
The local level in multi-level climate and energy governance: the role of rural communities in an urban age

Tuesday, October 13, 2015
Program and background materials
(conference edition)



The local level in multi-level climate and energy governance: the role of rural communities in an urban age

The global process of urbanization and the importance of city-level action for tackling climate change are widely acknowledged. Related implications for rural communities and their changing role in the fight against climate change have been relatively neglected. This conference closes this gap by highlighting existing experiences from rural climate and energy governance with a focus on China, India and Europe. Local success stories will be presented and compared and their contributions assessed within a multi-level perspective on global climate and energy governance. A particular emphasis is placed on the enabling environment for climate-friendly investments in rural areas as well as the importance of integrating rural and urban strategies for climate change mitigation. In a final session, key findings from the conference will be linked to ongoing international negotiations at COP 21 and HABITAT III with the objective of formulating related policy messages emerging from the discussions.

Conference Program

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Session 1	The local level in multi-level climate and energy governance: the importance of rural communities in an urban age
9.15 – 11.00	<p>Welcome: Prof. Dr. Mark Lawrence, Scientific Director, IASS</p> <p>Introduction and conceptual framing: Prof. Dr. Martin Jänicke, Senior Fellow, IASS</p> <p>Session chair: Dr. Sebastian Helgenberger, Head of Plattform Energiewende (TPEC) at IASS</p> <p>High-level session: Dr. Yongsheng Zhang, Deputy Director-General of Department of Development Strategy and Regional Economy, Development Research Centre of the State Council of the People's Republic of China</p> <p>Hans-Josef Fell, former Member of the German Bundestag, Die Grünen</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Carlo Jäger, Head of Green Growth, Global Climate Forum</p>
11.00 – 11.30	TEA TIME

<p>Session 2</p>	<p>Local climate and energy governance: the role of rural communities</p>
	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What is the particular role of rural communities in the context of multi-level climate and energy governance? ■ What do current local-level approaches to rural climate and energy governance look like? ■ Is there a need for better integrating urban climate and energy governance with surrounding rural communities? What good practice examples exist?
<p>11.30 – 13.00</p>	<p>Session chair: Dr. Annika Bose Styczynski, Plattform Energiewende, IASS</p> <p>Jeppe Jensen, Covenant of Mayors</p> <p>Martin Nesbit, Head of Environment and Climate Governance Programme, Institute of European Environmental Policy</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Sabine Barles, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne</p> <p>Bernhard Osterburg, Thünen Institute</p>
<p>13.00 – 14.00</p>	<p>LUNCH</p>
<p>Session 3</p>	<p>Mobilizing climate friendly investments in rural communities</p>
	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are priority investments needs for building climate-friendly and resilient rural communities? ■ What are particular opportunities and challenges for mobilizing climate friendly investments in rural communities? ■ What role do urban centers play for mobilizing climate friendly investments in rural communities?
<p>14.00 – 15.30</p>	<p>Session chair: Dr. Armin Haas, Co-Lead Economics & Culture Program, IASS</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Joyashree Roy, Jadavpur University Kolkata</p> <p>Howaida Barakat, Senior Sustainable Development Expert, Egypt</p> <p>Janina Oest, KfW</p> <p>Andreas Bleschke, Climate Protection Coordinator, Teltow-Fläming</p>
<p>15.30 – 16.00</p>	<p>TEA TIME</p>

Session 4

Concluding Panel: The role of rural communities in global climate and energy governance: from COP 21 to HABITAT III

16.00 – 17.30

Guiding questions:

- How are the opportunities and challenges of climate and energy governance in rural communities being addressed in international fora?
- How are rural communities represented at the international level?
- What are key messages from the conference for COP21 and HABITAT III?

Session chair: **Dr. Rainer Quitzow**, Plattform Energiewende, IASS

Dr. Vincent Kitio, Chief, Urban Energy Unit, UN-Habitat

Alexander Carius, Managing Director, Adelphi

Dr. Vera Rodenhoff, Head of Division of International Affairs for Environment, Energy and Urban Development, Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Prof. Dr. Martin Jänicke, Senior Fellow, IASS

17.30 – 19.00

RECEPTION

An introduction to the conference theme by Prof. Dr. Martin Jänicke, Senior Fellow, IASS

The global process of urbanization and the importance of city-level action for tackling climate change are widely acknowledged. Related implications for rural communities and their changing role in the fight against climate change have been relatively neglected. This conference contributes to closing this gap by highlighting existing experiences from rural climate and energy governance in China, India and Europe. Local success stories will be presented and compared and their contributions assessed within a multi-level perspective on global climate and energy governance.

