

WORKSHOP ON PRE-2020 AMBITION:
URBANIZATION AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS IN FACILITATING CLIMATE
ACTION IN CITIES¹

Thursday, 14 November 2013, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Take-home messages from the facilitator
Mr. Burhan Gafoor (Singapore)

At the workshop entitled “Workshop on pre-2020 ambition: urbanization and the role of governments in facilitating climate action in cities”, held in Warsaw, Poland, on 14 November 2013, statements were made by representatives of national and subnational governments, the private sector and civil society on their efforts to address climate change through the implementation of sustainable urban development policies and initiatives in two key urbanization-related thematic areas: transport and buildings.

Participants engaged in an in-depth discussion and expressed their views on keynote presentations² and panel interventions. They also provided their insights on following questions proposed for discussion:

(a) What can be done under the UNFCCC process to assist Parties and other stakeholders in identifying best practices and success stories and in accelerating their replication and scaling up in accordance with national circumstances and sustainable development needs?

(b) What further steps could the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) take in the 2014–2015 period to advance its work on increasing ambition through the workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition, referred to in decision 1/CP.17, paragraph 7?

Some of the points raised by speakers and participants are presented below:

1. The workshop marked a watershed moment under the Convention by gathering multiple stakeholders together for a formal discussion on addressing climate change. This also marks the beginning of a constructive dialogue between the diverse stakeholders to better understand their roles in addressing climate change and enhancing action through collective efforts in the pre-2020 period and beyond.
2. In 2010, more than half (50.5 per cent) of the world’s population lived in urban areas. Cities currently account for two thirds of the world’s overall energy consumption and 70 per cent of global greenhouse emissions. By 2050, 6.2 billion people or 70 per cent of the global population will be living in urban areas.
3. According to the *Emissions Gap Report* published by United Nations Environment Programme, transport and buildings sectors demonstrate significant mitigation potential.

¹ This workshop under workstream 2 is organized as a part of a series of workshops of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) held in 2013, including those held during the first part of the second session of the ADP, held in Bonn, Germany, from 29 April to 3 May 2013, that were focused on low-emission development opportunities and on mitigation and adaptation opportunities related to land use and the workshop entitled “Pre-2020 ambition: energy transformation, including scaling-up renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency and consideration of carbon capture and storage”, organized during the second part of the second session of the ADP, held in Bonn from 4 to 13 June 2013.

² Presentations delivered at the workshop are available at
<http://unfccc.int/meetings/warsaw_nov_2013/workshop/7875.php>.

International and national efforts to address climate change can be accelerated by tapping into opportunities the cities face in addressing climate change in these thematic areas.

4. There exists an interactive and mutually reinforcing relationship between national and subnational governments with policies adopted and implemented at different levels of government. National governments play a critical role by providing incentives through robust, long-term regulatory frameworks and financing mechanisms, while many policies and actions for mitigation and adaptation must be implemented at the subnational level through local policies. National governments can enable and facilitate the role of cities in key areas of housing, transport and energy sectors, thereby allowing subnational authorities to make a difference in addressing climate change. This synergistic relationship needs to be optimized and enhanced to encourage ambitious action at the city and municipal level.

5. It is evident that in many countries national governments are working closely with and enabling regional/state and local governments to tap into the potential of cities in addressing climate change. It is also evident that cities are taking a leading role in addressing climate change and contributing to national efforts which would be reflected in the national greenhouse gas inventories of Parties.

6. Financing needed to meet the infrastructure demands of a growing global urban population is measured in trillions of dollars. This provides a huge opportunity to ensure that the new infrastructure put in place to meet the demand is sustainable, resilient to the impacts of climate change and that it promotes inclusiveness and urban poverty reduction.

7. There are abundant opportunities to replicate and further scale up efforts already underway. In countries like Colombia and Mexico, national governments are putting in place policies to assist cities in advancing the sustainable development agenda. Efforts already underway could be further strengthened through complementary policies and actions of national, regional/state and local governments with support from international cooperative initiatives and an active engagement of the private sector and civil society. Both within and outside the Convention, Parties have a critical role to play in identifying opportunities to work with their subnational counterparts and to scale up and replicate local successes from around the globe.

8. In order to capitalize on this opportunity, constraints around financial and human resources need to be addressed. It is critical to build institutional capacity of local authorities for integrated urban planning and create awareness of decision makers and citizens to facilitate climate action on the ground. Many national governments have already put in place financing programmes to enhance the implementation and build the capacity of local governments. This is encouraging and needs to continue.

9. It is important to engage the private sector to mobilize investment, but this should not replace the commitment of Parties under the Convention with regard to provision of support; it can complement it. There are many examples of private sector entities working closely with governments around the world, including efforts to reduce energy consumption of government-owned buildings by introducing new technologies.

10. Engaging civil society and other stakeholders was also considered an important ingredient for success in efforts to address climate change. Many international cooperative initiatives, such as C40, ICLEI, the International Partnership For Energy Efficiency Cooperation, World Green Buildings Council, and the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, are actively engaged in promoting sustainable policies in the transport and buildings sectors with climate change benefits.

11. A few Parties emphasised the need to look at the role of cities and local entities through the broader perspective of the national government as ultimately actions at all levels are

consolidated and contribute to the national inventory of emissions reduction. In this regard, there was recognition of the need to be sensitive to the specific circumstances and context of different Parties when discussing the role of cities and local entities.

12. Overall, Parties recognised the need for further dialogue and discussion and identified the following areas for continued work under the ADP:

(a) Facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices of cities, in the context of the pre-2020 mitigation ambition ministerial in June 2014;

(b) Organize a forum of government and local actors to identify meaningful opportunities to scale up mitigation actions and adaptation efforts at the subnational level in the pre-2020 time period;

(c) Request the secretariat to prepare a technical paper on opportunities for actions with high mitigation potential.
