

ITEM 4.2.2 The Role of Cities in the Green Economy

1. Introduction

The Caribbean is a low producer of greenhouse gasses (GHGs) but is on the frontline for the impacts of climate change; hence emphasis has been on adaptation strategies, particularly for Coastal Management and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. However, the region is highly urbanized, largely dependent upon imported fossil fuels and has very low density cities with energy inefficient transportation systems and buildings. Thus there is cause to address mitigation measures in urban areas for economic reasons as well as environmental sustainability. The *Regional Strategy – Climate Change and the Caribbean: A Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilience to Climate Change (2009- 2015)* alludes to this but falls short of providing effective solutions to address this, in that it focuses on alternative fuels rather than reduction of energy demand in our urban systems. Sustainable planning in Caribbean “cities” or more accurately “urban areas” can play an important role as the region addresses “green economy” issues.

The Caribbean Network for Land and Urban Management (CNULM) in conjunction with the Sustainable Development Unit of CARICOM Secretariat presented two policy papers entitled *Development of a Caribbean Urban Agenda in the Context of Sustainable Development and Urban Development & the Green Economy* at the Thirty-Seventh Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on Environment and Sustainable Development held in Georgetown, Guyana on 1-2 September, 2011. Arising from the meeting were several decisions which impact urban planning and management in the Caribbean as well as the concept of the green economy.

This paper seeks to update the COTED on actions taken with respect to implementation of the decisions of the 37th Special COTED by the CNULM and within the context of the Green Economy theme of Rio+20 present on *The Role of Cities in the Green Economy and recommend the next steps for going forward within the context of the objectives of the Rio +20*.

Caribbean Urban Forum 2012

The 37th Special Meeting of the COTED:

Further endorsed the convening of the Caribbean Urban Forum in 2012 with the widest possible stakeholder representation;

The 2nd annual *Caribbean Urban Forum 2012: Planning to Achieve the Vision...Towards a Green Urban Economy* (CUF2012) was held from 14-17 March 2012 at the Jamaica Conference Centre, Kingston, Jamaica. The CUF2012 was hosted by the Jamaican Institute of Planners, under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing, Environment and Water (Jamaica). The Caribbean Urban Forum is one of a series of regional events organized by the CNULM, in association with the CARICOM Secretariat.

The meeting brought together approximately 140 professionals involved in the urban sector. These included 11 CARICOM Member State representatives (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago) including notably Senator Denneth Modeste Minister of Works, Physical Development and Public Utilities of Grenada. Academic institutions represented included University of Technology (Jamaica), the University of the West Indies, Anton de Kom University of Suriname and University of Amsterdam, University of Antwerp (Belgium), Seneca College (Canada), Caribbean national, regional and international planning associations included – Barbados Town and Country Planners Society (BTCPS), Jamaican Institute of Planners (JIP), Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners (TTSP), Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), American Planning Association (APA), Young Planners Association (YPA), Commonwealth Planning Association (CPA). International organizations included UNHABITAT along with a range of other Jamaican and other Caribbean municipalities and organizations.

The CUF2012 sought to advance the Caribbean Urban Agenda, showcase examples of good planning and urban management practice from across the Caribbean, and serve as the launch pad for the Caribbean Planners Association (CPA). The meeting also served to solidify the Region's position on urban aspects of the green economy in preparation for Rio + 20, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held on 4-6 June 2012.

The CUF2 emphasised that the Caribbean is one of the most highly urbanised regions in the world with over seventy percent of its population residing in towns and cities. This means that most of the social and economic activities in the region takes place in urban areas, but in the past few decades unplanned and rapid urbanisation within the region has resulted in growing urban sprawl, environmental degradation, poverty, increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change, economic and social instability. Thus it could be stated that the majority of environmental problems are taking place “in the city”. The urban context provides the basis for addressing these negatives but also to implement new green solutions.

At the same time many of the environmental problems in Caribbean society and the generation of GHG emissions are caused by the very nature of urbanisation. These can be called the environmental problems “of the city”. These can only be addressed by fundamentally redirecting the nature of urbanisation itself in keeping with changing international thinking but in ways relevant to the specific conditions of Caribbean countries. Caribbean urbanisation must be more compact and use land efficiently, there must be more mixed land uses, both to limit the need for transportation and our transportation systems must include more public transportation and higher occupation of vehicles.