There is no global governance without using the intermediate levels of multi-level governance. This is particularly true in climate governance. If the UNFCCC secretariat would try to directly address the 7.3 bn. citizens of the world, the first problem would be to translate the message into different languages. The next necessary step would be to adapt the message to the different regional conditions. Many other steps would be necessary to address the world population as such – without a multi-level government. But in the best case of such a direct message there would be no support and no reinforcing dynamics and no vertical and horizontal learning and lesson-drawing. In other words: there is no alternative to using a multi-level governance approach if climate (or any other) governance should take place at a global scale.

Therefore, if we speak about the role of local communities in global climate governance, we should take a multi-level perspective. This is particularly important because local communities of rural villages are a weak player. Therefore support from higher levels is necessary. The crucial question is: which support from which level?

Let me turn to climate protection at the local level of villages. Why is it a relevant level of climate protection? The rural "hinterland" is where most renewable energy is produced. The countryside can provide carbon sinks if sequestration of CO₂ is at stake. The IPCC in its 5th Assessment Report comes to the conclusion that the 2° degree scenarios require not only the broad deployment of clean and highly efficient energy technologies but also "a wide range of changes in land use" with a strong role of bioenergy and afforestation. The IPCC also discusses the probable short-term "overshoot" of the 2° degree target, which necessitates the additional removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere at a later stage.¹ This will require large-scale investment into nature capital.

¹„Mitigation scenarios reaching about 450 ppm CO₂eq in 2100 typically involve temporary overshoot of atmospheric concentration...overshoot scenarios typically rely on the availability and widespread deployment of BECCS and afforestation in the second half of the century“ (IPCC 2014, 12).

Who will do this? Who would be available for this type of investment in the countryside? Which kind of interest could be mobilized? What are the governance needs if a climate strategy is necessary, which is based on investments in natural capital? Such questions are particularly relevant if we turn to the opportunities of a low-carbon strategy for the countryside. There are many examples of poor villages that have become relatively rich via investments in renewable energy and/or nature protection for eco-tourists. We will discuss such cases of best practice.

What is the role of rural communities in an urban age? This question refers to the fact that at present we see a booming agenda-setting relating to low-carbon cities and the “New Urban Agenda”. There is, however, no given harmony of interests between cities and their rural environment. Cities expand at the expense of villages, urban sprawl destroys surrounding natural space. Cities absorb qualified workers from the countryside. Their enterprises are often more competitive. The role of rural-urban linkages for effective climate protection represents another important question to be addressed by the conference. Finally, we ask the question how these local level challenges and dynamics of climate protection can be effectively supported by international processes, such as the UNFCCC climate negotiations or the HABITAT III process culminating in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016.

Messages from selected speakers

Dr. Yongsheng Zhang

Deputy Director-General of Department of Development Strategy and Regional Economy, Development Research Centre of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

Pilot Green Development Case in Poor Regions in China

This paper presents a case study on a pilot green development in a less developed region (Hubei province) in China, and focuses on three issues. First, why we conduct the green growth (GG) pilot in poor regions. A simple answer is that the traditional development pathway is no longer feasible, and new opportunities represented by green growth are emerging. Though the development paradigm established since the Industrial Revolution has brought prosperity for the minority of the population represented by industrialized countries, it has caused severe environmental consequences, including climate change, environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, etc. The existing development paradigm is not just environmentally unsustainable and no longer feasible, but also in a way departing from the ultimate purpose of development ---- happiness. Hence, we need to rethink the purpose of development and shift to a new green development paradigm.

How is the GG pilot conducted? By exploring the new green development pathway, the purpose of the pilot case is to turn the existing conflicting relationship between economic development and environmental protection into a mutually-reinforcing relationship, so that the protection of environment and local culture can become a prerequisite, basis and driving force for economic development in the poor regions. Specifically, it consists of three pillars.

