Inputs into the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Response
to
HIII Policy Paper frameworks

31 January 2016

Comments on PU3 National Urban Policy

- **Recommend greater recognition of the fact that development of an NUP is an inherently difficult process, requiring high-level commitment** (ie President's office or similar):
    - Urban functions and finances split between national, local, and intermediate levels of government
    - Urban functions split between different ministries and departments, at the same and different levels
    - Coordination of these actors very difficult: need extremely effective coordination mechanism and acceptance from all actors
    - Difficult to engage broad community in such abstract policy

- Challenge: in countries without a strong understanding of the "urban agenda", and the potential for economic development and environmental benefits that urbanisation brings, "urbanisation" can be seen as "urban planning". **There is a need to develop a greater awareness of a urbanisation as a cross-cutting social and economic trend, rather than the domain of urban planning and infrastructure provision.**

- Challenge: Development of an NUP, and particularly M&E of its implementation, can require a significant investment of time and resources from all actors involved. In developing countries, this may be a burden on both lead agency and other implementers. Efficient and effective methods of policy formulation and M&E need to be developed which are responsive to the resources of the national context, in light of competing priorities.

- Key Priorities: Section 2b comments that "Although many policy domains were exclusively under national jurisdictions in the past, now most areas of domestic policy are a shared responsibility."

    - Needs recognition that, although this is the case in many European and North American contexts, in the global south many policy issues are still under solely national jurisdictions, which complicates development of NUP

- Key priorities: the importance and demands of an NUP need to be clearly communicated to local stakeholders and implementing agencies, who may often be unaware of the rationale for or intent of an NUP

- List of key priorities: **suggest addition**: An NUP can help to define or clarify the system of urban governance include roles, responsibilities, objectives, and coordination, where this is not specified in a constitution or other legislation

- List of key priorities: **suggest strengthening point 8** (supporting cities actions for environmental sustainability): An NUP can set out handful of overarching principles for urban development – ie, cities should develop to ensure social, economic, and environmental sustainability; cities should be equitable; cities should develop in a way that encourages local economic development, public transport usage etc

Comments on PU5 Governance

- Strengthening municipal governance, including multi-layered and multi-stakeholder governance, will require increased coordination and different government bodies working together. To best capture the opportunities provided by urbanisation, there will be a need to break down silos between different technical and sectoral bodies and develop an awareness of holistic and strategic urban development. In many cases this will require strong and informed political leadership.

Comments on PU9 Urban Services

- Urban service provision is increasingly being decentralised. Framework should emphasise the need to also decentralise either revenue, or revenue-raising powers.
- Emphasise the importance of government collecting infrastructure charges/levies on new infrastructure provision, particularly in greenfield developments
- Very little explicit discussion of pro-poor basic infrastructure provision: including slum upgrading
- Importance of cross-subsidisation of basic infrastructure, on equality and social justice grounds (link to PU1 – Right to the City)
- Importance of advance planning in ensuring provision of basic infrastructure across all sections of society
- Discussion of innovative solutions for countries facing rapid urbanisation with weak finances or institutional capacity: provision of different levels of service or trunk-only infrastructure, central distribution point etc. And associated: need to develop infrastructure in a way that it can be upgraded later in line with resource availability.
- Importance of providing disaster-resilient infrastructure and basic services (mainstreaming DRR concerns)

Housing Policy

- Shift from housing provision to creating enabling environment is a major change for government ways of thinking. Agencies delegated with responsibility for housing – which previously may have meant construction and delivery – are faced with a more managerial and governance oriented task, involving finance, taxation, and shaping market conditions. This may require a significantly different skill set, and will require broader collaboration with other government agencies than was previously necessary.

    - Need for broad collaboration & coordination when developing and implementing a market-oriented housing policy. This will require strong leadership and commitment from all actors involved.

    - Will also involve a more cooperative relationship with private developers, understanding their drivers and working with them to ensure that housing is provided at all segments of the market.

- Land is one of the key determinants in housing affordability and availability, along with housing typology. Insufficient serviced land will inevitably lead to the formation of slums. Land provision can be one of the 'bottlenecks' in providing housing. In many countries, the establishment of a single land-release authority with the power to coordinate infrastructure providers has been successful in ensuring adequate serviced land for housing.

- Need to integrate disaster risk reduction concerns into housing policy – as a mainstream, not an afterthought. Resilient buildings – constructed according to adequate building standards, in safe environments, should be considered non-negotiable. Poor urban citizens, and particularly those in slums or informal settlements, are often most vulnerable to disasters – due to being located in hazard prone areas (flood areas, landslide, subsidence), and having poor or no infrastructure. Adequate urban planning and building code can help to ensure that DRR concerns are mainstreamed. Preventing slum formation can go a long way to reducing disaster vulnerability.