

**Public hearing
of the Committee on Economic Cooperation
and Development (AwZ)
on the subject of “Urbanisation”
Wednesday, 12 November 2014,
from 10:00 to 13:00 hrs**

Introduction:

In many developing regions, the urban population is growing. Already today, more than fifty per cent of people live in urban areas. According to UN projections, the urban population will grow by 2.5 billion people by 2050 and will then make up 66 per cent of the global population.

The KfW (Reconstruction Loan Corporation) points out that 90 per cent of the growth in the urban population will take place in developing and emerging countries. Sixty per cent of future urban residents will be under 18 years of age; many of them live, or will live, in slums. Living in a slum generally means no adequate access to drinking water, no sanitation and no adequate infrastructure – in the areas of education, transport and energy, for example. The lack of prospects may nurture crime and fuel tensions.

The question arises as to how the phenomenon of urbanisation can be taken into account in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To what extent can urbanisation present an opportunity to reduce maternal and child mortality, improve education, combat HIV/AIDS, improve access to drinking water and sanitation and do more for the climate? In towns and cities, the population density is high, meaning that measures in these fields can reach larger numbers of people.

The question of how to supply rapidly growing urban areas with energy in the future is not just relevant for economic growth and inclusion; it is also of importance for the global climate. Climate change affects all areas of our planet. This also applies to the effects of climate change, such as natural disasters, extreme weather events, floods and droughts, which create even more hunger in the world. The issues of energy supply and transport planning for growing towns, cities and megacities in developing and emerging countries are thus critical.

The 2014 WorldRiskReport points out that rapidly growing urban areas are particularly vulnerable. The report explains that the huge influx of people leads to the development of informal settlements and slums – often in areas which are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards: on river banks or on hillsides. For German development cooperation, the question arises as to whether and how the resilience of these vulnerable urban areas can be enhanced, in order to avoid every natural event triggering a disaster leading to large-scale loss of life, as well as creating high costs for reconstruction. Urbanisation has to be grounded in legal certainty – regarding occupancy and tenancy rights, for example. Urban planning can help to boost resilience.

Expert:

George Deikun, UN-Habitat Liaison Office, Geneva, Switzerland

Block 1: Societal, social and political aspects of urbanisation

According to estimates by Amnesty International, more than one billion people worldwide already live today in 200,000 slums. By 2030 already, this number is expected to have reached two billion. Living in a slum means a high level of child and maternal mortality, lack of adequate health care and, frequently, poverty. The lack of security and high crime levels are also major problems. Often, there is a lack of access to education and thus a lack of prospects. Wealth inequality is greater in urban areas than in the countryside, though absolute poverty is higher in rural areas. This can cause conflicts, prompting the question as to what role the extension of social-security systems in urban areas must, and can, play. In addition, the question arises as to how inclusion of residents can be increased and their security enhanced. This involves combating corruption, strengthening good governance and, not least, ensuring reliable protection by the security forces and decentralisation.

Questions:

- What social impacts can be expected as a result of increasing urbanisation in developing and emerging countries? What are the main structural causes of the different levels of development amongst cities developing into megacities?
- How can and is urbanisation being taken into account in the MDG/SDG process? How should urbanisation be seen in the context of the socio-ecological transformation described, for example, by the German Advisory Council on Global Change? What UN agencies should and will monitor and take action on this topic in the framework of the MDG/SDG? In what areas ought Germany to use its influence in UN-Habitat's governing council?
- How can and must educational provision be improved against the background of poverty and the largely very young population in the rapidly growing urban areas in developing and emerging countries? How can we create decent and sustainable jobs for people in towns and cities? What positive examples exist?
- What opportunities do growing agglomerations offer for improvement of health care in general and, specifically, the reduction of maternal and child mortality and how can these opportunities be better exploited? What positive examples exist? How can we improve general services in urban areas? What role does public infrastructure play? What role can or should private providers or PPP play?
- What role can and must self-determined family planning, combined with awareness raising, play in urbanisation in developing countries? What positive examples exist? How must women be empowered in the framework of urbanisation and what concepts exist for this?
- What concepts exist to enhance the security of those living in urban areas and promote good governance and the battle against corruption? What opportunities and challenges may be created in rapidly growing urban areas for processes of democratisation and community participation?
- How can housing rights be asserted in rapidly growing urban areas and what role do government-subsidised housing and municipal housing associations play in this context?