- *Eco-environmental protection.* Through building a new egret wetland and transforming to eco-organic agriculture as a starting point, it distinguishes the pilot area from other polluted areas, so the market value of agricultural products in the area could be largely enhanced.
- *Green economy promotion program.* By exploring alternative farming (for instance, internet-based, integrated rice-duck farming, IRDF), to completely eliminate the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormone, etc., the organic agriculture will further catalyze various relevant industries.
- *Low-carbon eco village community.* The target is to significantly improve the quality of rural life, and, through the realization of the first target, to create conditions for tourism, leisure, experience, ecological, cultural, nursery, ecological education, housing, etc. The plan includes: a low cost eco-solution for "zero energy" buildings (including wall insulation, passive solar, distributed photovoltaic, vertical greening, etc.); a constructed wetland for cleaning-up waste water; garbage classification and ecological ways for dealing with household waste. Village landscape design and planning are introduced.

Major problems exist at two levels. The first is at the institutional and policy level. Since the existing institutions and policy were intended for supporting the traditional industrialization pathway, they cannot meet the requirements of green development. These problems include: the official performance evaluation system, rural land system, tax and finance system, payment for ecosystem services, etc. The second level is about implementation. Local knowledge and support at the ground level, including from local government, are among the most essential for success. political regulations, which directs profitable private capital into these new developments, is the decisive political task of the coming years.

Hans-Joseph Fell

Former Member of the German Bundestag, Bündnis90/Die Grünen

The global challenges for humanity to live together in prosperity are getting bigger and appear increasingly insurmountable. War, terror, poverty, refugees, degradation of entire habitats, particularly due to global warming, are increasing in number rather than declining. The cause is often the unjust world economy, which mainly relies on the use of fossil and nuclear raw materials.

The complete replacement of the conventional energy system with emission-free or CO₂-neutral renewable energy is at the heart of a successful strategy to address these major challenges of humanity. In addition to an emission-free economy, a sustainable global economy requires an economic development path, which can further reduce high carbon concentrations in the atmosphere at a grand scale, to a level not exceeding 350 ppm. The agricultural sector is of particular importance in this context. By the greening of degraded soils, it is possible to restore agricultural land and to recreate previously lost habitats. Therefore, tackling the challenge of reverse soil degradation is of considerable importance. Sustainable farming methods for food and bioenergy, humus, water-saving irrigation, desalination of ocean water and decentralized renewable energies in rural areas represent key strategies for the recovery of large lost habitats on degraded land. They create new livelihoods for millions of people and can help prevent rural exodus and refugee movements. They create carbon sinks, combat hunger, poverty and lack of energy not only in underdeveloped regions.

Rural communities are frequently established with co-operative structures and are able to create agro-forestry and agro-photovoltaic systems, renewable energy projects, new technologies, production of biochar and Terra Preta.

At large scale, a movement from below has already been initiated with decisions at local, regional and national level to seek a 100 percent renewable energy supply which has already been achieved in many projects. To support this movement with political regulations, which directs profitable private capital into these new developments, is the decisive political task of the coming years.

Jeppe Jensen

Covenant of Mayors

Joint Sustainable Energy Action Plans – Covenant of Mayors

The Covenant of Mayors (COM) is a bottom up movement established in 2008 to provide solid methodologies and support to fast-track development and implementation of Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP).

88% of Signatories of COM have less than 50.000 inhabitants, covering only 17% of the total COM population. This fact resulted in a specific focus on this share and their needs as a local authority in order to meet and exceed the EU 2020 targets of reducing their CO₂ emissions with 20% within their territory.

Based on the experience from the COM Office the main challenges for the small and medium size local authorities is often a lack of resources and expertise in relation to emission inventories and climate and energy planning. The high number of small and medium cities indicates a clear political ambition and will to reduce their CO₂ emissions. The COM Office has, in collaboration with local authorities therefore designed the process of committing to the COM as a group of smaller local authorities. This enables smaller municipalities to benefit from shared recourse, expertise, project plans, financing as well as procurement.

Since April 2012, 181 groups have duly submitted their joint political commitments. From the most recent statistics these groups vary a lot in population size and number of local authorities. The most recent statistics shows that the average size of the joint SEAPs is 7 local authorities with an average population size of around 6500 inhabitants.

The joint SEAP options have in particular gained momentum in Spain and Italy where regions and provinces are heavily involved in the local Covenant activities and provide a significant support in the preparations and coordination of the Joint SEAPs.

