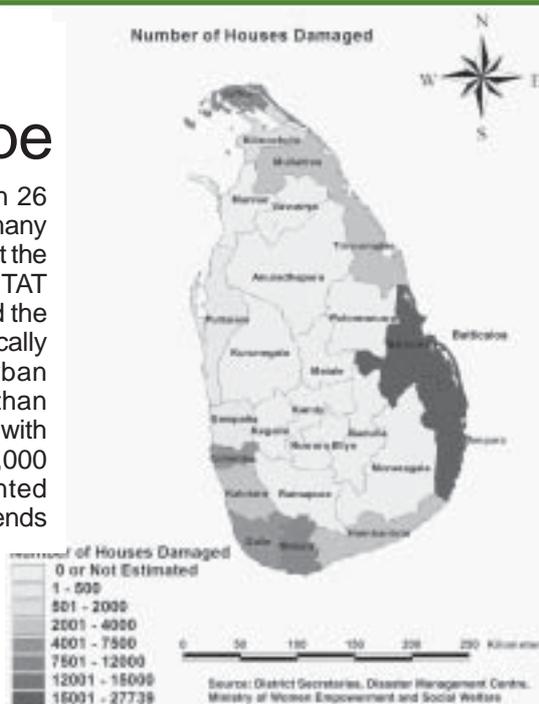


Tsunami Disaster: Helping Cities Cope

The Tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean region on 26 December 2004 ravaged coastal communities in many countries and impacted the lives of people throughout the region. Among other countries, UNEP and UN-HABITAT responded to the situation in Sri Lanka. At this island the waves caused massive destruction, affecting practically all coastal urban centres. The damage to urban infrastructure and amenities is extensive. More than 88,000 houses are reported completely destroyed, with a further 25,000 damaged, forcing more than 800,000 people into 800 makeshift camps. An unaccounted number of displaced people have moved in with friends and relatives.

UNEP and UN-HABITAT are providing key support to the countries that have been struck by the Asian Tsunami. Both organisations have set up teams to provide immediate support and to develop proposals to assist in the reconstruction of cities in the medium and long term in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Urban environmental issues are crucial in both phases as the damage to shelter and infrastructure is extensive as is land and water pollution. Industrial sites might pose yet another environmental hazard. UNEP has set up a team that is making assessments of the environmental issues and that is also providing support to the countries that have been affected, most of which have requested for environmental assistance. UN-HABITAT has been working in post-disaster reconstruction for more than two decades in several countries in Asia, including Sri Lanka and the Philippines, using a number of innovative practices including a community contracting system developed in its Sri Lanka projects.

The joint UN-HABITAT/ UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) has a long history of cooperation with Sri Lanka. In collaboration with



UNDP, SCP is currently supporting 18 Urban Local Authorities through the Urban Governance Support Project (UGSP). Some funds from the project have been reallocated for emergency aid. Among the cities most affected are the three SCP project cities of Galle, Batticaloa, and Katankudi which are benefiting from immediate relief activities like cleaning wells, emptying of septic tanks and toilets, and cleaning of market places. SCP, with its EPM approach, through the EMIS Tool (Environmental Management Information System) and focusing on basic urban services will further assist the municipalities in medium and long-term urban planning. Cross-sectoral coordinating working groups have already been established to prioritise the settlements to be supported, with NGOs mobilised to prepare reconstruction action plans through community participation.

UNEP and UN-HABITAT have initiated consultations on a City Alliance project proposal to support cities in their reconstruction efforts. The focus will be on providing support for reconstruction, making sure that urban services such as water, sewerage and sanitation facilities are integrated when reconstructing urban areas, especially in slums and urban poor areas.

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Sri Lanka commitment: government and cities' efforts to sustain and mainstream Environmental Planning and Management (EPM).

In 1998 the government of Sri Lanka adopted a four-phase decade-long National Sustainable Human Settlements Development Programme. The programme aimed at capacity building of urban local authorities and building public-private-popular partnerships for improved urban governance.

Phase I (1999) focused on strengthening coordination between Colombo Metropolitan Region municipal departments and central government agencies through public-community partnerships

Phase II (2001-3) improved the living conditions of urban poor communities further through explicit poverty reduction strategies. At the same time it provided support in areas such as transparency and accountability in municipal finance through participatory budgeting and e-governance. New municipalities, urban councils and provinces joined the programme. SCP/EPM toolkits were adapted, translated and developed into flexible "distance learning" training modules by a network of National Training and Capacity-Building Institutions.

Phase III (2004/05) concentrates on institutional consolidation, up scaling and replicating. In Kotte the focus is on up scaling the solid waste management "city-wide". Good practice experiences are documented for tool development and to strengthen the capacity building through partnerships.

