



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Urban dwellers constitute over half of the global population. Cities are economic powerhouses, representing about 60% of the world's GDP. At the same time, cities also account for about 70% of global carbon emissions. The challenges and consequences of rapid urbanization, including poorly planned cities and inadequate infrastructure, are manifold and contribute to social inequity, environmental degradation, and public health risks. As an international community, civic society must strategically reflect on how we occupy space on this planet. Through Sustainable Development Goal #11, the UN aims to transform the way urban spaces are built and managed.

What Makes A City Sustainable?

Constructing cities sustainable means creating safe and affordable housing, investing in public transport, carving green public spaces, and making urban planning more inclusive. By building affordable housing and investing in public transport, we promote urban equity, social inclusion, and a healthier environment. By reducing the ecological footprints of cities around the world, we enhance communal resilience to climate change and improve the livelihoods of millions.

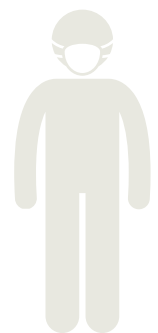
Providing Affordable Housing And Adequate Services

Population growth and increased urbanization are outpacing the construction of new affordable homes and exerting pressure on fresh water supplies, the environment, and public health. Rapid urbanization presents the additional challenges of inadequate infrastructure and services, including waste collection and water and sanitation systems. The number of slum dwellers currently hovers around 1 billion, with 80% living in Eastern

Reducing Air Pollution

Between air pollution from traffic, industry, waste burning, power generation, and residential fuel combustion, air quality has worsened for more than half of the world's population. Currently 9 out of every 10 urban residents are breathing polluted air – air that does not meet the World Health Organization's quality guidelines. This poses a tremendous threat to human health and undermines global efforts to tackle climate change. Compared to 49% in high-income countries, the air quality of 97% of cities (with more than 100,000 inhabitants) in low- and middle-income countries did not meet air quality guidelines in 2016. Concentrated primarily in Asia and Africa, over 90% of air-pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

9 OUT OF **10** URBAN RESIDENTS
BREATHE POLLUTED AIR



and South-Eastern Asia (370 million), sub-Saharan Africa (238 million) and Central and Southern Asia (227 million). According to data collected between 2010 and 2018, 2 billion people live without waste collection services and 3 billion people lack access to controlled waste disposal facilities. Renewed policy attention and increased investments are required to ensure affordable housing and adequate services for all by 2030.

Increasing Access To Public Transport And Public Spaces

Public transport is not only a catalyst for economic growth; it also increases social inclusion and mitigates air pollution. Public spaces similarly promote social inclusion and urban productivity. Nevertheless, only half of the world's urban population has convenient access to public transport and, on average, only 31% of urban residents are within walking distance of an open public space. Public transport is disproportionately inaccessible to vulnerable populations, including women, children, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

47% OF POPULATION LIVE WITHIN 400 METRES WALKING DISTANCE TO OPEN PUBLIC SPACES



400M



150 COUNTRIES

HAVE DEVELOPED

NATIONAL URBAN PLANS, WITH ALMOST HALF OF THEM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE



A Vision For The Future

Cities are the most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted densely populated slums most severely, with over 90% of the world's COVID-19 cases concentrated in urban areas. This fact has prompted, as of May 2020, the majority of national and city governments to reconsider the vitality of sustainable urban planning to aid prevention of future pandemics and public health crises. These efforts must be further encouraged and met with the full support of civil society.

The costs of poorly planned urbanization, manifest in sprawling slums, tangled traffic, and giant greenhouse gas emissions, are myriad, not only for the health of the public but the health of our planet. Cities occupy just 3% of the Earth's land, but they account for 60-80% of energy consumption. By 2050, 70% of the global population is projected to live in urban settlements. It is more vital than ever to demonstrate a global commitment to build sustainable cities – cities with functional public transport networks, limited air pollution, accessible green spaces and minimal ecological footprints.

READY TO TAKE ACTION?

We're taking the fight to Congress. Email takeaction@unanca.org for more info on how you can join us on Capitol Hill and beyond.