NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES: A Series of International Examples

Final regional meeting on the strengthening national capacity for sustainable housing, urban development and land management

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A need for National Urban Policies

Challenges in the ECE region and economies in transition:

- **Centralized planning** system
- **Weak institutional integration**
- **Sectorial** management of economies
- Shortage of **expertise**
- Few countries with NUPs
- **Less-participatory** policies
- Inadequate **implementation** mechanisms
National Urban Policies (NUPs)

- A **coherent** set of decisions;
- Deliberate **government-led** process;
- Coordinating and rallying **actors** towards a **common vision/goal**;
- Participatory and inclusive approach;
- For the **long-term**.

*Both a process and a product.*
Potential of NUPs for SDGs
UN-Habitat is currently supporting 28 countries with the development of their National Urban Policy

An active portfolio for NUP development with budget over USD 7 million
NUPs Around the World

Worldwide cases of National Urban Policies: AUSTRALIA | GHANA | INDIA | MEXICO | SOUTH AFRICA
AUSTRALIA – “Smart Cities Plan”

- Historically, Australia has lacked explicit visioning to guide NUPs.
- **Main challenge**: lack of integrated policy on behalf of a national-level authority*.
- Multiple efforts to **shift**, e.g. Building Better Cities Programme, 1990’s
- **Coordination at the heart** of NUPs.

AUSTRALIA – “Smart Cities Plan”

- Setting the central vision for the country.
- **Inform planning and investment** in the country’s largest and smaller-**regional** cities.
- 03 ‘smart’ pillars: smart **investment**, smart **policy**, and smart **technology**.
GHANA – “National Urban Policy Framework”

STATUS: IMPLEMENTATION

- Recognizing potential of urbanization for economic & social development.
- Four-year process, including extensive domestic consultation.
- Supported by strong advocacy campaign on media (TV & radio) for its sensitization.
GHANA – “National Urban Policy Framework”

• 12 objectives for policy implementation.
• Implemented through a National Urban Policy Action Plan.
• 5-year framework of implementation.
• Challenges regarding implementing actor.
INDIA – “100 Smart Cities Programme”

• Metropolitan areas experiencing stagnation*.
• Need to tackle horizontal urban areas to harness the benefits of agglomeration.
• Efforts:
  – First program (JNNURM) in 2005.
  – Pro-poor program (RAY) in 2013.

INDIA – “100 Smart Cities Programme”

• New “urban era” of India.
• Cities are thought of as an “eco-system”.
• Three main areas of action: retrofitting, redevelopment, and pan-city projects that will include smart solutions.
• Avoid pitfalls of JNURM: one-year consultation process with multi-level tiers, from top to bottom, to ensure sustainability.
MEXICO – “National Urban Housing Policy”

STATUS: IMPLEMENTATION

• Slightly ahead in the region: formal policy in place.

• Challenges for urban development:
  - Outdated legislation
  - Inflexible institutions
  - Lack of an integrated vision
  - Weak local authorities with short-time horizons

Worldwide cases of National Urban Policies: AUSTRALIA | GHANA | INDIA | MEXICO | SOUTH AFRICA
MEXICO – National Urban Housing Policy

- Established in **2013**.
- Introduces **new principles** of urban development.
- Formulated through extensive national consultation.
- Successes, so far:
  - Reconsideration of housing subsidies to hinder sprawl
  - Expansion of supply of low-income housing
  - More environmentally-friendly housing
  - More inclusive housing

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SOUTH AFRICA – “Integrated Urban Development Framework”

STATUS: IMPLEMENTATION

- Popular sentiment towards rural development has hindered NUPs.
- Shift to Integrated cities = functional cities = productive cities
- National Development Plan (2012) aims at integration of settlements through the potential of and roles of subnational actors.

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SOUTH AFRICA – “Integrated Urban Development Framework”

- Drafted in 2014.
- Requirement for **every city to formulate a** long-term growth and development **strategy (GDS)** with a 30-year timeframe.
- The GDS will be a **shared vision & guide** for each city.
- Expected outcome: **strengthen local authorities** to deliver housing and basic services.

Worldwide cases of National Urban Policies:  
AUSTRALIA | GHANA | INDIA | MEXICO | SOUTH AFRICA
CONCLUDING REMARKS

• Needs collective visioning to be sustainable, e.g. consultations among tiers of government and public participation.

• Efforts don’t stop in formulation & approval; needs continuation for its implementation, e.g. Mexico.

• Value in mobilizing actors and resources to guarantee NUP implementation, e.g. success in Australia, challenge in Ghana.

• The potential of local authorities for implementation: translating national-level principles to the local level, e.g. success in South Africa, challenge in Mexico.
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