



NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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13570 Grove Dr., Suite 294 • Minneapolis, MN 55311
www.nmun.org • info@nmun.org • 612.353.5649



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2018 National Model United Nations Galápagos Conference (NMUN•Galápagos)! My name is Andrea Wong and I am pleased to serve as the Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). I obtained a B.A. (Honors) with specialization in English and minor in political science from the University of Ottawa in 2010. I subsequently completed an M.A. in English and a J.D. at the University of Toronto in 2013. This is my eighth year on staff at NMUN.

The topics under discussion for UN-Habitat are:

1. Management and Control of Urbanization and Tourism in Protected Areas
2. Sustainable Transportation between Urban and Rural Zones

UN-Habitat is an integral player in the UN's development agenda, striving to ensure that urbanization issues are prioritized globally. To this end, UN-Habitat collaborates with all actors, including other international organizations, state governments, local authorities, and civil society organizations to promote sustainable cities.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. I encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and to use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a [Position Paper](#) by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 December 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

On the [NMUN website](#), you will find two resources that are essential to your preparation for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions.

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#): This document explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on prewritten working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#): This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure in committee.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. I want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact info@nmun.org.

I wish you all the best in your preparations, and I look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Andrea Wong, Director

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Committee Overview

Introduction

Rapid urbanization places immense pressure on the environment, industries, and infrastructure.¹ By 2050, an estimated 70% of the global population will be living in an urban area.² If prioritized, urbanization can serve as an opportunity to further sustainable development for those who live in cities.³ However, unabated urbanization poses significant risks to the general global livelihood.⁴ Inadequate urban planning and limited housing have fed the growth of urban slums; in some cities, up to 80% of the population lives in slums.⁵ By 2030, informal urban settlements will house an estimated 3 billion people, all of whom will need access to adequate housing, infrastructure, and basic services.⁶ Obstacles to establishing adequate housing include affordability, sustainability, and limited capacity for governance.⁷

The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly established the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (UNHHSF) on 1 January 1975 with the purpose of addressing urbanization issues.⁸ Under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNHHSF was tasked with assisting country-level human settlement programs through the delivery of fiscal and technical assistance.⁹ The first UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I), which took place in 1976 in Vancouver, Canada, was the first global conference to acknowledge the pervasive challenges of urbanization.¹⁰ The conference adopted the *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements* (1976), which established a global framework for Member States to respond to rapid urbanization and recommended the creation of the UN Commission on Human Settlements and its Secretariat, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).¹¹ In 1996, the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was convened to evaluate global progress since Habitat I and to outline goals for the new millennium.¹² The resulting *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements* and *Habitat Agenda* (1996) established over 100 commitments and 600 recommendations pertaining to the provision of adequate human shelter and sustainable human settlements.¹³ The *Habitat Agenda* outlined a plan of action for ensuring the creation of sustainable cities with adequate housing, employment, water, sanitation, and other basic public services.¹⁴

The UN system significantly reformed its approach to human settlements after the adoption of the *UN Millennium Declaration* (2000).¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 26 February 2002 on “Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements” consolidated UNHHSF, the UN Commission on Human Settlements, and Habitat into the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).¹⁶ Thereafter, UN-Habitat emerged as an integral player in the UN system’s development agenda.¹⁷ Today, UN-Habitat collaborates with governments, the private sector, and many intergovernmental and civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure that urbanization issues are prioritized globally.¹⁸ UN-Habitat also plays an important role in implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

¹ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

² UN DESA, *Cities for a sustainable future*, 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ UN-Habitat, *Up for slum dwellers – transforming a billion lives campaign unveiled in Europe*, 2016.

⁷ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

⁸ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

¹⁷ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

¹⁸ Ibid.

(2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁹ The international community continues to advance its approach to urban development in light of emerging challenges. The UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17-20 October 2016.²⁰ Conference participants adopted the *New Urban Agenda* (2016), which will serve as a framework for global stakeholders to achieve sustainable and equitable urban development.²¹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

As UN-Habitat’s decision-making body, the Governing Council meets every two years to establish strategic policy objectives for the organization and to approve its programs and budget.²² The Governing Council consists of 58 Member States elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) according to regional distribution.²³ In addition to its regular biennial meetings, the Governing Council hosts special sessions as needed.²⁴ Governing Council sessions are open to non-Member States, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other UN entities without voting privileges.²⁵

The UN-Habitat Secretariat ensures the implementation of the Governing Council’s decisions via strategies, programs, and initiatives.²⁶ The Secretariat serves as the executive body of UN-Habitat and is based in Nairobi, Kenya.²⁷ The Secretariat includes the Office of the Executive Director, the Project Office, the Office of Management, and External Relations.²⁸ The Executive Director plays an integral role in shaping the UN-Habitat agenda and priorities, thereby ensuring adherence to the organizational mandate.²⁹ Regional offices also assist with project implementation, including the Regional Office for Africa (ROAf), the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC).³⁰ The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), which is comprised of ambassadors or foreign envoys assigned to UN-Habitat, serves to ensure that the objectives of the Governing Council are carried out by the Secretariat.³¹ The CPR has a supervisory role and represents the Governing Council at the Secretariat to address any potential issues that arise between meetings of the Governing Council.³²

UN-Habitat reports to the General Assembly through ECOSOC regarding all fiscal matters and organizational activities.³³ UN-Habitat is primarily funded through regular budget allocations approved by the General Assembly and voluntary contributions from Member States and intergovernmental donors.³⁴ UN-Habitat also receives donations from other UN entities, local authorities, and the private sector to fund country-level technical projects and specific policy work.³⁵

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The General Assembly has mandated UN-Habitat to “promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.”³⁶ UN-Habitat also serves as a key partner in implementing

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat at a glance*; UN-Habitat, *26th session of the Governing Council*.

²³ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*; UN-Habitat, *Members*.

²⁴ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ UN-Habitat, *Our Secretariat*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

³⁰ UN-Habitat, *Our Secretariat*.

³¹ UN-Habitat, *Committee of Permanent Representatives*.

³² Ibid.

