KEY MESSAGES FOR THE 'NEW URBAN AGENDA': AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MANAGING URBANIZATION, VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT

Event: The Nexus of Urbanization, Violence and Conflict:
Linking SDG 11 and SDG 16 (18 April 2016)

Organized by the Permanent Missions of Lebanon and Norway to the UN, City College of New York - CUNY, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in coordination with the Global Alliance for Urban Crises

By 2050, 70 percent of the world's population will live in urban areas. Rapid urbanization is producing new contexts through which violence and conflict operate and it is critical to understand these complex dynamics. Urban settings have characteristics, which require effective, context-specific approaches. Violence and conflict in urban areas can involve different kinds of violence and can be driven by diverse vectors such as political, socio-economic, institutional and environmental. The event aimed to enhance our understanding of the nexus between urbanization, violence, and conflict in fragile settings. The following key messages emanated from the event and should be given consideration in the discussion on the New Urban Agenda.

KEY MESSAGES FOR THE "NEW URBAN AGENDA"

1. **Adopt "Leaving No One and No City Behind" as a fundamental principle**

   Reducing urban violence and conflict is of critical relevance to the design and implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Vulnerable communities and cities as a whole, affected by conflict or dysfunctional through sustained violence, risk being left behind and require focused attention in view of achieving both SDG 11 ("Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable") and SDG 16 ("Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies").

2. **Strengthen the knowledge and evidence base on the nexus between sustainable urbanisation, violence and conflict**

   a) Invest in scholarly informed context-based research to fully understand the nature, scale and complexity of urban violence and conflict.
   b) Produce consistent data and metrics on forms and impacts of violence and conflict across regional, national and international fora.
   c) Use joined up analysis bringing together urban, academic, humanitarian, peacebuilding, environmental and development actors to address the causes of urban violence and conflict and create an enabling environment for sustainable urbanisation.

3. **Focus on strengthening urban resilience in cities at risk of or affected by violence and conflict**

   a) Use urban resilience as a common principle in enacting strategies that ultimately help the city prepare for, withstand, and recover from future shocks and stresses, particularly building resilience towards instances of urban conflict and violence. Urban resilience frameworks define collective outcomes for humanitarian, development and peace and security actors, requiring multi-scale, multi-faceted, cross-sector based approaches and provides a framework to bridge humanitarian and development efforts.

b) Existing inequalities (economic, political, cultural, gender, security, justice, social services, etc.), which can have spatial components and drive violence and conflict, should be addressed within and beyond resilience frameworks. Reducing these inequalities can often be an effective method of building resilience against urban violence and conflict.
c) Involve all parties, in particular those driving and/or affected by urban violence and conflict.

4. **Link spatial and social planning practices to strengthen social cohesion and build resilient cities**

The shape and management of the built environment, infrastructure and public space have a two-way relationship with violence, social cohesion and resilience. The outcome of urban planning can be as much a cause of increased violence as a means to finding new solutions. Urban space is both a risk for conflict and an opportunity for conflict prevention and resolution, building and sustaining peace and social cohesion.

a) Recognize an inclusive and collective right over the processes of urbanization.
b) Use urban design, spatial and social planning as tools to support efforts to reduce urban violence and conflict, including through fostering the conditions for socio-economic development and collective action in affected communities.
c) Ensure access to inclusive, mixed-use and culturally sensitive public space and advocate to prevent the privatization and fragmentation of public space.

5. **Focus on strengthening urban governance, in particular responsive and inclusive actors with the capacity to deliver services and maintain urban systems, in the context of violence and conflict**

a) Ensure continuous and active community engagement within all governance processes and in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects.
b) Recognize legitimacy of the state is created not only through the quantity or quality of services or who delivers them but also through how they are delivered through inclusive process and with effective grievance mechanisms.
c) Promote accountability towards all urban residents, regardless of citizenship, particularly those most marginalized, underrepresented, or who moved into the city to escape conflict or violence.

6. **Use crisis response as an opportunity to set cities on a more resilient and sustainable urban growth trajectory**

a) Understand cities in crises through urban specific assessments, including spatial analysis, assessments of services, supply chains, critical infrastructure, governance arrangements and land tenure.
b) Work within a long-term systems approach that addresses inequalities (governance, society, and infrastructure) and integrates the displaced into the host community, moving from delivering aid to ending need, including through capacity and institution building of communities and local authorities to deliver social services in an equitable manner to the displaced and the host population.
c) Manage urban displacement as a humanitarian and development challenge, integrated into urban planning and urban development processes (ex. integration of (temporary) settlement of displaced as part of planned city extensions).

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