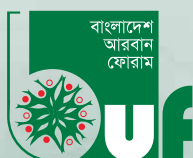


BANGLADESH'S URBAN FUTURE

making cities and towns work for all

Report of the 1st Bangladesh Urban Forum

5-7 December, 2011, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Dhaka, Bangladesh



Report of the 1st Bangladesh Urban Forum

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BUF Interim Secretariat:

Level 12, IDB Building
Agargaon, Dhaka.

Rapporteurs:

Hasan Md. Titu
Syeda Ishrat Najia
Dr. Tareq Salahuddin
Md. Anwar Hossain
Dr. Akhter Mahmud
Dr. Md Humayun Kabir

Report Preparation:

Bayezid Dawla
Asifa Rahman

Report Management Team:

Mostafa Quaium Khan
Abu Mehedi Imam

Report Review Team:

Professor Nazrul Islam, CUS
Anisur Rahman, LGD
Ar. Iqbal Habib, BAPA
Ashekur Rahman, UNDP

Special Acknowledgement:

Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shahid Khan, Secretary, the Local Government Division
Dr. Khondaker Showkat Hossain, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Public Works
Advocate Azmatullah Khan, President, Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB)

Disclaimer:

This publication contains edited transcripts and reports of presentations and deliberations made at the first session of Bangladesh Urban Forum, which was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka from 5 to 7 December 2011. Information about speakers and organizations is correct as of December 2011. The views captured here do not necessarily reflect those of the organizers, co-organizers, partners, supporting organizations or sponsors of the event.

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Report of the 1st Bangladesh Urban Forum

5-7 December, 2011, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Dhaka, Bangladesh



BANGLADESH URBAN FORUM (BUF)

ACRONYMS

BAPA	Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon
BELA	Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
BCI	Basic Capabilities Index
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BIP	Bangladesh Institute of Planners
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Services and Trust
BUF	Bangladesh Urban Forum
BWPI	Brookes World Poverty Institute
CBA	Community Based Adaptation
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme
CLTS	Community-led Total Sanitation
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civic Society Organization
CUP	Coalition for the Urban Poor
CUS	Centre for Urban Studies
DAP	Detailed Area Plan
DPHE	Department of Health Engineering
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FPC	Forum for Planned Chittagong
GIZ	German International Cooperation
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GRB	Gender Responsive Budget
Guchhagram	Clustered village
HBRI	Housing and Building Research Institute
HYSAWA	Hygiene, Sanitation and Water
IAB	Institute of Architects Bangladesh
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Khasland	Government-owned land
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plans of Action
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institution
LGSP-LIC	Local Governance Support Project
MAB	Municipal Association of Bangladesh
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NDBUS	Nagar Daridra Bastibasir Unnayan Sangstha
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHA	National Housing Authority
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NSAPR	National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction
Pourashava	Municipality
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
RAJUK	Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha
R&D	Research and Development
SDP	Sector Development Plan
STP	Strategic Transport Plan
SWAp	Sector-wide Approach
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UDD	Urban Development Directorate
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Upazila	Sub-district
WASA	Water Supply and Sewerage Authority
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation

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Executive Summary

Bangladesh is one of the countries of South Asia that are experiencing very rapid urbanization. Its cities are growing more than twice the rate of rural areas, and this rapid growth of urbanization is expected to continue till Bangladesh transitions from a low income to a middle income country. Only 28 to 30 percent of the total population living in urban areas is contributing approximately 60 percent to the national GDP. Consequently, urbanization has become synonymous with development. On the other hand, the fast pace of unplanned and uncontrolled urban growth is posing enormous challenges to the sustainable development of the country. There is urgent need for guiding the progress of the country through adopting policies on urbanization and urban development followed by their appropriate implementation. Therefore, a pressing need has been felt to bring all stakeholders together to a single platform that is relevant and focuses on the most critical challenges.

The idea for creating a Bangladesh Urban Forum had germinated and drew upon multiple events and discussions held between many national stakeholders since 2010. This includes the January 2010 Sylhet Conversation; high-level Bangladeshi participation in the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro in 2010 and 5th Asia Pacific Urban Forum in Bangkok in 2011; the national stakeholder consultation in Dhaka on January 11, 2011; the e-discussion hosted on the Solution Exchange Urban Poverty Reduction Community of Practitioners; and numerous formal and informal discussions within Government and with civil society, private sector and development partners of the Local Consultative Group (LCG) Urban Sector. The First Session of the Bangladesh Urban Forum was organized jointly by the Government of Bangladesh, Development Partners (DPs), and other stakeholders in the form of a national conference from 5th to 7th December 2011. An organizing committee and seven sub-committees were formed with all stakeholders of urban sector. The event has opened up the possibility of the BUF becoming recognized and accepted by urban stakeholders as a national institution capable of sustaining in the future. The conference centered on the theme “Bangladesh’s Urban Future: Making Cities and Towns Work for All” with three sub-themes – urban governance, urban poverty, and urbanization & growth. It was also guided by the three core principles such as focus on the most critical issues of urbanization; broad national participation and ownership with active government leadership; and partnership with key actors to ensure success.

Nearly a hundred organizations were involved in the process of executing the event. More than 2500 people from across the country gathered to participate, including national and international experts, representatives of government and non-government organizations, ministers, development partners, elected representatives and community people.



One of the highlights of the event was an Urban Exhibition organized specially to showcase best practices, innovations and initiatives to foster a progressive path for urbanization. The three sub-categories of the exhibition were the 'Young Professional's Urban Vision' category, the 'Best Practices and Innovations' category, and the 'Urban Championships' category. University students, government & private organizations, development partners, and pourashavas & city corporations participated in the exhibition, each presenting their respective visions for the urban future including their plans and innovations.

Twenty-one thematic sessions were held to analyze the current urban situation and identify ways to address the challenges. Relevant policies of the government, such as the Urban Sector Policy, the Education Policy as well as the country's urban land tenure system, the urban local economy, the impact of climate change on the urban environment and urban health and education were among the themes brought under careful scrutiny to find solutions to the problems associated with urbanization. The sessions also provided an insight into urban planning and research, roundtable discussion by mayors and civil society organizations, sharing of international best practices including that in Brazil with regard to sustainable urban development and the scope of involving the 'BUF Young Reporters' Initiative' in urban youth development.

Each of the thematic sessions concluded with some general as well as specific recommendations to improve the current urban situation. Some of the recommendations included taking measures for poverty reduction and planned utilization of urban land; making it mandatory for land developers to undertake low cost housing for the poor; ensuring speedy implementation of prioritized areas under the Urban Sector Policy; creating accountability in various sectors and administrative tiers of all government agencies in order to achieve the MDGs whilst ensuring primary healthcare for mothers and children as well as adolescent girls was identified at the conference to be among the highest priorities.

The outcome of the 3-day event was more than just a set of comprehensive recommendations expected to provide direction for future action. A detailed Declaration of the Bangladesh Urban Forum was also drafted by the stakeholders drawing on the discussions and deliberations. The Declaration recognizes the importance of the urban sector and the urbanization process for Bangladesh's future development. Calling for inclusive urbanization and a more proactive national strategic management, the Declaration is also a written commitment of the Government to refine, adopt and implement the Draft Urban Sector Policy. The Declaration, in fact, has emerged as a tangible proof of the BUF's existence and its acceptance as a platform where stakeholders can have their voices heard.

The BUF conference received very positive feedback through a questionnaire survey completed by participants of the event. The majority of the contributors believed that the main objective of bringing stakeholders together had been a great success.

Effective and positive urbanization requires a comprehensive understanding, tackling of misconceptions and development of new partnerships, policies and approaches. The participants and all stakeholders of the 1st Session of BUF also felt that the forum should now concentrate on 'making cities and towns work for all' through ensuring planned and balanced urbanization process using the broad based platform which has been created by organizing the three day event. Importantly, stakeholders have to come to agree that it is vital that the emerging urban challenges can and must be addressed as urbanization is both a driver and consequence of national economic growth and, if managed well, can bring significant benefits to the nation.





Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF) : The Platform for Dialogue and Action



Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF)

The Platform for Dialogue and Action

Background

Bangladesh is urbanizing rapidly. The annual population growth rate of approximately 4 per cent in urban areas is more than 2.5 times that in rural areas. The majority of the urban population in Bangladesh is concentrated in a few large cities. Dhaka – with 13 million people - accounts for about 40 per cent of the total urban population (UN-HABITAT, State of the World's Cities 2008-2009). It is predicted that by 2030 about 80 million people will be living in Bangladesh's towns and cities.

All city dwellers feel the consequences of this boom, but it is the poorest that are affected most; vulnerable to poor health and other risks, and with often limited access to public services. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics reports that 21 per cent of the urban population is below the poverty line, a third of whom are extreme poor.

A number of national assessments have identified this issue as critical for the development of Bangladesh. The 2009 MDGs Progress Report, jointly prepared with the Government and the UN System in Bangladesh, includes specific references to the centrality of urban policies to poverty reduction. Importantly, stakeholders agree that the challenges arising from rapid urbanization can be met, and indeed, can be leveraged for positive impacts. Urbanization is a driver of economic growth and, if managed well, will bring benefits not just to the poor in urban areas, but to the nation more broadly. Effective and positive urbanization requires a comprehensive understanding, the tackling of misconceptions, new partnerships, new policies and new approaches.



BUF stakeholder consultation 11 Jan 2011

The Response

Such directions are also clearly identified in key Government planning documents, including the draft National Urban Sector Policy, the Outline Perspective Plan and the Sixth Five Year Plan. The next cycle United Nations Development Assistance Framework places specific emphasis on working towards improved pro-poor urban development. Several other development partners have indicated that a response to urbanization is reflected in their development work. A number of urban sector programmes already exist, including the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction, Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project and the Urban Primary Health Care Project.

To build a broader base for action, and to develop consensus on the array of issues that Bangladesh's rapid urbanization brings, a number of stakeholders have recently begun to see the need and value of a national-level, multi-stakeholder forum on urban issues.

In recent years Bangladesh has sent a number of delegations to the World Urban Forum and in early 2010 the Sylhet Conversation brought together a broad group of urban actors – including Government, civil society, academia, development partners and representatives of urban poor communities. These events have underscored the tremendous potential that participatory action has. They have provided an opportunity to learn from others, to network and to spur further collaboration, and they have stimulated interest in establishing a national-level forum.



Meet the Press on Launching 1st Bangladesh Urban Forum, 20 Oct 2011

Towards this goal, Bangladesh's most eminent scholar on urban matters together with the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Land convened a stakeholder consultation on January 11, 2011 in partnership with the Secretaries of the Local Government Division and the Ministry of Housing & Public Works, with support from GIZ and UNDP. This consultation was a watershed which confirmed a broad-based commitment to the idea of a nationwide urban forum, titled the Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF), and the process towards its institutionalisation.

The Vision

The vision of the BUF calls for planned action for building an urban Bangladesh by the year 2100 with the purpose of ensuring basic services for all urban citizens by reducing spatial and social imbalance and inequality through focusing on disadvantaged groups.

BUF Objectives

- » To promote knowledge and experience-sharing among urban sector stakeholders in order to contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies on, and improving practice in urban sector management, primarily to reduce urban poverty.
- » To create a common understanding on policy and institutional capacity development issues for the government and the (urban) public sector as a whole, for national and international partners in development, and urban communities.
- » To raise public awareness about the growing importance of the urban sector and urbanization in Bangladesh and the need for improved policies, plans, and actions.
- » To bring together all stakeholders in the urban sector: central and local government officials and politicians; NGOs and CBOs; community leaders; academicians and the private sector.



