

# UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



## 2010 REGIONAL BULLETIN

REGIONAL BULLETIN HIGHLIGHTING UN-HABITAT ACTIVITY  
IN CENTRAL, EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE



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Dear readers,

I am pleased to be able to introduce to you the second edition of our Bulletin covering the activities of UN- HABITAT in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. It is published at a time when many of the countries of this region are facing serious flooding, subsidence and brush fire related problems. What these natural disasters have brought to the fore is the role of spatial planning in protecting people from future disasters. It is clear that in many cases development was mistakenly allowed on flood plains and in areas where subsidence was likely. Urban sprawl as a phenomenon has contributed to this as these areas tend to be on the outskirts of cities.

It is increasingly difficult to deny that the downgrading of planning has contributed to the problems being experienced. Not only does that lead to development which does not include adequate provision for public space or even infrastructure but it also can contribute to sustaining heavy material and human losses as a result of natural disasters.

UN-HABITAT has consistently advocated the need to ensure that planning takes account of risks of natural disaster and that cities should be compact rather than sprawling. We have also argued for cities to prepare for changes in the climate with investment in adequate drainage and air corridors to ensure a natural cooling effect. That is how we understand sustainability. No development is sustainable if as a result of its formation people regularly have their livelihoods destroyed as a result of physical destruction (wind or water). We have to face the fact that construction in certain areas is counterproductive and uneconomic for individuals and society alike, however attractive it may seem as creating scenic places to live.

Local government, as it acquires additional powers and resources will increasingly be the decision maker on these issues. This is how it should be. Decentralisation has brought with it many benefits and helped in building the civil society we all want. However, there must be room for a legal and supervisory framework to protect both individuals and communities from unsustainable forms of development. Let us hope that this is the positive lesson that will come out of the problems our countries have experienced this year.



Krzysztof Mularczyk

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Mularczyk".

Director  
UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office

The 6th regional Vienna Declaration (VD) review meeting was organized by the UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office in Budapest on 3-4 June 2010, with the financial support of the Government of Finland and in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and Economy of Hungary, the Hungarian Society for Urban Planning, and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South Eastern Europe (NALAS). The meeting was attended by Ministry representatives of the Vienna Declaration signatory countries and Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme (RCSP) countries, the Regional Cooperation Council, representatives of local authorities and national associations of local authorities from “South Eastern Europe (SEE)” countries, NALAS, sector experts and representatives of UN-HABITAT, UNDP, the European Investment Bank and other International Development Organizations.

Representatives of signatory Ministries to the Vienna Declaration presented their Progress Reports in the implementation of each Ministry’s action plan set to meet their VD commitments.

The meeting also gave an opportunity to share, through peer review, the achievements reached in the urban sector and the challenges faced in the development and implementation of each country regulatory and legislative frameworks in the fields of affordable housing, urban development management, legalization and regularization of informal settlements.



Furthermore, the meeting provided a platform to exchange experiences and share lessons learned from case study projects focused on integration of informal settlements and vulnerable groups and implemented by regional and national actors, and local governments in the SEE countries. Methodologies and tools developed on concrete pilot projects across the region offer a valuable knowledge base providing further inputs to development of national policies and programmes. The meeting reaffirmed the importance of improved cooperation between central and local government levels and also, in the view of enhancing regional co-operation, to further develop instruments for cross-border co-operation.

The Vienna Declaration Results Management Framework was presented and discussed at the 6th Regional VD Review Meeting. The discussion focused on the Vienna Declaration Results Matrices proposed to monitor results and progress in the implementation of VD commitments and devised as flexible tools that could further evolve on the basis of experience and feedback from user groups.

Given the diverse history and evolution of informal settlements in the region, varied standards (from slums to luxurious residences), location (from suburbs to city cores and protected areas) and size (from several small units to settlements for over 50,000 residents), it is important to report on results achieved for each type-squatter settlements, slums/settlements for vulnerable groups, and illegal subdivisions, as each of these types often requires a different set of policy instruments and approaches for integration.

It was convened that, while Countries in the region are faced both with the challenges of regularization, integration and upgrading of informal settlements as with the legalization of illegally constructed buildings, the focus of policy action in line with the Vienna Declaration would insist on area-based, neighbourhood integration of informal settlements, as opposed to measures dealing with unauthorized adaptation of buildings and/or illegal construction of buildings. The project concept of the RCSP implementation phase was presented and discussed as well.