Martin Nesbit

Head of Environment and Climate Governance Programme, Institute of European Environmental Policy

Climate change is often treated as primarily a challenge of adaptation for rural areas. However, rural communities will become increasingly implicated in major questions of mitigation policy. This will be in response to two pressures. In the first place, as easy wins in terms of decarbonisation of electricity are delivered at national and EU level, land use sectors such as forestry and agriculture, and sectors of particular relevance to life in rural areas such as transport, will form an increasingly significant proportion of the remaining emissions, and will be subject to much greater pressure to reduce emissions. Secondly, the land use implications of investment in renewable energy will become increasingly visible.

A number of actions on climate mitigation in rural communities have developed in recent years. Climate mitigation in the agricultural sector will not be considered in detail in this presentation. A number of mitigation projects have been developed at rural community level, particularly through the LEADER axis, including small scale renewable energy projects, numerous energy efficiency projects, awareness raising and education projects. Their defining characteristic is that they are small-scale (because of their community nature), and (although worthwhile) will have limited impact on overall decarbonisation targets.

A more ambitious approach to governance can be developed through a clearer national and EU-level planning approach to decarbonisation, focusing on technologies and location, and addressing cumulative landscape-level impacts of renewable energy. This can facilitate a dialogue about local land-use implications, local consent, and compensation. This approach, combined with similar clarity on the expectations in terms of mitigation targets for the land use sectors (particularly agriculture and forestry), will help to clarify the opportunities available for rural areas, and the contribution expected from them.

Professor Dr. Sabine Barles

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, UMR Géographie-Cités

**Urban and rural areas in climate and energy governance:
governing energy and materials flows?**

Taking urban metabolism as a starting point, it is easy to demonstrate cities' dependence on rural areas. This dependence is the very characteristic of cities, born from a socio-spatial specialisation. Introducing the need for renewable energy use increases this dependence, since a large part of renewable energy should be provided by bioproductive land located outside the city. Hence, food and energy production also become increasingly inter-related. Unfortunately, this is rarely considered by local policies.

Today, urban metabolism is embedded in the global metabolism that characterises human societies and is not subject to any true governance – governance that would be dedicated to energy and material flows and that would help dematerialization and equality. Urban metabolism (comprising its rural dimension) is then the consequence of various policies and strategies that impact energy and material flows, and that involve stakeholders of various kinds: private and public, international, national and local. Non-local stakeholders, markets and policies dominate the rural part of the global metabolism (see the EU's Common Agricultural Policy). Most of these policies and strategies are de-territorialised.

This is the general picture in France and in other parts of the world. However, some attempts exist to develop territorialised/local climate and energy governance in application of European and national regulations and programmes, or as a result of local initiatives. Three energy and climate planning tools can be mentioned: the Regional Climate, Air Quality and Energy Plan (Schéma régional du climat, de l'air et de l'énergie), jointly defined by the Prefect of the region and the regional council (compulsory for every region); the Climate and Energy Plan (Plan climat énergie territorial), compulsory for every département or local authority with a population of over 50,000 inhabitants; the Positive-Energy Territory (territoire à énergie positive, 100% RES Communities), dedicated to rural communities (sometimes including small cities) on a voluntary basis. These tools are very young so it is difficult to evaluate their results, but it is possible to shortly analyse them. Some characteristics can be identified:

- Regarding the mitigation of climate change, most of the plans concentrates on energy, excluding major issues like agriculture and animal production, or diets;
- Energy is addressed in quite different ways in urban and rural areas. Smart and high-tech solutions dominate in urban areas – with no consideration of the indirect impacts of these solutions in terms of material and energy –, whereas more ecological solutions characterise rural areas that emphasise their autonomy, often forgetting that their products (food and sometimes fuel) flow to cities;

- Rural-urban relationships are rarely considered. Widening the view to other environmental policies shows that when these relationships are addressed, it is on a marginal basis, for instance through short supply chains that concern less than 1% of the food demand, or through the production of urban composte dedicated to surrounding rural areas and representing less than 0,1% of the nutrient demand.

Moreover, two models of urban-rural relationships appear in this context:

- One emphasising the role of metropolisation: according to this hypothesis, rural areas can be considered as the suppliers (in terms of metabolism) and/or the playgrounds (in terms of leisure, sports, recreation) of cities. As a result, cities should have a greater influence on rural areas and extend their governance and power to them – some cities already do regarding particular resources.

