Subprogramme 4 – Urban Basic Services

Introduction

Cities need basic services to make them productive and livable. Transport networks, for example, connect people to jobs, goods and services. The growth of industrial and service sectors is also dependent on the quality, reliability and cost of services such as water supply, sanitation, energy and transport. Basic service provision, therefore, has the potential to positively impact economic growth, by reducing production costs and expanding market opportunities, thereby also increasing employment opportunities. Basic services also sustain the health, livelihood and the general living environment of city residents. Equally important, basic services are the cornerstone of a municipal government’s compact with its residents, and are the most tangible result for which communities hold their elected officials accountable.

The Habitat Agenda singles out adequate basic infrastructure and services as a fundamental element in the achievement of the goal of “Adequate Shelter for All”. Chapter 84 of the Habitat Agenda defines basic infrastructure and services at the community level to include the delivery of safe water, sanitation, waste management, social welfare, transport and communications facilities, energy, health and emergency services, schools, public safety, and the management of open spaces.

In the year 2000, world leaders meeting at the United Nations Millennium Summit committed themselves to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Goal 7, target 10 which aims to “reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015”. Basic services provision is also a subject of high interest in the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda. Under the umbrella of UN-Water, UN-Habitat is active in the formulation of draft Sustainable Development Goal and target on water.

As human settlements grow and their populations increase, lack of adequate basic services is becoming an increasing constraint to sustainable urban development. For example, despite the welcome announcement that the MDG drinking water target was met in 2010, five years ahead of schedule, the number of urban dwellers using unimproved sources actually increased, from 109 million in 1990 to 130 million in 2010. According to the International Energy Agency, nearly 1.3 billion people remain without access to electricity and 2.6 billion still do not have access to clean cooking facilities, mainly in developing countries of Africa and Asia. The World Health Organization estimates that outdoor air pollution, mainly caused by urban transport is responsible for 1.3 million deaths per year worldwide.

Thematic Focus

The Subprogramme is divided into four programmatic clusters: i) water and sanitation, ii) urban waste management, iii) urban mobility and iv) urban energy. Urban drainage has been added as an additional cluster in FA4 given the current backlog in urban drainage investment and the extreme flooding events associated with climate change. As part of its efforts to effectively manage open spaces, UN-Habitat is working with Kirtipur Municipality and the local communities to contribute towards revitalizing of Kirtipur, an old town in Kathmandu Valley, through people-centric pond and public space management.

i) Water and sanitation

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3 WHO Fact sheet №313.
In the water and sanitation cluster, the goal is to support efforts by governments in developing countries in their pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water and sanitation. This is being achieved through city-level demonstration projects, institutional strengthening of water operators and engagement in national policy and reform processes. Focus is also on advocacy and support to water and sanitation-related political processes and events to raise the profile of pro-poor urban water and sanitation issues and their integration in sector policy and practices.

ii) Urban waste management

Managing waste is one of the biggest challenges of a city. Available data show that cities spend a substantial proportion of their budget on waste management, yet waste collection rates for cities in low- and middle-income countries range from a low of 10 per cent in peri-urban areas to a high of 90 per cent in commercial city centres. To enhance the capacity of local actors in solid waste and waste water management, support is provided for pilot demonstration projects and technical assistance in setting-up community-based solid waste management systems.

iii) Urban mobility

In the urban mobility cluster, focus is on promoting access to opportunities, goods and services. Towards the goal of sustainable urban mobility, UN-Habitat will support a new paradigm of people-centered as opposed to vehicle-centered planning. Focus will be given to promoting safe and efficient public transport, integrated with safe and attractive facilities for Non-Motorised transport. Policy dialogue at city and national level will be aimed at mainstreaming sustainable urban mobility in national policies. This will be complemented by projects on the ground to demonstrate innovation and by awareness raising and advocacy activities on sustainable urban mobility. A wide range of partnerships will be pursued including with the MDBs, academic and research institutions, Civil Society and special interest groups e.g for public transport or non-motorised transport.

iv) Urban energy

In the urban energy cluster, focus is on increasing access to modern, clean and reliable energy services for the urban poor. Emphasis is also on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies by promoting renewable energy technologies and mainstreaming energy efficiency measures into housing policies, building codes and building practices. Key activities include demonstration projects, advocacy and awareness creation on the importance of energy for sustainable development and engagement in policy and legislation.

v) Urban Drainage

As settlements grow and urbanize, the provision of sustainable drainage systems is necessary to avoid the negative consequences of flooding events in such urban environments. Emphasis is on: awareness raising and advocacy to ensure effective integration of drainage in urban policies; facilitating technical advice on reducing flood hazard problems; working with city authorities on institutional arrangements for managing stormwater; promoting sustainable urban drainage systems and partnering with city authorities on demonstration projects.

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Strategy

A key focus of Subprogramme 4 is on supporting local, regional and national authorities responsible for urban and human settlements issues to develop and implement policies for increasing equitable access to urban basic services and improving the standard of living of the urban poor.