The RCSP was reformulated bringing its principles and objectives closer to the current realities in the SEE region and to the funding opportunities, with a focus on systematic training and institutional strengthening so as to effectively address the multiple challenges of informal settlement legalisation and integration across cities in the region. The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment of all stakeholders in revitalizing the programme and maintain the RCSP as a mechanism for regional cooperation, reinforced as an instrument of cross-border cooperation, fundraising and improved cooperation between central and local government levels.

## Moving forward in the preparation of THE STATE OF EUROPEAN CITIES IN TRANSITION REPORT

On 25 and 26 January 2010, UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office and the Institute of Urban Development (Instytut Rozwoju Miast - IRM) of Krakow, Poland, jointly organized an Expert Group Meeting launching the preparatory process of the State of European Cities in Transition Report.

Over 20 experts from 8 countries of the Region representing research/academic organizations, international organizations and associations of local authorities attended the event. Participants analyzed and extensively discussed current urban trends in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and related policies, challenges and emerging issues. The discussion led to reaching agreement on the scope of the report, its structure and the contents outline, giving valuable directions and recommendations for the development of its full contents.



In line with UN-HABITAT guidelines for the State of the Region's Cities reports, the State of European Cities in Transition Report will be based on a thematic approach to human settlements-related issues following six recurrent key themes: population and urbanization, economic roles of cities, social and housing issues, urban environmental challenges, urban governance systems, and emerging issues. The structure of the report will include sub-regional chapters, each covering the six key themes in order to highlight sub-regional specificities and commonalities.

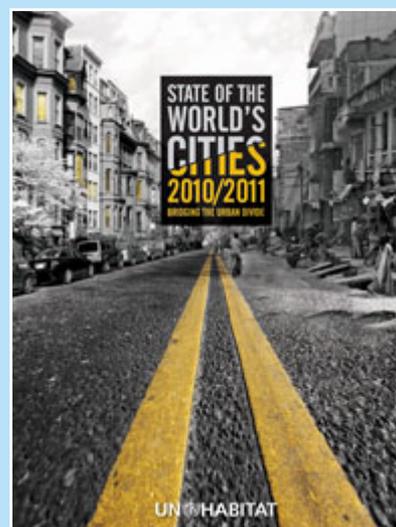
The State of European Cities in Transition Report will be a region-wide and cutting edge information and dissemination tool that will provide national and local decision makers with key urban data so as to help devising advanced policies for sustainable urban development, as well as raise the visibility on a global scale of a region that has undergone rapid transformations of its urban development related issues.

The process of preparation of the State of European Cities in Transition Report will further promote regional exchange and dissemination of experiences and practices relating to city development in the region, and in this view, partnering modalities and networking mechanisms were also examined by the experts participating at the Krakow meeting.

Besides, it was agreed to explore further partnerships so as to ensure a broader support and involvement of stakeholders committed to the development of sustainable human settlements in the Region and possibly from all the countries represented in the report.

UN-Habitat once every two years publishes The State of the World's Cities Report and has been further mandated to produce four State of the Region's Cities reports, one for Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Urban inequality is the main theme of the 2010/2011 mother publication.

The first edition of the State of the European Cities in Transition report will focus on describing and analyzing the situation of cities within the region and will be used as a region-wide information dissemination tool based on accurate and comparable data collected. The report will also aim to provoke dialogue and discussion on the role of cities of the region in improving national, regional and local economies through sustainable and equitable development.



The International Conference on land and property taxation and financing of infrastructure and housing development in urban areas, organized by UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office, the Global Land Tool Network GLTN and the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, took place on 15–16 October 2009 in Warsaw, Poland.

The Conference was aimed to enhance and share knowledge and experiences, disseminate lessons learnt from the region and other countries/ regions on policies and instruments of land management and land and property taxation, and also to generate further synergies and networks amongst participants and countries in the region and beyond. Over 60 participants from around the world, representing various stakeholders in the field, attended the event. Seventeen papers exploring policies and instruments for improving equitable, affordable and sustainable land and property taxation, charges and fees, were presented and led to stimulating discussions and exchanges.

Presentations and discussions touched on many aspects of land and property taxation and its potential to contribute to the financing of housing and infrastructure development, and also extended the scope of land and property taxation to encompass pertinent cross-cutting issues.