- What is the situation regarding decentralised and micro-level approaches (e.g. insurance, energy supply) for slum residents? What particular needs exist in relation to refugee towns?

Experts:

Professor Dr. Christian Schmid, Titular Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich)

Professor Albert Friedrich Speer junior, Urban and Regional Planner, Founder of the architecture and planning firm AS&P

Block 2: Technical, planning and legal aspects of urbanisation

The infrastructure in urban areas has not kept pace with the growth in population. This applies to energy supply, for example. Many of the 1.3 billion people worldwide without access to electricity, or the 2.7 billion people lacking modern cooking facilities, live in the “megacities”. And the UN predicts that demand for energy will continue to rise. Lack of access to water and sanitation is a major problem in urban areas, leading to disease. Mobility and transport infrastructure are vital for economic growth, for inclusion of residents and to allow people to travel to work. One important question is how the relationship between rural areas and the growing towns and cities can be improved – through trade ties and infrastructure, for example – i.e. the question of how urban and rural development can be mutually reinforcing.

Development cooperation frequently involves individual projects in towns or cities (e.g. in the areas of energy or water). In this context, the question arises as to what role greater emphasis on “package solutions”, providing a whole package of support for rapidly growing urban areas, could play in the future.

Urbanisation requires planning. This is particularly important since making changes at a later point is not only expensive, but also difficult due to land and property rights. The following questions therefore arise: what legal framework is needed for successful urban planning? In what ways must local authorities be strengthened and how can the rights of inhabitants be protected and their participation enhanced?

Questions:

- How can a sustainable energy infrastructure be successfully built for rapidly growing urban areas in developing countries against the background of climate change? What is the current situation of the energy infrastructure in the rapidly growing urban areas in developing countries? What positive examples exist in the area of renewable energy?
- How can effective improvements be achieved against the background of urbanisation in the areas of water supply and sanitation, as well as the availability of toilets?
- What role must the development of public transport, mobility and transport infrastructure play for rapidly growing urban areas? What positive and negative examples exist?
- How can urban and rural development be better linked, through trade and transport infrastructure, for example, and where is there a risk of urban-rural conflict? On the subject of “urban-rural linkage”: could the ten “green centres” planned by the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) be paired up with ten urban centres, in order to link urban and rural development more strongly?

- How can and must the resilience of urban metropolises be enhanced and in what ways are rapidly growing urban areas more vulnerable to natural risks? Do integrated natural disaster preparedness concepts exist?
- What experience is there with development cooperation concepts for rapidly growing urban areas which provide “package solutions”, i.e. encompass several different sectors? What form should a German development-policy concept for urbanisation take? What experience has been gathered in developing and emerging countries with the German model of municipal planning for urban development?
- How can legal certainty be enhanced against the background of urbanisation and what role do the development of land registers and the strengthening of land and property rights play? What positive examples exist? What interactions between legal certainty, good governance and combating corruption must be taken into account and what influence can urban planning have in this context? What role must decentralisation play in rapidly growing cities and megacities? What positive examples exist of slum upgrading? What forms of participative urban development exist in the states in the global South, e.g. in the field of participatory budgeting or local self-government and which of these should be promoted? What experience and approaches are there regarding the ongoing development of towns and cities as cultural areas?
- What experience has been gathered in German development cooperation with the concepts of “smart cities” and “transition towns”? Do megacities or cities approaching megacity status exist which are developing into “transition towns” or have already undergone this process?
- What timeframes and predictions (land register, GIS data?) have guided actions so far and will guide them in the future? Is the data available sufficient?

Experts:

Dr Clara Brandi, Researcher at the German Development Institute (DIE), Bonn

Professor Einhard Schmidt-Kallert, Dortmund University, International Planning Studies (IPS) department

Organisational points:

Time allocated for the general introductory statement: 12 – 15 minutes

Time allocated for the experts' comments in blocks 1 and 2: 5 – 7 minutes.

Experts and other interested organisations are asked to submit written position papers prior to the hearing in order to provide the Members of the Bundestag with information in advance.

Statements from the BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation) and KfW (Reconstruction Loan Corporation) will be requested in advance and made available on the Committee's webpage together with the papers from the experts.