³³ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

³⁴ UN-Habitat, *Our Donors*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ UN-Habitat, *Mandate*.

the *Habitat Agenda* and the *New Urban Agenda*.³⁷ UN-Habitat advocates for well-planned and sustainably developed settlement areas to ensure the provision of basic goods and services.³⁸ While it is able to establish initiatives and action plans to shape policy, UN-Habitat does not have the authority to enforce project implementation in Member States.³⁹ Despite its limitations, UN-Habitat has played an integral role in international development by providing partnership programs and targeted guidance to policymakers.⁴⁰

UN-Habitat's current mandate builds upon General Assembly resolutions 3327 (XXIX) (1974) and 32/162 (1977), which created UN-Habitat's predecessors: UNHHSF, the UN Commission on Human Settlements, and Habitat.⁴¹ UN-Habitat was formally established by General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 26 February 2002 on "Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements."⁴² On 22 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/210 on "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)," which strengthened the governance of UN-Habitat and reinforced its central role in implementing 2030 Agenda.⁴³

Foundational documents that showcase the increasing importance of sustainable urbanization and ensuring adequate housing for all include the Vancouver Declaration, the Istanbul Declaration, the *Habitat Agenda*, and the *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium* (2001).⁴⁴ UN-Habitat was influenced by the *Millennium Declaration*, which established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁴⁵ Target 7.D aimed to improve the lives of over 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020.⁴⁶ The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs also advance the urbanization agenda.⁴⁷ SDG 11 outlines the goal of making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.⁴⁸ SDG 17 stipulates the goal of strengthening and revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development.⁴⁹ The *New Urban Agenda* will further shape UN-Habitat's work in years to come.⁵⁰

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UN-Habitat's *Strategic Plan (2014-2019)* outlines seven areas: urban legislation, land, and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; and research and capacity development.⁵¹ UN-Habitat considers partnerships a vital component of promoting inclusive human settlement developments; it strives to include all parts of society in its work on urbanization.⁵² Habitat Agenda Partners (HAP) include various entities who work with UN-Habitat to promote sustainable urbanization and human settlements.⁵³ UN-Habitat has initiated thematic networks with various HAPs to enable multi-level urbanization cooperation.⁵⁴

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002; UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat (A/71/1006)*, 2017.

³⁸ UN-Habitat, *Mandate*.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Establishment of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (A/RES/3327(XXIX))*, 1974; UN General Assembly, *Institutional arrangements for international co-operation in the field of human settlements (A/RES/32/162)*, 1977.

⁴² UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/70/210)*, 2015.

⁴⁴ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ UN DPI, *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, 2016.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

⁵¹ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, pp. 9-12.

⁵² UN-Habitat, *Our Partners*.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

UN-Habitat is currently active in more than 70 countries worldwide; key thematic areas of work include urban policy advice at the government level, addressing the proliferation of slums, housing issues, and post-disaster recovery programs.⁵⁵ The Africa Urban Agenda Programme is one of many programs in which UN-Habitat is actively engaged.⁵⁶ The Africa Urban Agenda Programme works to establish people-centered processes that enhance local accountability, promoting ownership among citizens for the sustainable development of Africa as a whole.⁵⁷ In 2016, UN-Habitat partnered with a team of four urban planning offices on research pertaining to urban regeneration in Mexico.⁵⁸ The Urban Planning and Design Lab of UN-Habitat and the UN-Habitat Office in Mexico are working together with a team of four urban planning offices to initiate a “spatial, economic, social and financial pilot project” for the regeneration of affordable housing in Mexico City.⁵⁹

The 26th session of the Governing Council took place from 8-12 May 2017; the theme was “opportunities for the effective implementation of the *New Urban Agenda*.”⁶⁰ The Governing Council adopted nine resolutions on topics ranging from “enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response” to “promoting safety in cities and human settlements.”⁶¹ The Governing Council also adopted a resolution revising the *Strategic Plan (2014-2019)* and approving the proposed work programme and budget for 2018-2019.⁶²

As mandated by the *New Urban Agenda*, the UN Secretary-General convened the High Level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat.⁶³ The Panel’s report, which was finalized in August 2017, observed that “while UN-Habitat faces significant constraints and has critical weaknesses, its role is more important now than ever.”⁶⁴ The Panel made numerous recommendations for strengthening UN-Habitat, including universal membership, exploration of new financing strategies, and recommitment to its role as a normative body.⁶⁵ On 5 and 6 September 2017, a high-level meeting of the General Assembly will take place to discuss the assessment of UN-Habitat and the implementation of the *New Urban Agenda*.⁶⁶

Conclusion

UN-Habitat advances global urbanization issues in accordance with the principles of efficiency and sustainability.⁶⁷ As the primary international organization working to ensure that cities provide safe and adequate housing for all, UN-Habitat holds a unique position within the global arena.⁶⁸ UN-Habitat provides a platform for international collaboration to ensure sustainable urbanization. Despite substantial progress, much work remains to be done. UN-Habitat is poised to play a vital role in the realization of the SDGs and the *New Urban Agenda*.

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This resolution is foundational for understanding the role and functions of UN-Habitat and an integral source for delegates as it outlines the history and initial establishment of the committee.

⁵⁵ UN-Habitat, *Africa Urban Agenda Programme*.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat and partners in urban regeneration in Mexico City*, 2016.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ UN-Habitat, *26th session of the Governing Council*.

⁶¹ UN-Habitat, *Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme: Twenty-sixth session (A/72/8)*, 2017.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UN Secretary-General, *Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance Effectiveness of UN-Habitat after the Adoption of the New Urban Agenda*, 2017.

⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat (A/71/1006)*, 2017, p. 31.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁶ UN Office of the President of the General Assembly, *High Level Meeting on New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat*, 2017.

⁶⁷ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁶⁸ UN-Habitat, *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning discussed at ISOCARP Congress*, 2016.

Additionally, it provides a comprehensive overview of the mandate and structure of the organization and serves as a useful starting point for delegates in understanding the primary mission and aim of UN-Habitat. This document is responsible for establishing UN-Habitat in its current form.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Goals & strategies of UN-Habitat* [Website]. Retrieved 30 August 2017 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/goals-and-strategies-of-un-habitat/>

This website can be utilized as a guide to understanding the immediate goals and visions of UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat considers city planning, governance, and infrastructural development as highly important and directly related to ensuring adequate housing for all. This website discusses how the objectives of the committee have been framed historically by documents such as the Habitat Agenda and provides insight into how the goals of the committee are currently shaped by the Strategic Plan.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *History, mandate & role in the UN System* [Website]. Retrieved 30 August 2017 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/history-mandate-role-in-the-un-system/>

This source can be utilized as a guide to understand the scope and mandate of the committee. It provides a historical perspective of urbanization issues and how the international community has addressed them over time. In addition, this source discusses significant international developments that have shaped the global agenda on sustainable urban development.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*. Retrieved 16 July 2017 from: <http://unhabitat.org/un-habitats-strategic-plan-2014-2019/>

This report is essential for delegates to understand the current priorities of UN-Habitat. The Strategic Plan is broken down into three components: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategy implementation; it outlines current urbanization obstacles and an action plan to overcome these obstacles. Delegates should utilize this resource as a tool for framing their respective country policies to address the committee topics within the mandate of the committee.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *UN-Habitat at a glance* [Website]. Retrieved 16 July 2017 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/un-habitat-at-a-glance/>

This website is particularly useful for gaining insight into the overall function of the committee. It provides valuable background into the committee history, mandate, and overall role within the UN system. Additionally, this website discusses UN-Habitat funding and the outlines the main goals and visions of the organization.