The term “green urban economy” has recently emerged to describe such an approach whereby multiple economic and environmental challenges within cities are addressed in an integrated fashion that creates incentives for sustainable practices, promotes competitiveness, healthy liveable physical environment, and reduce dependency on high carbon generating energy sources. The concept of a green urban economy offers a practical operationalization of the goals of sustainable development by creating a concrete nexus between economic development, the social and the physical environment.

Specific issues raised first by country representatives as well as other participants in the context of the general framework of the green urban economy are included in a proposed agenda for a Minister's meeting on the urban sector. It was emphasised that the last meeting of CARICOM Ministers that dealt specifically with urban issues and the nature of urbanisation in the region was the 1988 meeting of Ministers of Housing in Trinidad. The need for a meeting of ministers responsible for urban issues agreed to at the 37th meeting of COTED was again supported and November 2012 was suggested as a possible date after Rio+20 and the World Urban Forum in September 2012.

2. Caribbean Planners Association

The 37th Special Meeting of the COTED:

Endorsed the formation of the Caribbean Professional Planners Association (CPPA), and ***encouraged*** those Member States which do not have National Professional Planners Associations to urgently establish these with the assistance of the UWI and existing national planning associations; ***Requested*** the Caribbean Network for Urban Land Management (CNULM) - University of the West Indies (UWI) to provide a proposal on the CPPA operations which shall include issues of financing, standards and accreditation and mutual recognition of certificates;

The Caribbean Planners Association (CPA) was launched on the 14th March 2012. The area covered by the Association is the Caribbean Region, inclusive of Association of Caribbean States (ACS). An executive of the CPA was elected from regional participants and held the first AGM at CUF2. Participating partners include CARICOM Secretariat, the Canadian Institute of Planners and the American Planning Association.

The aims and objectives of the CPA as defined in the constitution are:

- a. To enhance the profession of planners by combining and sharing resources in research, training, and experience. The preparation of model planning and development legislation and regulations, planning and development standards, methodologies, frameworks, guidelines and procedures.
- b. To foster the professional relationships between the countries and planners and to consider establishing a Planners' Network.
- c. To promote the principles of spatial and comprehensive planning to decision makers and communities in the region.
- d. To advance the practice of planning as a profession in all its aspects to ensure the interests of its members and the general public.
- e. To promote high standards of professional competence and conduct.
- f. To encourage and promote the education of persons intending to enter or be associated with the planning profession.
- g. To advise Training Institutions on new areas for curriculum development relevant to current practices and needs, to offer assistance with the accreditation of planning programmes and other areas in which Training Institutions in the region may need assistance. The Association will establish official links with these Institutions.

- h. To devise entry guidelines into the Association and to establish codes of practice for professional planners in the Caribbean Region.
- i. To disseminate information and awareness of planning matters to the general public through general media and means such as an Association magazine, newsletters, journals and/or website.
- j. To foster the advancement of knowledge and learning in planning through new techniques such as e-learning and to encourage the establishment of Spatial Data Infrastructure Units / Geographic Information Systems in all Caribbean territories to facilitate better Planning, Monitoring and Development Control.
- k. To foster partnerships with entities, including developers, investors and individuals engaged or interested professionally or otherwise in planning in the Caribbean region.
- l. To promote reciprocity among professional planners within the Caribbean region and foster interregional linkages.
- m. To encourage Governments, CDB, CARICOM and other Caribbean Institutions to advise the Association when there are projects/programmes being proposed or for which funding has been identified to facilitate Caribbean Planners the opportunity to bid for these projects/programmes.
- n. To promote and advance planning issues to the community, inter-agency stakeholder groups, private sector agencies, non-governmental organizations, the political directorate, funding institutions and academic institutions.
- o. To strengthen interdisciplinary and collaborative research, stimulate research networks and share best practices amongst Planning Practitioners.
- p. To establish a Strategic Plan of action with short, medium and long term objectives which should be revised each year or as deemed necessary.

3. Revising the Caribbean Urban Agenda

The 37th Special Meeting of the COTED:

***Also requested** that in further developing the CNULM, the draft framework for the Caribbean urban agenda undergo a process of broad consultation by a wider representation of stakeholders including, inter alia, the built environment, natural environment, social science and crime and security experts in the Region*

The Caribbean Urban Agenda previously presented to COTED in the paper *Development of a Caribbean Urban Agenda in the Context of Sustainable Development* is shown in Table 1. At CUF2012, there was a reiteration that all of the issues presented in the original CUA were relevant particularly the socio-economic issues. Based on the perspective of CARICOM Member State representatives (and the wider meeting) the CUA was revised as shown in Table 2. Climate change (vulnerability to) and sustainable planning were crosscutting issues and the concept of high and low priority was removed.