Management Arrangements

The inclusive management system of the BUF is expected to lead to sustainable growth for better living conditions through all the urban sector stakeholders. The Forum is to be steered by a committee comprising government and stakeholder representatives.

However, the 1st Session of BUF was organized through forming an Organizing Committee. The 33 member committee was headed by the Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives as Chair and Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Public Works as Co-chair. Others include stakeholders of urban sector in Bangladesh.

Another seven sub-committees were formed supporting the OC and making the three day event successful.

National Steering Committee

A National Steering Committee will be the highest level decision-making body for the BUF. This body will provide the Forum's governance structure and mandate for preparation and organization, as well as the mechanism through which policy guidelines will be developed.

Technical Committee/ Thematic Consultative Groups

Technical Committee/s will guide the consultative process and ensure the principles of the forum are carried forward to planning and execution through ensuring participation of urban sector stakeholders. The groups will meet regularly to review planning and progress of the forum and assist BUF Secretariat to report to the National Steering Committee against the results stipulated in the Forum's action plan.

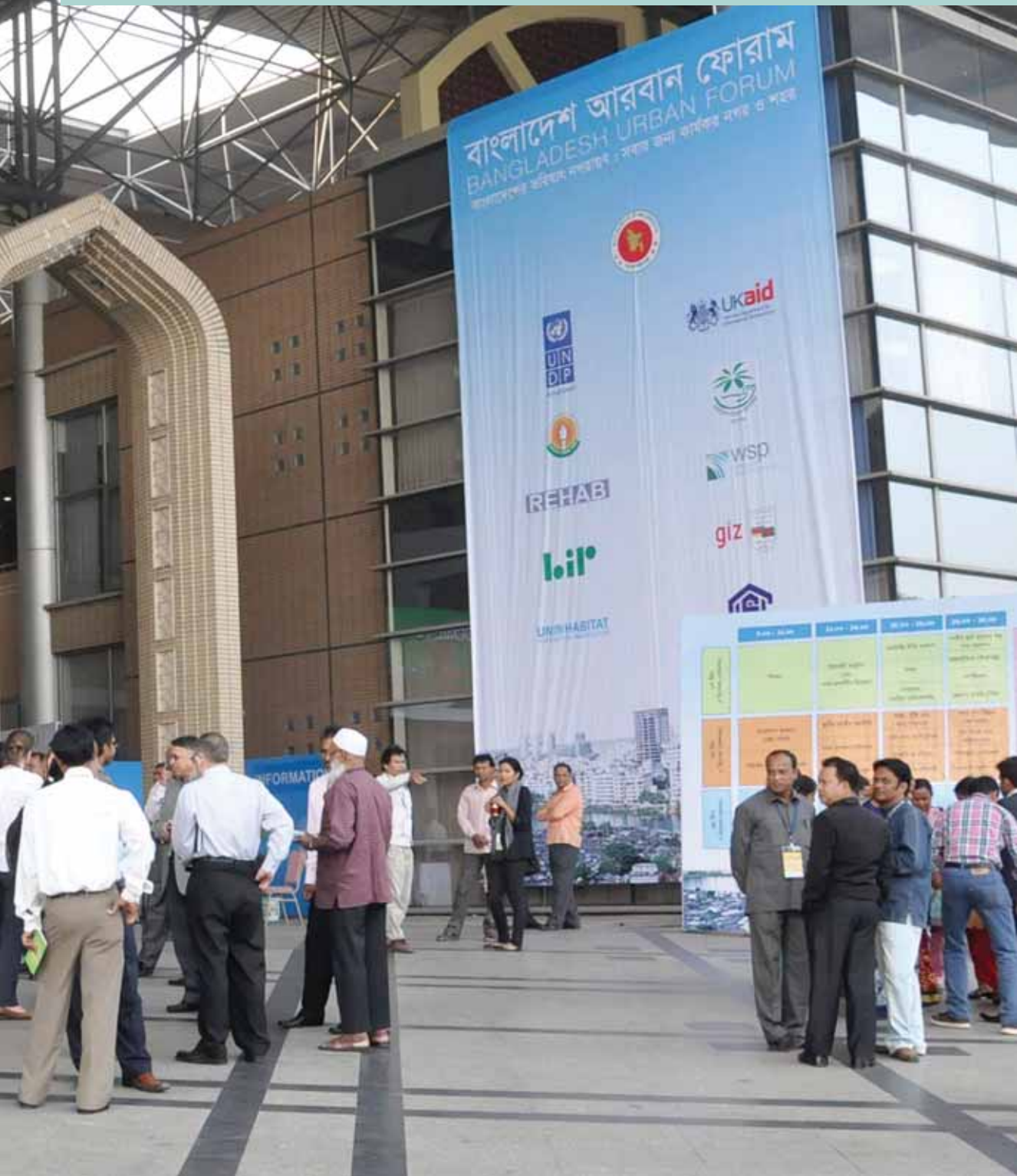
Secretariat

The Secretariat will play the main implementing role, focusing on the delivery of a wide range of activities. The secretariat will provide full-time support to the Thematic Consultative Groups/Committee for day-to-day implementation of the BUF's planning process. The Secretariat will be run by a number of dedicated administrative and logistical support staff, with support staff recruited as necessary.



WELCOME TO BANGLADESH

1st Session of Bangladesh Urban Forum : A Milestone in Urban Development



1st Session of Bangladesh Urban Forum

A Milestone in Urban Development

Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF) **Making Cities and Towns Work for All**

The process of setting up the BUF gained momentum with the decision to organize the BUF's first session. It was felt that a session at national level would drive home the importance of the Forum. The turning point was the Stakeholder Consultation in January 2011 that followed close on the heels of the Sylhet Conversation event.

The purpose of BUF is to build consensus on the problems of and possible responses to rapid urbanization, with a particular focus on urban poverty and urban governance. The event will bring together a broad range of stakeholders – Government, civil society, academia, NGOs, urban workers and residents, and development partners – and will leverage the knowledge, ideas, experiences and solutions of these groups.

Networks and coalitions will be strengthened. Innovation, collaborative solutions and new directions will emerge out of the sharing of knowledge within, and across, the different stakeholder groups. The event will enable

participants to generate new ideas for improved urban policies, programmes and projects.

The First Session of the BUF was convened jointly by the Government of Bangladesh, DPs and stakeholders in urban sector in the form of a national conference from 5th to 7th December 2011. The event has opened up the possibility of the BUF becoming recognized and accepted by urban stakeholders as a national institution capable of sustaining in the future. Nearly a hundred organizations were involved in the process of executing the event, which was attended by more than 2500 people from across the country.

For the first time in Bangladesh urban sector stakeholders discussed strategic approaches for planned and balanced urbanization to ensure making cities and towns work for all.

Themes: Highlighting Bangladesh's Urban Future

The proposed theme of the Forum is "Bangladesh Urban Future: Making cities and towns work for all. Under this theme participants of the Forum will review and discuss innovative approaches and strategies for achieving inclusive and sustainable development in urban areas. The Forum will focus on three sub-themes:

(i) Urban Governance; (ii) Urban Poverty; and (iii) Urbanization and Growth. Each day of the Forum will be devoted to one of these themes and events will be arranged and focused accordingly.



Principles

It is proposed that the Forum and its preparation be driven by three core principles: (i) ownership and participation of all national stakeholders, with strong government leadership; (ii) a focus on the most critical issues of urbanization in Bangladesh; and (iii) partnership between stakeholders.



Program

5-7 December, 2011

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC)
Dhaka, Bangladesh

	Day 1 Monday 5 december	Day 2 Tuesday 6 december	Day 3 Wednesday 7 December
9.00 to 11.00	Registration	Bangladesh Urban Sector Policy Environment & Climate Change	Urban Development Reform Agenda & The Future of BUF
11.00 to 13.00	Opening Session & Inauguration of The Urban Exhibition	The Urban Economy Urban Governance Urban Poor Assembly	The Urban Declaration & Closing Ceremony
14.00 to 16.00	Urbanization: The Engine of Growth Education MDG Policy Dialogue	Health, Nutrition & Food Security Water & Sanitation Culture & Heritage Women, Children & People With Disabilities	Field/City Visit
16.00 to 18.00	Mayor's Roundtable Transport International Best Practices Urban Land Tenure & Housing	Urban Upgrading Youth in Urban Future Planning & Research CSO's Roundtable	
The Urban Exhibition			
Closing Party			



রাফীক
 বাংলাদেশ উর্বাণ ফোরাম
 সচিব

বাংলাদেশ উর্বাণ ফোরাম ২০১১ সালের ৫-৭ ডিসেম্বর ঢাকায় 'বাংলাদেশ উর্বাণ ফোরাম' আয়োজন করে।



মাসুদ
 ঢাকা উর্বাণ কর্তৃপক্ষ
 সচিব

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Bangladesh Urban Forum: Visioning A Sustainable Urban Future

Background
 Bangladesh has been identified this year as the fastest growing country in the world in terms of population. By 2030, more people in the world live in cities and towns than in rural areas. Currently in Bangladesh, urbanization is taking place at a rapid pace. It is estimated that Bangladesh has some 150 million people, with a population growth rate of about 1.5% per year. By 2030, the urban population is expected to reach 180 million, with a population growth rate of about 1.5% per year. The urban population is expected to reach 180 million, with a population growth rate of about 1.5% per year.

The Purpose So Far
 The Bangladesh Urban Forum is a platform for urban stakeholders to discuss and address urban issues. It provides a space for urban stakeholders to discuss and address urban issues. It provides a space for urban stakeholders to discuss and address urban issues.

The Final Session of the BUFP
 The Final Session of the BUFP will be held from 5-7 December 2011. It will be held from 5-7 December 2011. It will be held from 5-7 December 2011.

The United Nations Development Assistance Programme for 2012-2015
 The United Nations Development Assistance Programme for 2012-2015 is a five-year programme of technical assistance and financial support. It is a five-year programme of technical assistance and financial support.

A Missing Ingredient
 Despite the new-found prominence of urban issues in policy discourse and the government's urban development strategy, there is a missing ingredient. There is a missing ingredient.



Nasir Waheed
 UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh

Message
 It would be a privilege for me to participate in the Bangladesh Urban Forum. It would be a privilege for me to participate in the Bangladesh Urban Forum.

Over the last year
 Over the last year, the Government of Bangladesh has taken some major steps towards improving urban development. Over the last year, the Government of Bangladesh has taken some major steps towards improving urban development.

I would like to stress
 I would like to stress that the challenges facing Bangladesh's cities and towns are numerous and daunting. I would like to stress that the challenges facing Bangladesh's cities and towns are numerous and daunting.



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Nasir Waheed
 UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh





Inaugural Ceremony

The conference was started with an Inaugural Ceremony attended by the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh as chief guest. The LGRD and Cooperatives Minister, the State Minister for Housing and Public Works, and the UN resident coordinator and UNDP resident representative also attended the inaugural as special guests.

Not just towns, but all areas of the country will have to be brought under balanced development to build the 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I urge the urban planners and others concerned to ensure all sorts of civic amenities while planning for urbanization so that it will be environment friendly, healthy, safe, and balanced.

Md. Zillur Rahman

Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Chief Guest

Md. Zillur Rahman

The Honourable President of People's Republic of Bangladesh

Special Guests

Mr. Syed Ashrafur Islam

The Honourable Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan

The Honourable State Minister for Housing and Public Works

Mr. Neal Walker

Resident Representative, UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh

Mr. Abu Alam Md. Shahid Khan

Secretary of the Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, and Chair of the Organizing Committee of the BUF

Dr. Khondaker Showkat Hossain

Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, and Co-Chair of the Organizing Committee of the BUF

Chair

Advocate Jahangir Kabir Nanak MP

The Honorable State Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives



"Bangladesh is experiencing rapid urbanization. Already one-third of our people live in urban areas and experts believe that if the current rate of urbanization continues the majority of the population will live in urban areas within the next four decades. The current demand is to make urban life easy, environment-friendly, sustainable and development-oriented."

