

Caribbean Urban Forum 2016

Call for Papers



Suriname
Caribbean Urban Forum 2016

27-30 April, 2016

Paramaribo

Introduction

From 27th – 30th April 2016, the Institute for Graduate Studies and Research of Anton De Kom University of Suriname in association with the Suriname Association of Spatial Planners (information) and the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) welcomes participants to the sixth annual Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF2016), at the Royal Torarica Hotel, Paramaribo, Suriname. The forum is hosted in association with the Caribbean Local Economic Development Project (CARILED), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT), Caribbean Evaluators International (CEI) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat.

The Forum will bring together urban and land managers, policy makers, academics and allied professionals within the Caribbean in an effort to further advance land and urban management within the region.

Conference Theme

The primary theme for CUF6 is *Sustainable Urban Development? The Gap between Rhetoric and Reality*. For planners and allied professionals, there is a requirement to not only understand the nature of urban issues but to suggest and support means of transition to the desired result. The conference examines the extent that the rhetoric of Sustainable Urban Development is being realized in the Caribbean, with particular emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals. This issue has two dimensions: 1) Urban Sustainability has become a mandated component of policies and plans, but these are not enforced by the regulatory framework and often not implemented in projects and programmes; and 2) Current approaches to urban development, while well intended, make it difficult to implement sustainable urban policies in the immediate and near future.

We also posit the following questions:

- (a) Are planners operating in a post sustainable development scenario – where achieving sustainable development in the future is no longer possible because the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is already compromised?
- (b) What is the role of cities in sustainable development and what are the critical steps to reposition urban policy, plans and development programmes to achieve sustainable cities.

The broad conference theme will be explored in a range of interconnected components, including urban governance, sustainable and energy efficient transportation, economic development and sustainable livelihoods, healthy communities, realistic urban upgrading and regeneration strategies and urban planning education and practice in the region. The CUF is being held in Suriname, which is one of the three coastal, continental countries in CARICOM. As such, there are additional areas of special interest, such as hinterland issues and indigenous populations, which are not the usual considerations in other Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Conference Objectives

The conference will address specific policy issues in the Caribbean urban sector within the context of broader sustainable development issues. Through presentations, workshops and discussions, the forum will:

1. Examine the recent advances on urban sustainability;
2. Consider the importance of urban governance in achieving sustainability and poverty reduction;
3. Examine how an energy efficient transportation sector can be developed;
4. Highlight efforts to increase local economic development and sustainable livelihoods;
5. Review housing and neighbourhood upgrading policies considering the requirements of compact development;
6. Examine policies and practices that integrate public health and the built environment to achieve healthy and sustainable communities;
7. Examine coastal zone management especially in urban coastal areas;
8. Review professional planning practice and education in relation to sustainable urban development.

Specific activities, which will also be accomplished at or immediately before the CUF 2016 are:

1. The Annual General Meeting of the Caribbean Planning Association (CPA);
2. Urban design workshop on energy efficient development for campus management;
3. International workshop on Sustainable Urbanization (UNHabitat);
4. Workshop on results based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).
5. Caribbean Forum of Local Government Ministers (CFLGM) hosted by Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities (CALGA)

International Call for Papers

The CUF 2016 Call for Papers aims to solicit presentations that examine issues related to the thematic areas outlined below. The conference seeks to assemble diverse examples of research, urban planning and management practices that have been implemented or can be implemented in a Caribbean and SIDS context to address contemporary issues related to the themes under discussion. Papers can focus on a single theme or more than one interrelated theme. Case studies, project and programme reviews, institutional assessments, policy reviews, and theoretical discourse are encouraged. The information gleaned from the papers submitted, as well as the issues aired, may be used to inform the work of CARICOM's Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) or be used in preparation for a future special meetings of CARICOM Ministers related to Sustainable Urbanisation.

Papers may focus on, but are not limited to:

1. Sustainable Urban Development

At the Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015, a bold new global agenda to end poverty by 2030 and pursue a sustainable future was unanimously adopted today by the

193 Member States of the United Nations (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/summit/). The post 2015 development agenda lays out *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, a stand-alone goal on cities and human settlements, highlighting the importance of both urban and rural systems in transforming development. Other SDGs focus on infrastructure and sanitation which also intersect with urban issues. This also connects with the preparations for Habitat 3 in October 2016 (www.habitat3.org/).

