

Guest Column:
The Power of Urban Water by Design
by Henk Ovink

Urgency, complexity and opportunity

The 2016 World Economic Forum Global Risks Report puts the impact of water crises as the number one global risk for the next decade. It is estimated that two billion people will be devastated by 2050, and four billion by 2080, if we continue with our current practices. Water is affecting 15% of the world's GDP and 90% of the world's disasters are water related.

It is through water that we feel the impact of climate change the most. Water quality defines our economic and societal prosperity. And water risks—too much or too little—define our societies' vulnerability. Water is key for agricultural, food and energy production. Water is an urban matter, an asset if managed right, a severe risk if not. Global urbanization gives us growth, prosperity, emancipation and development opportunities, but climate change, sea level rise and increasing impacts of these risks put a lot of pressure on our cities, societies and citizens, and on our economy and ecology. With the world's urban population increasing toward 75% in 2050, it is the cities where lives and assets are at severe risk if not developed resilient.

A transformative approach

To encounter future risks, impacts, and uncertainties, we need a transformative approach to serve vulnerable regions and worldwide sustainable development. Five aspects not only stand out, they are all connected and interdependent—one without the other will cause a failing approach.

Long-term planning coupled with short-term innovative projects

Regional and comprehensive research is a necessity to get a better understanding of risks, uncertainties, and strengths of our regions, cities, and communities. Long-term comprehensive planning is also vital for defining the right response and the ways forward to deal with this complexity. They need to be coupled with short-term innovative interventions that will withstand next year's elections. These projects will inspire and kickstart replication. The connection between planning and projects is critical, otherwise plans are left on the shelves and projects will become incidents.

Public-private funding

Public-private partnerships, built on trust and mutual gains, need to be embedded in a process of transparency and accountability. Only then can we get to new ways of financing, matching public and private funding. The needed comprehensive long-term approaches must be addressed in evaluations and analyses to increase transparency and attract donors, both public and private. Monitoring and evaluation enable the loop back into existing structures to fix institutional mismatches and increase capacity, perform change, and thus, improve for better delivery towards next steps for resilience.

Coalition building and inclusive collaboration

Real change is cultural change and thus, starts in the hearts and minds of the people of the region. Matching up global talent with local talent, partners of all backgrounds, with both the best professional skills as well as specific regional ties and personal convictions is crucial.

Building institutional capacity

A comprehensive approach demands a critical level of institutional capacity for organizing the necessary inclusive processes, and building a coalition among public and private stakeholders that ensures accountability and transparency. Capacity and ownership to move this comprehensive approach towards sustainable implementation, built up from the start is key for successful transformation.

Design

And at the heart of this approach stands design. Design has the strength to identify opportunities and transform these into innovative examples. Design can connect the regional interdependencies with local needs, connecting people and place, making tactile what is envisioned, practical what is ambitious. Design is key for showing the added value of investments in a comprehensive way. Design is essential for the collaborative and inclusive process, building the alliance needed for critical change, not by trade-offs of interests, but by bridging gaps. Design bridges the gap between quality and safety, between local needs and political capacity, between regional interdependencies and community assets, between economy, society, and the environment. Design in that sense is both the 'cultural' process as well as the 'economic' outcome.

Change the world

The slowness of climate change causes a slow approach and a focus on response, not an approach of preparedness. But we have a choice to make! We can choose not to go slow and incremental but to step up, leap-frog and become transformative—in our approaches, in our collective actions, in our collaborations. We can choose to become transformative in creating facts on the ground with the capacity to change the world by overhauling the speed of climate change in the way we develop our cities, regions and nations.

¹ World Water Development Report 2012 ² UNDP: Human Development Report, 2007/2008 ³ World Water Development Report 2012 ⁴ World Water Development Report 2012



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CITY RESILIENCE PROFILING PROGRAMME

Volume 9



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This information brochure summarizes key aspects of UN-Habitat's new programme producing measurable indices for urban government resilience building efforts.

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UN-Habitat and the City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP)

As the main UN agency responsible for ensuring the sustainable development of human settlements, UN-Habitat is strategically placed to coordinate the humanitarian and development efforts of multiple actors and policy makers at all levels in the common pursuit of urban resilience.

UN-Habitat has committed to implementing the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience; operationally through its Strategic Policy on Human Settlements in Crisis and Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework, and institutionally by creating a new branch dedicated to disaster risk reduction and resilience and a global work programme mainstreaming outputs on disaster risk reduction and resilience. The on-going City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP) will also contribute to the Plan of Action as per mandate.

The CRPP goes beyond conventional approaches to ‘risk reduction,’ delivering a forward-looking, multi-scale, multi-sectoral, multi-hazard, multi-stakeholder model for building resilience that recognizes the complexities and unique value of cities, and the inherent interdependencies of each part of an urban system.