The key issues discussed were:

- Local solutions for a global issue, where various approaches and tools implemented in different parts of the world;
- Property and land valuation: potential and limit, where different rationales, mechanisms and tools for valuing property and land;
- Bringing informal settlements into city planning processes;
- Multifaceted issues require the engagement of various player;
- Direct vs. indirect taxation instruments.

All participants seemed to come to an agreement that urban development should be financed with uncaptured land value increment.

The Conference has pointed to the need for a certain paradigm shift and going beyond the conventional use of certain instruments. Further study of what did and did not work in specific contexts, and a comparison of instruments and related implementation scales and mechanisms has become a pressing requirement.

The conference report “Financing affordable housing and infrastructure in cities: towards innovative land and property taxation” provides an in-depth overview of the presentations and discussions held during the thematic sessions and underlines main conclusions and recommendations for the way forward. The report is available on the UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office web site.

### Proposals for the way forward at a glance

#### Continue exchanging and debating

Further networking and interactions with other networks, such as the European network of housing researchers, the International Federation of Housing & Planning, etc. and those affiliating international lenders, developers and central and local authorities.

Additional meetings/ workshops addressing land and property taxation issues, particularly land value capture, local applications and transferability of instruments.

#### Keep in touch and get organized

Creation of an expert group involving organisations/ individuals interested in taxation systems, its main task would be to inform local communities and others on LPT.

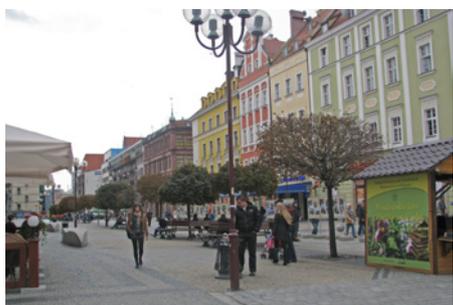
Planning a follow-up Conference to see where we are in one-two years.

#### Promote good practices

Further document land and property taxation practices/ instruments, incl. regional comparisons, and disseminate innovative solutions (this may take the form of a policy guide and the proceedings of the Conference).

Raise awareness and further integrate the human rights dimension into the debate on land and property taxation.

# EUROPEAN URBAN SUMMER SCHOOL



UN-HABITAT has joined with the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) in the organization of the first European Urban Summer School (EUSS) for young professionals held in Wrocław, Poland from 10 to 19 September 2010.

With the aim to facilitate intra-European exchange and trans-European debate, young professionals and experienced academics and practitioners from across Europe were brought together to discuss relevant and emerging planning issues around three main aspects of urban sustainable development – the environment, society and culture, the economy – comparing “old” with “new”, in an effort to recognise essential differences and similarities in order to face the challenges of the future ahead.

EUSS 2010 has been hosted in Poland by the University of Technology of Wrocław, a city in Central Europe that was chosen as the host because of two reasons. First, being a medium-sized European city it serves as a good example to study important topics of this class of cities. Secondly, having multi-cultural roots and the unique experience of changing population after World War II, it is an interesting case study of building local identity and overcoming historical burden.

Professors from Planning and Architecture Faculties and Universities from across Europe were joined by many committed young professionals from the whole Europe.

A series of lectures, debates, workshop sessions and study visits contributed to the development of concepts and design tools for the regeneration of residential neighbourhoods, revitalization of industrial areas and historical centres, sustainable spatial development of medium-size cities, and based on the case-study provided by the City of Wrocław.

EUSS 2010 was organized under the auspices of the Minister of Science and Higher Education and the Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland, and the Marshall of Lower Silesia.

To find out more visit [www.euss.pl](http://www.euss.pl)

## AESOP - the Association of European Schools of Planning [www.aesop-planning.com](http://www.aesop-planning.com)

AESOP is a network of universities and university departments that teach and conduct research within the field of urban and regional planning.

AESOP was founded in 1987 and counts over 150 members, academic and planning institutions and individual experts from Europe and beyond.

The network exists to promote the development of the teaching curricula and research within the Member Schools through regular dialogue, exchange visits and the dissemination of research and best practices.

UN-HABITAT together with the Polish Foundation in Support of Local Democracy are organizing a conference in Warsaw, 27-28 January 2011 on **“Decentralization-Twenty Years of Polish Local Governance: A Model for Transition?”**. The Conference will be spread over two days. On the first day the participants will be invited to discuss the Polish experience of decentralization and local government reform. Discussion will focus around both the successes and the shortcomings of the Polish experience with especial reference for what it has to offer to the ongoing transition in parts of Europe and beyond.