- Another one, which can be considered as the answer to the previous one, emphasises the need for rural areas to be autonomous in terms of metabolism and especially energy (see above).

If we consider that urban and rural are physically connected through energy and material flows, it would be important to explore different ways of organising their relationships and the governance of these flows. Two paths can be suggested, inspired by recent urban-rural experiments:

- Organic agriculture for a better urban water quality: in some cases, contracts exist between a city and farmers (or a rural authority) situated close to drinking water catchments in order to help them to turn to organic farming. The aim for the city is to improve water quality in rural areas thanks to the decrease in industrial fertilisers and plant protection products; so urban water supply is improved as well. This could be a source of inspiration regarding energy and climate governance and urban-rural relationships.

- Reciprocity contracts (contrats de réciprocité): this new tool, created at the beginning of 2015, has just been implemented on an experimental basis in France. The idea is to develop urban-rural relationships on the basis of equity and reciprocity, in a cooperative way: the two partners exchange expertise, flows, services, etc. The contracts are not specifically dedicated to climate and energy governance, but can be. Four exploratory urban-rural partnerships (that have the peculiarity to connect non-contiguous areas) are currently tested. Such experiments also exist in Denmark, Italy, and Germany.

Prof. Dr. Joyashree Roy

ICSSR National Fellow, Professor of Economics, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

Climate Friendly Investments in Rural India: Priority, Source and Urban Linkages

Cities as focus areas for climate friendly investment reflect priorities and biases of selected countries where 80–90% people live in urban areas. In contrast, 70% of Indians still live in rural areas. Hearing their voice can guide us better for understanding priorities for climate friendly investments in rural India. For example, in the post-harvest season all kinds of vegetables and fruits get rotten before they reach the urban markets. This is due mainly to a lack of cold storage facilities and a food processing industry, which does not come to the point of produce due to a lack of adequate and reliable power supply. As a consequence living in rural areas is not going beyond subsistence level. Today India produces no less than a dozen of top quality rice varieties, cereal varieties, mango varieties and so on through modest irrigation and advanced agricultural equipments. This, if strategically managed cannot only feed its own population but can feed very large parts of the rest of the world. The much talked about adverse impacts on soil quality and water depths are a misrepresentation of environmental concerns: they result from a lack of investment in environmental resource management and in actually managing these resources. Field experiences raise hope when it is seen that orchards are replacing paddy cultivation in some of the degraded lands of Punjab, drip irrigation is replacing flooded irrigation, vegetables and horticulture is bringing in more cash and diversity in dietary patterns. So, to answer **what the priority investment needs** for building climate-friendly and resilient rural communities are is rather straight forward: advanced in-situ/mobile storage facilities, transport and communication, food processing industry growth in rural areas, reliable power supply, advanced efficient agricultural equipment, improvement in soil quality, knowledge of alternative agricultural practices, and efficient irrigation pump sets. Rural farmers do attach varying priority to each of these depending on whether they are in drought prone areas or in flood prone areas.

There are various sources that are being mobilized for climate friendly investments in rural communities. Some are pro-active and some are re-active. Pro-active ones are planned under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurantee Act. It has played a very important role in rural India, complementing regular sources like bank loans, insurance support schemes, other governmental funding sources, including subsidies. Some flow of adaptation funds at an experimental level and private sector fund flow are also occurring. But during extremes, crop loss, borrowing, dissaving, asset loss, and health insecurity are the major challenges. Urban centers as major consumers play an important role by transferring funds to rural communities. However, in the absence of direct marketing facilities, the trickle down effect are often times less pronounced as finance is distributed in the middle of the supply chain.

Janina Oest

Infrastructure Finance, KfW

KfW programs for the mobilization of climate friendly investments in rural communities

The municipal level plays a significant role in the (local) implementation of the German Energiewende. On the one hand, municipalities are providers and/or producers of energy and electricity; on the other hand they are major energy consumers. Moreover, they function as a role model for local enterprises and citizens when making investments. This double role usually is a big challenge for the municipalities: caught between an investment backlog and a newly created “debt brake” (Schuldenbremse) there is often only little leeway for investments in the Energiewende. It is these challenges that KfW’s promotional programs seek to address.