Syed Ashrafur Islam Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives



"Almost one-fifth of our population now lives in the urban areas who are directly contributing nearly 60 percent of our GDP, and this is increasing due to rapid growth of urbanization. In this regard, it is impossible to ignore the contribution of urbanization in our national economy. I believe that the development path for our county is in the development of all urban areas alongside rural areas."

Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan State Minister for Housing and Public Works



"Such a platform comes at a critical time. The urban population globally is growing rapidly - more than half of the world's seven billion residents now live in cities and towns. Bangladesh is no exception to this phenomenon: the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has found that already more than quarter of the population live in cities and towns while, according to the UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs, the proportion will reach half by 2050. This massive demographic shift has enormous implications in terms of poverty, governance and the environment. If well-planned and managed, however, the challenge of rapid urbanization can be turned into an opportunity, leading to strong, inclusive and sustainable national growth and human development."

Mr. Neal Walker Resident Representative, UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh

Summary of inaugural keynote

Two important milestones have been reached this year in the process of urbanization. Firstly, for the first time in history, more people in the world now live in cities and towns than in rural areas. Secondly, in Bangladesh, stakeholders will soon hold the country's first Bangladesh Urban Forum.

It is true that Bangladesh has some distance to go before urbanites outnumber their rural counterparts. Presently the ratio is about 1 to 2. But this is changing fast. The urban population is six times larger now than it was at Independence while the rural population has grown by only 70 percent.

It is understood that Bangladesh will continue to experience rapid urbanization into the future and, therefore, it has to be managed intelligently. This understanding has encouraged shifts in important policy documents, such as the 2009 MDGs Progress Report, which notes the importance of pro-poor

urban policies to ensure poverty reduction; the draft National Urban Sector Policy outlines a vision of an equitable, efficient and sustainable urban future; and the Sixth Five Year Plan lays out a detailed strategy to manage the urban transition in the short-term. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2012-2016 includes pro-poor urban development as one of the key focuses alongside other more recognized development priorities such as tackling climate change and poverty. Other bi and multilateral development partners are also designing development projects aimed at ensuring sustainable and equitable urban development.

This First Session of the BUF heralds the process that will continue with programs and events held throughout 2012 and beyond, leading to subsequent BUF national events.





The Urban Exhibition

One of the highlights of the event was an Urban Exhibition organized specially to showcase best practices, innovations and initiatives to achieve positive urbanization. The exhibition comprised three sub-categories, which included:

- ▶ The Young Professionals' Urban Vision category: where students of planning and architecture presented their visions of the future urban Bangladesh. The students were from the Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, the University of Asia Pacific, Dhaka, BRAC University, Dhaka and the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka.
- ▶ The Best Practices and Innovations category: for which 12 urban sub-sectors were selected to present best practices and innovations in urbanization. Major government, private and international development partners participated and presented their best practices under the themes of water and sanitation, waste management, housing solution, transportation, health, education, environment, poverty, urban governance, disaster and risk management, and youth and children.
- ▶ The Urban Championships category: where 20 best initiatives were presented by mayors for achieving positive urbanization of their cities. The top three initiatives received awards. Twenty-seven pourashavas and city corporations participated in this category.









The Thematic Sessions of 1st Bangladesh Urban Forum

As the cities of Bangladesh are becoming more crowded with every passing day, the locations where people are concentrated, how much they consume and whether the cities are able to handle such pressure are becoming matters of serious concern. The demand for basic necessities such as food, energy, drinking water and shelter is increasing bringing with it various adverse effects on the urban economy, health and food security, education and water and sanitation. Significant sections of the city dwellers are settled mostly in slums and squatter settlements and living below the poverty line. Unemployment continues to be a pressing concern for the urban dwellers as the city economies are unable to absorb the enormous influx of workers. In fact, the urban poor mainly make their living through subsistence activities or informal jobs such as garbage collection, domestic help etc.

Twenty-one thematic sessions were held to delve into the current urban situation and find out ways to address the challenges. Relevant policies of the government, such as the Urban Sector Policy, the Education Policy as well as the country's urban land tenure system, the urban local economy, the impact of climate change on the urban environment and urban health and education were among the themes brought under careful scrutiny to find solutions to the problems associated with urbanization.

The thematic sessions also included a look into urban planning and research, a roundtable discussion by civil society organizations, sharing of best international practices with regard to sustainable urban development, and the scope of involving the "BUF Young Reporters' Initiative" in urban youth development.



Urbanization

The engine of growth

At the current rate of growth, the ever increasing population of Bangladesh (currently 158 million) is expected to reach 206 million in 2025. It is estimated that more than half of the population will live in urban areas by the year 2025. Push and pull factors are involved in the migration from rural to urban areas. The push factors driving people from rural to urban areas are socio-economic, demographic and cultural factors, such as unemployment, poverty, floods, droughts, river erosion, political instability, social discrimination, disputes, etc. The pull factors attracting people to urban areas include the concentration of resources, employment oppor

Chief Guest

Mr. Mostofa Farooq Mohammad MP

Chair

Prof. Amirul Islam Chowdhury

United International University

Speakers

Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman

Executive Chairman, PPRC

Elisha Muzzini

World Bank

Lalita Moorthy

World Bank

Panel

Prof. Sarwar Jahan

President, Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP)

Dr. Zahid Hossain

Senior Economist, World Bank

Dr. Syed Abu Hasnath

Adjunct Professor, Boston University

Recommendations

Some of the general recommendations include renewed emphasis on poverty reduction in order to achieve sustainable urbanization; enhanced infrastructure facilities; planned utilization of urban land; decentralization to better manage large cities with greater focus on regional development; and an enhanced service delivery system at village and small town level.

tunities, better living and educational facilities, etc. in the urban areas. The challenges of urbanization are compounded by the current inefficiency of the rule of law. It is the result of inappropriate exercise of law that leads to the corruption, violence, and other social ills which plunge urban civic life into uncertainty and insecurity.

The question “Is a large population a burden or asset?” is becoming easier to answer. For example, it is a fact that Dhaka is rated as the “worst livable city among 140 others around the world” according to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s 2012 Global Livability Survey. In 2011, Dhaka ranked 139 among 140 cities and scored 38.7 out of an overall rating of 100 measuring political and social stability, crime rates and access to quality healthcare.

The Livability Survey Report surveyed the locations to assess the best or worst living conditions. However, it cannot be denied that the urban population and labor force have a denied that the urban population and labor force have a large contribution in the GDP. Squatters should no longer be considered a burden; rather they could be educated and their skills developed to become a better workforce contributing more to the society and the nation. A strong urban economy could be built by capitalizing on the cheap labour and deploying the workforce in large scale productive schemes.

Bangladesh drafted a National Urban Sector Policy in 2006. The policy has so far received a range of comments and feedback from stakeholders at different levels. Such feedback, combined with those received from the BUF conference, will help finalize the draft.



Urban Land Tenure and Housing

A complex dilemma

Urban land prices are on the rise due to the scarcity of land is a myth created to generate quick profits for the land developers and construction companies. The truth is, there are large tracts of unused or underused khasland holdings within the pourashavas and their peripheries. The centralized land administration policy of the government does not allow local government institutions, such as the pourashavas, city corporations, and the city development authorities, to transfer such unused or

underused land held by government ministries or powerful elites. Discriminatory public policies also hit hard the land tenure security of the urban poor.

To deal with this, modern approaches need to be adopted with an emphasis on the preparation of flexible and adaptable urban plans at three levels, i.e. structure planning, local planning and action planning. Moreover, it would be practical to adopt land use zoning, which can be a very powerful tool for protecting critical environmental areas such as wetlands, restricting development in hazard-prone areas and separating conflicting land uses. To promote efficient and sustainable land development, different techniques would be used, such as land pooling/readjustment, guided land development, land sharing, sites and services schemes, etc.



Chief Guest

Mr. A K Mozammel Huq MP

Chair, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Land

Chair

Dr. Hameeda Hossain

Chairperson, Ain O Salish Kendra

Speaker

Ms. Salma A Shafi

Architect & Planner, Treasurer, Centre for Urban Studies

Panel

Mr. G A Jaynal Abedin Bhuyian

Chairman, National Housing Authority (NHA)

Mr. M A Gaffer

Adviser, GIZ

Mr. Micheal Slingsby

Eminent Urban Expert

Mr. John Arnold

Freelance Consultant

Dr. Shakil Akhter

BUET

Recommendations

It should be made mandatory for land developers to undertake low cost housing for the poor. Similarly, a land bank could be established for low income people to receive soft loans at subsidised rates. There is a need for the housing finance system to be strengthened so that a million housing units could be constructed for the urban poor while at the same time all civic facilities are extended to them. Furthermore, RAJUK Act/Laws should be modified and DAP should be implemented with the community.

Eviction causes violation of right to shelter, housing and settlement. It leaves devastating impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the urban poor. Slum demolitions are the public actions that create economic and social insecurity among the victims as it creates changes in the ownership and leadership dynamics of the area. Ruling by the High Court suggests rehabilitation of the slum dwellers prior to eviction. The rehabilitation plan should provide concrete rehabilitation or compensation options to make their development sustainable. To sustain the gains, the government, respective agencies, and real owners of the lands need to be sensitized to realise not only the impacts of eviction on extremely poor households, but also their responsibilities as laid out by the High Court ruling. For efficient management of the rehabilitation, it may be useful to prepare a database on slum dwellers.

Furthermore with the fast growing population in urban areas, the government needs to undertake a broad-based housing scheme development program that may involve the private sector to create housing facilities for all sections of the urban community. It could also create policy resources and opportunities for land developers while NGOs could become involved in large scale housing programs just for the shelterless, the poor and the low-income groups.

Some other measures could be mobilization of financial resources, construction innovations, community-based housing facilities and so on. Developing and fostering a public-private partnership may be a useful strategy for resolving the urban settlement crisis. Moreover, the local government may also become engaged in developing land and housing for the low income group and the poor.

Land Law

The urban land administration is complex. The Land Law that regulates urban land tenure allows two systems of land ownership—freehold and leasehold title—for public and private land management, which is guided by the Transfer of Property Act of 1882 and the Registration Act of 1908. The Non-Agricultural Tenancy Act of 1949 is the most significant law dealing with public land for urban use. All these laws are so complex that it is very difficult to interpret and make use of them without legal advice. Moreover, urban land use is regulated by the Pourashava Ordinance 1977 and the Town Improvement Act 1953, which are both outdated. The National Housing Policy (1993), which has sufficient guidelines to serve the urban poor, is still not taken into consideration for public action. The existing legal framework is highly exclusive, unpractical in many instances and hardly benefits the poor.



The Urban Sector Policy

Can it help?

The policy envisions strengthening the beneficial aspects of urbanization to make it sustainable. It seeks to facilitate a decentralized and participatory process in which all stakeholders such as the central government, the local government, the private sector, the civil society and the people could take part and play their respective roles. With that aim, it covers the spatial, economic, social, cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of urban life with freedom from hunger and poverty; capacity to live a healthy life; access to education, shelter, and basic services, and a secure and liveable environment at home and at work.

Although the Policy contains all required objectives for achieving positive urbanization, e.g. ensuring regionally balanced urbanization, economic development, poverty reduction, optimum utilization of land resources and meeting increased demand for housing and urban services etc. the hard fact is that policies may change with the change in government, as evidenced in the past. To prevent this from happening it is imperative to build political consensus on the Policy.



