



## DIALOGUE 5 WUF 7 CONCEPT NOTE

# RAISING STANDARDS OF URBAN RESILIENCE

### Objective of the Dialogue

The primary aim of this Dialogue is to demonstrate how a holistic approach to urban resilience that considers all functions of an urban system can contribute to making all cities more equitable places to live and work.

The Dialogue will also aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Demonstrate a correlation between urban resilience and economic inclusiveness and development;
- Introduce new, innovative structural and non-structural approaches to building urban resilience that contribute to a more equitable urban environment;
- Make the business case for cross-sectoral investments in urban resilience using examples of how micro-finance, insurance, transport, affordable housing, and renewable/low carbon energy industries are enabling the urban poor to build resilience to natural and man-made hazards and conditions, and realize new growth opportunities;
- Demonstrate how cities can overcome capacity constraints to effectively develop and implement a resilience action plan.

### Introduction of the topic

Resilience is a cross cutting theme that, if approached in a coherent and holistic manner, can address and reduce social, economic, and environmental inequalities in urban areas. In this way, resilience is both a protector of development gains, as well as a conduit for future sustainable development.

As the overarching theme for the WUF 2014 is 'Urban Equity in Development', this Dialogue will take delegates on a resilient cities 'tour' to demonstrate how resilience standards in urban areas can be achieved across four key areas:

- Socio-economic
- Demographic
- Environmental
- Spatial

Potential resilience themes covered in the 'tour', include:

- Water and sanitation
- Food security
- Youth empowerment and engagement
- Equitable housing and infrastructure finance
- Transport

The Dialogue will bring together local governments, urban planners, private sector, and other actors to discuss how cities build resilience in the face of uncertainty to protect lives and livelihoods, ensure continuity of services, and improve equitable living conditions. This Dialogue will also focus on how cities can overcome capacity gaps/constraints to develop and achieve resilience targets and 'do more with what they have'.

### Linkages with Post-2015 Development Agenda and Habitat III

- Empowering "Inclusive, Productive and Resilient cities" is one of the 12 thematic focus areas for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this calls for all cities to be "socially inclusive, economically productive, environmentally sustainable, secure, and resilient to climate change and other risks". Achieving this requires the development of participatory, accountable, and effective city governance "to support rapid and equitable urban transformation".
- Globally, 80% of the largest cities are vulnerable to severe impacts of earthquakes, and 60% are at risk from storm surges and tsunamis, and all face new impacts of climate change. The goals of any sustainable development agenda must ensure that even the most modest development gains are protected against losses incurred through natural and human-induced disaster and crisis.
- Development within planetary boundaries is one of the 10 Priority Challenges of Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>. Climate change adaptation and the adoption of low carbon and efficient energy strategies and technologies will play a critical role in meeting this challenge. Some of the greatest strides in this area will be made in cities, where energy efficiency measures in urban planning, buildings, and transport, and in the production of goods and services and the design of products, can both mitigate existing environmental concerns and contribute to new economic and job opportunities.
- The Dialogue will contribute to the wider urban resilience goals promoted by UN-Habitat as part of the post-2015 disaster risk and sustainable urban development agendas and the anticipated outcomes of the Habitat III conference in 2016.

<sup>1</sup> *Sustainable Development Solutions Network Report to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, July 2013*

<sup>2</sup> *Action Agenda for Sustainable Development, Report for the United Nations Secretary-General, 2013*

### Key interrogatives

- How does a focus on urban resilience influence and advance equitable living conditions?
- What is the correlation between urban resilience and economic inclusiveness and growth?
- How can local governance be improved and leaders be empowered and work with other actors to mobilize financial, institutional, and human resources needed to build a resilient, equitable urban environment across a range of urban issues, including jobs, housing, infrastructure, security, education, etc.?
- What tools and other resources are available to help urban leaders prioritize the various elements of a resilience agenda that can make the greatest contribution to improving urban equity?
- How can tools and methodologies aimed at providing a measurement of urban resilience contribute to the advancement of equitable urban development?

### References

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