In urban areas, the concept of sustainability tends to be multi-dimensional including many of the sub-themes of the forum. Like the broader concept of sustainable development, sustainable urban development initiatives tend to be general and lack specificity and measurable results. A discussion on how to distill and link urban issues to national/regional/local goals and then with corresponding targets and indicators that are meaningful and reflect our Caribbean reality is fundamental.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *What are the known gaps between rhetoric and reality and how should this be addressed?*
- *What are the Caribbean's priorities in the sustainable urban development agenda?*
- *Is the Caribbean's progress in developing appropriate indicators to evaluate urban development and revitalization strategies? How do we quantify and determine what is sustainable development in the context of the Caribbean?*
- *Are urban planning and development strategies working toward sustainable development goals or against them?*
- *What are some of the actions taken towards preparation for Habitat 3?*

2. Local governance and Decentralization

Local governance is a critical issue in the Caribbean due to the primary status of most of our capital cities and the limited powers and capacity of Municipal government. Most Caribbean municipal areas are managed with fiscal transfers from central government with generally poor land and property tax systems which have the potential for revenue generation for local government. Land and spatial information of all types are limited, making management difficult and effective monitoring problematic. The changing role of the municipality was expressed in Vision 2030 launched in June 2015 by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum in Botswana (www.clgf.org.uk), but several small countries are questioning the need for municipal leadership in the area of planning and overall development. How can the systems of governance be more inclusive of the critical stakeholders and address the important issues which are becoming more critical as cities become more populous? The ideas which are translated into policy will have long term impacts on the character of the urban landscape. It is important to understand the drivers of policy and how the planning profession can become more influential on the decision making process.

In the Caribbean many local government authorities are economically vulnerable and lack enabling legislation and capacity on their own to generate adequate resources for development. The situation is worsened by the restriction of local governments to manage low

revenue generating ventures by central governments. Meanwhile reforms to transfer autonomy, competencies and resources to local governments are often discussed but not implemented. Decentralization is important for sustainable local development, because the central state is often not in the position to pay enough attention to local development.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *Is Vision 2030 (Botswana, 2015) an appropriate shift in municipal governance for urban areas in the Caribbean?*
- *What are the appropriate governance structures for moving to sustainable urban management both at the national and municipal level?*
- *How are the various interests being tempered by the requirements of realistic and sustainable urban policies?*
- *How are policies made and are planners and other members of civil society influencing decision-making?*
- *How can local governance be strengthened, and are there success stories to be told?*

3. Sustainable transportation solutions

Urban sprawl in the Caribbean results in several problems including the movement of large numbers of people on a daily basis to support livelihoods and access services concentrated in central urban areas. This process is often inefficient and leads to undesirable impacts including the preponderance of private automobiles, inefficient use of imported fossil fuels, high pollution, stress and unproductive use of time due to traffic. Most of these factors affect economic productivity and the competitiveness of our economies.

Sustainable urban transportation solutions are closely related to a range of factors the key of which is more efficient land-use practices that minimize the need for transportation through higher densities, compact urban form and mixed land use. Mass transportation and other modal switches, pedestrianization and traffic management solutions such as flexi-time and staggered work and school hours are also part of the policy mix. However, Caribbean cities, in large part, are not implementing such solutions and seem to prefer highway engineering solutions and suburbanization.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *What are the changes in urban form required to make movement of persons more effective?*
- *Are governments employing strategies to encourage public transportation and reduce private automobile usage and how can public transportation be financed?*
- *How can we minimize the need to move from Point A to Point B in order to save energy and reduce climate change?*
- *What role can community engagement play in shaping transportation design in urban areas?*
- *How significant is the loss on livelihoods and quality of life relative to poor transportation?*

- *What are some of the achievements and lessons to be learnt in public and mass transit case studies in the Caribbean? Water Taxi in TT?*

4. Local Economic Development for the Caribbean

Local Economic Development (LED) is seen as a strategy for creating sustainable economic growth at the local level that is socially inclusive, improves the quality of life for all and promotes sustainable livelihoods. It is an approach to economic development that focuses on the local assets of an area and seeks to ensure that economic development is stimulated through enabling environments. It is a process that uses a multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach that brings together government, business and civil society to collectively achieve integrated development planning.