Chair

Mr. Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan

Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of LGRDC

Speaker

Professor Nazrul Islam

Head, Bangladesh Urban Forum Secretariat

Panel

Advocate Azmatullah Khan

President, Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB)

Mr. Robert Juhkam

Deputy Country Director, UNDP

Dr. Towfiq M Seraj

Ex-President, REHAB

Recommendations

The most vital divisions under the Urban Sector Policy should be implemented with priority. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation process should be done with the participation of people. The Urban Sector Policy, currently considered by Government, should acquire the support of the broader political spectrum as well as key development agents.

Vision

The National Urban Policy envisions strengthening the beneficial aspects of urbanization and at the same time effectively dealing with its negative consequences so as to achieve sustainable urbanization, keeping in view the multi-dimensional nature of the urbanization process. The policy also envisions a decentralized and participatory process of urban development in which the central government, the local government, the private sector, the civil society and the people all have their roles to play. The policy, therefore, should cover spatial, economic, social, cultural, aesthetic and environmental aspects of urban life directed towards achieving an urban reality that can ensure freedom from hunger and poverty; capacity to live a healthy life; access to education, shelter, and basic services, and a secure and liveable environment at home and at the workplace. The policy will be gender sensitive and friendly to children, the aged and the disadvantaged.

Major Dimensions of Urban Sector Policy

Effective responses to the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and fulfilling the stated objectives will require giving priorities to the following dimensions while formulating the National Urban Sector Policy:

- a. Patterns and process of urbanization
- b. Local urban planning
- c. Local economic development and employment
- d. Urban local finance and resource mobilization
- e. Urban land management
- f. Urban housing
- g. Urban poverty and slum improvement
- h. Urban environmental management
- i. Infrastructure and services
- j. Urban transportation
- k. Health and education
- l. Social structure
- m. Gender concerns
- n. Urban children, aged, the disabled and the scavengers
- o. Urban Recreation, Playground, Park, Open Spaces and Graveyards
- p. Cultural and aesthetic development
- q. Rural-urban linkage
- r. Law and order
- s. Legislation
- t. Urban governance
- u. Urban Research, Training and Information



MDG Policy Dialogue

The urban target

Target 11 of MDG 7, which states “By 2020 to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers”, recognizes slums as a major development issue. Although, Target 11 focuses on improving the lives of slum dwellers, other MDGs on e.g. poverty, health, education, water and sanitation etc. are also relevant in the urban context. The Goals call for the eradication of extreme poverty in all its dimensions- income, poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, gender inequality, poor education, and environmental degradation. The rule of law is also recognized as crucial for sustained

economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger. However, the public policies and institutions in Bangladesh regulating economic and social interactions do not ensure equal opportunity or protection of poor women and men, children and other disadvantaged groups. These groups not only have poor access to services and resources that are often regulated and managed by inefficient and corrupt public officials, they are also frequently the victims of abuse of power by the judicial system.

Chief Guest

Prof Dr. Shamsul Alam

Member, General Economics Division, Government of Bangladesh

Chair

Dr. Selim Jahan

Head of Poverty, UNDP Headquarters, New York

Speaker

Dr. Binayak Sen

Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies

Panel

Md. Ekramul Hoque Titu

Mayor, Mymensingh Municipality

Ms. Khushi Kabir

Coordinator, Nijera Kori

Recommendations

In order to reduce the social inequality among city/town dwellers, programs like LGSP-LIC should be undertaken. In this regard, the central and local governments could work in a coordinated manner to reduce inter-city and inter-regional inequality. The Sixth Five-Year Plan should also adopt a long-term strategy on issues related to growth, employment and regional inequality. Accountability in the sectors and administrative tiers of all government agencies is essential to achieve the MDGs.

Despite a variety of reform efforts, the quality of public service delivery has not improved adequately. Various surveys have identified public service as over centralized, unaccountable, inefficient, overpaid, coercive, unethical, and rent seeking.

Low standard of living

The most recent Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) published by Social Watch indicates that increased trade and per capita income have not resulted in reduced poverty let alone improving the quality of life of the world population. The Index reveals that global trade and average per capita income have grown faster in the first decade of the 21st century than in the decades before. World exports multiplied almost five times between 1990 and 2010 and income more than doubled. But progress against poverty declined as the world average BCI only increased by one tenth in those same 20 years.

The most vulnerable sectors of the population are carrying the largest burden of the crisis. Before the crisis, gross income was growing fast while progress in education, health and nutrition was already too slow. Hence, the report concludes that macroeconomic performance and human well-being do not go hand in hand (Social Watch Report 2012).





Education

Constraints & prospects

There are 15 million urban children in the country who are under 15 years of age. An estimated 57.3 percent of these children are literate. This rate of literacy is higher than in the rural areas (37.9 percent) indicating that people living in the urban areas have better access to educational facilities provided by the public and private academic institutions. On the other hand, most of the urban children do not have access to adequate space, environment or provision for growth, development, recreation and quality education. The differences are even more pronounced for secondary school education. According to 2009 data, 18 percent of children in slums attended secondary school, compared to 48 percent in rural areas. Even where progress is made, it cannot be taken for granted (UNICEF 2012:30).

Chief Guest

Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid MP

Minister for Education

Chair

A K M Abdul Awal Mozumder

Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Speaker

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed

Senior Advisor, BUIED, BRAC

Panel

Mr. Alamgir

*Director General, Bureau of Non Formal education,
MOPME*

Dr. Abul Barakat

Professor, Department of Economics, Dhaka University

Mr. Kazi Rafiqul Alam

Chair, CAMPE

Ms. Doli

An Ex. BEHTRUWC Project Learner

Recommendations

Priority should be given to vocational trainings for low income people. Business in the formal sector should be engaged in apprenticeship schemes in order to tailor such training to meet work-force needs and requirements of local markets. Meanwhile, special arrangements should be made to enhance the educational prospect of adolescence with special regard to linking their education to future employment opportunities. Steps should also be taken to address the reasons behind urban migration.

Poverty is the overarching factor in the poor access to school. For example, parents in Dhaka spend an average of 10 percent of household income per child on schooling costs, this rises to 20 percent in the poorest families even though primary schooling is free (due to ancillary costs such as uniform, classroom supplies etc.). Other hindrances to education for urban slum children are eviction and hooliganism.

Education Policy 2010 in the urban context

The Government of Bangladesh has formulated and approved a new Education Policy (2010) in consultation with educationists, teachers, students, parents, politicians, Muslim theological experts, businessmen, investors, professionals and people from all strata of life. The Ministry of Education asserts that the Education Policy has “earned a nationwide receptivity” as it has “recognized the importance of public views and reactions to it” (MoE, GoB). The Policy assures “education for all children” to develop “skilled human resources so that they may contribute in eradicating poverty, illiteracy, corruption, communalism and backwardness and build a developed and prosperous Bangladesh.”

However, this does not apply to the urban children as neither the city corporations nor the respective authorities take full responsibility for their education. In fact, urban education remains heavily dependent on non-public service provisions. There is neither any basic education service provision for the urban slum children nor an EMIS on urban slum education. Sixty-five percent of urban slum children attend primary schools while only 18% percent attend secondary schools, and most of these schools are run by NGOs. The common barriers to their education continue to be regular flooding of the slum premises, ‘unsafe and overcrowded housing’, tenure insecurity, and limited access to water supply and sanitation facilities.



Health, Nutrition and Food Security

A search for the right urban strategy

The nutritional status of the country had registered a striking improvement from the late 1980s up to 2000 but slowed down after the year 2000. The urban areas are also burdened with higher rates of under nutrition. In Dhaka city alone where 40% of the inhabitants live in slum settlements, 56% of under-five children are stunted, 17% are wasted, and 46% are underweight. Severe acute malnutrition affects more than 6% of children aged 12-23 months. Malnutrition is also highly prevalent in non-slum urban areas. One-third of children in such areas are stunted.

Chief Guest

Dr Syed Modasser Ali

Health Adviser to Prime Minister

Special Guest

Mr. Carel de Rooy

Country Representative , UNICEF Bangladesh

Chair

Mr. Muhammad Humayun Kabir

Secretary, MoH&FW

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Tahmeed Ahmed

Director, Centre for Nutrition & Food Security, ICDDR,B

Panel

Dr. Sharmin Mizan

Deputy Project Director, Urban Primary Health Care Project 2

Ms. Nusha Chowdhury

Head, Vulnerability Assessment Mapping, WFP

Dr. Kaosar Afsana

Associate Director Health, BRAC

Recommendations

Modern information and communication technology could be used to take healthcare services to the urban people in a cost effective way. In fact, the healthcare system could be transformed if taken to the doorstep of the urban poor by reducing the cost of the Internet and bandwidth and stabilizing the supply of electricity. The topmost priority is to ensure primary healthcare for mothers and children and adolescent girls. Linking healthcare services with the community would be a good strategy for ensuring access of low income community to the services. Another strategy could be dissemination of health information through the state-run media, and introduction of health insurance for the urban poor. A policy should also be formulated specifically to ensure food security.

Maternal under-nutrition also shows a downward trend; one-third of the mothers are still under-nourished and micronutrient deficiencies are widespread. The prevalence of anemia among young infants, adolescent girls and pregnant women is still at unacceptable levels.

The entire health system needs to be revitalized to overcome factors constraining policy, governance, and service delivery levels. The primary healthcare clinics will have to improve substantially to deliver nutrition interventions of good quality which requires increase in the coverage of clinical services, quality of care provider-patient interaction, and creating demand in the community. It may be useful to consider the system of providing primary healthcare through urban community health volunteers. Simultaneously, the speed of urbanization should be controlled in such a way that education and health services can be properly managed. Coordination between the health ministry and the food ministry needs to improve to expedite the primary health care services.



Women, Children & People with Disabilities

Need for comprehensive framework

A comprehensive sustainable social and economic development framework is centered on people. Since people comprise of heterogeneous groups that face different realities, obstacles, and opportunities for such groups that also include-marginalised, disempowered and vulnerable members of the society. Poverty reduction strategies in Bangladesh need to take the differences into consideration to remove obstacles, address needs, and expand opportunities for these groups that are comprised of the excluded, disempowered and vulnerable members of the society. Some of them are women, children, and persons with disabilities. A few policies exist that, if implemented properly, could address the needs of these groups.

Chief Guest

Ms. Arifa Zaman Moushumi

*Actress and Goodwill Ambassador
UNICEF, Bangladesh*

Chair

Dr. Taslima Mansoor

Dean, Faculty of Law, Dhaka University

Facilitator

Mostafa Shiblee

*Expert on Child/Adolescents Rights
Specialist*

Peter Fremlin

*Consultant on People Living with
Disability, UPPR*

Recommendations

Providing equal access to vital service provision all people are entitled to, facilities for sports and recreation while safety and security should be ensured with special regard to the rights of all children. These should receive appropriate attention at every level. A green and habitable environment should be created for all.

Bangladesh Women Development Policy 2011

This Policy grants equal share of women in property and their opportunities in employment and business, and upholds the rights of all women irrespective of their religion. It also contains provisions for physically and mentally challenged women and those from the indigenous communities. In addition, the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR) incorporates the gender equality concerns while a National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women is being implemented. A Gender Responsive Budget (GRB) has also been embarked upon to incorporate gender policy considerations into the budgeting process.

NGOs across the country also work for women's empowerment in terms of leadership development, access to resources and decision making at different levels.