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I. Management and Control of Urbanization and Tourism in Protected Areas

*“Truly sustainable development requires policies and economic incentives, practical tools and safeguards to ensure that protected areas sustain critical ecosystem services and promote resilience and human well-being.... [We] can set the pathway to that future if we can strengthen the role of protected areas in defining and delivering on the world’s Sustainable Development Goals, and by embedding protected areas in the procedures that define society’s development planning and underpin economic decision-making.”*⁶⁹

Introduction

The profound dependence of human health, well-being, and socioeconomic development on biological resources has fueled widespread recognition of the importance of biological diversity, or biodiversity, which refers to the varied millions of species on Earth and the ecosystems they inhabit.⁷⁰ Efforts to protect biodiversity have centered on the creation of protected areas: “clearly defined geographical space[s], recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”⁷¹ In addition to furthering biodiversity conservation, protected areas contribute to sustainable development and offer essential ecosystem services, “such as food, water, disease management, climate regulation, spiritual fulfillment, and aesthetic enjoyment.”⁷² Despite global support for their establishment and maintenance, protected areas remain vulnerable to a multitude of threats from human activities, including urbanization and tourism, which can cause harm to protected areas through damage to ecosystems, species, and heritage.⁷³ Mandated to secure a better urban future for all, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) plays a key role in promoting sustainable urbanization and tourism—both of which, through proper management and control, can benefit from protected areas without jeopardizing their primary purpose of conservation.⁷⁴

International and Regional Framework

The 1992 United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development resulted in *Agenda 21*, a comprehensive action plan for sustainable development.⁷⁵ Chapter 15 focuses on the conservation of biodiversity and emphasizes the need for “urgent and decisive action ... to conserve and maintain genes, species and ecosystems, with a view to the sustainable management and use of biological resources.”⁷⁶ It recommends that governments take necessary action to conserve ecosystems and natural habitats, including through “the reinforcement of terrestrial, marine and aquatic protected area systems,” and to “promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas adjacent to protected areas.”⁷⁷ Establishment of protected areas is also recommended in other chapters of *Agenda 21* as a strategy to safeguard fragile ecosystems and freshwater resources.⁷⁸ *Agenda 21* further recognizes the value of “environmentally sound leisure and tourism activities,” making use of national parks and other protected areas, to raising awareness and promoting education for sustainable development.⁷⁹

The *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) (1992), which was opened for signature at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, aims to ensure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.⁸⁰ The CBD is also the chief international legal instrument governing protected areas.⁸¹ Article 8 of the CBD encourages parties to “establish a system of protected areas,” including “guidelines for the selection, establishment and management of

⁶⁹ World Bank, *Keynote Address by Paula Caballero: Integrating Conservation and Development for Lasting Impact*, 2014.

⁷⁰ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *History of the Convention*; WHO & Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health*, 2015, p. 28.

⁷¹ IUCN, *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*, 2008, p. 8.

⁷² Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*, 2005, p. 1.

⁷³ Mathur et al., *Managing Threats*, 2015, pp. 476-477, 492.

⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *Report of the High-level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat (A/71/1006)*, 2017.

⁷⁵ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 15.3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 15.5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, chs. 11, 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 36.10.

⁸⁰ Secretariat of the CBD, *Introduction*.

⁸¹ Secretariat of the CBD, *Protected areas and the CBD*.

protected areas.⁸² In 2010, the parties to the CBD adopted the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020*, which includes the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Target 11 is to ensure that, by 2020, 17% of terrestrial and inland water, as well as 10% of coastal and marine areas, is conserved through the establishment of protected areas and other conservation measures.⁸³

In 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development adopted *The Future We Want*, an outcome document expressing renewed commitment to sustainable development that was later endorsed by the General Assembly.⁸⁴ It reaffirms the importance of environmental protection, “area-based conservation measures,” and “sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.”⁸⁵ It calls for support for sustainable tourism activities in developing countries, emphasizing that “well-designed and managed tourism” can contribute to sustainable development.⁸⁶ It also underscores the ability of well-planned cities to “promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies,” and the need to conserve “the natural and cultural heritage of human settlements.”⁸⁷

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that collectively represent a plan for poverty eradication and environmental protection.⁸⁸ The SDGs recognize protected areas, urbanization, and tourism as essential components of sustainable development.⁸⁹ SDG 11 is to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”⁹⁰ Its fourth target is to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage,” as measured by the “total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage”; its sixth target is to reduce the environmental impact of cities.⁹¹ The implementation of policies to support sustainable tourism is included as the ninth target of SDG 8, which is to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”⁹²

At the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016, world leaders worked to achieve their vision of sustainable cities that have minimal impact on the environment, practice sustainable consumption and production patterns, and actively conserve their ecosystems and biodiversity.⁹³ The ensuing *New Urban Agenda* (2016) is premised upon three “interlinked principles”: eradicating all forms of poverty and ensuring equal rights for all, promoting sustainable growth of urban economies; and ensuring environmental sustainability.⁹⁴ It notes the possibility for urbanization to be an “engine of sustained and inclusive economic growth, social and cultural development, and environmental protection, and of its potential contributions to the achievement of transformative and sustainable development.”⁹⁵

Role of the International System

As set out in its *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, UN-Habitat strives to realize “economically productive, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable cities,” and it therefore consistently prioritizes environmental protection throughout its work to promote sustainable urban development.⁹⁶ UN-Habitat supports the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, which prominently feature urbanization and cities as “a string that connects all other goals together”; it is a custodian agency for eight of the indicators under SDG 11.⁹⁷ UN-Habitat also lends its expertise to individual programs and projects that focus on the relationship between urban development and the

⁸² *Convention on Biological Diversity*, 1992, art. 8.

⁸³ Secretariat of the CBD, *Aichi Biodiversity Targets*.

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), 2012.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, paras. 61, 177.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 130.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 134.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.

⁸⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11*, 2017.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015.

⁹³ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda* (A/RES/71/256), 2016, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁶ UN-Habitat, *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, 2013, p. 8.

