

The United Nations Development Programme



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**Finals of 2019 Guangdong High School
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The United Nations Development Programme

Introduction of the Committee

Founded in 1966 with the merging of the Expanded Programme Technical Assistance (EPTA) and the Special Fund to help countries eliminate [poverty](#) and achieve sustainable human development, an approach to [economic growth](#) that emphasizes improving the [quality of life](#) of all citizens while conserving the environment and natural resources for future generations, the United Nations Development Programme is central to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Group \(UNSDG\)](#), a network that spans 165 countries and unites the 40 UN funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other bodies working to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and with UNDP Administrator as Vice-Chair, the UNSDG provides strategic direction and oversight to ensure UNDS entities deliver coherent, effective and efficient support to countries in their pursuit of sustainable development.

UNDP has a critical advisory role in driving the sustainable development agenda, based on Member States' priorities and country context and plays an important role in fostering coordination within the UN system at country level, including by providing key system-wide services and country support platforms to support the implementation of the SDGs. UNDP participates in 66 "Delivering as One" initiatives which, together with the Standard Operating Procedures, enable UN Country Teams to operate more coherently, effectively and efficiently, minimizing transaction costs, reducing duplication and scaling up common approaches and joint initiatives.

UNDP also reinforces joint action on development in such forums as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the [United Nations](#).

Topic 1: Urbanization and Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Sustainable urbanization has been an important topic for the international community for the past 25 years as more and more people move to urban areas. According to the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (DESA) World Urbanization Prospect of 2018, 4.2 billion people already live in urban areas which constitutes 55% of the world population. By 2030, it is projected that 1 billion more people will be living in urban areas and, by 2050, it is projected to increase to about 6.6 billion people or 68% of the world's population. Almost 90% of the urban growth is going to happen in Asia and Africa due to higher rates of population growth and the movements from rural to urban areas. What constitutes a city or urban area exactly

varies from country to country depending on the criteria at hand and has not been universally agreed upon. **The UN Development Programme (UNDP) looks, for instance, at the administrative or political boundary of the settlement, population size, population density, and economic function to make its determination.**

The ongoing rapid urbanization confronts Member States with unprecedented challenges. While only between 1-3% of the world's land surface is considered urbanized currently, this number is projected to triple by 2030. Making these new and growing cities inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and safe is crucial to achieving sustainable development for all.⁶⁵ Cities also play an important social, economic, and environmental role.⁶⁶ Already today, cities account for more than 80% of global gross domestic product (GDP), but at the same time they account for 70% of the total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and 80% of energy use. **Social and economic inequalities, such as income or access to basic health and educational services, are prevalent. Air quality and infrastructure is deteriorating in many cities while an estimated 1 billion people live in slums with limited or no access to housing, basic services, or economic opportunities. In addition, as cities grow they face increasing risk of disasters. Cities are becoming especially more vulnerable toward hurricanes, floods, and other natural hazards that have increased in frequency and severity due to climate change; this risk is exacerbated as over 90% of all cities are in coastal areas.**

2. International and Regional Framework

The latest UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat-III) took place in Quito in 2016. At the third installment of Habitat, Member States adopted the New Urban Agenda with the aim to address the new challenges of urbanization of the 21st century. The New Urban Agenda is the result of a participatory process and consultations over two years. The New Urban Agenda commits to creating cities that **promote adequate housing and standard of living, universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation, as well as food security, health, education, infrastructure and waste disposal, mobility and transportation, energy, air quality and livelihoods without discrimination.** The New Urban Agenda further calls for gender equality, gender- and age-responsive and people-centered planning of city infrastructure, and allowing all citizens to fully participate in the social, economic, and political spheres of society. Member States also highlight **the importance of reducing the environmental impact of cities, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and designing resilient cities that are adequately equipped for climate change and the risks of disasters.** Based on the imperative of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), the New Urban Agenda seeks to leave no one behind and end poverty in all forms. Being the driving force in a country's economy, the New Urban Agenda promotes urban and inclusive economies that are fostered by innovation. To move away from business as usual and achieve transformative sustainable urban development, the New Urban

Agenda requires: new forms of holistic financing, strong governance and management of cities, and participation and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, including international and multilateral actors, national and local governments, the private sector, and civil society groups.