National Child Development Policy 2011

An updated version of the 1994 policy, its basic principles are to ensure child rights in the light of the Bangladesh Constitution, Child Act and the international conventions and declarations. It also provides for children's poverty alleviation; elimination of all sorts of repression and discrimination against children; ensuring their health and education; and incorporation of their opinions in the measures adopted to ensure their protection and interest.

Special interventions for children with disabilities and autism, birth registration, special programs for disadvantaged and ethnic minority children, etc. are also important provisions of the Policy.

National Policy on Disability and Disability Welfare Act

Developed in 1995, the National Policy on Disability is under the purview of the Bangladesh Constitution which obliges the government to adopt legislative and policy frameworks for developing the full potentials of persons with disabilities in the country.

Bangladesh has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol. The National Action Plan formulated in 2006, formulated to implement the National Policy on Disability and the Disability Welfare Act, involves forty-six ministries and divisions of the government to undertake specific activities for persons with disabilities.



Water & Sanitation

Viabile service delivery solutions needed

The Water and Sanitation Sector (WSS) has made important progress in service delivery over the last few decades. However, there are emerging challenges in providing “improved, equitable and sustainable services for all”. The excessive abstraction of groundwater is causing rapid decline in the water level. Contamination of shallow aquifers and overdependence on piped water systems are limiting water supply coverage in urban areas. Providing adequate and appropriate sanitation remains a major challenge as conventional sewerage systems are absent in all urban areas except Dhaka where only 25 percent of the population is served by a sewer network.

The situation is worse in slums where people live without basic services including water and sanitation. The government, however, has formulated and approved a “Cost-sharing Strategy for the Water and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh”, which considers the need for serving the urban poor at minimum affordable costs. There are also a number of policies, strategies and plans to guide and assist the sector in its efforts to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. They are also aimed at increasing public sector

Chief Guest
Engineer Taqsem A. Khan
*Managing Director,
DWASA*

Chair
Mr. Shariful Alam
*Policy Support Unit (PSU),
LGD*

Presenters
Md. Motasim Billah Motu
Mayor, Meherpur

Mr. Shamsuzzoha
ExEn, Chandpur

Nazrul Islam
Water Super, Gazipur

Mr. Moslem Uddin
CBO President, Uttar Kalshi

Ms. Shobi Rani
Arsadpur CDC

Mr. Mamun
Town Planner, Rangamati

Shamsul Alam
Assistant Eng, Faridpur

Md. Ashraful Alum
*Architect, General
Secretary, RAIN Forum and*

Mr. Imran
*Town Planner, Chapai
Nawabganj*

Recommendations

WSS service delivery in urban areas requires sector and institutional capacity for coordination, monitoring and evaluation, R&D, and technological innovation to cope with the challenges brought by climate change, environmental concerns and disasters risks. It also requires mobilization of additional resource for SDP implementation. Alternative sources of ground water should continue to be explored.

allocation as well as recognizing & adopting a Sector-wide Approach (SWAp) and successful community-based approaches, and developing a vibrant private sector to meet the ever increasing demand for water and sanitation.

There are a number of successful community-based service delivery approaches in the WSS sector supported by local government institutions and NGOs. These include the i) Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), which focuses on the behavioral changes needed to ensure sustainable improvements and which is largely credited for the sanitation success in Bangladesh; ii) the Hygiene, Sanitation and Water (HYSAWA) project, the LGI-funded community-based program which is considered a new approach to decentralized rural WSS services; and iii) the urban slum community-based approach. The factors that have contributed to their success are strong social capital in the community, involvement of community in all stages of the programs, effective coordination and working relationship between local government institutions and NGOs, and appropriate choice of technology.

Sixth Five Year Plan

The fundamental task of the Sixth Five Year Plan (FY11-FY15) of the government is to develop strategies, policies and institutions that allow Bangladesh to accelerate growth and reduce poverty. Some core targets have been identified for monitoring the progress of this Plan. The targets that range from income & poverty, human resource development and energy & infrastructure to gender equality, environment and information technology, also includes water and sanitation. In this regard, the Plan envisions making safe drinking water available for all urban population and increasing the proportion of urban population with access to sanitary latrines to 100 percent by 2015.

Sector Development Plan

The Government of Bangladesh has also approved a participatory, home grown Sector Development Plan (SDP) for the FY 2011-25 to provide a framework for planning, implementing, coordinating and monitoring all activities in the WSS sector. It is envisaged that all WSS-related national and sectoral policies and strategies, as well as international commitments will be aligned with the SDP. As a strategic planning document, the SDP is expected to address the emerging and the future challenges of the WSS sector.



Environment and Climate Change

A growing global concern

International agencies and local and foreign climate experts predict that Bangladesh will be adversely affected by climate change due to melting Himalayan glaciers, global warming and rising sea level, intensified natural calamities, and greater water scarcity. Such phenomena will lead to loss of livelihood, rising unemployment and poverty. Those who are most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change are also amongst the poorest communities, both rural and urban. They include the people from the coastal region who migrate to urban areas to escape climate change induced disasters and to find shelter and employment. A rise in the sea level, leading to coastal submergence (17 percent of Bangladesh) would cause large-scale displacement of people – a factor that will further intensify migration to urban areas. Therefore, a key challenge for Bangladesh is to identify and adopt climate-adaptive and resilient measures suitable to the local contexts and realities. Bangladesh is taking a lead in the efforts to mainstream climate change adaptation in the public and private sectors. The country is also playing a pioneering role through its Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP), which is increasingly combining disaster relief and rehabilitation with adaptation to climate change.

The concept of climate change impact mitigation at local level is also being adjusted in the spirit of “transformative adaptation”. Transformative adaptation refers to the opportunity that adaptation to climate change presents to not just become more “climate resilient” but to transform countries, societies and communities from the current state of vulnerability to a new and better state of development. An example of such adaptation is the Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA) and the Community Based Adaptation (CBA), which involve the empowerment of vulnerable communities with knowledge and support to become more adaptive.

Chief Guest

Dr. M. Aslam Alam

Secretary, DMRD, Ministry of Food & Disaster Management

Chair

Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury

Former Adviser, Caretaker Government

Keynote Speakers

Dr. A Q M Mahbub & Dr. Shahidul Islam

Department of Geography and Environment, Dhaka University

Mr. Iftekhar Enayetullah

Co-founder and Director, Waste Concern

Dr. Maksud Kamal

Urban Risk Reduction Specialist, CDMP

Panel

Mr. Norio Sato

Senior Urban Development Specialist, ADB, Manila

Dr. Puji Pujiono

Project Manager, CDMP

Recommendations

For mitigating climate change impacts, a master plan for medium and large cities, a land-use plan, a zoning plan as well as building regulations should be strictly implemented. Furthermore, local administration and communities should cooperate in accommodating climate affected displaced people migrating to their cities and towns.

Provisions for urban environmental sustainability in Sixth Five Year Plan

- » Improvement of air quality in Dhaka and other large cities and enactment of Clean Air Act;
- » Treatment of all urban waste water by FY15 to clean river waters;
- » Promotion of zero discharge of industrial effluents;
- » Restoration and protection of urban wetlands in line with Wetland Conservation Act;
- » Development of Risk Atlas for at least 7 cities/towns by 2015;
- » Establishment and protection of 500 meter wide permanent green belt along the coast
- » Land zoning for sustainable land/water use;
- » Integration of environmental, climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations into project design, budgetary allocations and implementation process;
- » Restoration of canals and natural water flows of Dhaka and other major cities.

Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

This action plan, prepared in 2008 and revised in 2009, is now an approved document of the Government of Bangladesh. Three of the themes of the strategy and action plan including food and livelihood security fall under adaptation, which is the prime need of the country. The other two adaptation programs concern construction and maintenance of necessary infrastructure, especially for water management. The third important area is disaster management as disaster risk reduction and post-disaster rehabilitation are going to engage a lot of energy and resources of the country due to climate change.

Action Towards Resilient Cities

Priority	Proposed Actions
Governance and Policy	Develop/improve legal institutional framework Commit dedicated and adequate resources Promote local autonomy and participation
Risk monitoring and early warning	Conduct localize sectoral risk assessment Develop system to monitor, disseminate and archive data
Knowledge and culture of safety	Promote accessible risk information Incorporate into education, training and research agenda Promote public awareness and culture of safety
Addressing the underlying factors	Incorporate disaster relief and rehabilitation (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) into development plans and programs Implement specific DRR and CCA programs Use post disaster to commit resilient procedures and resources
Preparedness to response	Develop plans with policy, technical and institutional arrangements Put in place periodic preparedness, contingencies and drills Develop mechanisms to mobilize internal and external capabilities



The Urban Local Economy

Where it stands

The 'Informal sector' is an integral economic unit of the urban economy of Bangladesh. This sector creates independent self-employments with low productivity. However, the actors in this sector generally run unrecorded and unregistered enterprises with low access to formal market, credit, education, and training facilities. The majority of the people engaged in this sector are poor men and women who live in unhealthy conditions. The small market in the secondary and small urban centers dominated by low-income people and lacking infrastructure, remains stagnant as it does not attract investment or provide employment opportunities. The entrepreneurs also do not have adequate collateral to access institutional credit for starting businesses.



Chief Guest

Dr. Hafiz G A Siddiqui

Vice Chancellor, North South University

Chair

Professor Syed Abu Hasnath

Boston University

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Akhter Hossain Chowdhury

Khulna University

Panel

Mr. Anwar Ali

Mayor, Kustia Municipality

Mr. Niaz Rahim

Director, Rahim Afroz Group

Mr. Asif U Ahmed

Director, Economic Development Unit, CARE

Dr. Shafiquzzaman

Department of Economics, Dhaka University

Recommendations

The government should adopt liberal policies and promote private sector business as well as provide human resource development facilities in order to create employments and better livelihoods, and connect the local towns with the national economic hub for movement of goods and passengers. Connectivity among the national economic centers should be increased, and the fiscal policy should be renewed and adjusted to facilitate it. A policy should also be drafted encouraging the informal sector and for the expansion of small and medium industries.

There is, however, a ready source of money that could be used for productive investment in the country. More than eight million Non-Resident Bangladeshis are working abroad who send home about \$12 billion annually as remittance. A large sum of the remittance is invested in land whose value hardly depreciates. It has caused the value of urban land to rise even in remote small towns. This huge money could, however, be invested in other lucrative enterprises.

Developing an investment-friendly atmosphere is a prerequisite for attracting investors. Such atmosphere can be developed through the creation of infrastructure and service facilities. However, there are barriers to this in the small and medium towns of the country, which include poor drainage, poor supply of piped water and electricity, poor road network etc. Measures that need to be adopted to encourage investments, including solving those problems, are further extension of tax holidays, provision of soft credit to the prospective entrepreneurs on easy and terms, creation of investment opportunities for wage earners, increase in urban local government revenue, etc. These steps need to be supported by policy interventions to make the urban centres economically vibrant and attractive places for investment.



Urban Governance in Bangladesh **Still a bumpy road**

The government has enacted the Right to Information Act and the Local Government Act, 2009. In the political context of Bangladesh, however, the local government system is facing several challenges, such as limited understanding, such as limited understanding of the functions of the LGs among people, low awareness of elected officials about their roles and responsibilities, lack of accountability of public officials etc. In reality, no devolved intermediate governments exist in Bangladesh. The existing government bodies at division and district levels are not elected. Furthermore, the political power and scope of functioning of the local governments are determined by the central government.

Nevertheless, the Right to Information Act 2009 is a landmark and a progressive legislation enacted to protect the rights of the entire population. It seeks to ensure transparency and accountability in all public, autonomous and statutory and private organizations as well as to decrease corruption and establish good governance. As per the law, a 3-member Information Commission was set up in July 2009. With this, the Act became officially functional with full independence to arbitrate on behalf of the information seeker if and when information is denied.