The second day of our event will consist of a workshop session exploring the possibility of creating a Network in Support of Decentralization in the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The idea of the network is to create a body which can support the UN-HABITAT “International Guidelines on Decentralization and the Strengthening of Local Authorities” and the “International Guidelines on Access to Basic Services”. The workshop will discuss self-assessment instruments for monitoring progress and initiatives for supporting countries who are or may in the future be seeking assistance with their decentralization efforts.

The participants of the conference are expected to be: central government officials, local government representatives, experts and representatives of NGOs. The conference will be held in the English language with translation available on the first day into the Polish language. Registration forms for participation in the conference are available on both the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy web site [www.frdl.org.pl](http://www.frdl.org.pl) and the UN-HABITAT Warsaw Office website [www.uhabitat.org.pl](http://www.uhabitat.org.pl). A preliminary programme will also shortly be available on both websites.

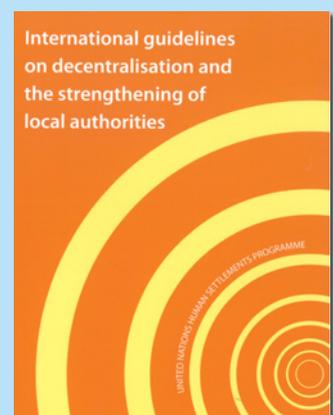
### International Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities

After a decade of research and focused debate, which saw the efforts of UN-HABITAT directed towards supporting the international dialogue among local and national governments on issues related to effective decentralization for enhancing local governance in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the “International Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities” have been approved by UN-HABITAT’s Governing Council in 2007.

The guidelines outline the main principles of decentralization policies, stemming from the review of the status of decentralization policies in different countries, including subsidiarity, administrative and financial capacities of local authorities, governance and democracy at the local level.

Indeed, decentralization is not a static model, which can be easily transferred from a country to another. The challenge has been to identify positive components of decentralization policies and provide a set of recommendations from which all countries could benefit. In this view, the Guidelines may be subject to national adaptations; however they shall serve as a catalyst for policy and institutional reform at the national level to further enable and empower local authorities to improve urban governance in attaining the human settlements related Millennium Development Goals.

The International Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities have been published and are available in the Publications section of UN-HABITAT web site [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)



# PROMOTING PEACE BUILDING IN SOUTH SERBIA

## UN joint programme supported by the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund

UN-HABITAT is supporting community cohesion and inclusive development in thirteen municipalities in South Serbia through the UN Joint Programme Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development (PBILD). PBILD is implemented by six UN Agencies in the Pcinjski and Jablanicki districts: UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO and IOM, who are working together as “One UN”, with each agency undertaking activities in their area of expertise.

Lead partner of the PBILD at central level is the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government. At the local level PBILD is implemented in partnership with the 11 municipalities of Bojnik, Crna Trava, Lebane, Vlasotince, Medvedja, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Presevo, Surdulica, Trgoviste and Vladicin Han, and cities of Vranje and Leskovac.

Two joint programmes comprise PBILD. One of them is the “Promoting peace building in South Serbia”, a 2.5 million US Dollars programme funded by the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund, aimed at achieving improved community cohesion and human capital, in order for communities in south Serbia to be stronger, more integrated and better able to reduce inter-ethnic tensions and conflict risk.



As one of the UN partner agencies working together on PBILD, UN-HABITAT co-operates with the 13 local authorities to contribute to the achievement of this outcome through strengthening capacities of local administrations, institutions and civil society to engage in conflict/violence prevention planning through participation, dialogue and partnership for improved safety, and integrating safety concerns within development efforts, fostering long term stability, reintegration and good governance.



UN-HABITAT will adapt the methodology of its Safer Cities Global Programme, already successfully used in other parts of Serbia in the frame of the SIRP Programme to provide a structured process of capacity building measures to support municipal administrations and civil society partners. This will help them develop and upgrade strategies and plans, through participation and partnership building (including with police), which will address issues related to safety, conflict and security concerns at local level and integrate them within the development efforts, fostering social cohesion, and conflict management capacities. Vulnerable members of the communities, as well as women, youth and ethnic minorities will be involved from the beginning in the planning process for the development of safety strategies and action plans and benefit of capacity building activities.