The CRPP’s comparative advantage is strengthened through key partnerships founded on integrated approaches to urban resilience, with strategic partners including the UNISDR Secretariat, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, Habitat Partner University Initiative institutions, private sector representatives from the insurance, IT, energy and natural resource industries, as well as city networks including ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, UCLG, Metropolis, the C40 Cities, Climate Leadership Group and 100 Resilient Cities.

CRPP Overview

The CRPP is delivering the following four accomplishments:

- 1. **Research on Operational Framework:** An adaptable urban systems model suitable for all human settlements.
- 2. **Indexing and Profiling:** A set of indicators, standards, and profiles to support cities for calibrating urban systems’ ability to withstand and recover from crises.
- 3. **Tools/Software Development:** Software systems that produce city resilience profiles, from which Resilience Action Plans are derived.
- 4. **Normative Guidance:** Global standards set for urban resilience at different levels from local policies based on the Resilience Action Plans to national policies including the states’ competence towards new resilience standards.

Urban Resilience refers to the ability of any urban system to withstand and recover quickly from multiple shocks and stresses and maintain continuity of services.

CRPP Events



Barcelona Resilience Week: Resilient Cities from Commitment to Action

Built on the success of last year’s international workshop, “Barcelona’s Experience in Resilience,” we are excited to host “Barcelona Resilience Week” from March 14th through 18th. The event is organised by the BCN Urban Resilience Partnership, UN-Habitat’s City Resilience Profiling Programme and the City Council of Barcelona, providing a global platform for discussion and learning between leading cities and companies working to build more resilient communities all over the world. More than 250 attendees, including representatives from more than 50 cities are expected to attend.

Barcelona Resilience Week aims to give voices to and connect cities, while providing the opportunity to learn about ground-breaking resilience topics, present, share and exchange experiences and best practices, and gain practical knowledge. Moreover, this year’s event will provide more space for interaction, which offers attendees opportunities to create new contacts, develop partnerships and foster networking opportunities between cities, companies with extensive experience in implementing resilience projects, and experts from international institutions. The event will feature a variety of sessions covering a wide range of topics, from water management and disaster-proof urban infrastructures to multi-stakeholder collaboration frameworks and social resilience.



Several high-level panel discussions will explore major current-affairs topics. The session, “Resilience Challenges,” will focus on a comprehensive view of urban resilience as a mainstream issue, and the factors that hinder cities from implementing resilience procedures. The discussion will aim to address methods to accelerate urban resilience efforts. “Community Practice” will be centred on communities seeking to implement urban resilience measures and how these communities can benefit from collaboration. The session will bring partnerships among cities, international institutions, and private companies into the spotlight to discuss experiences and positive results.

Additionally, “Multi-stakeholder collaborations enhancing resilience” will examine the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships with private companies, research centres, and representatives from civil society in a city’s resilience agenda. The discussion will address the benefits of these collaborations and how to successfully build such relationships. Lastly, the very relevant topic of migration and its relation to urban resilience will be analyzed in the participatory session, “Migration impacts.” Initiatives to maintain public services and overcome other social, economic and humanitarian challenges during migration crises will be considered and discussed.

Furthermore, parallel sessions will cover the most practical aspects of the implementation of resilience projects and initiatives through the presentation of case studies and specific projects. With a broad range of topics, these sessions will aim to provide an holistic view of resilience through themes such as health, social, energy, data sharing and services, to name a few.

In addition, organized site visits will offer a unique opportunity to participants to experience first-hand how Barcelona is strengthening its capabilities to become more resilient to a slew of threats. Side events have also been organized with outside organizations, including an exhibition from the international design competition, “Designing Resilience in Asia” from the National University of Singapore School of Design & Environment. The Enginyers Industrials de Catalunya (EIC) will also be featured in a session, “Resilient Catalonia, Governance and Smart City to Face Crisis,” exploring the concept of resilience and its impact in the Catalan territory. Furthermore, the Medellín Collaboration on Urban Resilience will host a session on the international perspective on Urban Resilience.



Last year’s “Barcelona’s Experience in Resilience”

Smart City Expo Puebla: Urban Innovation Towards Equitable Cities in Latin America

From February 16th–18th, the city of Puebla, Mexico hosted Smart City Expo Puebla, bringing together over 80 businesses and 36 Latin American Countries under the common goal of a more sustainable, healthy and equitable future for Mexican and Latin American cities. As part of the event, the Smart City World Expo Congress featured over 100 speakers.



Ms. Maíta Fernández-Armesto presenting at Smart City Expo Puebla

At the congress, CRPP’s Senior Coordinator, Maíta Fernández-Armesto, presented in the session, “Urban Resilience.” The session focused on the multi-stakeholder, multi-sectorial, multi-hazard approach to resilience that the CRPP represents. The speakers were asked to present the new challenges and opportunities arising from the implementation of resilience actions in urban areas. They represented some of the most relevant actors potentially acting on the urban development process in Mexico, and the organizational competence from multiple scales of territory: national, state, metropolitan and local. In addition, views from other organizations were represented by university networks, as well as the links to smart technologies applied to community based resilience. The panel raised large interest from the audience and agreed on the necessity of a change of paradigm in urban planning. A more social based, integrated approach including all aspects from management to more flexible planning and an adequate regulatory framework for urban development is required.