This section summarizes UN-Habitat’s strategy in achieving the Subprogramme’s three Expected Accomplishments.

EA1: Improved policies and guidelines on equitable access to sustainable urban basic services implemented by local, regional and national authorities

The Subprogramme will support local, regional and national authorities to strengthen their legislative and institutional frameworks for expanding access to urban basic services. Efforts will focus advocacy and networking on basic services to contribute to the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda through collaboration with UN-Water, UN-Energy, the UN Secretary General’s Technical Working Group on Transport, Regional Economic Commissions, and inter-governmental bodies. Support will also be given to national and subnational policy and sector reform processes to develop and implement pro-poor policies. To achieve this, the Subprogramme will strengthen its involvement in the development of country support strategies through active engagement with other UN partners under the umbrella of “One UN” activities and increased collaboration with the UN-Habitat Regional and Country Offices will be strengthened. The Subprogramme will also support the implementation of the International Guidelines on Decentralization and the Guidelines on Access to basic services for all, and the development and dissemination of toolkits, standards and guidelines as valuable tools for expanding access to urban basic services. The normative tools will be used in training and capacity building programmes aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of basic service providers.

EA2: Increased flow of investment into equitable urban basic services catalysed by UN-Habitat programmes in partner countries with a focus on urban poor

The Subprogramme will build a broad range of innovative, strategic partnerships, especially those with regional development banks, regional economic commissions and the private sector to increase the flow of investments into urban basic services. Existing partnerships with the regional development banks will be strengthened to provide pre-investment support and technical assistance to partner countries. The Subprogramme will also continue to strengthen its work with the private sector to channel financial support to expand access to urban basic services. Pro-poor financing mechanisms will also be developed to mobilise support for the poor and vulnerable groups. The Sub-Programme will continue to engage with other UN Agencies under the “One UN” Umbrella and will use this platform to increase investments in urban basic services, especially in fragile states and countries recovering from human and man-made disasters.

EA 3: Increase in the use of sustainable urban basic services in partner cities

The Subprogramme will support programmes and projects aimed at enhancing the use of sustainable urban basic services in partner cities. A rights-based approach will be promoted to enhance effective collaboration between duty bearers and rights holders in improving access to basic services. The Subprogramme will continue its support to the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation to ensure that these services are available, accessible, safe, acceptable and affordable for all without discrimination. Based on this experience, the Subprogramme will contribute in informing the global debate on the Right to other services, including drainage, transport and energy. Of special relevance here is also the Secretary General’s initiative on Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All).
Consumers and users of urban basic services will also be engaged to promote sustainable consumption practices through awareness and education programmes.

UN-Habitat held a Senior Management Strategic Planning Retreat from 9 to 13 September 2013 in Nairobi in order to develop an implementation plan for the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. The specific objectives of the retreat were to i) agree on how UN-Habitat will achieve expected accomplishments specified in the strategic plan; ii) agree on the development and implementation of strategic large scale thematic and geographic programmes capable of attracting significant donor support, which would lead to a doubling of UN-Habitat’s portfolio and to the achievements of its planned results; and iii) agree on how to strengthen integration of normative and operational components of UN-Habitat’s work. During the retreat, Regional Offices took the lead in providing inputs to the Subprogramme based on their regional perspectives.

**Linkages with other UN-Habitat Priorities**

The planning and implementation of Subprogramme 4 activities are closely linked with the other three priorities of UN-Habitat as shown in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Examples from on-going projects</th>
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<tr>
<td>Urban planning</td>
<td>• Participatory poverty and environmental mapping</td>
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<td>• GIS based mapping in Lao PDR</td>
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<td>• h2O monitoring system in Zanzibar</td>
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<td>• Infrastructure-led slum upgrading including Kibera Soweto East</td>
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<td>• Integrated WATSAN initiative</td>
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<td>• Monitoring watsan coverage and setting standards eg. Hosting the Urban Task Force of JMP, the use of UIS for monitoring and tracking the impact of investments, Maji Data in Kenya, etc.</td>
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<td>• Sustainable Transport in East African Cities (GEF supported)</td>
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<td>Urban Legislation and Governance</td>
<td>• Legislation related to urban catchment management e.g. “enforcement notice” issued in the Densu river basin in Accra</td>
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<td>• Environmental legislation; Solid Waste Management legislation, by-laws for Rain-harvesting in Nepal</td>
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<td>• Assistance for effective Institutions for Public Transport (Kenya)</td>
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<td>Urban Economy and finance</td>
<td>• Solid Waste Management and Job creation: e.g. Nicaragua and Madagascar to support Waste Valorization Activities</td>
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<td>• Influencing the re-alignment of lending policies and approaches – by developing specific pro-poor components to larger support projects of e.g. AfDB and EIB</td>
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<td>• Urban catchment improvements resulting in value capture.</td>
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<td>• Urban Mobility Investments and the Green Economy</td>
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**Progress in Operationalising the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund**

The Governing Council of UN-Habitat, at its 24th Session held in Nairobi, Kenya from 15-19 April 2013, adopted a resolution on “Strengthening UN-Habitat’s Work on Urban Basic Services”, which among other things, calls upon UN-Habitat to gradually expand the scope of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund and rename it as the “Urban Basic Services Trust Fund” in support of the implementation of the Agency’s work programme on basic services including sustainable solutions for water and sanitation,
energy, mobility, waste management and drainage. The proposal to expand UN-Habitat’s Water and Sanitation Trust Fund to an Urban Basic Services Trust Fund was also unanimously adopted at the 4th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD IV) held in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2012.