Small grants will support the implementation of key relevant pilot initiatives through partnerships, as identified by the local communities, targeting the community as a whole, including women, youth, minorities and vulnerable groups.

# ACCESS TO SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING: sharing experiences on policies in Serbia and other European countries National Conference

The conference “Access to social and affordable housing” was held on February 11, 2010 in Belgrade, co-organized by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration with the technical assistance of UN-HABITAT and the support of the Italian Government.

The conference reflects the Serbian political will of sharing experiences with other European countries on affordable housing policy development and strategic options to better target social inclusion. Following the adoption of the Law on Social Housing in August 2009, the Government of Serbia is undertaking further steps to develop appropriate policy instruments and mechanisms for the implementation of social housing programs in the future. The Ministry is currently identifying possible policy options to target the needs of the socially vulnerable population with a strategic approach in a medium/long term perspective, which would be adequate also for possible integrations of housing and urban/spatial planning policies especially in respect of the legalization of informal settlements and the provision of land for social housing.



The conference aimed at confronting different housing policy options and experiences for strengthening affordable housing delivery systems in Serbia. Three main themes significant for the ongoing housing reform process in Serbia, were addressed by the conference highlighting good practices and challenges in other European countries drawing lessons learned and confronting different housing policy options. Sharing experiences on i) housing policy reform processes, ii) housing finance systems, and iii) strategies for addressing the needs of the low-income and socially vulnerable groups, has set the ground for an open policy dialogue to further develop possible options and appropriate instruments for Serbia.

Experiences and analysis from other European countries were brought by experts from the UNECE, the University of Calgary, the Department of Urban Studies of the University of Glasgow, the Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies of the Delft University of Technology, the London School of Economics, and Federcasa Italian National Housing Federation.

The participation has been numerous and active, including representatives of the Serbian Parliament, line Ministries, the Republic Agency for Spatial Planning, Statistical Office, the Institute of Urbanism of Belgrade, the Serbian Chamber of Engineers, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, representatives of Cities’ Assemblies and Councils, local self-governments, Municipal Housing Agencies, Association of Housing Agencies, commercial banks, the Council of Europe, the European Integration and Economic Section of the EU Delegation to Serbia, OSCE and other international organizations and other representatives of the donor community, academia, civil society organizations and non-profit associations.

The relevance of the ongoing reforms in the social housing sector to the EU integration process of Serbia was highlighted by Mr. Adriano Martins Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Serbia “The efforts of the Government in reaching the housing needs of the most vulnerable will contribute to the process of achieving peace and stability and the fight against poverty and social exclusion, one of EU’s main objectives”, said Mr. Martins. 2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Building a more inclusive Europe is vital to achieving the European Union’s goals of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The involvement and cooperation of all stakeholders, central government, local self governments and the civil society, is key to successfully reach adequate and appropriate solutions for the inclusion of the most vulnerable in their communities, added Mr. Martins.

In this respect, the methodological approach of the Conference itself was highly valued as it aimed at involving all actors, bringing together representatives of central and local governments, the private sector, the academia and research institutes, and the civil society. The robust dialogue and discussion that has stemmed from the presentations of experiences has provided a set of recommendations for the new social housing policy in Serbia.

## RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

National workshop organized by the UN Country Team in Serbia

On May 19th and 20th the Theme Group on Roma Inclusion of the UN Country Team in Serbia, with support of the UNHCHR and UN-HABITAT, organized two one-day training workshops targeting local and national level institutions on the right to adequate housing. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia co-hosted the workshops.



This initiative is a result of the implementation of one of the recommendations coming out of the work that is being carried out in Serbia by the UNCT around forced evictions and relocations of Roma informal settlements. The main objectives were to set out a common understanding of the economic, social and cultural rights framework, of international norms and standards related to the right to adequate housing, and to see how they can be implemented at local and national level.

The workshops focused on the content of the state regulatory framework with regard to the right to adequate housing and on good practice examples on translating the law to the practice. Relocations of Roma settlements in Belgrade were analyzed as a specific challenge Serbian authorities are and will be dealing with.



The workshops also included a presentation on local good practice examples and projects for sustainable integration and upgrading of Roma settlements in Serbian municipalities implemented by UN-HABITAT in the framework of the Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia between 2005 and 2009.

Besides the training workshop, the UNCT has provided for the translation of the key documents elaborating the international law standards in the field of the right to adequate housing.



