

## UNDP and UN-Habitat

### Partners' Meet on Integrated Urban Resilience

#### Concept Note and Agenda (as of 31 May 2023)

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 -- Time: 13.00h - 16.30h

Venue: Nyon Room, Varembé Conference Centre (CCV) Geneva (Rue de Varembé 9, 1202 Geneva)

And online - <https://undp.zoom.us/j/85467454190>

#### Background and Context

An analysis of the past decade of investments in urban resilience, *A Decade of Urban Resilience: An Analytical Review* [<https://www.undp.org/publications/analytical-review-decade-urban-resilience>] identifies significant gaps, existing demands and emerging needs especially in small, medium and coastal cities in SIDS, LDCs, L/MICs and fragile/crisis contexts. Given an already urbanized profile of humanity and the shift of development axis towards the cities, advancing resilience and sustainability of socio-economic and infrastructure assets in cities has become central to the development discourse.

On one hand, risks of all types are becoming increasingly manifest in urban spaces. Not only is there an evidentiary increase in the incidence and magnitude of disaster events and climate change impacts (including nearly 90% of the Covid cases), *The States of Fragility Report (2020)* indicates that nearly 43% of the people in fragile contexts are living in cities. This number is expected to rise to 48% by 2030 and 59% by 2050.

On the other hand, the urban centres are emerging as catalysts for growth, and the centre of development gravity is shifting towards the cities. Yet, at the same time, the convergence of multiple risks, development needs, governance deficits and socio-economic inequalities (discrimination, marginalization, poverty etc.) tends to undermine development, financial and infrastructural investments. This makes it imperative to invest in bottom-up resilience building to secure advancement towards realizing the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

Increasing urbanization and concentration of people, infrastructure and socio-economic assets is leading to a rapid accumulation of risks and vulnerabilities in cities. In the 136 biggest coastal cities, there are 100 million people – or 20% of their population – and \$4.7 trillion in assets exposed to coastal floods. Around 90% of urban expansion in developing countries is near hazard-prone areas and built through informal and unplanned settlements. Small and medium-sized cities have less capacity to deal with complex challenges and risks

and are likely to have a higher number of low-income and low-skilled residents compared to larger metropolitan areas.

The vulnerabilities, aggravating the impacts, are shared across all typologies of risks in cities and urban areas. The shared risk and vulnerability context in cities underscores the need to adopt shared risk management, resilience building and sustainable development approaches by all actors and stakeholders. This calls for making cities resilient, safe and inclusive places to ensure no one is left behind.

Reflecting the synergy among all strands of the 2030 Agenda on urban resilience and the need to institute a better understanding of existing needs and emerging priorities vis-à-vis holistic risk management and sustainable development at city/municipal level, UNDP and UN-Habitat are convening a Partners' Meet to benefit from the experience of key partners and stakeholders and inform the policy and programmatic work related thereto. Noting that many of these priorities tend to be addressed in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner, fostering synergies on urban resilience related issues will help institute a holistic multi-hazard risk reduction and resilience building approach while connecting the same to socio-economic and environmental aspects.

One of the key initiatives as part of urban resilience action is the joint Global Program by UNDP and UN-Habitat, the *Integrated Urban Resilience in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Coastal Cities (IUR-SIDS)*. It seeks to support 10 cities (located in challenging risk and development contexts in SIDS and comparative coastal areas), develop risk-informed urban development plans and implement urban resilience building interventions addressing all resilience dimensions i.e. physical, environmental, and socio-economic aspects while strengthening urban governance informed by a systems' thinking to secure resilient and sustainable development outcomes.

The programme will be implemented jointly by UNDP and UN-Habitat through a partnership-based approach while pro-actively fostering collaboration with UN and international organizations, regional inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), IFIs, technical, academic and research institutions, development partners, private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders at regional, sub-regional, national and city level to ensure synergies of action and convergence of approaches.

### Objective and Intent

UNDP and UN-Habitat are convening a Partners' Meet on Integrated Urban Resilience to socialize the vision and intent informing the collaborative action on urban resilience while seeking to benefit from the perspectives of development partners, stakeholders, national governments, inter-governmental organizations, think-tanks and other key organizations, both within and outside the UN system, to foster synergies of action and convergence of approaches on issues related to urban resilience. The Partners' Meet will foster a discussion on effective joined-up efforts and will bring to bear knowledge, expertise and technical resources to support delivery and financing, as well as research and innovation to advance risk-informed urban development and to build resilience aligned with Pillar-3 of the [New Urban Agenda](#) focusing on *Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development*.