Panel

Linda P Gonzalez

Mayor, Ligao City, Manila

Professor Dr. Tofail

Ahmed

Local Government Expert

Md. Wahidur Rahman

Chief Engineer, LGED

Mr. Anir Chowdhury

Advisor, Access to Information Program, Prime Minister's Office

Momtaz Akther Aduri

Joint Secretary, NDBUS

Moderator

Mr. Muhammad Jahangir

Media Personality

Recommendations

One of the most important means of improving urban governance in Bangladesh is by enhancing the capacity of local government institutions in terms of monetary and administrative aspects. The departments, institutions and agencies, such as the DPHE, LGED, WASAs, city corporations and municipalities that are organically linked to deliver urban sector services need to build capacity for mitigating the development challenges facing the sector. Small and medium towns should be strengthened and power should be decentralized. A mechanism should also be put in place to control nepotism and partisan practices and to ensure institutional transparency of municipalities. Most particularly, necessary regulations should be framed to ensure that the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Local Government Act, 2009 are fully operationalized.

People have started using the Act to obtain benefits from the public schemes that provide vulnerable groups with health care, food, education, and other services. More specifically, it can be used in the transparent distribution of grains, environmental advocacy against illegal building construction, creating access to maternal health vouchers and land records etc.

The Act is expected to add great value to urban development if it could be integrated with the service delivery mechanism of the government. Meanwhile, community participation remains a critical element in the Local Government Act, 2009 which rightly recognizes the importance of community participation, transparency and accountability by including specific sections on participatory planning, access to information, and extended authority of the standing committees, etc. However, the Act has yet to be operationalized in its entirety.





বাংলাদেশ আরবান ফোরাম
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Making Cities & Towns Work for All

Urban Upgrading

How to proceed?

The draft Bangladesh Urban Sector Policy recognizes six categories in the hierarchy of urban areas: the megacity, the metropolitan city, the regional/industrial city, the secondary city/district town, small town/upazila center/thana town, and the growth center/local center/compact town. The urban poor live in crowded, dense and unhealthy living conditions and become exposed to hazardous dangerous situations, insecure tenure, poverty, lack of access to basic services and various social ills. Yet there are no comprehensive measures to ensure sustainable living environment for the urban poor. The only exception is the Slum Improvement Project in Dhaka Metropolitan City (2002). This project, the first successful model for slum upgrading in urban Bangladesh, was designed in 1985 to improve the quality of life for slum dwellers by mobilizing the community and improving their access to government resources.

Strategic approaches for urban upgrading*

Community empowerment

Support could be given to form community development committees, town level federations etc. Community based savings groups, with technical support from urban development projects could build up mutual trust and financial management capacities. At least 75 percent of the leaders should be women community members. Cross community associations could also be supported to bring together people with a common interest based on livelihoods, health issues, etc.

**Source: Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project, UNDP*

Settlements improvement

Funding and technical support could be provided for the development and implementation of community contracts for the construction of basic services such as sanitation and water supply, improvements in drainage, solid waste management and cleaning of ponds. Communities could be supported to improve the planning of their settlements and make qualitative improvements to their houses. They could also be assisted in negotiating improvements in security of tenure through community land purchase or leasing, land sharing or where necessary, voluntary relocation. Community groups could be formed to improve their negotiating position with landowners.

Chief Guest

Dr. Khondoker Shawkat Hossain

Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Public Works

Chair

Ms. Fatima Akhter

Member, Executive Committee, NDBUS

Speakers

Engineer Taqseem A Khan

Managing Director, DWASA

Dr. Md. Jahorul Haque

Director, Urban Planning, RAJUK

Mr. Ali Ahmed

National Project Director, UPPR

Mr. Zahed Khan

World Bank, Dhaka

Mr. Shafiqul Alam

UNICEF, Dhaka

Md. Rafiqul Islam

ADB, Dhaka

Presentation: Drama

Recommendations

Coordinated steps should be taken to involve the government, NGOs, development partner and the poor settlers in urban upgrading which cannot be achieved through undertaking and implementing a few sporadic projects. A national policy should be formulated for urban population. Customised solutions should be created to solve site-specific problems and in this regard slum dwellers should be provided with soft loans and subsidy to ensure low cost housing for them having a broad target to empower them economically, socially and culturally.

Livelihoods improvement

Apprenticeship and vocational training programs could lead to wage employment and capacity development of those with demonstrated entrepreneurial aptitudes. The emphasis should be on supporting access to livelihoods opportunities that are outside the slum based economy.

Support for the extreme poor

Community based programs could be launched to support the disabled, elderly, single person and female headed households. NGOs and specialized agencies could assist such programs to meet the needs of pavement dwellers, street children and other marginalized and vulnerable groups who do not live in settled communities.

Town level economic development and poverty reduction

Technical and financial support could be provided for this with the participation of local government, the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and urban poor community representatives.

Capacity building

Long term sustainable relationships between urban poor community leaders, local government and service providers could be built through training, peer learning and exchange programs.



Policy advocacy

Advocacy could be conducted through development of knowledge products, international and regional experience sharing and a communication strategy on promoting best practices.





Transportation

The urban criterion

The urban transportation system is not well organized or coordinated to provide people with easy and comfortable access and mobility to different places. Private sector operators, although playing a major role in urban transportation, do not often comply with traffic rules due to a lack of efficient public monitoring arrangements. The mix of vehicles, motorized and non-motorized, and violation of traffic rules cause heavy traffic congestion in the cities, especially Dhaka and Chittagong.

The situation, however, could be improved by introducing a variety of transports, such as double-decker buses, Rapid Bus Transit, mass transit system, subway, commuter train, and elevated expressway. The traffic pressure could also be eased by connecting transportation linkages with surrounding urban centers and satellite towns.

The government and city authorities should be realistic while selecting appropriate mass transit options taking into account long-term needs and implementation and financial issues. Integration with other transport modes must be achieved in a sensitive manner that respects commuters' choices. Non-motorized transport, especially walking and cycling, should be prioritized in the planning process.

Chief Guest

Mr. M A N Siddique

Secretary (In-Charge), Roads Division, Ministry of Communications

Chair

Prof Dr. A M M Safiullah

Vice Chancellor, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology

Speaker

Professor Alamgir Mujibul Huq

Department of Civil Engineering, BUET

Panel

Mr. Abdul Huq

Director, FBCCI

Prof Hasib Mohammad Ahsan

Director, Accident Research Center, BUET

Mr. Ashraful Alam Sarkar

Transport Economist

Recommendations

Policies relevant to transportation including the draft rail and road policies of 2004 should be updated and harmonized. Primary and secondary roads should be increased for facilitating traffic. Moreover, the 683 km of road proposed by JICA and the short and long term projects under STP should be implemented immediately.

Pedestrian walkways are very poorly managed in urban Bangladesh. Transport authorities are more concerned about motorized traffic management than designing suitable pedestrian walkways or sidewalks. In Dhaka city, walking opportunities are very much limited due to crowded streets and the presence of obstacles on the walkways that range from public rest rooms to dustbins, street vendors, illegal parking, temporary structures etc. One solution to this could be declaring certain roads as exclusive pedestrian walks for 24 hours or part of the day or night.

Being the administrative, commercial and cultural capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka has a major role to play in the socio-economic development of the country. But the existing transportation system, which is predominantly road based with non-motorized transport (mainly rickshaws) having a substantial share, is a major bottleneck to the development of the city. There are no exclusive bicycle lanes or pedestrian streets. Although a 37-km long railroad passes through the heart of the city, it has little or no contribution to the city's transport system due to policy constraints. Over 500,000 rickshaws, mostly unauthorized, also ply on Dhaka's roads. There are around 100 open markets on the streets and 3,000 roadside shopping malls without adequate parking provisions. Most of the traffic signals are manually controlled and the number of traffic policemen is woefully inadequate.



International Best Practices

Options for replication

The internationally recognized and practised community mobilization models include mobilizing the community as a group, creating women's groups, and creating a space for one-on-one relationships between a project and community members.

Community participation models, on the other hand, are aimed at advancing the community's development priorities. Community action can serve to translate policy into implementable actions. Keeping communities at the core of project planning, organization and implementation ensures that local priorities are addressed. This involves recognizing rights and entitlements, giving communities dignity and ownership and making them partners in development.

Linkages and partnerships are also important on local, national and international levels. Interface between these levels can be achieved through cooperatives or federations of community groups. Exchanges between different groups, such as communities, NGOs, academics and local government can also create a joint platform for change, while city level planning can prevent the isolation of projects and lead to joint action. Successful projects too can stimulate both local and national government into further action, and be an important force in shaping policy.

Chair
Ms. Mariko Sato
Chief, UN-HABITAT Office, Bangkok

Presenters
Ms. Diane Archer
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Thailand

Ms. Nasima Shaikh
SwayamShikshanPrayog, Mumbai

Mr. Anura Dassanayake
Project Director, Sri Lanka

Ms. Lajana Manandhar
LUMANTI, Nepal

Learning from Brazil

From the beginning of the 20th century until today, Brazil has gone through a rapid urbanization process which has brought positive and negative effects with it. Consideration the importance of addressing poor communities living in both formal and informal settings, Brazil has taken different approaches in facing the challenges of uneven urbanization, such as alternative techniques for low-cost housing; urban policies and strategies implemented by three tiers of government (federal, state and municipal), and participation of low income communities in projects to improve their livelihoods, in this case through tourism.

Providing education for children living in poverty

Bolsa Escola is a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that offers mothers in poor households a monthly stipend if their children aged 6 to 15 years attend school on a regular basis. It has the unique characteristic of being decentralized at the municipal level, with local authorities being in charge of beneficiary identification, selection and of program identification. This is a huge achievement towards building local authority capacity and accountability. Impact assessments of the programs have stipulated that fact that not only has there been resurgence in new enrolments in schools but also a decrease in drop-out rates with children not having to leave school and engage in child labor.

Promoting participatory budgeting within municipalities

The city of Porto Alegre in Brazil has been a model to be mirrored all across the world for honing its initiative for promoting and engaging community members in budgeting for municipalities. Participatory budgeting allows the participation of non-elected citizens in the conception and/or allocation of public finances. Such initiatives has resulted in demand driven expenditure of public finances where priorities have shifted to public health care, the number of schools and nursery schools in local areas has been increased and access to water supply and waste water systems has been revamped. This has been a commendable effort in promoting capacity building of local authority through participation of community members.

Chair

Mr. Olaf Handloegten

Country Director, GIZ Bangladesh

Panel

Dr. Francisco Casanova

Dr. Beny Schvarsberg

Ms. Sheila Gonçalves

Ms. Ximena Soto

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Planning & Research

The building blocks

The need for urban research is growing with the increase of population and the pressure it is creating on urban areas. The research conducted so far has focused on the central themes, issues and problems, without including issues in the peri-urban or semi-urban areas as well as municipalities at the district and upazila levels. To strengthen urban research and expand its scope, national and international funding and collaboration are necessary. There is also a great need for strengthening local and institutional research capacity and management. The public institutions that need to build research capacity include NILG, LGED, HBRI, UDD, NHA, RAJUK and BIDS. The LGED could become engaged in training municipal engineers and other technical groups in research while private research and training centres may also be involved in building capacity of the local authorities.

