

# **CARIBBEAN URBAN FORUM 2020 CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**



**Urbanization and Urban Policy**

**UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA**



## Introduction

The University of Guyana (U.G.) will be the lead host for the 10<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF2020) to be held from 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at the University of Guyana Turkeyen campus, Georgetown, Guyana. Co-hosts include the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) based at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, the Central Housing and Planning Authority, the Guyana Planning Association and other national, regional and international organizations. The Forum brings together urban planners, environmental experts, municipal managers, policy makers, academics and allied professionals in an effort to address urban issues in the region.

The CUF 2020 theme is ***Urbanization and Urban Policy***. This theme aims to confront the issue of urbanization in the Caribbean context and to critically examine the range of policy responses to this phenomenon over the years. The dialogue starts with the recognition that the Caribbean is one of the fastest urbanizing regions in the world. This fact presents critical challenges to planning and managing the urban environment. How the process of urbanization is managed will determine if our human settlements will be safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11) and if our countries will achieve targets in the other Sustainable Development Goals.

While there are various understandings of the nature of urbanization and various policy response options, it is clear that good urban policy is an essential factor in dealing with the challenges of urbanization in a sustainable manner. Several countries have articulated such policies. Guyana for example has a Green State Development Strategy that considers an urban future of inclusive and green settlements.

Under the broad theme of urbanization and urban policy, various sub-themes will address specific issues or concerns related to the broad theme.

## Conference Objectives

The conference will examine the nature of Caribbean urbanization and the effects of urban growth as a feature of the Caribbean urban landscape. This is an area of many challenges and problems and it is important to understand the effectiveness of previous and present responses to the problems. There is need for appropriate policies or policy reforms in order to guide the urbanization process.

Through presentations, workshops and (plenary) discussions, the forum will:

1. Explore the nature, trends and pattern of the urbanization process in the Caribbean
2. Critically examine the impacts and consequences of Caribbean urbanization
3. Examine Caribbean urbanization issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and the quest to develop sustainable cities
4. Discuss the challenges and opportunities that may come with urbanization
5. Examine policy responses and consider the factors necessary to chart a more sustainable urban future through appropriate policy interventions.

## **Thematic Areas**

The following are broad areas under the themes under which papers can be contributed. **Abstract may focus on, but are not limited to:**

### **1. The evolving nature and challenges of Caribbean urbanization**

In order to respond to the challenges posed by Caribbean urbanization through policy and planning interventions, it is essential that there be a clear understanding of this phenomenon; how has it evolved over time and what are the specific challenges. In this regard, it is useful to start with the recognition that urbanization in the Caribbean and other less developed countries show distinct differences to that of the industrialized countries and countries of Latin America. This consideration suggests the need to delve deeply into the nature of Caribbean urbanization, as we seek to understand its implications for development policy and future planning, whether in the context of micro islands, small and medium islands or continental states.

### **2. Urbanization and social issues**

It is a fact that urbanization brings with it an array of social issues. In this regard, high population densities, inadequate infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, flooding, slums and squatter settlement creation, crime, congestion and poverty work in ways to present serious challenges from a social/welfare perspective to many who live in urbanized environments, as well as to the institutions planning and policy-makers tasked with managing such environments. While this may point to the need for an integrated urban development policy framework, a lack of research to inform effective policy-making in view of the complex nature of urbanization and associated social problems presents another layer of challenge.

### **3. Policy and legislative responses to Urbanization**

It is important to examine the policy and legislative responses by various governments to the process of urbanization and assess how effective these were these responses. Few countries have had specific urban policies but in most the nature of urban policy needs to be assembled or implied from components such as land use plans and policies, the intent of urban interventions and positions taken with respect to international frameworks and agreements such as the UNHabitat process and sector reform and implementation programmes supported by multilateral agencies such as UNHabitat and other UN agencies, the World Bank, the IDB and the CDB. There are also some regional initiatives which may be examined, such as the Caribbean Urban Agenda, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Sub-regional Implementation plan of the NUA for the Caribbean and the urban sector policies of the IDB and the CDB.