The commitments outlined in the New Urban Agenda are based on the 2030 Agenda which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The agenda lists 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that form a framework for the UN system and its Member States to work toward sustainable development. Several of the SDGs are relevant to rapid urbanization and sustainable development, especially the standalone SDG 11 on sustainable cities. This goal includes ensuring safe and affordable housing and transportation within urbanized areas, disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation strategies, improving air quality and waste management, and the provision of public spaces particularly for marginalized groups. Additionally, all of the SDGs are to some extent interlinked with SDG 11 and urbanization. For instance, sustainable infrastructure programs should take into consideration SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, and SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure. Making basic services accessible in cities also contributes to SDG 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 4 on quality education.⁹⁴ Creating job opportunities in cities aligns with the objectives of SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and helps fulfilling SDG 10 on reducing inequalities. Reducing the environmental impact of cities is also related to SDG 9 as well as SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production and SDG 13 on climate action.

Considering rapid urbanization and population growth in cities, the concentration of financial and material assets in urban areas, as well as the increase in disasters and their severity, the international community recognized the importance of resilience, for example in developing disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation strategies. To that end, Member States met at the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 and adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. **The framework outlines strategies to prevent human and economic losses from disasters, calling for laws and regulations in urban planning that promote higher safety standards. The framework also promotes public awareness and education efforts such as the “Making Cities Resilient: My city is getting ready” campaign. It emphasizes four areas of action for DRR: understanding the risks, strengthening governance to manage the risks, investing in resilience, and increasing preparedness for disasters as well as recovery strategies and reconstruction efforts.** As called for in the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, sustainable cities are necessarily resilient cities.

3. Building Resilient Cities

As cities face an increased risk not only from natural shocks but also man-made economic and social crises such as “high unemployment, inefficient public

transportation systems, endemic violence or terrorist attacks, or chronic food and water shortages,” there is a need to make cities more resilient against these challenges. Building resilient cities is an important aspect of urbanization and sustainable development. Urban resilience is defined by the 100 Resilient Cities project as the ability **“of individuals, communities, businesses, and institutions within a city to survive, adapt, and grow regardless of the kinds of chronic stresses or acute crisis they may experience.”**

The first step in addressing the risks is the need for all cities to develop a resilience strategy. However, having such a strategy at hand is not yet the norm. **Cities might lack the national support or institutional capacity for developing a resilience strategy; or they require more technical expertise to fully assess the risks of a natural disaster occurring or identify economic and social instabilities.** While there are initiatives such as the 100 Resilient Cities project or the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, there is no large-scale coordination of cities within or across Member States to share research, analysis, or policy practices. For instance, to prevent negative impacts of economic shocks on the entire urban economy, cities should ensure that there is a diverse number of industries within their city. In case one industry is destroyed or productivity is reduced, other sectors can continue to attract business and give citizens the possibility to find employment in other industries. In addition, cities should build dynamic economies that grow and foster conditions generating new ideas and innovations. Social instability and violence are often a sign of a lack of social cohesion, marginalization or disenfranchisement of populations, large migration movements, or cultural disputes. Member States need to develop guidelines to manage cities successfully amidst such crises and emergencies.

More commonly, DRR and resilience strategies look at natural shocks, their prevention, mitigation of consequences, and more sustainable and durable reconstruction of urban infrastructure, service provision, and livelihood opportunities. By 2030, climate change and natural disasters may cost cities worldwide \$314 billion each year and push 77 million urban residents into poverty. More than 10,000 people have died since 2015 due to earthquakes and tsunamis. **Floods are one of the most frequent natural disasters** with the highest costs regarding lives lost and infrastructure being destroyed. The costs of floods in coastal cities alone are projected to reach about \$1 trillion annually by 2050. With the adoption of the Sendai Framework, UNISDR set up an outline for Member States to use when designing resilient cities. The scorecard’s first level looks at the Sendai Framework’s targets and indicators with 47 questions, such as: is there a disaster plan in place, is there more than one industry established, have risks been adequately identified, among others. The second level of analysis can be used to help guide cities in becoming resilient because it suggests main areas that cities need to address in the early stages of resilience building. However, **assessing the resilience of a city is difficult, requires a high-level of technical expertise, as well as technological equipment.** Technology and knowledge transfer is still limited and developing countries face a lack of resources to, first, assess