Chair

Professor Dr. Sarwar Jahan

President, Bangladesh Institute of Planners

Keynote Speaker

Professor Dr. Nurul Islam Nazem

Department of Geography and Environment, Dhaka University

Panel

Professor Dr. Roxana Hafiz

Dean, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, BUET

Professor Dr. Qazi Azizul Mowla

Department of Architecture, BUET

Dr. Hossain Towfiq

Deputy Director, Urban Development Directorate (UDD)

Recommendations

- ▶ Research and planning focus should be shifted from the centre to the periphery to build capacity at the local level.
- ▶ Planning should consider ecological balance, sustainable development, etc.
- ▶ Planning should have a research background, and research should have a problem focus. Research findings should be shared and implemented as per recommendations.
- ▶ Approval of planning and coordination is necessary for development activities in a municipality.
- ▶ Networks should be developed at the at medium and small towns involving the CBOs, CSOs, NGOs and other stakeholders to participate effectively in the research and planning steps and actions.

On the other hand, urban planning and management require identifying issues of critical importance, formulating strategies and actions to resolve the issues, and implementing the strategies through coordinated actions involving the public and private actors. Urban planning also calls for inter-ministerial coordination as it involves different agencies under different ministries playing dominant roles in urban development. Local urban planning requires the pourashavas to develop their own planning units and build their capacity and at the same time decentralize its planning authority by involving CBOs, NGOs, CSOs, and businesses to participate in the urban development planning process.





Urban Poor Assembly

Pinpointing the needs

The gap between the demand for urban infrastructure and services and the available supply is widening fast with the rapid growth of the urban population. This means that the urban service delivery institutions managed by public and private agencies need to be more capable of serving the increasing population. The public sector will have to address the deficiencies, and also help the

low-income groups find creative solutions of their own. Community-driven initiatives may help to control population influx and provide all town-dwellers with improved access to educational, health, water, sanitation, employment and housing facilities.

Conventional public responses to bridging the investment need-flow gap have failed due to a lack of investment as well as institutional failure of the government, the private sector and development partners to mesh with local people's needs and priorities.



Chief Guest

Mr. Ranjit Kumar Biswas

Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare

Chair

Ms. Tahamina Akhter Rupa

President Sitolokha Community Development Committee, Narayanganj

Moderator

Dr. Dibalok Singha

Dustha Sasthya Kendra (DSK)

Panel

M A Rashid Khan

NDBUS

Dr. A K M Musha

Concern Worldwide

Ms. Diane Archer

ACHR, Thailand

Dr. Baber Kabir

BRAC

Advocate Mahbubur Rahman

Mayor, Bogra

Recommendations

Public and private development agencies need to take more progressive support schemes for the urban poor so that they can develop their life skills and become employed. Skill training programs should be undertaken and implemented by NGOs and government agencies to ensure jobs. Banks should come forward with loans or grants for the training recipients, especially the youth. The Guchhagram (clustered village) model of distributing khas land to the poor could be a solution to the land crisis for housing.

The failure suggests an official urban development "model" shift to one that promotes partnership with the poor, supports the investments they make, helps them overcome constraints, and ensures infrastructural services with limited per capita budget.

The growing role of NGOs in community development is instrumental in changing the conventional model to one that involves participation in the planning, execution, maintenance, and control of projects. NGOs can provide technical and financial support to low-income households and communities to carry out development projects; to design and implement programs for supplying safe water and adequate sanitation and drainage; to act as their "consciousness raisers"; and to influence policy for establishing new social models. NGOs could also help organize the poorer groups for negotiation and management, building their leadership and collective capacity, ensuring budgetary allocation for them, using their social capital in accessing utility services, and also negotiating access to the leasing arrangements for their housing.

The government acknowledges that all targeted programs do not reach the hardcore poor. A large part of the total budget allocation is termed as social safety net, but the real amount that actually reaches them is very meagre. Better safety net programs such as old age pensions and public works need to be expanded to provide social protection for those just above the poorest strata. Safety nets need to ensure that the poor receive basic minimum assistance but can also graduate from poverty, using innovative approaches such as conditional cash transfers.



Mayor's Roundtable

A push for synergy

Local urban governments are highly dependent on the central government for decisions, resources and actions while effective urban governance requires comprehensive devolution of power to the city corporation/pourashava, and even to the ward levels. The urban governments are administered in a bureaucratic system ignoring the involvement of people in the decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programs. Neither the elected representatives nor the appointed public officials demonstrate any transparency or accountability in the urban local governance system.

One of the most critical problems that have gripped urban governance is weak interaction among the sector stakeholders and even non-existent coordination among the development partners. In Dhaka city, for example, there is hardly any real coordination among

the 16 government/autonomous organizations directly involved, and nearly 30 other organizations indirectly involved in urban development activities.

Two major problems have been detected that are responsible for constraining coordination between the city corporations or pourashavas and the other organizations in their area. Firstly, the city corporations and pourashavas are accountable directly to the people, while the government organizations are accountable to their own line ministries. Secondly, in a typical system of administration, the public bureaucrats do not like to be accountable to the elected representatives. For inter-agency coordination within Dhaka city, a high level Coordination Committee was formed in late 1996 with the Dhaka City Mayor as the Coordinator. The Committee gradually became dysfunctional due to a leadership crisis and lack of bureaucratic cooperation.

Chief Guest

Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy

Mayor, Narayanganj City Corporation

Chair

Advocate Azmatullah Khan

Mayor, Tongi Municipality and President, Municipal Association Bangladesh

Speaker

Hon'ble Linda P Gonzalez

Mayor, Ligao City, Manila

HE MR. Muhammad Younus Nawandish

Mayor of Kabul

Hon'ble U.L. Titus Perera

Deputy Mayor of Colombo

Mr. Dormani Poudyal

President, Municipal Association of Nepal

Prof. Shamim Al Raji

Secretary General, Municipal Association of Bangladesh

Moderator

Mr. Monzurul Ahsan Bulbul

Boishaki Television

Recommendations

NGOs, donors, the private sector and civil societies should work together to ensure interaction between sector stakeholders as well as coordination among development partners. Being accountable to the people, it is the city corporation/municipality who should take the lead in ensuring coordination between their chiefs and the development authorities. Minimum educational qualification should be set for candidates of municipal elections, and programs should be undertaken to educate mayors on the Municipal Act of 2009.

There is no minimum educational qualification for the mayor or councillor candidates in the local government elections of Bangladesh. This allows people without minimum academic knowledge and literacy skills to get elected by popular votes, often using unsavoury means. They are also quite unaware of the substance of the Municipal Act of 2009 and therefore are rarely able to enforce it.

There is also a lack of coordination between the chiefs of the city corporations who are the most important persons in their respective cities, and the development authorities, who administer a bigger area and thus claim superiority over the corporations.





CSO's Roundtable

All partners on board

Civic organizations have expanded to grassroots over the past few years, identified problems and voluntarily networked to influence policy reforms. Media has provided support for the causes and NGOs have played a critical role in safeguarding the urban environment. For example, BAPA (Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon) brought critical environmental issues to public attention and involved similar organizations such as SUJON, BELA (Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association), TIB (Transparency International Bangladesh), IAB (Institute of Architects Bangladesh), BIP (Bangladesh Institute of Planners), etc. The NGOs have also fought uphill battles against land grabbers to protect the shore lands of the rivers around Dhaka.

Moderator
Mr. Badiul Alam Mazumder
Shujon

Keynote
Zarina Hossain
Architect

Panel
Dr. Humayra Islam
Shakti Foundation
Dr. Zafarullah Chowdhury
Gono Sasthya Kendra
Dr. Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah
Dhaka University
Mr. Kamaluddin
Association for Realisation of Basic Needs (ARBAN)
Mr. Zakir Hossain
Nagarik Uddayug

J K Baral
Bangladesh Poribesh Andoloan
Dr. Farzana Islam
Jahangirnagar University
Ms. Ayesha Khanam
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
Mr. M. Shahidul Haque
SARPV
Syed Mahbubul Alam
WBB Trust

Recommendations

Civil Society offices and networks should be formed at medium and small town levels, and power must be devolved from the centre to the local level to ensure effective participation of all urban stakeholders. Civic networks should be built to lead successful campaigns for achieving positive urbanization. Research initiatives should also be undertaken on a regular basis and civic networks should be built to lead successful campaigns for improving the condition of towns and cities.

Civic campaigns are raising awareness to voice mass demand for planned rapid public transport route, protection of heritage sites and infrastructures as well as natural water flows from the threat of chemical pollution and fire risks, establishing mass river transportation, and resolving cross border water sharing issues. The “Forum For Planned Chittagong” (FPC) emerged in mid-1996 and led a movement to save the century old Chittagong Court Building. The FPC has also made repeated appeals to save the protected hills both within the city and its periphery, provide footpaths and make provision for street vendors, expand the open space network, conserve heritage sites/ buildings, protect the Karnaphuli and Halda rivers and catchments, take actions to reduce traffic congestion and ease flow, etc.

There is a need for a mechanism within the local governance where dialogue and discussion with CSOs and stakeholders are the normal working practice. With opportunity to engage in meaningful debates and discussions on local development issues, CSOs would make a valuable contribution in improving the cities and towns. In the age of communication and networking, delivery of services and information opportunity for skill building and research and meeting of ideas and stakeholders would yield great results. Routine meetings among stakeholders for various purposes would help in creating a healthy local environment and make urban settlements more livable for all.

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সংস্কৃতি ও ঐতিহ্য

CULTURE & HERITAGE

BANGLADESH URBAN FORUM
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Culture & Heritage

The urban reflection

Bangladesh is rich in its heritage that has been formed by a composite of land, rivers and the lives of the people of the country. It has evolved over many centuries encompassing the cultural diversity of several social groups. Most of the towns and cities have developed on the banks of many rivers flowing through the country. The rivers that have played important roles in developing the urban cultures are dying due to land grabbing and pollution. Real estate developers are taking over agricultural and marshy lands for their housing projects, raising environmental concerns among the conscious citizens. These companies are also bringing down or taking over archaeological and historical sites and structures and turning them into commercial areas. Some of the historical sites and structures date back to 400-500 years.

Chief Guest

Mr. Abul Kalam Azad

Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs

Chair

Architect Mubassher Hossain

President, IAB

Keynote Speaker

Professor Muntasir Mamun

University of Dhaka

Panel

Mr. Rabiul Hussain

Poet and Architect

Md. Golam Quddus

Sammillito Sangskritik Jote

Prof Abu Sayeed

University of Asia Pacific

Professor Sharifuddin Ahmed

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh

Kuheli Islam

Chair, Music Department, Dhaka University

Recommendations

The government needs to come forward to impose regulatory steps to prevent illegal land intrusion to help build liveable towns and cities. Community organizations and public-private partnerships should be formed and encouraged to preserve Dhaka and other cities and towns with their age-old cultural traditions that are disappearing. The media should also disseminate the symbolic, historic, aesthetic, economic and informational values of the urban cultural heritage.

Appropriate public interventions are necessary to conserve the cultural heritage in the urban areas. There should be clear public policy directives for protection of the heritage sites and culture from extinction. Community and academic institutions should be encouraged to provide library facilities and introduce musical classes to educate the communities about the importance of culture and heritage. Different media should be used for dissemination of the symbolic, historic, aesthetic, economic and informational values of cultural heritage. Public-Private partnership should be developed to conserve the cultural property specifically designed for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science.





Youth in Urban Future

Getting them ready

On the occasion of the first national BUF conference, GIZ, with organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children, considered it crucial to give some of the youths of Bangladesh the opportunity to participate and contribute actively in the event.

In addition to organizing the session on “Youth in Urban Future”, the Good Urban Governance Project of GIZ partnered with Jaago and Aga Khan Foundation over the “BUF Young Reporters’ Initiative”. Six young volunteers attended the conference to listen and observe, as well draw attention to their issues and ideas. Outside the sessions, the Young Reporters interviewed the conference participants, asking their opinions of the different sessions and their overall impression of the event. Accompanied by two film teams documenting the session, they were the only reporter team that covered the entire event.