⁹⁷ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat for the Sustainable Development Goals*.

environment. In Jordan, the Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Tourism Development Project, managed by the UN Development Programme and slated to run from 2014 to 2018, is promoting biodiversity as “a fundamental part of national planning and development efforts.”⁹⁸ UN-Habitat will assist in reviewing existing frameworks and implementing land use planning as a method of “reducing the impact of tourism on biodiversity.”⁹⁹

Biodiversity and environmental protection are important priorities throughout the UN system.¹⁰⁰ In 2010, the General Assembly declared 2011-2020 as the UN Decade on Biodiversity, in an effort to assist in the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.¹⁰¹ The Human Rights Council, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, has recently considered biodiversity from a human rights perspective. In January 2017, the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment submitted a report to the Human Rights Council on “the human rights obligations relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.”¹⁰² UNDP has adopted the *Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-2020* to guide its work with governments and other stakeholders.¹⁰³ The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which leads the UN’s environmental agenda and focuses on ecosystem management as one of its seven main subprograms, has previously collaborated with UN-Habitat to disseminate information on urban biodiversity.¹⁰⁴

Recent UN system efforts related to tourism have benefitted from General Assembly resolution 70/193 (2015), which proclaimed 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism.¹⁰⁵ The proclamation was followed by a 2016 resolution on the “promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection,” which reaffirmed sustainable tourism as fundamental to sustainable economic growth, job creation, environmental protection, and poverty reduction.¹⁰⁶ The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), a specialized agency of the UN, has facilitated the organization and implementation of the International Year.¹⁰⁷ More generally, UNWTO promotes “responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism” as a driver of “economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability.”¹⁰⁸ In 1999, UNWTO adopted the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, which comprises 10 principles underlying a sustainable model of tourism.¹⁰⁹

Outside of the UN system, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is at the forefront of efforts to protect the environment.¹¹⁰ Comprised of both government and civil society organizations, IUCN is “the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network.”¹¹¹ IUCN is a “global leader in protected area policy, science and management practice,” and it was responsible for establishing the system for categories and governance types of protected areas.¹¹² IUCN supports several voluntary groups through its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), including the TAPAS Group, which is a collaborative network of over 350 members from government agencies, academic, private sector entities, and civil society “committed to promoting sustainable tourism in protected areas.”¹¹³

⁹⁸ UNDP & UN-Habitat, *Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Tourism Development in Jordan: Comprehensive Technical Final Report*, 2014, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ UN General Assembly, *Convention on Biological Diversity (A/RES/65/161)*, 2010.

¹⁰² UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (A/HRC/34/49)*, 2017.

¹⁰³ UNDP, *UNDP’s Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-2020*, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ UNEP, *Urban Biodiversity*.

¹⁰⁵ UN General Assembly, *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 (A/RES/70/193)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection (A/RES/71/240)*, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017 (A/RES/70/193)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ UNWTO, *Who we are*.

¹⁰⁹ UNWTO, *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*.

¹¹⁰ IUCN, *About*, 2017.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² IUCN, *Protected Areas: Our Work*, 2017.

¹¹³ UNWTO, *The BPG Initiative – Advancing Protected Area Tourism*, 2016.

Managing Urbanization

In 2015, almost 4 billion people, or 54% of the world’s population, lived in urban areas.¹¹⁴ By 2030, that figure is expected to rise to 5 billion.¹¹⁵ The growth and ubiquity of urban areas has created close proximity between cities and many protected areas; IUCN uses the term “urban protected areas” to refer to protected areas that are “in or at the edge of larger population centers.”¹¹⁶ There are various positive aspects to the relationship between urbanization and protected areas. Many cities benefit from protected areas; for example, protected areas provide clean water to 33 of the world’s 105 largest cities.¹¹⁷ The centralization of many people in one place can help to maintain the state of protected areas outside of city limits; it can also “result in economies of scale in such areas as energy, housing, transportation and solid waste reuse and recycling.”¹¹⁸

However, cities frequently create negative effects for protected areas. As cities face increasing pressure from growing populations, urbanization often threatens protected areas.¹¹⁹ Urban sprawl and peri-urbanization, which result in uncontrolled city expansion beyond formal boundaries, can physically infringe on protected areas and “destroy the very natural capital that would provide resilience to brace against resource scarcity and climate change.”¹²⁰ Without proper management, the challenges inherent to cities inevitably affect neighboring protected areas, including air and water pollution, solid waste management and disposal, and depletion of natural resources.¹²¹ Cities are sources of noise, light, crime, and littering that can affect protected areas; city residents may also inadvertently introduce invasive species or instigate human-wildlife conflict.¹²² Moreover, proximity is not required for urbanization to have a negative impact on protected areas. Cities require a large amount of land to provide required resources and facilitate waste disposal, resulting in an enormous “ecological footprint” that affects an area much larger than the city itself and “contributes significantly to biodiversity loss, both locally and at the global level.”¹²³ For example, a city may affect bird species by disturbing a migratory flight path; alternatively, demands for certain foods, such as seafood, may affect faraway fish stocks and lead to overfishing.¹²⁴

Cities are ultimately responsible for “remedy[ing] their own negative effects on the natural environment through development and implementation of adequate solutions.”¹²⁵ Through careful urban planning and regulations on land use, cities can limit their impact on ecosystems and protected areas.¹²⁶ One approach to changing the interaction between cities and protected areas is mainstreaming biodiversity: a process of “embedding biodiversity considerations in . . . policies, strategies, and practices that engage key public and private sector actors.”¹²⁷ For instance, cities may devise policy and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable land use or provide incentives for actors to change damaging production practices.¹²⁸ Yet the success of this approach requires awareness, funding, resources, and support that may not be readily available.¹²⁹ Pre-existing barriers may include lack of political will or commitment; subsidies for activities that are harmful to the environment; lack of information or knowledge concerning the values and benefits of protected areas; and lack of financial, technical, or human capacity.¹³⁰

¹¹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 13.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Trzyna, *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*, 2014, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ Ervin et al., *Protected Areas for the 21st Century: Lessons from UNDP/GEF’s Portfolio*, 2010, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Trzyna, *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*, 2014, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*; UN-Habitat, *Greener Cities Partnership (UN-Habitat and UN Environment)*.

¹²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 13; Trzyna, *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*, 2014, p. 6.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ UNEP & UN-Habitat, *Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Role of Cities*, 2005.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report 2016*, 2016, p. 92.

¹²⁶ UNEP & UN-Habitat, *Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Role of Cities*, 2005.

¹²⁷ Global Environment Facility, *Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Practice: A Review of GEF Experience*, 2016, p. 4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ UNEP & UN-Habitat, *Ecosystems and Biodiversity: The Role of Cities*, 2005.

¹³⁰ Mathur, *Managing Threats*, 2015, p. 480; Global Environment Facility, *Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Practice: A Review of GEF Experience*, 2016.