the risks of their cities and, second, to make the necessary infrastructural as well as regulatory changes to counter such risks. Lastly, the upcoming of so-called digital cities presents new opportunities and challenges for urban actors as digital infrastructure needs to be protected in case of disaster while simultaneously information and communications technology-based solutions could help increase cities' resilience.

4. Sustainable and Inclusive Cities

Beyond the challenges that cities face from natural and man-made shocks, cities also face problems from a lack of sustainability and inclusiveness. **Cities often lack the necessary investment in sustainable aspects such as green urban spaces, which could provide necessary public spaces while contributing to preserving eco-system, and standards of living.** Additionally, sustainable cities require substantial investment in environmentally friendly housing, such as better insulated houses that require less electricity for cooling or heating. Cities may look into using local materials and vernacular architecture when building and planning new housing developments. Another aspect of sustainable urban planning is the generation and efficient consumption of energy. Installing renewable energy systems have better environmental outcomes than other forms of energy. **Cities face a dilemma of using cheap energy that impacts the environment versus clean energy that requires an upfront investment.** Another prevalent problem of rapid urbanization is high rates of pollution and water contamination negatively impacting the health of citizens. **To tackle air pollution, for instance, Member States have to look at low-emission and public transportation in cities.** Public transportation often cannot keep up with the rapid urbanization and increase in demand. Integrating new transportation comes with a high upfront cost and requires years to complete expansion. In the past, many developing states chose to expand roads rather than build public transportation systems. Cities are increasingly making use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to create sustainable housing, green space, and transportation, but PPPs require sets of rules to prove successful. Some Member States also favor PPPs for the provision of basic services such as education and health care. It is important that public authorities assert sufficient oversight to ensure that these basic services are accessible and affordable for all and do not exacerbate inequalities among citizens. However, some governments do not prioritize investment in basic infrastructure for the poorest and prefer investing in commercial expansion and building condominiums.¹⁷⁷ To address this, citizens need to be able to participate in urban planning, decision-making, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation of urban projects as UNDP fosters in its National Urban Poverty Reduction

5. Conclusion

Developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia are facing significant urban growth over the next 30 years. Sustainable urbanization decreases the probability of creating slums and enables social and economic development of Member States while

ensuring environmentally conscious policies. The current rate of urbanization puts significant pressure on Member States to mitigate the negative impact on the environment and reduce vulnerability toward disasters. Member States need to cooperate on the international, regional, and local level to find innovative policies and solutions for energy consumption and industrial activity, waste production, transportation needs, as well as demand for affordable housing, other public services and civic participation.

Further Research

In addition to the information provided in this guide, moving forward, delegates should consider questions such as: How can Member States address and reconcile rapid urbanization and environmental sustainability? What barriers exist to sustainable urban development? How can the international community help combating the negative impacts of unplanned rapid urbanization? What are the responsibilities for developed and developing states? What mechanisms could incentivize sustainable urban development? What steps could be taken to encourage greater compliance with commitments made in the New Urban Agenda? How can UNDP use its comparative advantage to help Member States with sustainable urbanization?⁴

Topic 2: Building Climate Change Resilience Through Adaptation Strategies

1. Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that by year 2030 over 100 million people could face extreme poverty if effective and inclusive climate action-driven development initiatives are not implemented. According to Article 1 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992), climate change is a change in the environment caused, in a direct or indirect manner, by human activity. Adaptation is understood as the capability of natural or human-made systems to adapt to stressful environmental conditions and mitigate possible harms while experiencing or expecting climatic threats. Nevertheless, **climate change adaptation (CCA) should not be mistaken with climate change mitigation**; mitigation refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, a major precursor of climate change. Adaptation strategies are actions taken to address climate change effects, especially in vulnerable communities where adaptation efforts must be considered in public policy formulation.