Loans (i.e. at reduced interest rates) and grants offer an incentive for investments by increasing the cost effectiveness of certain measures or by reducing their pay-back period. The municipal level is confronted with a variety of investment areas. Among those, the sector of energy-efficient construction and refurbishment is a major one, since buildings make up a considerable part of CO₂ emissions. However – especially at the urban neighborhood level – a more integrated approach makes sense: over and above the focus on a single building, the consideration of several sectors of energy consumption such as heat/water/sewage supply systems, urban lighting or traffic can help to reveal and exploit synergies.

Before undertaking actual investments, the creation of an integrated neighborhood concept and/or the initiation of an active implementation management (which can be promoted by KfW’s grant program) represent ambitious measures to create incentives for investments in an Energiewende. Despite the “urban” focus in the grant program’s name, the grant is explicitly not only targeting urban quarters in cities, but also small municipalities and rural administrative districts. Furthermore, inter-communal cooperation is possible (for example a rural administrative district coordinating the project for its smaller municipalities). KfW’s flexibility in this regard is being appreciated: two thirds of the grants go to municipalities with less than 50.000 inhabitants.

Andreas Bleschke

Climate Protection Coordinator, County Teltow-Fläming, Germany

There are multiple stakeholders involved and there is a bunch of tasks to protect the climate and to reduce Greenhouse Gases, most notably CO₂.

The conversion to renewable energy, the saving of energy and increase in efficiency, the planning and engineering of structural changes, the need to re-think and adapt forestry and agriculture as well as our health care system has to be realized by energy producers, network operators, consumers, industry/businesses, private individuals, and municipalities.

Currently, only 1000 out of 9000 municipalities in Germany visibly engage in climate actions. This is a result of limited qualified human resources and financial constraints, since climate protection in Germany is predominantly a voluntary task. Till today there is no federal climate protection law.

There are some (active) urban centers, some (active) rural communities, which are role models in climate protection. Other urban centers and rural communities are not. This means that not every city is a role model in terms of climate-friendly investments. Cities are well positioned to be role models, for instance in educational initiatives. However, urban redevelopment and urban infrastructure measures are rarely directly transferable to rural communities. We rather need to look at each case individually.

Research and investments are important as well. We have to recognize that an energy transition has to be realized in every single household and in every business, albeit on the basis of political guidelines. Hardly anybody reduces energy consumption in order to rescue polar bears. People do so because they want to save money. Hence, financial incentives are needed.

In the County of Teltow-Fläming in Germany, key activities in the field of climate protection are being realized in the domains of public relations, awareness-raising and the provision of information, networking among stakeholders within the county administration, among mayors, within federal states and across the country.

Successful projects save 10 % or 100.000 Euros in energy costs and more than 300 t of CO₂ in a year – only by behavioral changes in schools.

Please don't forget: "The most climate-friendly kilowatt-hour is the one that is not consumed."

Dr. Vera Rodenhoff

Head of Division of International Affairs for “Environment and Energy” and “Environment, Building and Urban Development”, OECD and Cooperation with OECD Countries, Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

HABITAT III and the New Urban Agenda: The position of the German government (Excerpt)

The international community will be setting itself ambitious goals with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD”. The New Urban Agenda, which is to be adopted at the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development – Habitat III – in October 2016 in Quito in Ecuador, will set out goals and guidelines for sustainable urban development that will be applicable for all countries. Habitat III will thus give important impetus to the work of solidifying and realising in urban settings the targets formulated in the Sustainable Development Goals. For Germany there are three core tasks that are of key importance in this connection:

- recognising and empowering cities as development actors
- creating decent urban environments for people to live in
- realising integrated urban development

These tasks must be dealt with directly in the individual countries. At the same time, however, back-up and support will need to be provided through a strong, cooperative global system of actors and instruments. With this in mind, the New Urban Agenda will need to be implemented through a global partnership. Cities and municipalities themselves will have a prominent role to play in this regard. There will need to be a global exchange of experience involving everyone – actors from metropolises and also actors from medium-sized and smaller cities.

Germany will bring its experience and thoughts into the preparations for Habitat III. With this paper Germany is putting forward ideas for Habitat III and for the discussion of the New Urban Agenda.