Promoting Sustainable Tourism

As “one of the world’s fastest growing industries,” tourism has created “increasing stress on fragile ecosystems,” including in protected areas.¹³¹ According to UNWTO, “tourism in protected areas will continue to grow by 3.3% annually through 2030.”¹³² Tourists are drawn to “vulnerable natural and cultural sites,” which may be damaged by frequent visitors.¹³³ Transportation infrastructure designed for tourists, such as roads and tracks, “often has very significant impacts on protected areas,” including habitat fragmentation and wildlife disruption.¹³⁴ Yet tourism also produces too many benefits to disregard. Protected areas in particular can generate significant revenue through tourism, particularly for developing countries, which are home to the largest share of global biodiversity.¹³⁵ Tourism in protected areas creates employment opportunities and economic benefits; it supports the livelihoods of local communities and indigenous people.¹³⁶ It raises awareness and facilitates education for sustainable development by offering tourists “opportunities to learn about nature and sustainability,” as well as biodiversity.¹³⁷ Due to their accessibility, urban protected areas are often highly attractive to tourists; they also “add to the tourist appeal of the nearby town or city.”¹³⁸

If properly managed, tourism is not necessarily incompatible with the conservation goals of protected areas.¹³⁹ Certain models of sustainable tourism have proven effective; for example, ecotourism, which focuses on “the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas,” incorporates educational aspects and minimizes environmental impacts.¹⁴⁰ As ecotourism is generally organized by small businesses, it benefits local communities and management authorities, while promoting “conservation of natural and cultural assets, among both locals and tourists.”¹⁴¹ Strategies for promoting such models are highlighted in *The Future We Want*, which recommends “creating small and medium-sized enterprises and facilitating access to finance, including through microcredit initiatives for the poor, indigenous peoples and local communities in areas with high ecotourism potential.”¹⁴² UNEP, UNWTO, and IUCN have jointly published guidelines for planning and management of sustainable tourism in protected areas; similarly, the Secretariat of the CBD has published guidelines on biodiversity and tourism development.¹⁴³ Both publications highlight the potential of a mutually beneficial relationship between sustainable tourism and environmental protection.¹⁴⁴ Common themes include the need to establish an overarching vision or plan, identify concrete objectives for implementation, and involve stakeholders at all levels through consultative processes.¹⁴⁵ Sustainable tourism further requires support from “appropriate guidelines and regulations, in accordance with national priorities and legislation.”¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The Earth is in crisis, as biodiversity faces greater threats from human activities than ever before.¹⁴⁷ The international response to biodiversity conservation continues to feature the establishment of protected areas, which represent “one of the most efficient and effective strategies available for simultaneously addressing the global challenges of alleviating poverty, adapting to and mitigating climate change, and maintaining key ecosystem

¹³¹ CBD, *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*, 2004, p. 1.

¹³² IUCN, *Protected Planet Report 2016*, 2016, p. 12.

¹³³ Mathur, *Managing Threats*, 2015, p. 476.

¹³⁴ Eagles et al., *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*, 2002, p. 71.

¹³⁵ Pabon-Zamora et al., *Protected Areas and Human Well-being*, 2008, p. 67; Ervin et al., *Protected Areas for the 21st Century: Lessons from UNDP/GEF’s Portfolio*, 2010, p. 6.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³⁷ Trzyna, *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*, 2014, p. 7.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ CBD, *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*, 2004.

¹⁴⁰ UNWTO, *Ecotourism and protected areas*.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, para. 131.

¹⁴³ Eagles et al., *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*, 2002; Secretariat of the CBD, *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development*, 2004.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, para. 131.

¹⁴⁷ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *History of the Convention*.

services.¹⁴⁸ Urbanization and tourism may be characterized as destructive processes that threaten protected areas; however, effective management and control of urbanization and tourism may allow for both conservation and sustainable use of protected areas.¹⁴⁹ UN-Habitat is ideally positioned to guide cities towards sustainable models of urbanization and tourism that promote development without endangering ecosystems and natural resources in protected areas.

Further Research

How can UN-Habitat address barriers to biodiversity mainstreaming in urban policies? How can UN-Habitat promote sustainable tourism in relation to urban protected areas? What is the role of raising awareness and promoting education for sustainable development in safeguarding protected areas? How can greater civil society involvement contribute to sustainable urbanization and tourism?

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http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/biodiversity/PA_21Century.pdf

Protected areas are subject to evolving expectations that are contributing to “a new paradigm that views protected areas as part of a planetary life support system.” This report features eight themes that characterize protected area management within the context of this new paradigm. Case studies throughout serve as examples of best practices and successful UNDP projects relating to protected areas.

International Union for Conservation of Nature. (2017). *Protected Planet Report 2016*. Retrieved 20 August 2017 from:

https://wdpa.s3.amazonaws.com/Protected_Planet_Reports/2445%20Global%20Protected%20Planet%202016_WEB.pdf

The 2016 edition of the Protected Planet Report focuses on the contribution of protected areas to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs. It highlights the benefits of protected areas, as well as their contribution to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Delegates will benefit from the comprehensive overview of protected areas and the examples of nature-based solutions to challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, and food insecurity.

Mathur, V., et al. (2015). Managing Threats. In G. Worboys et al. (Eds.), *Protected Area Governance and Management* (pp. 473-494). Canberra, Australia: ANU Press. Retrieved 15 August 2017 from: <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p312491/pdf/book.pdf?referer=372>

As part of a longer publication on the management of protected areas, this chapter reviews the most common threats to protected areas and the underlying causes thereof. Delegates will find it valuable to have a full understanding of the myriad threats facing protected areas; this context will be helpful for determining the most effective approaches to management and control of urbanization and tourism specifically.

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2004). *Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Management*. Retrieved 28 August 2017 from: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/tou-gdl-en.pdf>

Careful management and planning can ensure that tourism does not threaten protected areas. The Secretariat of the CBD has produced a set of guidelines that “aim at making tourism and biodiversity more mutually supportive.” As set out in the guidelines, delegates are encouraged to consider models of sustainable tourism that are compatible with protecting biodiversity and sustainable use.

¹⁴⁸ Ervin et al., *Protected Areas for the 21st Century: Lessons from UNDP/GEF's Portfolio*, 2010, p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ Trzyna, *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*, 2014.

Trzyna, T. (2014). *Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines*. International Union for Conservation of Nature. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from:

<https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-022.pdf>

Urban protected areas have special significance; they also face specific challenges. This publication explains the importance of urban protected areas and suggests approaches for their defense. Case studies are provided as examples of urban protected areas around the world. Part 3 sets out 30 guidelines for safeguarding urban protected areas; these are excellent models for best practices and may assist delegates in formulating policy statements.

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II. Sustainable Transportation between Urban and Rural Zones

*“Global trade depends on the world’s roads, rails, waterways and flight paths. The transport sector itself is a huge source of jobs and an engine of economic growth. Beyond economics, there is a human side. We should all be concerned about people who do not have the access they deserve. Sustainable transport is out of reach for too many rural communities. Millions of persons with disabilities cannot use public transportation because it is inaccessible. ... Sustainable transport has to answer to the needs of those who have the least. When it does, we can bridge more than physical distances—we can come closer as one human family.”*¹⁵⁰

Introduction

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) works to ensure access to sustainable transportation, which refers to “the provision of services and infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods—advancing economic and social development to benefit today’s and future generations—in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient, and resilient, while minimizing carbon and other emissions and environmental impacts.”¹⁵¹ Sustainable transportation is essential for urban development, as it improves urban mobility and connectivity between urban and rural zones.¹⁵² It allows rural communities “better access to services” available in urban areas, such as healthcare and education, and facilitates “increased political and social participation.”¹⁵³ It can extend “market chains and connect rural producers to the wider market, enabling participation in the national and regional economy” and bringing their products to markets at competitive prices.¹⁵⁴ Sustainable transportation between urban and rural zones thus creates more equitable access to the benefits of urbanization, and it is vital to UN-Habitat’s vision of “economically productive, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable cities.”¹⁵⁵