State authorities, and in particular local authorities, showed great interest in the presentations, and also identified a number of areas where progress could be made.

The initiative saw the full support of UNHCHR and UN-HABITAT who provided substantive contributions, in cooperation with UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP, members of the UNCT Theme Group on Roma Inclusion, who are working together in the spirit of "One UN" in providing support to the Government of Serbia on Roma Rights related issues.

In its second phase of implementation, the Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme is providing technical assistance and advisory services to ten municipalities in support of developing urban planning instruments through inclusive and participatory approaches.

Municipal/Urban Development Plans have been formulated in most municipalities with on the job technical assistance throughout the planning process, resulting in wide community participation for the identification of strategic priorities for municipal urban development and of priority projects to be implemented. These plans specify strategic priority areas leading to the development of sectoral plans and to the identification of capital projects.



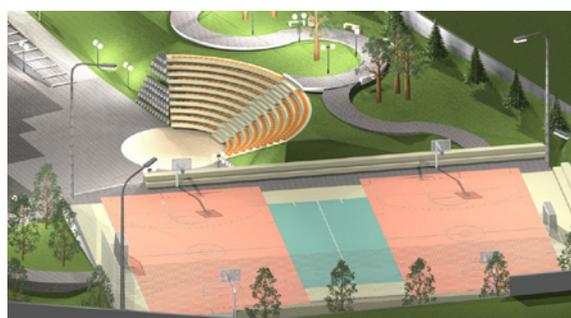
The integrated approach applied to the undertaken planning processes has resulted in the integration of environmental, spatial, social aspects of urban development. Integration of informal settlements in the municipal plans has also been given special attention due to its implications for regulatory planning and capital investments. Strengthening municipal/urban planning processes also includes central level support and cooperation as well as enhanced role of the Association of Kosovo Municipalities vis-à-vis planning.

Out of several planning projects which are in the pipeline at present, an Urban Regulatory Plan for the Informal Settlement Zatra, in Peja/Pec was completed in August 2010 and its public review was launched in September. For the drafting of the Plan, Peja/Pec municipality mobilised its own human resources and it is the first case of the URP for an Informal Settlement to be done in-house. Similar approach has been adopted to the other planning projects and the launch of the public review for the Junik MDP took place in mid-October 2010.

Municipal and Urban Development Plans for Ferizaj/Urosevac and Gjilan/Gnjilane are being revised and retrofitted with the focus on natural disasters and transport, while quality control of the MDP for Prizren, that is drafted by an external consulting company, covers both the structure and the contents of this Plan. Based on the experience with drafting the MDP for Junik, MuSPP teams continue their support to the municipalities of Hani i Elezit/General Jankovic and Mamusha for drafting their MDPs/UDPs with their own resources and thus contributing to building capacities of the municipal staff for planning activities in the future.

So far a number of capital investments projects have been identified, formulated and initiated in close cooperation with municipalities and through consultations with the local communities.

In March 2010, MuSPP2 management met with the Mayor of Ferizaj/Urosevac to discuss ongoing cooperation on the identification of flood-affected areas. The purpose of this meeting was to present technical flooding advice to the municipality, and to discuss the possible solutions in the identified spot improvement area.



In Junik, community consultation meetings with the participation of school pupils with their parents, Municipal officers, and MuSPP2 staff have been organized in order to discuss the capital investment project focused on the improvement of the school yard and addressing accessibility issues. New ideas, such as multipurpose sport area in the school yard, were proposed by the community. The preferred scenario was developed and presented to the local stakeholders in the end of the April 2010.

In June, the capital investments project for the requalification and regeneration of the Skenderbeu Square in Peja/Pec saw its official start with the signing of an agreement of cooperation. The document specifies responsibilities of each of the parties in co-financing under a 50 per cent basis, the capital investment project which aims to regenerate one of the vital areas of the city whilst improving its accessibility.

Agreements of Cooperation were exchanged and undersigned also with the Municipalities of Mitrovica, Prizren, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Junik. It will soon also include Hani Elezit/General Jankovic.

In Mitrovica, two Capital Investments Projects have been identified. Following consultations between the municipality and all schools in the city center school district the improvement of a primary school access was considered a priority to be addressed through participatory design process and implementation of shared solutions.

Further, as the municipal development plan of the city pays particular attention to green corridors, the Lushta River, which crosses the city center, has been dedicated particular attention. A Capital Investment Project is being implemented for its requalification and improvement of the river banks.