Proposals for shaping and implementing the New Urban Agenda

Habitat III will be the first global conference to take place after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) will thus be the first contribution for the concrete implementation of the global sustainable development goals (SDGs). Agreeing on the NUA and creating the institutional framework for its implementation will demand constructive, cooperative and results-oriented collaboration from all involved. Based on its own national experience, its role as an international donor and the awareness of its shared responsibility for the sustainable development of our One World, the German government has the following expectations and recommendations for the Habitat process:

- The German government welcomes the stocktaking done through issue papers and will actively promote and support the work of the policy units where possible. However, the shortness of the time remaining gives cause for concern as to whether there is enough time left to complete this ambitious task without sacrificing quality or compromising the force of the message. The Habitat III Secretariat should therefore issue clear, results-oriented directions and give strong support to the policy units for their work so that the results can be fed into the NUA drafting process in a targeted way.
- The outcome of the conference should consist of two elements: firstly a strong political declaration defining the direction to be taken that describes the relevance of urbanisation for sustainable development and clearly defines the desired goals, agreements and instruments for implementation. Secondly, a more comprehensive document that is not misunderstood as a “blueprint for the city of the future” but rather provides guidelines for existing and growing small, medium, large and mega-cities so they can pursue their own development adapted to their specific economic, environmental, social and cultural context.
- Efforts must be made to ensure that the outcomes and recommendations of the policy units and the national contributions are comprehensively fed into the zero draft which will be the basis for the actual negotiations. The German government expects that the so far very transparent and participatory process will be continued going into the formulation of the zero draft and recommends that there should be an overlap in the timeframe and the staff involved in the two processes.
- Besides the work on the content of the New Urban Agenda, it will be very important that there is agreement about the structures, instruments and processes for its implementation, especially for monitoring and reporting progress made on achieving the goals and suitable structures for mutual support. The German government suggests that informal working groups should be set up as quickly as possible. These groups would work in parallel to the expert groups and present pertinent recommendations for the 3rd preparatory conference.
- The realisation of the goals for sustainable development and their consolidation in the New Urban Agenda demand in addition to constant monitoring that all relevant players regularly take stock of progress made on goal achievement. With a view to achieving greater continuity here, the German government suggests that the past rhythm of 20 years between the Habitat conferences should be reduced to ten years, with effective formats being added to the process for monitoring progress in between times.

The New Urban Agenda must be a universally applicable political, implementation-oriented document that motivates and mobilises member states and other relevant players to push for sustainable development at the local level.

Notes



The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies IASS Potsdam

The IASS Potsdam was founded in 2009 for the purpose of gathering together all relevant forms of knowledge from science, society and politics in order to initiate and support a transformation towards sustainable development that is grounded in scientific research. Currently around 100 researchers from over 30 different countries are working at the institute on projects that span the humanities and the natural and social sciences.

Our status as an Institute for Advanced Studies means that international researchers at the IASS can pursue interdisciplinary research using innovative methods to find new and practicable solutions to urgent global sustainability questions.

Our research follows a transdisciplinary approach. We actively include societal stakeholders in the research and peer-review processes. In this way we ensure that our scientific insights are directly usable for society. By involving society at large in our research from the very start, we also facilitate the generation of new research questions that address the urgent challenges posed by sustainable development.

Our strategic focus lies on sustainability issues where we see a great need for transformation or expect a high transformation potential as a result of developing new options for action. We identify these issues in a dialogue with stakeholders and with the IASS Strategy Advisory Board and General Assembly.



Transdisciplinary Panel on Energy Change/Plattform Energiewende

The Transdisciplinary Panel on Energy Change (TPEC) at the IASS aims to develop and mobilise knowledge to enable a global transition to a sustainable energy supply. The panel brings together stakeholders from research, politics, business and society in a transdisciplinary research process, thereby contributing to ongoing political processes and societal developments. The German Energiewende represents an important reference point within a work programme that is global in scope.

The main pillars of the current work programme are:

- Enabling a Global Energy Transition
- Financing and Flexibility Options for Germany's Energiewende in a European Perspective
- The Water-Energy Nexus
- From Coal to Renewables
- Transformative Energy Governance

Launched in March 2012, our platform takes up the suggestions of the Ethics Commission for a Safe Energy Supply, which was co-chaired by IASS Executive Director Klaus Töpfer on behalf of Chancellor Angela Merkel. In addition to carrying out original research on different aspects of the Energiewende and a global energy transition, the team organises thematic working groups and workshops, and bilateral talks with experts from Germany and its partner countries.

Conference Organizing Committee

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