Phase IV (from 2006) will continue to institutionalise the experiences from phase III at local, provincial and national levels to ensure sustainability and over time, make the EPM approach routine in urban planning, and a mechanism for continuously improving urban governance.



UNEP



UN-HABITAT

Brazil: Bringing urban planning and environment management together

Within the framework of the joint UNEP - UN-HABITAT strategy on the urban environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, support is now being provided to four Brazilian cities (Marabá (PA), Beberibe (CE), Piranhas (AL), Garantã do Norte (MT)).

The project combines efforts from the two UN agencies. The UNEP GEO Cities Programme is currently supporting the preparation of GEO City reports, which will provide an urban environmental diagnosis of each city. Based on these reports, the UN-HABITAT LA21 Programme will provide support to an environmental planning and management process. This joint effort already has brought together the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Cities.

Approaches and methodologies of the two Ministries and the two UN agencies were reviewed and aligned during a workshop that took place in Rio de Janeiro in August 2004. Agreement during the workshop was meant to better respond to the following twin challenges: (a) better incorporate environment concerns into municipal planning and (b) strengthen participation in environmental management and municipal planning. The expected final output of the project will be the production of municipal plans (*Planos Diretores Municipais*). The project will allow the adaptation of a number of UNEP and UN-HABITAT tools to the national context, which will subsequently be used in other Brazilian cities. A network of anchoring institutions will be created to support the replication of this initiative.

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EMIS: Managing Information for Urban Environment



GIS-Lab at Lusaka City Council

The meeting of the city council starts. Important decisions are waiting for the councillors. An investor wants to build a modern dumpsite, but what does that mean for the area? "Thousands of people have to be relocated", "There is a plot which is far more suitable to the south", and "We need this dumpsite urgently. Just think about all these illegal dumpsites!!" - different opinions and facts are voiced while the councillors take their seats. In front of them, they find a 2-page report with detailed maps. In a short Power Point Presentation the Town Clerk describes the method used to identify the most suitable plot. He states

that 50 families who moved there without permission will be given a new home not far away. Finally he emphasizes the need for the dumpsite - the Working Group for Solid Waste have found that illegal dumpsites are scattered along the streams throughout the town and pose a grave threat to citizens using the water.

In this way, or in a scenario very similar to the one above, decisions are taken in Lusaka, Zambia, since the establishment of an Environmental Management Information System (EMIS). This is one of many cases of Sustainable Cities Programme cities worldwide using environmental databases and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) approach. A brief status report about these cities using EMIS revealed, however, that one of the major problems remains the mainstreaming of the EMIS into the day-to-day task of municipal decision making. This and other issues related to EMIS will be discussed at the SCP Global Meeting in Havana 2005.

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Improving Urban Air Quality in developing countries



With increasing urbanisation and the rapid rise in vehicle fleets worldwide, urban air pollution is becoming a major problem in many cities. This is especially the case in developing country cities where old vehicles, using dirty fuels, are causing major health and environmental problems. To address this, the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) was established in August 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to promote cleaner fuels and vehicles. With the Partnership Clearing-House located at UNEP Headquarters in Nairobi, as well as a range of partners involved - ranging from the fuels and vehicles industries, international

organisations, developed and developing country governments, and non-governmental organisations - the PCFV is well-placed to make a difference in urban air quality across the globe.

The PCFV is undertaking activities at all levels: national, regional, and global. The initial focus of the PCFV was on the phasing-out of leaded petrol, primarily in Africa, the continent where its use is most widespread. The PCFV is supporting many African Governments and their partners, with the result that in 2004, 10 countries switched to unleaded petrol, and another 25-30 are slated to make the switch in 2005.

The year 2004 also saw a number of other activities around the world: workshops on desulphurisation and fuel standard harmonisation were held in Central America; a workshop on clean fuels in West Asia was held in Beirut; and a Ministerial Meeting was organized in Nairobi, on the phasing-out of leaded petrol in Sub-Saharan Africa. The work programme for 2005 includes activities to promote phase out of leaded petrol, reduction of sulphur levels in fuels, and the introduction of clean vehicles. Activities will be implemented in all regions, for example in Chile a diesel retrofit programme will be supported, Indonesia will receive support to phase out leaded gasoline, while in Central and Eastern Europe national action plans will be developed.

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SCP/ILO partnership for “Decent jobs & better services for the poor”

Lack of decent work opportunities is an important dimension of urban poverty. Engagement in public-private partnerships as well as development of citywide development strategies are possible solutions to this issue that can lead to the generation of durable jobs as well as improved service delivery. Recent needs assessments and field experiences confirm that there is a growing demand for capacity building services in this area, at national and municipal levels. In response to this demand, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UN-HABITAT have been mobilizing resources to develop a capacity-building programme (Decent Jobs and Better Services for the Urban Poor) that is currently in its first phase of implementation.