The key lessons emerging from Local Economic Development (LED) practitioners is that focused efforts in a local area can foster job creation, financial investments and local innovation that can lead to sustainable economic growth. Local governments are seen as the pivotal player in coordinating and facilitating these efforts of localization and responding to the needs of the people in their jurisdictions. Successful local economic development initiatives incorporate , strong leadership, planning and participatory governance The Gaborone Declaration – Local Government Vision 2030 promotes LED as part of ‘Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals’ and encourages municipalities to lead in shaping change. In 2012, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) contributed to 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and approximately 70% of jobs in the Caribbean Community. MSMEs in the Caribbean could therefore form the core of Local Economic Development initiatives.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *What is the role of small business in shaping LED strategic planning for Caribbean communities?*
- *Should the approach to planning for business development differ in urban versus rural communities?*
- *How important is the voice of micro and small enterprises in shaping local priorities for growth?*
- *Are male and female entrepreneurs equally heard by municipalities in planning for LED in the Caribbean?*
- *How do we formalize and promote the informal business sectors within local economies in the Caribbean?*

5. Professional Planning Practice, Education & Training in the Caribbean

The quality and the relevance of training provided both regionally and internationally help to determine the extent to which planners are able to support sustainable urban areas in the Region. Across many states there is a need for increased transparency and inclusiveness in the planning process if difficult choices are to be made in redirecting the nature of urban development and certain unsustainable behavioural practices reduced.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *Are our training programmes equipping our planners to create sustainable urban environments?*
- *Do our current engagement and planning frameworks give a voice to our communities?*
How do we increase transparency and dialogue in the decision making process for sustainable development planning outcomes?

6. Unrealistic and unsustainable housing and settlement upgrading programmes

There seems to be contradictions between housing, urban regeneration and neighbourhood upgrading policies and strategies and the requirement of sustainable urban development in the Caribbean. Many solutions, including some promoted by multilateral lending agencies, are for suburban and areas of low density, requiring extensive infrastructure development and promote sprawl and energy inefficient transportation. These solutions also promote the conversion of the limited good agricultural lands at the urban fringe. Except for Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, governments in the region promote single family, owner-occupied housing as the predominant social housing form. The minimum size is normally above the income capacity of the targeted beneficiary groups which leads to high subsidies to a limited few in unsustainable programmes.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *To what extent should governments participate directly in the construction of housing? To what extent should it enable and facilitate private and voluntary-sector housing production? What are the lessons learned in both?*
- *What practices have ensured synergy and coordination between housing policy and other government programs and strategies, e.g. urban planning, economic, social, and infrastructure policy?*
- *Apart from the creation of new housing, which policies and principles have led to increased security of tenure for residents in existing housing? How can Caribbean governments' strategies towards informal settlements balance both social equity and economic development?*
- *What are the best practices (case studies) in either public or private housing, and what do we learn from those?*

7. Built environment and public health

Despite strong gains in the areas of public sanitation, vaccination and infection control with a resultant reduction in communicable diseases, the prevailing burden of illness in the Caribbean, like elsewhere in the world, is found in non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Such diseases include heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes, which account for 3 out of 4 deaths in the Caribbean. The rise in NCDs is related to unhealthy nutrition, tobacco and immoderate alcohol use, physical inactivity and socioeconomic disparities.

Changing the built environment is coming to be viewed as integral to injury and NCD prevention, as well as the improvement of outdoor air quality. Research is mounting demonstrating that the design of cities has a direct impact on a number of important public health outcomes, including physical activity and access to nutritious foods. The public health mandate and good planning practice have the potential to intersect at several levels: Community design plans promoting more compact urban form, higher densities and a mix of land uses; integrated transportation plans delivering complete networks for pedestrians and cyclists linked to public transit; and public space design offering accessible spaces that encourage active transportation. However, collaborative work between these two disciplines is new, sometimes resulting in a disconnect between intent and action, with the potential for disciplinary silos to pose real barriers to progress. These factors are further exacerbated by a backlog of municipal infrastructure and services combined with the persistence of informal settlement and poverty.

