

EVENT SNAPSHOT

People-oriented urbanization: Planning and public health working together to generate healthy urban environments



UCCRTF interventions on urban health.
1st - deployment of mobile facilities and capacity building in Marawi, Philippines on health emergency response; 2nd - distribution of equipment and supplies for COVID-19 response in Bangladesh; 3rd - capacity building of urban local bodies in Bangladesh on integrated and equitable health planning.

EVENT DETAILS

People-oriented urbanization: Planning and public health working together to generate healthy urban environments

Organized by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, World Health Organization (WHO); and UN Habitat

22 October 2020 | 8:30 - 10:00PM
Manila time | via Zoom

Opening Remarks: **Aksel Jacobsen**, State Secretary of International Development - Norway

Keynote Speakers

- Nathalie Roebbel, WHO
- Eduardo Moreno, UN Habitat

Moderator: **Jose Siri**, Wellcome Trust

Panelists:

- Jo Ivey Bouford**, International Society of Urban Health (ISUH)
- Carlos Cadena Gaitan**, Secretary of Mobility, Medellin, Colombia
- Jens Aerts**, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)
- Virinder Sharma**, Asian Development Bank (ADB)

CITIES AS CHAMPIONS OF GREEN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

As part of the Urban October celebration, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the World Health Organization, and UN-Habitat held a webinar to highlight and discuss the way the health sector can contribute to decision-making and influencing interventions to catalyze action towards healthy and sustainable cities.

Focus was on how to bring the planning and health sectors together, “bridging the gap from both sides” and strengthening capacities to (1) foster and sustain intersectoral work, from planning, design to implementation of policies; (2) localize action and engage citizens and communities; (3) track and monitor success; and (4) maximize health, environmental, and climate gains through leadership and guidance.

Virinder Sharma, Senior Urban Development Specialist (SDSC-URB), who leads the implementation of UCCRTF, was one of four panelists invited to share ADB’s experiences on addressing urban health and urban development. He highlighted that there’s a need to look beyond tools and to understand the barriers and enablers for healthy and sustainable cities by looking at the **three ‘I’s** namely:

- Institutions** and their dynamics;
- Indicators** that are anchored on an integrated and implementable framework that could help cities assess gaps, develop action plans; and monitor progress; and
- Incentives** in place to catalyse action.

URBAN CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE LESSONS

- Cities are the economic engines of countries.** At the same time, they are also the epicenter of urban issues such as poverty, lack of housing, poor sanitation, among others. Citing Eduardo Moreno—*Cities are a pharmakon—they are both the cause and the solution to the problem.*
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted three conditions in urban areas that made it challenging to contain the spread**—densely populated housing; limited public transport modes; and, people having to sustain their livelihoods.
- Health serves as both a historical and current driver to unlock new opportunities towards healthy and sustainable urbanization.** The replanning of the cities of London, New York and Ho Chi Minh were triggered by public health issues. To catalyze actions, there’s a need for closer collaboration between health and urban planning and development sectors at all levels.
- A systems approach is required to bring about effective solutions towards healthy and sustainable cities.** This should be built on the understanding of the complexities of urban areas, the existing socio-economic and health disparities and need to prioritize poor and vulnerable sectors; and the recognition of the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration and community engagement.
- Political governance and leadership are important to bring planning and health sectors together.** To address barriers and enhance convergence actions on health and well-being and sustainability, there is a need to recognize the importance of both preventative and curative health system; infrastructure (hard) and service delivery (soft); and to strengthen evidence-based decision-making from planning to implementation of interventions.

“Business as usual will not work. We need to look for more systemic and transformative change in the way we plan our cities.”
— Virinder Sharma, ADB

FURTHER INFORMATION

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UCCRTF FINANCING PARTNERS