Climate change resilience relates closely to adaptation strategies and disaster risk reduction (DRR). The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) defines DRR as the process of reducing the damage caused by natural hazards. Hence, resilience occurs when communities are able to not only resist but also to recover from a disaster while implementing strategies to preserve and restore essential basic services in a time-efficient manner. **Devastating natural disasters such as massive floods, fast-moving fires, and long-lasting droughts can be attributed to climate change. That is why one of UNDP's main objectives is to build climate change resilience to confront and overcome extreme weather conditions and natural disasters.** CCA and resilience measures support poverty alleviation because they strengthen social and economic sustainable development. Moreover, poverty and climate-related issues convene in a broad spectrum of cross-cutting topics such as risk management and resilience, gender equality, community-driven policy approaches, development funding, and peace building.

2. International and Regional Framework

With UNFCCC entering into force in 1994, the first Conference of Parties (COP) was held in Berlin in 1995. The Marrakesh Accords were adopted in 2001 to guide capacity-building efforts for adaptation. In 2005, COP 11 established the Nairobi Work Programme as a mechanism to support adaptation policies and practices, particularly in LDCs and SIDs by **providing scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information about possible CCA measures..** Finally, during COP 15 the States parties to the Convention committed to the formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to **generate and share valuable national climate medium- and long-term plans.**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 70/1 of 2015 as a path of action for sustainable development, introducing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs are intrinsically related to CCA due to the cross-cutting nature of climate change. CCA prevents further damages to people's livelihood due to extreme weather conditions which affect economic stability, food security, and health conditions, and with it promotes SDG 1 on poverty reduction. Similarly, both SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation and SDG 7 on clean energy address CCA as they require measures on reducing GHG emissions. In the same way, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG 14 on life underwater, and SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems target climate-related issues, such as stimulating environmentally-sustainable productivity, protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, combating land desertification and degradation, promoting adequate chemicals and waste management, and planning for disaster risk reduction (DRR) to cultivate zero-carbon growth. Finally, SDG 13 on climate action allows UNDP to address development challenges including rising sea levels, erratic rainfall patterns, severe drought, soil erosion, and ocean acidification.

The Paris Agreement (2015) was adopted at the 21st meeting of COP to **limit the change in global temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius**. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) was adopted in 2015. It recommends **incorporating CCA into DRR measures to implement comprehensive capacity-building measures at the local and national levels**, such as setting early warning systems for hazards and upcoming disasters, adopting first response plans, and promoting preparedness culture to strengthen resilience by reducing vulnerability.

3. Funding Climate Resilience and Adaptation

In order to provide funding to adaptation strategies, the Kyoto Protocol established the Adaptation Fund (AF). The Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) supervises and manages the AF under the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties (COP), which decides on the overall policies. With the World Bank as its trustee, the AF has committed \$512 million to climate adaptation and building resilience measures since 2010, supporting 77 adaptation projects with an estimate of 5.6 million direct beneficiaries. **The AF directly finances CCA and resilience efforts, allowing implementing actors to directly receive financial transfers for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects**. While a significant part of the AF funding resources results from government and private donor contributions, **most of it is derived from sales of certified emission reduction (CER) credits that are issued every year under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects**. Countries with emission reduction or emission-limitation commitments under the Kyoto Protocol can implement projects in developing countries to earn credits, each equivalent to one ton of CO₂, to count toward their Kyoto targets. Since the 2011-2012 drop in the carbon credits market, the AF has increasingly relied on government contributions from developed countries. The UNFCCC Secretariat has expressed

concerns regarding predictable and sustainable funding for climate change action. The financial needs of CCA exceed current funding sources. In addition to the overall funding shortage, UNDP has observed a substantial gap in funding for climate adaptation projects which target women.