International and Regional Framework

Sustainable transportation and urban-rural connectivity are key components of frameworks for sustainable development. The relationship between transportation and sustainable development was first acknowledged at the 1992 United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development and in its outcome document, *Agenda 21*.¹⁵⁶ Chapter 7 of *Agenda 21*, which focuses on promoting sustainable human settlement development, includes a recommendation that all countries should promote “efficient and environmentally sound” urban transportation, with special attention to high-occupancy public transportation and non-motorized modes of transportation.¹⁵⁷ Adopted in 2012 by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want* similarly recognizes the centrality of transportation and mobility to sustainable development.¹⁵⁸ Sustainable transportation supports economic growth and the “efficient movement of people and goods,” which in turn improves social equity, health, and resilience.¹⁵⁹ In relation to urban-rural connectivity, sustainable transportation strengthens “urban-rural linkages” and increases productivity of rural areas.¹⁶⁰

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015, highlights the importance of urbanization and urban-rural connectivity to sustainable development.¹⁶¹ Approximately one third of the 231 indicators used to measure progress towards the SDGs have an “urban component” that applies at a local level and has a “clear impact on cities and human settlements.”¹⁶² The 2030 Agenda also features a goal that is dedicated specifically to cities: SDG 11 is to “make

¹⁵⁰ UN Secretary-General, *Remarks at opening session of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference: Ban Ki-moon*, 2016.

¹⁵¹ High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 7.

¹⁵² UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵³ Avery et al., *Rural-Urban Connectivity in Achieving Sustainable Regional Development*, 2017, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Avery et al., *Rural-Urban Connectivity in Achieving Sustainable Regional Development*, 2017, p. 3; UN-Habitat, *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, 2013, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ UN DESA, *Sustainable transport*; UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 7.52.

¹⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012, para. 132.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁶² UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat for the Sustainable Development Goals*.

cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”¹⁶³ Target 11.a is to “support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning,” as measured by the proportion of people living in cities with urban and regional development plans.¹⁶⁴

The 2030 Agenda further highlights the importance of sustainable transportation. Target 11.2 is to enable universal access to “safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems,” especially public transport, and with “special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.”¹⁶⁵ Other targets related to transportation include 3.6 on reducing deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents, 7.3 on improving energy efficiency, and 12.c on phasing out harmful fossil fuel subsidies.¹⁶⁶ Beyond links to specific targets, sustainable transportation “plays a vital role in contributing to all SDGs.”¹⁶⁷ For example, the transportation sector is currently “responsible for one quarter of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions worldwide,” which contributes significantly to global warming and must be addressed in efforts to achieve SDG 13 on combating climate change.¹⁶⁸

In October 2016, world leaders at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) adopted the *New Urban Agenda*, a forward-looking blueprint for a sustainable approach to urbanization and city management.¹⁶⁹ The *New Urban Agenda* includes a commitment to “encouraging urban-rural interactions and connectivity by strengthening sustainable transport and mobility, and technology and communications networks and infrastructure” to achieve “enhanced productivity, social, economic and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability.”¹⁷⁰ The *New Urban Agenda* also includes many commitments related to enhancing access to transportation, including implementing “innovative transport technologies”; increasing sustainable infrastructure for public transportation, walking, and cycling; developing measures to finance transportation infrastructure and systems; and improving “connectivity between urban, peri-urban and rural areas” through coordinated “transport and land-use planning.”¹⁷¹

In November 2016, the first UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.¹⁷² Participants included governments, intergovernmental organizations, development banks, private sector entities, and civil society organizations.¹⁷³ The resulting *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations* (2016) summarizes important conclusions and concerns expressed during conference deliberations.¹⁷⁴ Contained in paragraph 12 of the Ashgabat Statement is a commitment to “leave no one behind”: participants pledged to support communities in rural areas by developing transportation infrastructure to “enable access to economic and social activities and opportunities in cities and towns” and to “unleash productivity and competitiveness of rural entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers.”¹⁷⁵

Role of the International System

UN-Habitat’s commitment to sustainable transportation is set out in its *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, which establishes a goal of “well-planned, well-governed and efficient cities” with basic services that include energy and transportation.¹⁷⁶ The strategic plan also includes a list of numerous characteristics of modern cities that require a response from UN-Habitat; among these is declining urban density in developed countries, which is creating “negative impacts on urban-rural environments and disadvantaging those without either private vehicles or access to

¹⁶³ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11*, 2017.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ UN-Habitat et al., *Analysis of the transport relevance of each of the 17 SDGs*, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ UN DESA, *Sustainable transport*.

¹⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 20-21.

¹⁷² UN DESA, *Participants endorse “Ashgabat Statement” as first-ever UN conference on sustainable transport ends*, 2016.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations*, 2016.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 23.

¹⁷⁶ UN-Habitat, *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*, 2013, p. 8.

public transport.¹⁷⁷ To support SDG 11, and specifically target 11.a, UN-Habitat is cooperating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and the UN Centre for Regional Development to implement national urban policies in over 40 countries that promote links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.¹⁷⁸

UN-Habitat works to address the challenge of urban mobility by providing national and subnational governments with information, training, and technical assistance in devising “sustainable urban mobility plans and investment strategies.”¹⁷⁹ UN-Habitat also participates in diverse partnerships and projects that incorporate sustainable transportation. For example, UN-Habitat collaborates with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on the Greener Cities Partnership, which promotes “environmental sustainability in urban development” and mainstreaming of “environmental considerations into urban policy making.”¹⁸⁰ Sustainable transportation constitutes one of the partnership’s core priorities.¹⁸¹ While UN-Habitat focuses on land-use and transport planning, UNEP promotes fuels and vehicles that are environmentally friendly; both cooperate on promoting non-motorized and public transportation.¹⁸²

In recent years, sustainable transportation has become a priority within the UN system.¹⁸³ In 2014, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, which issued a report containing analysis and policy recommendations on mobilizing sustainable transportation for development.¹⁸⁴ In 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/197 on “Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors,” which called for cooperation, networking, mobilization of financial resources, and provision of technical assistance in support of transportation.¹⁸⁵ Other UN entities addressing sustainable transportation include UNEP, which leads the Share the Road initiative to advocate for non-motorized transportation infrastructure in urban areas, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which is devising a framework to assist transportation planners with climate change risk assessment, adaptation, and response to build resilience in small island developing states.¹⁸⁶

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs hosts the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT), which comprises over 90 organizations, including UN bodies, development organizations, non-governmental organizations, foundations, academia, and private sector entities.¹⁸⁷ Established in 2009, SLoCaT promotes sustainable land transportation in developing countries, with the overall aim of poverty eradication and sustainable development.¹⁸⁸ Its four objectives are integrating sustainable transportation in climate negotiations, policies, and programs; integrating climate-related concerns in transportation policies; promoting sustainable transportation as a necessary element of international development; and advancing sustainable development by providing goods and services to lower-income groups.¹⁸⁹

At the regional level, in furtherance of energy and climate goals, the European Commission established the Sustainable Transport Forum in 2014.¹⁹⁰ It specializes in the field of alternative transportation fuels, and it promotes dialogue between Member States and stakeholders in the alternative fuels industry.¹⁹¹ Also in 2014, the first Africa

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ UN-Habitat, *11a Urban-rural linkages*.