The other speakers in the session included Mr. Ricardo Gutiérrez Padilla, Director General of IMEPLAN Guadalajara; Mr. Alfonso Goverla, CEO of Digital Civix; Mr. Nicola Tollin, Executive Director of RESURBE International Program on Urban Resilience; Mr. Armando Saldaña, Director General de Ordenamiento Territorial y Atención a Zonas de Riesgo - Secretaría de Desarrollo Agrario, Territorial y Urbano; Ms. Ma. Elena Gálvez Arellano, Directora de Normatividad e Instrumentos Financieros de Gestión de Riesgos - Coordinación Nacional de Protección Civil; and Ms. María Magdalena Ruiz, Secretario de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo Territorial - Estado de Jalisco.

Raising Resilience in the Russian Federation

Dan Lewis, Chief of the Urban Risk Reduction Unit, UN-Habitat, recently traveled to Yakutsk, Russia, one of the largest Arctic/Nordic cities in the world, to meet with its City Council to discuss the city’s resilience and partnership with CRPP. In Yakutsk, Lewis shared his experiences in urban risk reduction and building resilience, and discussed the importance of cooperation among cities on common resilience challenges, particularly those in extreme climates. The visit was very productive as Yakutsk Mayor, Mr. Aysen Nikolayev, agreed to participate in the City Resilience Programme of UN-Habitat. Furthermore, the Mayor agreed to support the development of an Arctic/Nordic Cities Resilience Network, which will bring together cities in similar extreme climates to work together to meet common goals of protecting their citizens, public and private assets, and ensure the continuity of urban functions through all potential threats and hazards.

After Mr. Lewis’ visit to Yakutsk, he traveled to St. Petersburg to meet with government authorities, furthering dialogue initiated during the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona in November 2015. The meeting was arranged and hosted by the Deputy Governor, and included city partners from ITMO University and University of St. Petersburg, as well as other senior city government officials. The meeting marks a fresh start for further collaboration; with the appointment by the Vice Governor, of Ms. Elena Ulyanova, Director of Strategic and Spatial Planning, who will, as lead Focal Point for CRPP, continue developing the partnership between CRPP and St. Petersburg.

CRPP is looking forward to future engagement with the city of Yakutsk and the Arctic/Nordic City Network, and continued partnership with St. Petersburg in their resilience efforts. The Programme is also excited to welcome Mayor Nikolaev and Ms. Ulyanova and their delegations to Barcelona Resilience Week in mid-March 2016.

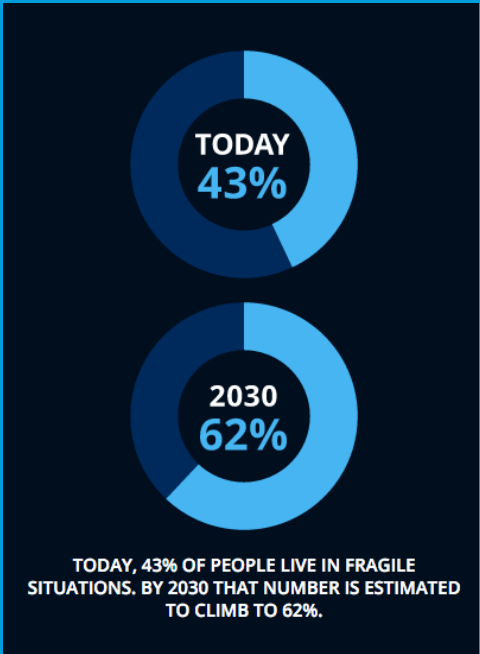
‘Global Alliance for Urban Crises’ Pre-Launch Workshop in Preparation for World Humanitarian Summit

Before this year’s Barcelona Resilience Week, the Sant Pau Art Nouveau Site in Barcelona hosted a Pre-Launch Workshop organised in preparation for the World Humanitarian Summit. The event was held for the launch of the ‘Global Alliance for Urban Crises,’ a collaboration aimed at bringing together humanitarian groups and cities in working toward an international approach to urban disaster preparation and response.

The ‘Global Alliance for Urban Crises’ has now been confirmed as a High Level Special Session during the World Humanitarian Summit. The Summit will be the first event of its kind, and will be held in Istanbul, Turkey from May 23rd–24th. The event will bring together humanitarian organisations, government actors, individuals, and the private sector in order to create solutions for the humanitarian crises facing the world today and for the future.

“We are currently facing humanitarian needs on a massive scale. In our rapidly changing world, we must continually seek better ways to meet the needs of millions of people affected by conflicts and disasters.”

World Humanitarian Summit



Secretary General Report for the World Humanitarian Summit:
<http://sgreport.whsummit.org>

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