In addition to the AF, States parties established the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2010. Currently, this fund serves as the only multilateral financing mechanism for both the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. **The fund provides equal amounts of funding to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, with special focus on Low development Countries, Small Island Countries, and African States.** To support developing countries in their GHG emission reduction and adaptation efforts the GCF promotes and directly finances the implementation of NAPAs, NAPs, technology need assessments, and nationally appropriate mitigation actions. These funds come from public and private contributions.

4. The Role of Technology in Capacity-building for Adaptation Strategies

Building technical and functional capacities to achieve CCA is core to achieve sustainable development, especially in communities where structural poverty prevents proper investment in adaptation efforts. UNDP aims to address inequalities in technology access in countries and communities where poverty thresholds such as food security are not the main concern. UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 stresses the need to invest in emissions-reducing technologies during the process of achieving sustainable development. States working on NAPs are likely to face a lack of technical expertise in addition to a lack of technological infrastructure. Hence, the AC has worked on building technological skills within governmental institutions through the NAPs task force, which aligns technology needs assessments (TNAs) with the NAPs process.

Governments with limited access to technology also face barriers in collecting and using development data, including the outcomes of previous adaptation measures. **Partnerships for knowledge sharing and technology transfers significantly increase capacity-building for climate resilience;** in one example, the Regional Gateway for Technology Transfer and Climate Change Action in Latin America and the Caribbean (REGATTA) was established with the support of UN Environment and the Spanish government. REGATTA's main objective is to strengthen resilience capacities by promoting knowledge exchange on climate change strategies for mitigation and adaptation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. Community-based Approaches to Climate Resilience

UNDP supports projects that work toward community, country-based, and gender-responsive approaches. **Focusing on communities and countries allows UNDP and its partners to gather sufficient information about local needs.** A specific mechanism to target issues on the local level is the Community-Based Resilience

Analysis (CoBRA), which measures community resilience and needs in dialogue with community members who have previously experienced extreme climate events. Community-based adaptation (CBA) projects are crucial for mitigating the lasting effects of climate change.

Women play a crucial role in implementing adaptation strategies, even in the face of gender-related limitations such as lack of resources, limited access to education and information, restricted mobility, and limited participation in decision-making processes. Women often manage natural resources for their households, including fetching water for consumption or agricultural activities, and have direct contact with the changing environment of their communities. Mindful of this, Member States like the Maldives and Papua New Guinea have closely coordinated their NAPs with government authorities in charge of overseeing gender equality and women's empowerment in NAPs processes. Member States in the Caribbean region are strengthening adaptation for communities through the formal institutionalization of gender issues in policy planning. In spite of recent progress, multiple challenges exist when integrating gender-sensitive approaches (GSAs). The social and cultural context within the communities where GSAs might be applied must be considered well in advance of implementation. Other barriers include knowledge gaps, which prevent adaptation measures at the local, national, and regional levels.

6. Conclusion

The world faces many challenges in order to adapt to climate change-induced events, and existing gaps in resilience capacities must be acknowledged by the international community. Sustainable development is also hindered by capacity and financial gaps between developed and developing countries. CCA relates closely to the achievement of SDGs such as poverty alleviation, peace building, environmental preservation, and gender equality as it aims to build more resilient ways of overcoming climate hazards that could potentially exacerbate poverty, social unrest, gender inequality, and/or environment degradation. In recent years, UNDP and its partners have found that the most effective CCA strategies incorporate best practices from ITKP in addition to community-driven and gender-responsive approaches.

Further Research

Delegates should pay particular attention to the work of NAPs and NAPAs. Have the principle objectives of NAPs and NAPAs been effective at tackling climate adaptation issues on a global level? How can UNDP ensure that these programs and plans have a more widespread and global impact? It is also important to focus on the technical aspects of implementation plans and the gaps CCA initiatives might present. How should funding be implemented regarding climate adaptation, particularly for developing countries? How can UNDP more effectively connect local/community-based necessities with global frameworks for adaptation? How can UNDP target gender

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issues to climate adaptation taking into consideration the significant cultural differences experienced around the world?