¹⁷⁹ UN-Habitat, *Mobility*.

¹⁸⁰ UN-Habitat, *Greener Cities Partnership (UN-Habitat and UN Environment)*.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ UN-Habitat et al., *Analysis of the transport relevance of each of the 17 SDGs*, 2015.

¹⁸⁴ UN DESA, *Sustainable transport*; High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016.

¹⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors (A/RES/70/197)*, 2015.

¹⁸⁶ UNEP, *Sustainable transport and air pollution*; High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 27.

¹⁸⁷ SLoCaT, *SLoCaT Partnership*.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ European Commission, *Sustainable Transport Forum (STF)*, 2017.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Sustainable Transport Forum (ASTF), which was attended by 43 African Member States, adopted a 13-point ASTF Action Framework for sustainable transportation in Africa.¹⁹² Supported by UNEP, the World Bank, and UN-Habitat, the ASTF aims to ensure the incorporation and funding of sustainable transportation in planning processes.¹⁹³

Examples of important subnational actors include ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, which is a global network of over 1,500 cities, towns, and regions.¹⁹⁴ One of ICLEI’s programs is EcoMobility, which is a “global campaign on sustainable urban transport” that promotes public and non-motorized forms of transportation that are environmentally friendly and socially inclusive.¹⁹⁵ Civil society partners include the Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization, a not-for-profit organization that advocates for responsible urban planning, and the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, which works with cities and non-governmental organizations on sustainable transportation policies and projects.¹⁹⁶

Connecting Urban and Rural Zones

Rural communities, especially those in developing countries, often lack any connection to a transportation network that will enable them to access opportunities in urban areas.¹⁹⁷ Approximately 1.3 billion people living in rural areas do not have access to roads.¹⁹⁸ The “last mile,” a term that refers to the distance between a rural community and the nearest transportation hub, may in fact refer to “a hundred miles or more.”¹⁹⁹ Urban sprawl and “inadequate transport and infrastructure” can reinforce inequalities and disparities between urban and rural zones, “especially as economic and social activities and opportunities are often based in cities, towns and markets.”²⁰⁰ Without transportation infrastructure, it is difficult for the rural poor to access basic social services, jobs, or other income-generating opportunities.²⁰¹ Inability to move people and goods constrains productivity and well-being; there is a positive correlation between levels of rural poverty and distance to the nearest road or waterway.²⁰²

Sustainable transportation to connect urban and rural zones is therefore “a prerequisite and core component for sustainable development” in rural areas.²⁰³ Yet there are many challenges to implementation, particularly as urbanization continues at an unprecedented rate.²⁰⁴ In 2015, approximately 4 billion people lived in urban areas; by 2030, this figure will increase to 5 billion, placing strain on urban planning and transportation authorities.²⁰⁵ Further, simply improving transportation infrastructure in rural areas does not fully address transportation-related challenges experienced by rural communities.²⁰⁶ Infrastructure sustainability and maintenance are necessary to ensure safe and continued use.²⁰⁷ Actual modes of transportation must be accessible and affordable: “for example, if social custom restricts the mobility of women, or credit facilities remain out of reach, improved physical connectivity will only

¹⁹² UNEP, *Africa Sustainable Transport Forum: Overview*.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ ICLEI, *Who we are*.

¹⁹⁵ EcoMobility, *What is EcoMobility?*, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization, *Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization*, 2017; Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, *History of ITDP*, 2017.

¹⁹⁷ High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 14.

¹⁹⁸ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Thematic discussion 2: Reaching the most remote – rural transport challenges and opportunities*, 2016.

¹⁹⁹ High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 14.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*; UN-Habitat, *Enhancing Urban-Rural Linkages to Harness the Transformative Power of Urbanization for Sustainable Development*, 2016.

²⁰¹ UN ECOSOC, *Policy options and actions for expediting progress in implementation: transport – Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/2011/4)*, 2010, p. 5.

²⁰² UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Thematic discussion 2: Reaching the most remote – rural transport challenges and opportunities*, 2016.

²⁰³ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2017/66)*, 2017, p. 13.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, p. 9.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

deliver part of its full potential for human development.”²⁰⁸ Infrastructure projects may therefore be unresponsive to rural needs without transparent, consultative, “participatory process[es] that involve local communities.”²⁰⁹

Rural communities in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states have different needs and face additional obstacles in achieving sustainable transportation.²¹⁰ In these countries, “adequate transport is currently unavailable to most people, particularly in rural areas.”²¹¹ Barriers to sustainable transportation include high financial costs, “restricted access to the sea, limited air service for passengers and cargo, and difficulties securing investments and partnerships.”²¹² Many of these countries are already coping with the impacts of climate change, which enhances vulnerabilities.²¹³ Road safety poses another challenge: “more than 90% of road fatalities take place in low- and middle-income countries.”²¹⁴ Existing framework documents, including *Agenda 21* and the Ashgabat Statement, reference the need to provide assistance as necessary to developing countries in advancing sustainable transportation.²¹⁵

Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Transportation

Financing

An estimated \$90 trillion is required for “energy, transport and urbanization over the next 15 years.”²¹⁶ The Ashgabat Statement highlights the “enormous challenge” of financing sustainable transportation, particularly given the deficit in public funds available for this purpose.²¹⁷ Potential alternative sources of financing include “traditional official development assistance, domestic resource mobilization, direct private investment,” and other forms of partnership.²¹⁸ Public-private partnerships are valuable in the context of sustainable transportation, especially for technology development, as they allow for “scaling the innovation generated by small organizations with the means available to large organizations.”²¹⁹ They can also attract investment in projects aimed at improving sustainability.²²⁰ Public financial support can manifest in novel forms, including “crowdfunding, peer-to-peer lending, sustainable investment funds and local and electronic currencies.”²²¹ To encourage investment, governments may choose to use incentives; additionally, “risk must be held to an acceptable level, governance structures must be in place to create an enabling environment, and national governments should support and empower local level authorities to engage with private sector partners in a constructive manner.”²²²

Capacity-building

Capacity-building refers to strengthening “human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities.”²²³ A city or rural community cannot advance sustainable transportation unless it has the capacity to do so.²²⁴ Limited technical capacity often poses a challenge for rural communities and developing countries.²²⁵ The High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport recommends technical capacity-building “of transport planners and implementers” through “partnerships with international organizations, multilateral development banks,

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Thematic discussion 2: Reaching the most remote – rural transport challenges and opportunities*, 2016.