The overall objectives of the Partners' Meet are to –

- a. Foster an understanding of the centrality of reducing urban risks and strengthening resilience to realize the vision and aspirations of all strands of the 2030 Agenda.
- b. Build a shared understanding of risks and vulnerabilities in cities and advance synergistic approach among all partners and stakeholders.
- c. Foster linkages between similar global/regional multi-partner urban resilience initiatives.
- d. Socialize the UNDP-UN-Habitat IUR-SIDS Program outputs, activities and approach including implementation through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) modality.
- e. Invite expression of interest from potential partners and organizations to support a specific set of countries/cities and outputs/activities.

## Agenda

### Opening Session

13:00 – 13:15

The Opening Session will provide an overarching context on urban risk management and resilience within the context of the 2030 Agenda and the on-going policy and programmatic engagement on the issue. Outlining the inter-linkages with other thematic areas like governance, climate adaptation, natural resource management, key sectors like water, energy, food security etc., the Session will highlight the need for augmenting global, regional, sub-regional and national partnerships to advance action on urban resilience.

#### Speakers (Online)

- **Ms. Asako Okai**, Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Crisis Bureau, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) – recorded video message

### Keynote Speaker

13:15 – 13:30

This Keynote Address will shed light on national insight into the challenges experienced by SIDS and outline needs, priorities and opportunities for effective action towards risk-informed and resilient urban development in small and medium cities in SIDS and coastal areas. The need for better complementarity between global, national and city-level policy, planning and programmatic work will be emphasized, specifically articulating the existing needs and emerging priorities from the perspectives of SIDS.

#### Speaker (TBC)

Minister of Housing, Government of Barbados/Senior Government Official

### IUR-SIDS Program: Presentation outlining key elements, activities and approach

13:30 – 13:50

This session will introduce the *Integrated Urban Resilience in SIDS and Coastal cities (IUR-SIDS) programme* and provide a snapshot of the joint policy and programmatic engagement by UNDP and UN-Habitat in key global and regional inter-governmental processes – especially in the light of the UNDP-UN-Habitat Enhanced Collaborative Framework with a focus on its 4<sup>th</sup> Priority Area i.e. ‘Urban Resilience’.

#### Speakers

- **Mr. Ronald Jackson**, Head of Disaster Risk Reduction & Recovery for Building Resilience, UNDP
- **Mr. Esteban Leon**, Head of the City Resilience Global Programme and Head (oic) of UN-Habitat Kosovo Programme, UN-Habitat

**Open discussion: 13.50 - 14.15**

### Tea/Coffee Break

14.15 – 14.45

### Urban Resilience in SIDS and Coastal Cities: Challenges and Opportunities Partner Perspectives and Open Discussion

14.45 – 16.15

The **Session** will explore approaches to risk-informed urban development and resilience-building in the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean SIDS and coastal countries/cities through contributions from leading inter-governmental organizations, international/regional financial institutions and development partners.

The **Open Discussion** will consider how partners from different sectors and regions are addressing the existing needs while also paving the way for meeting the emerging demands and priorities in light of the rapid pace of urbanization and development in cities especially in SIDS and coastal areas. It will also deliberate upon as to how potential synergies for a shared and convergent action can be facilitated enabling different actors and stakeholders to come together to build resilient cities.

#### Speakers

- **Mr. Daniel Best**, Director of Projects, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- **Mr. Karlos Moresi**, Program Advisor, Resilient Development Finance, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- **Mr. Stephen Goldfinch**, Head, DRM Unit, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- **Prof. Satoru Nishikawa**, Senior Advisor, JICA
- **Mr. Sunandan Tiwari**, Director, Global Implementation, ICLEI World Secretariat.
- **Dr. Emily Wilkinson**, Director, Resilient and Sustainable Islands (RESI), Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- **Dr. Karl-Heinz Gaudry Sada**, Advisor and Head of Southern Africa Component, Connective Cities Initiative, GiDRM, GiZ

#### Moderator

- **Mr. Ronald Jackson**, Head, Disaster Risk Reduction & Recovery for Building Resilience Team, UNDP

### Closing Remarks

16.15 – 16.30

#### Speaker

- **Dr. Graham Alabaster**, Head, UN-Habitat Geneva Office

### **Looking ahead**

Recognizing the need to take a decadal approach towards urban resilience, the Partners' Meet on Integrated Urban Resilience will set the stage for fostering a shared vision with a 2030 orientation. This will include utilizing the experience gained during Phase-1 implementation in 10 cities to prepare the ground for expanding the coverage to more cities, potentially 100 by 2030, and to deliver sustainable and institutionalized resilience building pathways enabling cities to contribute to the achievement of the broader 2030 Agenda aspirations. The multi-pronged approach will help deliver sustainable development and resilience building dividends across all strands of the 2030 Agenda.