

The Future of Asia and Pacific Cities Report 2019:

Sub-regional meeting for North and Central Asia

9:00-10:00, 10-12:00 (parallel session) and 14:00-18:00, 5 October 2018

Palais des Nations, Room XXV

Geneva, Switzerland

CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAMME

I. Background

UNESCAP in cooperation with UN-Habitat and UNECE is producing a major Report on cities in the Asia-Pacific region, titled the *Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019* Report. It will be a policy advocacy Report intended to support national and local governments in long-term thinking and inclusive decision-making to advance resilient and sustainable cities. The Report will help create a 'possibility space' to re-imagine the future of built/natural environments to support the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global agendas in Asia-Pacific cities. To these ends the Report will critically assess and provide knowledge and best practices of the means of implementation across a range of urban sustainability areas, including governance and capacity development for resilient cities, urban finance, urban data and technologies for smart cities, and integrated urban/territorial planning. The key audiences are national and local governments who are critical to making decisions and forging local partnerships with stakeholders to influence the direction sustainable urban development in the region.

The Report is envisaged as more than a publication, but seeks to strengthen partnerships formed while creating knowledge for the Report through a diverse array of countries and urban stakeholders. This process will engage partners to co-produce the Report's thematic areas and to co-convene and co-host a series of consultative meetings throughout the Asia-Pacific region to provide inputs into the various chapters. Through such a process, the Report will be produced both *for* and *by* countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and it is expected that the consultations will build champions, with the participants developing ownership over the Report and taking forth its knowledge and recommendations.

As part of this process, UNESCAP in cooperation with UN-Habitat and UNECE will host a meeting to provide stakeholder inputs from North and Central Asia sub-region to the Report¹. It will review the challenges and future opportunities in the region's cities.

The meeting will take place on 5 October afternoon following the 79th session of the Committee on Housing and Land Management (that will take place from 4 to 5 October 2018 in Geneva). There will be approximately 30 participants at the meeting in order to obtain multi stakeholder inputs and buy in for the Report from a wide array of stakeholders and member States from the region.

During the period from 1996 until today, countries of the sub-region have seen the transition from planned to market economy, which began in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union and is still going on at present. There have been significant changes in the political, economic, social, demographic and environmental spheres of human settlements development in the region. The transformation of national

¹ The nine countries to be included are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

economies did not bring only positive changes, it also put forward new challenges and threats, exacerbated some old problems that former Soviet republics accumulated during previous decades.

Motivated by the Habitat III Conference in 2016, several national governments of the CIS prepared national human settlements development reports, presented at the regional level as *“CIS Cities: Towards Sustainable Future.”*² The report concludes that *“cities in the region still do not adequately fulfil their basic function – to become a source of innovation and high living standards due to the fact that the existing urban settlement system was shaped under the influence of planned economy and is not always adapted to the demands of the new market system”*³.

It needs to be underscored that countries in the sub-region vary in the nature and efficiency of demographic and urbanization processes. For most North and Central Asian countries, challenges of urbanization are, for example, associated mainly with high rates of population growth, which result in the need to create an environment for the development of quality education and employment systems. Population growth, in case of seriously limited agricultural development, will create pressures on the labor market. In the long term, migration from rural areas to cities will be increasing. These processes are galvanized by the decrease in employment opportunities in rural communities resulting from decrease in land areas and deterioration of water supply. Such sub-regional differences will be important to capture in the Report.

II. Objectives

The overall objective of the sub-regional meeting is to generate valuable inputs into the Report by engaging stakeholders, policymakers, and experts, in order to:

1. Review progress on enhancing the enabling environment for cities in North and Central Asia to contribute to the SDGs, NUA and other global sustainability agreements, and develop recommendations for public, private and civil society organisations for the sustainable management of the region’s cities, towns and settlements.
2. Broaden the knowledge base regarding practical applications to sustainable city planning, financing, data, technologies, local governance and urban management capacities in the region through the elaboration of innovative solutions and partnerships.
3. Build ownership for the Report and encourage participants to become champions, to take its knowledge and recommendations forward, and to disseminate, and raise awareness within their networks.

III. Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the sub-regional meeting are threefold:

1. Validation of the overall narrative and structure of the Report from a North and Central Asia urban perspective.
2. A more granular and regionally-specific understanding of the challenges and future opportunities of sustainable city development in the region, to generate examples of best practices and case studies that can feed into the Report.
3. Confirmation of timeline and possible thematic working group for the Report on North and Central cities to further elaborate content from the region against the thematic focus areas of the Report.