In terms of translation of the CUA into policies and programmes, the following were identified:

- (a) Improving outreach to citizens (e.g. need for standards)
- (b) Market planning as a socio-economic tool that is tied to physical planning.

TABLE 1: PRIORITIES FOR A CARIBBEAN URBAN AGENDA		
PRIORITY	Thematic Areas	Issue
HIGH	Local economic development and Poverty alleviation	unemployment strengthening diversified local opportunities for economic development provision of housing and basic services
	Enabling mechanisms for government and professionals	research, communications, training, education, financing etc.
	Governance	implementation, communication and legislation, municipal governance, awareness component, co-governance inclusive governance, partnerships, coordination
	Informal sector	tenure security, informal settlements, informal economy
	Natural hazards and disaster management	climate change, built environment resilience, response capacity
	Physical human Security	Crime, safety, freedom from fear
LOW	Physical Living Conditions	housing, basic services (water, sanitation, energy use, transportation etc.)
	Inequality	social, economic inequality based on gender, age
	Climate Change	<i>contribution to:</i> energy, emission, transportation, green economy <i>vulnerability to:</i> LECZ, Adaptation at local community level,
	Sustainable planning	urban form (compact), holistic, Comprehensive Coastal zone settlements planning , land management/use, rural/urban integrated planning

TABLE 2: REVISED PRIORITIES FOR A CARIBBEAN URBAN AGENDA (2012)		
	Thematic Areas	Issue
Climate Change <i>vulnerability to:</i> LECZ, Adaptation at local community level Sustainable planning urban form (compact), holistic, Comprehensive Coastal zone settlements planning , land management/use, rural/urban integrated planning	Local economic development and Poverty alleviation	Unemployment, strengthening diversified local opportunities for economic development provision of housing and basic services
	Enabling mechanisms for government and professionals	research, communications, training, education, financing etc.
	Governance	implementation, communication and legislation, municipal governance, awareness component, co-governance inclusive governance, partnerships, coordination
	Informal sector	tenure security, informal settlements, informal economy
	Natural hazards and disaster management	climate change, built environment resilience, response capacity
	Physical Human Security	Crime, safety, freedom from fear
	Physical Living Conditions	Housing, basic services (water, sanitation, energy use, transportation etc.)
	Inequality	social, economic inequality based on gender, age
	Climate Change <i>contribution to:</i>	energy, emission, transportation, green economy

5. Special Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Physical Development and Urban Affairs

The 37th Special Meeting of the COTED:

***Further requested** the convening at the earliest opportunity, of a Special Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Physical Development and Urban Affairs to address pressing urban development issues in the Region including inter alia, governance, tenure, climate change, crime prevention, citizen security and transportation.*

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has expressed an interest in hosting a Special Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Physical Development and Planning for November 2012. Based on discussion with CARICOM Member states representatives (and the wider meeting) the following issues were prioritized as possible agenda items:

- a) **Improving the understanding of “urban” in the Caribbean:** There is no international definition of “urban” and each country in the Caribbean may have its own understanding of “urban”. “Urban” does not only occur in capitals and large cities but in smaller size communities. Indeed, many islands resemble city states due to sprawl. It must be recognized however, that land constraints of islands do not pose the same challenges as mainland countries.

- b) **Urban (Re)development:**
 - i. **Financing of development:** Multi-lateral agencies and private developers bring significant resources into countries and therefore have significant influence over policy makers particularly in small economies but their agendas but may be ill-conceived and may conflict with the needs and wants of the local citizenry. How can governments finance (re)development, slums, housing for low-income individuals etc. as to negate undue influence. How can private sector finance without producing low quality or excessively high cost. Public –private partnerships should be encouraged.

 - ii. **Housing:** Due to limited land space in islands, there is need to invest in high density low cost housing. However, there is need to recognize that persons are culturally accustomed to single family dwellings and high density housing often leads to other undesirable social implications.

