

# ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ASUD)

**ASUD** is a pathway to urban development that can meet current needs without prejudicing those of the future. The ASUD approach has three main aims:-

- i. To *build cities that are liveable* and that provide an environment for *agglomeration economies*.
- ii. To *support national efforts to spread these benefits across countries* by developing systems of cities and making the maximum use of the wealth created by urbanisation to offset its costs and, thereby, allow for greater scale.
- iii. To provide *city structures that are flexible and ready to adapt* to the changing demands of population, technology and environment over time.

## THE CHALLENGE

The ASUD approach addresses a series of interlinked challenges, including:

- i) Scale: cities in developing countries are growing faster than governments are planning and managing them, creating inefficient structures and encouraging informality and weak governance across all sectors;
- ii) Character: the formal element of city planning and infrastructure fails to reflect the population and economic patterns demanded, leading to lost financial and economic opportunities and, again, encouraging informality and weak governance across all sectors but particularly excluding the poor and marginalised;
- iii) Resources: urbanization requires significant investment and is currently largely dependent on the public purse (usually a combination of national and multilateral) for its structural elements while simultaneously depending on private investment at a micro scale for its economic, social and residential fabric, with limited connections between the two and a resulting inefficiency in design;
- iv) Sustainability: the wealth generated by urbanization is not invested back into the city and the potential for a virtuous circle of wealth generation and investment is missed, meaning that cities grow project by project according to opportunity rather than holistically and consistently according to political objectives;
- v) Inclusion: cities with poor design, limited sustainability and weak finances and governance tend to be economically and socially fragmented with the poor,

marginalized and vulnerable suffering particular exclusion from services and economic opportunity, with consequent risks to safety and sustainability.

## UN-HABITAT'S APPROACH TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

ASUD addresses the gaps and deficiencies in current urban planning processes and policies at the national and local levels, in order to effectively respond to the complex demands of rapid population and economic growth. It supports cities in developing strategic sustainable urban development plans and implementing demonstration projects, particularly planned city extensions. ASUD also supports countries in developing and implementing national urban policies that will promote more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

Key elements of the programme include:

1. **National urban policies** – resulting from evidence based decision making and outlining a system of cities appropriate to expected population growth and profile. A design aspect considers the preferred location and hierarchy of human settlements according to national priorities. A legal aspect provides the structure for institutional, financial and development decision-making. An economic aspect drives the design and legal in many respects, by indicating how to harness natural trends and opportunities.

## 2. City expansion plans based on a three pronged approach –

- a) **Design** to ensure that urbanisation projects are based on high quality design principles.
- b) **Finance** to make sure that urbanisation can be paid for and maintained over the widest geographic area and longest time frames possible.
- c) **Regulatory** to be aware of, and to direct, the legal framework that shapes, and provides the basis of investment in, urbanisation.

Challenges addressed by ASUD approach include:

\ Scale  
\ Character  
\ Resources  
\ Sustainability  
\ Inclusion

## ASUD also supports countries developing and implementing national urban policies

that will promote more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

## IMPACT

ASUD approaches have been applied in eleven city level pilot projects in five countries, including low to medium income level countries. These pilots have led to the adoption of new integrated plans or planning strategies in more than half of the pilot cities and have subsequently contributed to or led the review or adoption of national urban policies in four of these five countries. The approach is being mainstreamed into other UN-Habitat planning system projects and has already been adapted by other international development institutions.

## CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**1.3** (access to basic services and security of tenure), **10.2** (social and economic inclusion), **10.3** (eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and actions in this regard), **11.1** (housing, basic services and slum upgrading), **11.2** (accessible transport), **11.3** (integrated and sustainable planning), **11.7** (public space), **11(a)** (national and regional development planning), **11(b)** (integrated policies on environment and environmental risk), **16.6** (developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions) and **17.1** (enhance domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection).

## BENEFICIARY VIEWS

“The ASUD project is a great example of projects that strive to unpack the complexity of long standing problems, such as planning city extensions. This was done through in-depth analysis of the legal and institutional challenges that lead to weak implementation of policy instruments, such as land readjustment. The project was very successful in demonstrating how ambiguity in the legal framework, centralization of the decision making process, and overlooking the linkage between planning and financing infrastructure provision leads to inefficient governmental interventions and spread of informal expansions

Mr. Mohamed Abdel Zaheer, Governor of Qalubya Governorate

## DONORS AND PARTNERS

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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