Building on the experience of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund will provide an integrated focus across the different areas of basic services and bring about greater efficiency and synergy in the delivery of the urban basic services programme. Through the expanded Urban Basic Services Trust Fund, UN-Habitat seeks to more effectively address challenges in the areas of mobility, energy and drainage while maintaining its efforts on urban water and sanitation with an enhanced focus on the poor in informal settlements.

To ensure focus on each of the thematic areas, the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund will be demarcated clearly by component viz. Water and Sanitation, Mobility, Energy, Drainage and Waste Management. The funds meant for a particular basic service will have a unique budget code and a dedicated funding window that locks them for that particular activity. It will, therefore not be possible to move funds from one funding window into another funding window unless a donor specifically gives a written request to do so.

As a follow-up to the GC Resolution, UN-Habitat convened an Expert Group Meeting from Thursday, 6 June to Friday, 7 June 2013. Hosted by the UN-Habitat Office for Liaison with European Institutions in Brussels, Belgium, the EGM brought together twenty urban basic services specialists to discuss the modalities of operation and management of the Trust Fund, key elements of the Trust Fund’s Five Year Strategic Plan 2014-2019, possible options for capitalization of the Trust Fund, including key elements of a fundraising strategy and how best the Trust Fund could develop partnership arrangements to catalyse pro-poor investments in urban basic services.

UN-Habitat is further developing the operational guidelines that will set out the principles, rules and procedures to guide the management of the Trust Fund, including its management structure, the scope of activities to be supported, eligibility criteria for recipients and implementing partners, recipient contributions, procurement of goods and services, performance and results measurement, and monitoring and Evaluation, among others. The operational guidelines will be adopted by the Trust Fund’s Management Board to be held in early 2014.

Next steps will be to; i) further develop the Trust Fund’s 5-Year Strategic Plan, ii) develop the Trust Fund’s Policy Paper highlighting linkages between each of these sectors to other UN-Habitat priority areas, iii) develop the Trust Fund’s Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy aligned to the UN-Habitat Partnership Strategy and Resource Mobilization Strategy, respectively, and iv) develop a communication strategy for the Trust Fund.

Opportunities, challenges, assumptions and external factors

Opportunities

- The establishment of the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund offers an opportunity to demonstrate how water and sanitation, urban mobility, energy, waste management, drainage and planning of public spaces can complement each other.
- Increasing demand for UN-Habitat’s technical assistance in urban basic services provision for small and medium-sized urban settlements of less than one million people in developing countries, which currently accommodate most of the world’s urban population and will absorb most of the predicted urban growth in the next few decades, but are institutionally weak;
The Rio+20 outcome document ‘The Future We Want’, which commits Governments to a broad framework for sustainable development over the next decades prioritizes sustainable urban development and contains 283 paragraphs relevant to energy, transportation and mobility, water and sanitation, and waste management.

The Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda and the on-going consultations on Sustainable Development Goals provides an opportunity to advocate for international recognition and commitment on urban basic services.

The third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development, HABITAT III, to be held in 2016, will provide a platform for shaping a new urban and human settlements agenda to respond to new challenges and to raise the strategic, political and media profile for sustainable urban development.

The Delivering as One UN approach provides opportunity to integrate operational activities of the UN the country level by enhancing coherence, efficiency and effectiveness while reducing transaction costs for host countries. However, to become an equal player and gain from the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks’ (UNDAF) resources, UN-Habitat should commit financial resources in the process.

Strengthened collaboration with regional/country offices will improve the normative (knowledge management) aspects of the operational activities undertaken by the Regional Offices.

Challenges

- Lack of predictable funding makes it difficult to plan long-term programmes.
- How to expand the donor base at a time when the effects of the global financial crisis are still being felt.
- Up scaling of successful approaches by partner cities require allocation of human and financial resources that may be limited or taken up by other development priorities.
- Timely implementation of UN-Habitat operations, especially in the emergency/humanitarian area, is handicapped by lengthy procurement procedures, some of which UN-Habitat has no control.

Assumptions and External Factors

- There will be continued interest and willingness by development agencies, financial institutions, national governments and the private sector to support the development and implementation of policies for increasing equitable access to sustainable urban basic services.
- There will be political stability, commitment, goodwill and conditions for good governance in the participating cities, regions and countries.