 - iii. **Building standards:** There is need to regularization of construction standards in the context of informal settlements and hazard prevention

- iv. **Maintenance of infrastructure:** There is often no budgetary considerations for maintenance of infrastructure
 - v. **Emphasis on Disaster and Hazard Management planning:** Floods are more important in Haiti than earthquakes. There is a need to ensure proper plans for urban areas are put in place.
- c) **Improving Governance:**
- i. **Planning to implementation:** Plans are often developed and not legally adopted by Cabinet thus reducing their effectiveness. There is need to improve the mechanisms (laws, organizations, land management practices) to implement plans and for developmental control to ensure its effectiveness.
 - ii. **Local government reform:** Not all CARICOM countries have functional local government. Trinidad has moved forward in local government reform and lessons can be learnt from the experience.
 - iii. **Security of tenure:** The land title process is cumbersome and needs addressing as this can lead to growth through improving land markets.
 - iv. **Bottom up approaches:** There is need for greater bottom up planning
- d) **Improving data management and collaboration:** There is a need for a review of the tools for data collection and sharing in the region including statutory tools. In Haiti, systems are not in place for basic data gathering (rainfall and sea-level rise) to allow for assessing impact of climate change. Data availability is also a major challenge in the region and data should be shared in order to improve planning. In countries which are recovering from natural disaster (e.g. Montserrat) there is need for inputs by CARICOM Member states that are better acquainted with the Caribbean context rather than from external organizations. An urban planning desk at CARICOM was proposed.
- e) **Emphasis on the social dimensions of planning:** “Urban” and its associated socio-economic issues are inextricable linked. Particular attention needs to be paid to managing the informal sector in urban areas balancing aesthetics with the need to address inequality, increase employment, and provide security and other services. Management of the informal sector is therefore critical.

6. CITIES WITHIN THE RIO+20 ZERO DRAFT

A review of the Zero draft (January 2012) would indicate that many issues of relevance to the urban sector are mentioned, but there seems to be little recognition of the fact that the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas and that Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most urbanised regions in the world. The draft document appears to have a rural and natural resource management bias. The following are the few key sections that focus on the urban sector and urban application of the green economy solutions to the problems of sustainable development.

62. We recognise the need to integrate sustainable urban development policy as a key component of a national sustainable development policy and, in this regard, to empower local authorities to work more closely with national governments. We recognize that partnerships among cities have emerged as a leading force for action on sustainable development. We commit to support international cooperation among local authorities, including through assistance from international organizations.

68. We recognize the necessity of setting goals for wastewater management, including reducing water pollution from households, industrial and agricultural sources and promoting water efficiency, wastewater treatment and the use of wastewater as a resource, particularly in expanding urban areas.

[Cities]

72. We commit to promote an integrated and holistic approach to planning and building sustainable cities through support to local authorities, efficient transportation and communication networks, greener buildings and an efficient human settlements and service delivery system, improved air and water quality, reduced waste, improved disaster preparedness and response and increased climate resilience.

The reference to the Barbados Plan of Action is in itself weak with reference to urban areas and cities but there is reference to the particular needs of SIDS which form a majority of the countries in the Caribbean.

85. We reaffirm that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The vulnerability of SIDS has worsened over the last two decades, primarily because of higher exposure to external shocks, including increasing adverse impacts of climate change and more frequent and intense natural disasters as well as the fuel, food, and financial crises, combined with inadequate international support.

86. We call for increased efforts to assist SIDS in implementing the BPOA and MSI and achieving sustainable development, including improvement and strengthening of the relevant entities within the United Nations system that support SIDS' sustainable development. We also call for the convening of the third international conference for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States in 2014.

6.1 Discussion and Negotiating Points

The Output of the CUF2012 and the ongoing work of the CNULM would suggest that the following key issues need to be taken on board in discussions and further negotiations towards Rio+20:

1. The increasingly urban nature of Caribbean society should be emphasised in framing the discussions and actions;
2. The specific need of SIDs should be emphasised as a prelude to a possible Barbados+20 meeting in 2014.
3. The specific and widespread contribution of urban activities to the of GHG emissions and concentration of social, economic and environmental problems in urban areas;
4. The nexus of high levels of urban poverty, informal settlements poor regulatory systems for built development and risk of urban populations to natural disasters(especial in the coastal zone);
5. The environmental problems caused by the very nature of urbanisation in the Caribbean with poor land management, low density of development and urban sprawl, poor public transportation and inefficient transportation systems generally and energy inefficient buildings;
6. The need for basis improvement in urban planning and management as a fundamental basis for the implementation of a green agenda and economy.