²¹⁰ UN DESA, *Participants endorse “Ashgabat Statement” as first-ever UN conference on sustainable transport ends*, 2016.

²¹¹ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Thematic discussion 6: Sustainable transport and transit solutions in countries in special situations*, 2016, p. 1.

²¹² UN DESA, *Participants endorse “Ashgabat Statement” as first-ever UN conference on sustainable transport ends*, 2016.

²¹³ High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 26.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

²¹⁵ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992; UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations*, 2016.

²¹⁶ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, p. 5.

²¹⁷ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations*, 2016, para. 27.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ UNCTAD, *Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Urbanization*, 2014, p. 37.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 38.

²²² High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 30.

²²³ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992, para. 37.1.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016.

and governments at all levels, to ensure equitable access to markets, jobs, education and other necessities.²²⁶ One example of a successful collaboration is the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities, which pools resources to assist cities with funding and coordination of projects.²²⁷ Other strategies include the direct provision of training to personnel employed in energy and transport sectors; strengthening of “institutions that provide education and training on energy service and urban transport planning and management; and raising awareness of the need to promote sustainable transportation through informational campaigns and community-based initiatives.”²²⁸

Science, Technology, and Innovation

Advances in sustainable transportation are closely linked to technology development.²²⁹ The Ashgabat Statement emphasizes the importance of transitioning to “low-carbon energy sources and technologies”; developing “new and innovative technologies”; improving existing technology; and integrating science, technology, and innovation into sustainable transportation systems.²³⁰ *Agenda 21* notes that in relation to transportation, “technological inadequacies,” high fuel consumption, and increased numbers of motor vehicles are contributing to “pervasive air quality problems” in many cities.²³¹ Technology can provide alternatives for cleaner, environmentally friendly modes of transportation that produce less pollution and fewer emissions.²³² Further, it can enhance the safety, reliability, affordability, and accessibility of transportation options.²³³

Information and communications technology (ICT) can contribute to advancing sustainable transportation, which is an integral component of a smart city: “an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects.”²³⁴ ICT allows for “informed decision-making by providing city stakeholders with appropriate, up-to-date and actionable intelligence.”²³⁵ For example, ICT-based applications can contribute to “smart” transportation solutions that enhance sustainability and safety, including through traffic monitoring, smart vehicles and infrastructure, and multimodal transportation.²³⁶ ICT systems can also implement “congestion pricing” to “influence travel behavior” and encourage use of non-motorized and public transportation to promote “sustainable urban mobility.”²³⁷ Technology therefore presents diverse opportunities for sustainable transportation, but the feasibility of technology development and implementation in developing countries, rural communities, or individual cities may be limited by resources or capacity.²³⁸

Conclusion

In the wake of the UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the importance and benefits of sustainable transportation have earned increased recognition from the international community.²³⁹ Sustainable transportation is “critical for both rural and urban development.”²⁴⁰ Rapid urbanization, lack of rural infrastructure, and difficulty in securing financing will remain among the significant challenges to the advancement of sustainable transportation between urban and rural zones. Multiple existing frameworks have provided recommendations with respect to

²²⁶ High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 8.

²²⁷ European Commission, *Smart Cities and Communities: The European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities*.

²²⁸ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992, para. 7.54.

²²⁹ UN Secretary-General, *Remarks at opening session of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference: Ban Ki-moon*, 2016; UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations*, 2016.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ UN Conference on Environment and Development, *Agenda 21*, 1992, paras. 7.46-7.48.

²³² High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, 2016, p. 33.

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report 2016*, 2016, p. 45; UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *The Role of ICT in the Proposed Urban Sustainable Development Goal and the New Urban Agenda*, 2014.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²³⁷ UN-Habitat et al., *Analysis of the transport relevance of each of the 17 SDGs*, 2015.

²³⁸ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016.

²³⁹ UN DESA, *Participants endorse “Ashgabat Statement” as first-ever UN conference on sustainable transport ends*, 2016.

²⁴⁰ UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, *Summary Report*, 2016, p. 2.

sustainable transportation; UN-Habitat will serve as an ideal forum for further discussions in the specific context of promoting urban-rural connectivity.

Further Research

How does sustainable transportation promote urban-rural connectivity? What are the challenges faced by rural communities with respect to sustainable transportation? How can national and subnational governments create an enabling environment for the development of technology to support sustainable transportation? What is the role of technology transfer? What are different approaches for financing sustainable transportation projects and infrastructure? What forms of capacity-building are required? How can partnerships contribute to sustainable transportation? How can the international community increase community involvement in devising sustainable transportation solutions?

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<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2375Mobilizing%20Sustainable%20Transport.pdf>

Established in 2014 by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport issued a comprehensive report on mobilizing sustainable transportation for development in 2016. It explains the concept of sustainable transportation and provides recommendations for encouraging the development of sustainable transportation with respect to policy development and implementation, financing, and technological innovation. Notably, this report served as input for the first UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference in November 2016.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Sustainable transport* [Website]. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabletransport>

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs maintains the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, which includes a topic page on sustainable transportation. This hub collects all news, documents, decisions, statements, and information on meetings and events that are relevant to sustainable transportation. Delegates will find this page indispensable to their research.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/256>

The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, sets out commitments by world leaders to achieve an ambitious vision of sustainable cities. Many of the commitments reference transportation and connections between urban and rural zones. Delegates should review these commitments carefully to understand how transportation between urban and rural zones promotes sustainable urban development.

United Nations, Global Sustainable Transport Conference. (2016). *Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations*. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11987Ashgabatstatement.pdf>

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened the first UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, which took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, in November 2016. Participants adopted the Ashgabat Statement, which collects their shared commitments, concerns, and conclusions with respect to sustainable transportation. Delegates should refer to the Ashgabat Statement as a summary of relevant issues.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2016). *Enhancing Urban-Rural Linkages to Harness the Transformative Power of Urbanization for Sustainable Development* [Report]. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from:

http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/URL_flyer_2016.pdf

This brief report from UN-Habitat succinctly explains the necessity for enhanced urban-rural linkages in the general context of achieving sustainable development. The report advocates for the abolishment of the traditional dichotomy between urban and rural in order to harness

urbanization for sustainable development. It is important for delegates to understand the rationale behind supporting greater connectivity between urban and rural zones via sustainable transportation.

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The recognition of sustainable transportation as an essential component of sustainable development is relatively recent. Sustainable transportation was not considered in the Millennium Development Goals, but it is explicitly mentioned in the targets of the SDGs; further, it is in fact vital to the achievement of all SDGs. This report analyzes the relevance of sustainable transport to each of the SDGs and identifies specific goals and targets of particular importance. It is crucial for delegates to understand the broader role that sustainable transportation plays in the context of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.

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