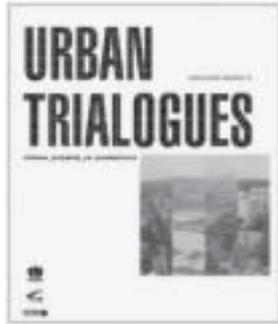
This programme is meant to contribute to the improvement of the conditions of men and women living and working in poor urban settlements in developing countries. It includes training workshops at sub-regional and national level focusing on tools and good practices in employment creation in urban infrastructure and service delivery. The main objective of the training workshops is to enhance the participants' knowledge and capacity in planning, designing and implementing development initiatives geared to create decent and sustainable jobs, while providing improved infrastructure and services. In this process, participants share practical ideas and tools to assess urban employment problems and define possible solutions.



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Air

Partners



Urban Trialogues

Urban Trialogues is about inclusive planning for sustainable urban development. It contains theory and practice relating to the Local Agenda 21 Programme, which focuses on environmental planning and management in urban areas. The book presents case studies from various towns and cities around the world and relates these to the LA21 concepts. It is targeted at urban planners and managers, community developers, scholars and those making decision-makers on urban issues.

LA21 website updated

The Localising Agenda 21 website has been updated and is now available in three languages (English, French and Spanish). Visit the site frequently as it will be regularly updated.

Bookmark the following link: <http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/agenda21>

The Urban - Rural Link

Many key urban environmental issues do not stop at city borders. Water and air pollution as well as energy provision are examples where cities are closely linked with their hinterland.

Between 1-3 October, UN-HABITAT organised a conference on urban-rural linkages. The session on environment was organised by UNEP. Some case studies demonstrated the importance of wetlands for cities. These wetlands act as natural filters of pollution and drainage systems. At the same time, they provide resources such as fish, food and drinking water. However many wetlands are threatened by pollution and encroachment. Other issues discussed included air pollution, erosion, expansion of cities in environmentally sensitive areas, and waste.

Addressing these issues in cities needs an approach that integrates both the urban and rural dimensions. One suggestion is the ecosystem approach in which the functions of the ecosystem are taken as a starting point. It also includes a management approach, promoting the urban and rural uses of the ecosystem. UNEP prepared a paper on the urban -rural linkages, which includes current case studies. (contact_rob.jong@unep.org)

World Urban Forum II

Participants from all over the world gathered in Barcelona from 13-17 September 2004 to attend UN-HABITAT's biennial World Urban Forum (WUF). The WUF is a platform for experts and professionals in the field of human settlements to examine the trends of rapid urbanisation and its impact on cities, their economies and policies. During the forum, UNEP and UN-HABITAT jointly organised a session on Urban Sustainability. The key message of this session was "Only a culture of partnerships can make sustainable urban development meaningful and achievable". Several SCP/LA21 partners participated in this event, which focused on local, national and global partnerships. The presentations and discussion revealed a strong need for partnerships at each level, and between the different levels. Furthermore, the session emphasised the importance of a mechanism for national governments to sensitise city authorities on the implementation of the Agenda 21 - and in supporting them in developing Local Agenda 21 initiatives. In this context, a suggestion to involve mayors in national budgetary processes was also mooted.

SCP/LA21 also organised two events on "Managing Information on Local Environment" and on "Tourism, Sustainable Urbanisation and Poverty Alleviation", in the later partners from Cuba and Morocco made excellent presentations. The presentations clearly showed the link between the three issues. The next WUF will be held in Vancouver, Canada, in 2006.

Upcoming events:

UNEP Governing Council - GC23

21st to 25th of February 2005
in Nairobi, Kenya
focus on MDGs within the
context of gender,
environment and policy
issues related to water,
sanitation and human
settlements
more at: www.unep.org

UN-HABITAT Governing Council - GC20

4th to 8th of April 2005
in Nairobi, Kenya
focus on: Involvement of
civil society in improving
local governance;
Post-conflict, natural and
man-made disasters
assessment and
reconstruction
more at:
www.unhabitat.org

Commission for Sustainable Development - CSD13

11th to 22nd of April 2005
in New York, USA
For more information visit:
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/csd13.htm>

SCP/ LA21 Global Meeting

26th of June to 1st of July 2005
in Havana, Cuba
Achieving sustainable
urbanisation-Innovations
for local and global results
more at:
www.unhabitat.org/scp
www.unhabitat.org/la21

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