Encouragement from participants

Professor Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, Engineer, former Vice Chancellor of BRAC University and former Chairman of the National River and Earthquake Commissions encouraged the youth group to engage in awareness-raising about safeguarding against risks like earthquakes and floods. They were encouraged to voice their concerns to their landlords if the buildings they live in do not appear to be safe.



Guests

Mr. Mahbub Ahmed

Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed

Biswa Sahitya Kendra

Ms. Falguni Hamid

Bangladesh Shishu Academy

Mr. Jewel Aich

Magician

Advocate Elina Khan

Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation

Mr. Benzir Ahmed

Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Moderator

Muhammad Jahangir

Media Personality

Recommendations

Platforms should be created for youths at various levels so that they may express their views. One of the most powerful tools at the disposal of the young generation is social networking as they can use it to generate awareness. Following the Sri Lankan example, a youth parliament could be developed where they would be represented to express their opinions on any subject. The government may also consider establishing a youth community police service and a national youth council or forum and take necessary steps to set up skills training programs for the youth.

Ekrumul Hoque Titu, Mayor of Mymensingh Pourashava, reminded the Young Reporters that they should focus on their aims to achieve their goals. A representative of UN-Habitat suggested that the Young Reporters should present their experience of the first national BUF conference at the sixth World Urban Forum in Naples in September 2012.

Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy, Mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation, emphasized the importance of including the youth in the future planning of her city for sustainable results. She invited the young reporters to participate in the youth assembly that she planned to convene in Narayanganj.

After two exciting days of the event, the Young Reporters briefly presented their experiences in the “Youth in Urban Future” session to an audience of 300 people.





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নগর ঘোষণা এবং সমাপনী

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BANGLADESH

Making



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WSP



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FORUM
নগর ও শহর

FRESH URBAN FORUM
Cities & Towns Work for All





Closing Ceremony

The BUF conference culminated in a much welcomed Declaration of the Bangladesh Urban Forum drafted on the basis of the discussions and deliberations at the conference. It recognizes the importance of the urban sector and the urbanization process to Bangladesh's future development. Calling for inclusive urbanization and a more proactive national strategic management of it, the Declaration is also a written commitment of the Government to refine, adopt and implement the Draft Urban Sector Policy. The Declaration, in fact, has emerged as a tangible proof of the BUF's existence and its acceptance as a platform where stakeholders can have their voices heard.

Three "best urban practices" were also awarded at the end of the event.

The closing ceremony that followed the drafting of the declaration was attended by the Finance Minister as chief guest, and State Minister for LGRDC and State Minister for Housing and Public Works as the special guests. Among others, the UNDP Country Director also attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith stated that decentralisation could help resolve the housing problem, especially in urban areas. State Minister for LGRD Jahangir Kabir Nanak stressed the need for forging a social movement to stop criminal activities in the name of urbanization, and State Minister for Housing and Public Works Advocate Minister Abdul Mannan Khan gave his assurance that the government would take the Declaration of the Forum into consideration.

Chief Guest

Mr. Abul Mal Abul Muhit MP

Finance Minister

Special Guests

Mr. Jahangir Kabir Nanak

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives

Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan MP

State Minister for Housing & Public Works

Mr. A K M Mozammel Huq MP

Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Land

Mayor Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy

Narayanganj City Corporation

Advocate Azmatullah Khan

President, Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB)

Professor Nazrul Islam

Head, Bangladesh Urban Forum Secretariat

Mr. Stefan Priesner

Country Director, UNDP

Presided over by

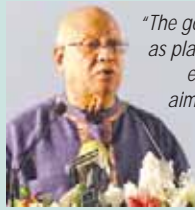
Mr. Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan

Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of LGRDC

Vote of thanks

Dr. Khondaker Showkat Hossain

Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Public Works



"The government should take the Forum's Declaration into consideration as planned and well managed urban growth is a must for the country's economic and social development. Planned urban growth must be aimed at addressing the problems associated with land use, housing and urban poverty, slum development and civic amenities."

Mr. Abul Mal Abul Muhith

Finance Minister



"The Declaration on Inclusive Urbanization is an outcome of expert discussions held at various sessions during the three-day event. I believe that the Declaration will bring about fruitful results in quality management and ensure sustainable urbanization in Bangladesh."

Mr. Jahangir Kabir Nanak

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives



"The government would take the forum's declaration into consideration. In this regard we all should be united to begin a social movement to stop criminalisation in the name of urbanization."

Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan MP

State Minister for Housing & Public Works



Mr. A K M Mozammel Huq MP



Dr. Khondaker Showkat Hossain



Mr. Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan



Mayor Ms Nargis Khatun



Advocate Azmatullah Khan



Professor Nazrul Islam

"We from UNDP are proud to have been part of this endeavor and look forward to supporting the institutionalization of the Bangladesh Urban Forum and to collaborating with the government in addressing key urban sector challenges."

Mr. Stefan Priesner

Country Director, UNDP



Declaration of the

PREAMBLE

1. We jointly recognize the importance of the urban sector and the urbanization process to Bangladesh's future development. This includes its contribution to economic growth, to poverty reduction, to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Government of Bangladesh's Vision 2021 agenda.
2. We also recognize the prevailing social, economic and environmental problems along with the unequal pattern of urbanization at regional levels and in cities arising as a result of rapid unplanned migration and urbanization and the heavy population concentrations within the major cities of Bangladesh.
3. Furthermore, we recognize; these weaknesses have generally been made worse by inadequate urban governance. This is given by over-centralization and inadequate popular participation.
4. We do note, however, the particular pressures faced by Bangladesh and its Government. These include: a high and accelerating rate of urbanization; severe climatic pressures and environmental vulnerabilities in rural areas; and the country's exceptional population densities.
5. We note, and affirm, the progressive direction given in the Government's Draft Urban Sector Policy and the Sixth Five Year Plan, which aims to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and effectively managed urbanization process.
6. In addition, we consider that joint actions and the creation of partnership initiatives can explore initiatives for tackling the problems faced.

KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN

7. The presence of severe pockets of poverty, social exclusion, deprivations, slums and squatter settlements within urban areas is an absolute priority for action. This requires a targeted and urgent response in a number of domains by a variety of actors. These responses will need to be at scale and sustained over the medium term.
8. The rural-urban migration process and the pattern of economic activity, driven by industrialization and exposure to environmental risks, are the underlying drivers of urbanization pressures. This calls for holistic policy responses and taking up relevant effective actions accordingly.
9. Major Service delivery failures in cities and towns exist and must be tackled. These are notably in water and sanitation, and access to other infrastructure, but also in schooling and health. These are severe enough to give rise to basic inequities and injustices, between city dwellers, and serve also to limit the inclusiveness of growth and welfare improvements.
10. Weak and ill-defined land tenure and property rights weaken both livelihoods and give rise to homelessness and social insecurities. Arbitrary evictions blight the lives and weaken the opportunities open to the poor to live fulfilled and happy lives.

Bangladesh Urban Forum

Issued on the occasion of the First National BUF Conference held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 5-7 December 2011

11. Poor environmental conditions in urban areas pose a direct threat to the welfare of all city dwellers, but especially the poor. Congestion, pollution and degradation of living and commercial space will also - if unchecked - directly slow the pace of development in a variety of domains.
12. The quality of urban governance requires improvement. This includes the upgrading of urban planning and administration. In addition, the level and nature of decentralization is in need of review, with a presumption in favour of further de-concentration of functions and the progressive devolution of powers.

A BOLD AGENDA FOR CHANGE

13. We affirm a joint vision of a prosperous but equitable, greener and fully sustainable future for urban Bangladesh, where the rights of all Bangladeshis are recognized. Moreover, we agree that all stakeholders have a role to play in bringing this about.
14. We jointly resolve that there is a need for more proactive national strategic management of urbanization in Bangladesh, which accentuates the gains and limits the weaknesses of the process. Further, we agree, that the duty of Government is to achieve a more balanced and more measured pattern of urbanization, prioritizing the issues related to social justice, environment and development works.
15. Recognizing these points, and the need for joined-up strategic thinking, the Government of Bangladesh commits as a first step, to refining, adopting and implementing the Draft Urban Sector Policy. The policy includes 24 sectors. These being: i) Patterns and processes of urbanization; ii) Local urban planning; iii) Local economic development and employment; iv) Urban local finance and resource mobilization; v) Urban land management; vi) Urban housing; vii) Urban poverty and slum improvement; viii) Urban environmental management; ix) Infrastructure and services; x) Urban transportation; xi) Health and education; xii) Water and sanitation; xiii) Disaster risk reduction; xiv) Facing climate change and its impact; xv) Social structure; xvi) Gender concerns; xvii) Urban children, the aged, the disabled and scavengers; xviii) Urban recreation, playgrounds, parks, open spaces, religious places, graveyards, crematoriums; xix) Cultural and aesthetic development; xx) Rural-urban linkages; xxi) Law and order; xxii) Legislation; xxiii) Urban governance; xxiv) Urban research, training and information.
16. We jointly commit to the institutionalization of the BUF. This would comprise a permanent office, which would support government and others concerned in policy formulation; and operate a monitoring and evaluation function for relevant research and development works.
17. Government will take the initiative in moving this agenda forward and call on various national organizations and development partners to support Government, when necessary.
18. We firmly believe that the Bangladesh Urban Forum will commence its activities in 2012 and take up medium and long term planning to ensure activities of the Forum in Divisional and District towns, beyond the capital city.

Members of the Bangladesh Urban Forum

7th December 2011

Participant Feedback

Toward the end of the 3-day event an evaluation form was handed out to the participants to gather their reaction to the conference and their assessment of its success. Over 300 completed forms that were collected revealed that 93 percent of the participants have found the event to be either excellent or good in achieving its overall objective of bringing stakeholders together. In terms of presentation and quality of discussion at the thematic sessions, 87 percent of the participants have found the event to be either good or excellent while 74 percent have found it to be excellent or good in terms of event organization.

Their responses indicated that the event was a timely and appropriate initiative that should be held in every district (the next one preferably in Chittagong) with stronger participation of mayors, community including slum dwellers, students and CSOs. Government policies related to urban issues should be evaluated in future BUF sessions to assess their effectiveness in achieving positive urbanization. At district level BUF sessions, the mayors should present the condition of their respective towns and cities along with their future development plans.

Preparations for the second session of the BUF should be started much earlier and there should be more media coverage to inform people for achieving greater participation.









Organizing Committee of 1st Session of Bangladesh Urban Forum

Mr. Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan

CHAIR

Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives

Dr. Khondaker Showkat Hossain

CO-CHAIR

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28. Representative of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon
29. Representative of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
30. Representative of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
31. Representative of Coalition for the Urban Poor
32. Representative of Nagar Daridra Bastibaseer Unnayan Sangstha (NDBUS)



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BUF

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North South University

MEMBER SECRETARY

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Project Director, SSP-2

Note:

Partners

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Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
Ministry of Housing & Public Works
Local Government Engineering Department
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Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha
Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme II
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Dhaka City Corporation
Dhaka Metropolitan Police
Dhaka Transport Coordination Board
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Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection Project II
Urban Development Directorate
Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (UPPR)

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Japan International Cooperation Agency
Urban Sector Local Consultative Group
United Kingdom Department for International Development
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
World Bank

National Partners

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Asiatic Society of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Association of Women for Self-Empowerment
Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association
Bangladesh Institute of Planners
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon
Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET)
BRAC
Campe
Centre for Urban Studies
Coalition for the Urban Poor
Eminence
Engender Health
FHI 360 Bangladesh
Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry
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