Possible Discussion Points:

- *What are the potential barriers to healthy behaviours in the urban Caribbean context that are linked to the built environment?*
- *In what ways do urban policy, land use plans, building standards and transportation policies support mobility and physical activity?*
- *What recent programmes have been implemented that address the built environment as a means of improving public health by reducing NCDs in Caribbean countries?*

8. Management of urban coastal zones

Most of our populations live in the coastal zone, often in the primate capital cities. This makes them susceptible to storm surges and sea level rise. The poor are most affected because they often live in high risk informal settlements. These problems are especially true in the coastal continental countries of Suriname, Guyana and Belize where the capital cities are sprawling and low lying with parts that are below sea level. With the high cost of coastal protection and the limited adaptation measures available for existing development the risk of inundation are greater and more frequent. Is Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) a bit late to address these problems?

Possible Discussion Points:

- *What has been the impact of existing coastal zone management strategies in the region?*
- *In what way can we implement ICZM in built urban environments to create resilient cities?*
- *What are the realistic solutions to sea level rise and do we have a range of adaptation options?*
- *Is relocation the cheapest long-term solution?*

Cross-cutting criteria

The meeting output is implementation oriented, thus authors should include at least one of the following in their submissions where possible.

Transition management: Closing the gap between rhetoric and reality with respect to sustainable urban management will not happen by shifts in policy and plan alone, nor will it easily happen in a comprehensive manner. There will be need for specific smaller interventions necessary to manage the transition process, which may require a multi-part strategy. This may take the form of pilot and case study approaches and in the case of built environment interventions, “living laboratories” where the elements can be tested in implementation and then scaled up.

Monitoring and evaluation: It is difficult to know if any policy intervention is succeeding if there are no measurable performance indicators. The poor quality of urban data for the Caribbean Urban sector makes it difficult to develop meaningful indicator to evaluate success. However, it may be difficult to establish complex and costly data collection and management systems for urban management as a precondition for attempting policy and programmatic shifts in present urban management practices. There is need for simple, cost-effective and timely development of indicators, data collection and management systems that can be sustainable beyond the life of an urban management intervention or project.

Submission Criteria

Abstracts

Abstracts must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Abstracts should be submitted in English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10” and 1” margins and not exceed more than 300 words.

Abstract submissions should include:

1. Title of the proposed presentation;
2. The sub-theme to which it relates;
3. Name(s) of author(s); (no more than 3)
4. Position or title of author(s);
5. Author(s) employer or affiliated institution;
6. Contact details including - e-mail address, telephone/fax numbers and postal address;

Abstracts should be submitted electronically to:

Papers and Presentations Sub-Committee

Email: info@bluespacecaribbean.com

Deadline: January 15th 2016.

Feedback on abstracts will be provided by January 29th 2016

Papers

Persons whose Abstracts have been approved will be asked to submit Papers and PowerPoint presentations. Papers must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Papers should be submitted in English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins and must not exceed 15 pages including illustrations, bibliography and appendices.

Paper submissions should include:

1. Title of the proposed presentation;
2. The sub-theme to which it relates;
3. Name(s) of author(s); (no more than 3)
4. Position or title of author(s);
5. Author(s) employer or affiliated institution;
6. Contact details including - e-mail address, telephone/fax numbers and postal address;
7. Short biographical statement (no more than 100 words) regarding the author(s);
8. Photograph of each author

Papers should be submitted electronically to:

Papers and Presentations Sub-Committee

Email: info@bluespacecaribbean.com

Full papers will be required by April 4th 2016

Authors will be allowed a 15 minute slot for delivering their papers and are expected to prepare a sound PowerPoint presentation.

Travel and Stay Expenses

Please note: Expenses for attending the CUF 2016 conference (including travel, accommodation and conference fee) will be the sole responsibility of the author(s)/presenter(s) of the accepted papers. Please submit an abstract ONLY if at least one of the authors is certain to be present for the programme.

Call for Exhibitors

CUF6 provides an opportunity for private and public sector entities involved in urban planning, land development and environmental related matters to showcase their services and products. To request a copy of our exhibition package, please email the CUF 2016 Local Planning Committee at cuf2016@gmail.com

Events prior to the CUF2016

For the (a) Urban Design workshop for Campus Management being hosted on the 25th -26th April 2016 (b) the UNHabitat training on Living Laboratories for Sustainable Urbanization and (c) the Workshop on results based monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), or for general information,

please contact Nika Maingot, Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management, Telephone: 1(868) 662-2002 ext. 83386; email: info@bluespacecaribbean.com

Questions?

For further information on general conference proceedings as well as the events being held prior to CUF2016, please contact:

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