### **4. Informality, Public health risk reduction and the urban environment**

This area of concern is particularly important since it relates directly to the environmental conditions within which large urban populations have to live. The rapid, especially the unplanned and unsustainable patterns of urban development characteristic of urbanization in Caribbean cities require concurrent focus on issues of public health in the urban environment, both from the standpoint of policy and regulations. The World Health Organization for example, has notably recognized that as urban populations grow, the quality of global and local ecosystems, and the urban environment, will play an increasingly important role in public health with respect to several risk-

related issues, ranging from solid waste disposal, provision of safe water and sanitation, and injury prevention, to the interface between urban poverty, environment and health.

The issue of urban informality as a particular feature of Caribbean urbanization is notably a high priority issue on the Caribbean Urban Agenda. Key considerations in the debate on this issue revolve around tenure security, informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas and the informal urban economy.

### **5. Resilient urbanization**

The sub-theme brings together the discourse on energy efficiency in the urban environment, urban resilience and the green economy. It recognizes the need for an integrated approach to the issue of resilient urbanization, especially in the context of the sustainable development goals currently being pursued. There is also a growing trend that points towards more innovative approaches to urban resilience. This is evident by the fact that many cities are adopting smart city approaches to building urban resilience.

### **6. Water management in an urban context**

Urbanization places strenuous demands on water resource use. While some countries such as Guyana have the opportunity to exploit ground and surface water options, other countries are limited to only the ground water option. Water resources in this context may be sourced from ecologically sensitive watershed areas that are likely to become more endangered due to urbanization (particularly informal settlements). There is also the need to note that many Caribbean cities are situated in low-lying coastal areas prone to flooding – a situation made worse due to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. It is therefore increasingly important that water management be considered in the wider debate on and response to Caribbean urbanization, particularly from the perspective of building urban resiliency in the face of climate change.

### **7. The transformation of rural areas through urbanization**

In the traditional sense, there is a tendency to think of urbanization and the policy and planning responses only in the context of the major cities in a particular country. However, the experience in some Caribbean countries is one whereby rural marketing and service centres are experiencing rapid transformation into more full-fledged urban centres. This trend has to be properly managed if more sustainable results are to be achieved. In this regard, strategic urban spatial development policies may be required since the rural to urban transformation will require management and tremendous improvements. There will be for example the need to reach minimum standards on services, infrastructure and housing, as well as in local governance, institutional capacity and security of tenure. The policy perspective on the transformation of rural areas through urbanization may also most likely point to the need for policy towards more balanced urban-rural urbanization – quite a challenging area for future policy research and policy formulation that may be of significance to countries such as Guyana and Belize.

## Submission Criteria

Submissions are invited under the following criteria:

### Papers:

For acceptance to present at the conference, an abstract must be submitted. The abstract should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) the research methodology; (c) the relevance of the paper to the theme and/or sub-theme; (d) the (expected) results; (e) the conclusion. Abstracts must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words. At the bottom of the body of the abstract, no more than five key words must be stated. These key words must closely reflect the content of the paper.

### Posters:

The 10<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Urban Forum is providing an opportunity for professionals and students to showcase their research to the wider public of experts, academics and other professionals and students.

For acceptance to present the poster at the conference, an abstract must be submitted. The abstract should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) the research methodology; (c) the relevance of the research to the theme and/or sub-theme. Abstracts must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words.

The guidelines for the poster will published together with the final screening of the feedback on acceptance of abstracts.

### Urban Planning Projects:

Presentations on urban planning projects are welcomed. Such presentations must however include a clear and concise project description and sample image of the urban planning project. The description should outline the following: (a) location, (b) client or commissioning agency (c) whether built or unbuilt (d) relevance to the conference themes (e) relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals and (f) relevance to the particular country's national policy context. Projects from architectural, urban design and urban planning students are welcomed and student projects should be clearly indicated. Combined text and images of submissions should be forwarded in single page pdf format.

### Papers and Project 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:**

Content, editorial and presentations Sub-Committee

Email: [2020.cuf10@gmail.com](mailto:2020.cuf10@gmail.com)

Deadline: January 15, 2020.

Feedback on acceptance of abstracts will be provided by January 31th. 2020

**We encourage authors to submit papers for publication in our peer reviewed conference proceedings.**

## **Questions?**

For further information on general conference as well as the events being held prior to CUF2020, please contact:

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