² *CIS Cities: Towards Sustainable Future the Commonwealth of Independent States Regional Report for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III; General provisions, (2016)*

³ Ibid.

**UNECE**

UNITED NATIONS

ESCAP

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

**UN-HABITAT**
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

IV. Programme

8:30am: Registration

9:00 - 10:00	Session 1: Opening and greetings
9:00 - 10:00	<p><i>Chair: Ms. Åsa Jonsson, Chief of Best Practices Unit, HQ Coordinator, Project Coordination Officer for Countries of the CIS, UN-Habitat</i></p> <p>Introduction: Ms. Åsa Jonsson, Chief of Best Practices Unit, HQ Coordinator, Project Coordination Officer for Countries of the CIS, UN-Habitat</p> <p>Welcome remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Omar Siddique, Economic Affairs Officer, Sustainable Urban Development Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP - Ms. Paula Pennanen-Rebeiro-Hargrave, Human Settlements Officer, Technical Advisory Branch, UN-Habitat - Ms. Gulnara Roll, Head of Unit, Housing and Land Management, UNECE <p>Key objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting with presentation on the narrative and emerging focus areas of the <i>Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019</i> Report (10 min) – UNESCAP – Mr. Curt Garrigan</p> <p>Presentation on key issues and questions for discussion related specifically to North and Central Asia (15 min) – UNECE – Mr. Oleg Golubchikov, Senior Lecturer at Cardiff University</p> <p>Q&A</p>
10:00-12:00	<p>Session 2: Small group inputs on report's themes for Session 4 (Room E1066)</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Ms. Paula Pennanen-Rebeiro-Hargrave, UN-Habitat</i></p> <p>Committee Session taking place from 10 – 13</p>
UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management Unit Session in Room XXV from 10:00 – 13:00	
14: 00-14:30	<p>Round of Introductions (facilitated by the Chair)</p> <p>Session 3: Feedback on the morning presentation</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Ms. Paula Pennanen-Rebeiro-Hargrave, UN-Habitat</i></p> <p>The discussants will be asked to give brief comments to Report Concept Note. (3 interventions – 5 min each – 15 min total)</p> <p>Ms. Irina Gentsler, Director of the Municipal Economy Department, Institute of Urban Economics</p> <p>Ms. Asel Yeszhanova, Director and Co-Founder, Urban Forum Kazakhstan</p> <p>Mr. Olzhas Sartayev, Chairman of Astana Innovations</p> <p>Inputs from the floor / open discussion (15 minutes)</p>

**UNECE**

UNITED NATIONS

ESCAP

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

**UN-HABITAT**
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

14:30-15:30	<p>Session 4: Thematic breakout discussion groups by stakeholder groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Future of urban and territorial planning 2) Future of urban finance 3) Future of urban governance and capacities for resilience 4) Future of smart urban data and technologies <p>Moderators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Urban and territorial planning: Ms. Irina Ilina, Director of the Institute for regional studies and urban planning 2. Finance: Ms. Meruet Makhmutova, Director, Public Policy Research Centre 3. Urban governance: Mr. Oleg Golubchikov, Senior Lecturer at Cardiff University 4. Data and smart cities group: Ms. Domenica Carriero, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE
Break with group photo – 15:30-15:45	
15:45-17:15	<p>Session 5: Fishbowl discussion</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Ms. Åsa Jonsson, UN-Habitat</i></p> <p>Fishbowl discussion on the four thematic areas (four Rapporteurs – 10 minutes each, with 40 minutes Q&A)</p> <p>Q&A</p>
17:15 - 17:45	<p>Session 6: Contextualization for North and Central Asia & other emerging trends</p> <p><i>Facilitator: Ms. Gulnara Roll, UNECE</i></p> <p>Facilitated plenary group discussion on the challenges and opportunities that are of relevance to cities in the region, and feedback on the thematic areas of the Report.</p>
17:45 –18:00	<p>Closing Session</p> <p>Next steps for the finalization of the State of Asia Pacific Cities Report- Ms. Paula Pennanen-Rebeiro-Hargrave, UN-Habitat</p> <p>Closing remarks – UNECE</p> <p>Evaluations</p>