In Prizren an agreement was signed to implement a project that will revitalize the historic centre. The project will integrate the historic core of the city through Farkatarëve Street and will also be co-funded on 50 per cent basis by the Municipality of Prizren and UNHABITAT.

In Gjilan/Gnjilane, the severe problem related to earthquakes in the area has been highlighted and proposed to be addressed urgently. The Capital Investment Project implemented in this municipality aims at raising awareness and develop mitigating measures to the impact of earthquakes. The project foresees the reinforcement of a public school building. Involving teachers and students in the process will contribute to raising awareness of the citizens and future generations.

As a result of a wide participatory process, during the formulation of the Municipal and Urban Development Plan, the Municipality and community of Hani I Helezit/General Jankovic has identified as a priority project the requalification and improvement of public spaces in the town centers. The aim of the Capital Investment Project developed in Hani I Helezit/General Jankovic is to improve quality and quantity of public spaces in the town center and to provide opportunities for community gatherings and recreation.

Both the development of the capital investment projects and the planning activities involve civil society organisations, both formal and informal, with a special focus on equal participation of women and vulnerable groups.



In May, a delegation of 16 participants representing national and local authorities participated to a study tour to Sweden where they visited the cities of Stockholm, Gavle, Falun and Borlange, and met with representatives of local governments and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities. The main purpose of the study tour was to become familiar with the Swedish local government system, its function, roles and responsibilities. The visit also aimed at getting an insight into environmental planning and management issues and their relationship to sustainable development.

# THE 100 CITIES INITIATIVE

launched at the Fifth session of the World Urban Forum

In the space of a few years, the World Urban Forum has turned into the world's premier conference on cities. The Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing problems facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies.

Since the first meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002, the Forum has grown in size and stature as it travelled to Barcelona in 2004, Vancouver 2006, and Nanjing in 2008.

The fifth session of World Urban Forum took place in Rio de Janeiro on 22 - 26 March 2010 and it was jointly organized by UN-HABITAT and the Government of Brazil.

The Forum is one of the most open and inclusive gatherings of its kind on the international stage. It brings together government leaders, ministers, mayors, diplomats, members of national, regional and international associations of local governments, non-governmental and community organizations, professionals, academics, grassroots women's organizations, youth and slum dwellers groups as partners working for better cities. The fifth session in Rio has built on the lessons and successes of the previous four events.

The theme of the Fifth WUF in 2010 was "The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide". With half of humanity already living in towns and cities, it is projected that in the next 50 years, two-thirds of us will be urbanised. A major challenge of the Forum is to minimize burgeoning poverty in cities, improve the rights of the urban poor to basic facilities such as shelter, clean water and sanitation and to achieve environmentally friendly, smart urban growth and development. The theme for Rio 2010, "The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide" is in harmony with UN-HABITAT's flagship report, State of the World's Cities 2010-2011.



Rio 2010 was the first World Urban Forum that formed part of the World Urban Campaign designed to elevate and mainstream sustainable urbanisation in global, national and local policy making. The World Urban Campaign is a platform designed for public, private and civil society actors to work in the true spirit of partnership so as to elevate policies, share practical tools and raise awareness for sustainable urbanization.

UN-HABITAT and its partners have been working towards this Campaign since the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements in 1996, where the Habitat Agenda was reaffirmed. The challenge has been transferring the knowledge from Istanbul into an active, forceful initiative and with the World Urban Campaign we believe we now have the platform.

In the frame of the World Urban Campaign, the 100 Cities Initiative ([www.100citiesinitiative.org](http://www.100citiesinitiative.org)), was developed supported by UN-HABITAT and its partners, and launched at the fifth session of the World Urban Forum. The 100 cities initiative web site will be the key tool in promoting the Campaign on a global basis. The website - which carries the strap line Your City, Your Story—is designed to allow any interested party with knowledge of a city to contribute their story so other cities can share the experience. "The 100 Cities Initiative is the key means by which we can mobilise, include and engage cities in the World Urban Campaign," says Nicholas You, senior policy advisor at UN-HABITAT. "It does so by providing a platform for cities to share their stories on how they are addressing current and future challenges and to learn from each other."

**100.CITIES.INITIATIVE**  
YOUR.CITY.YOUR.STORY

[www.100citiesinitiative.org](http://www.100citiesinitiative.org)



The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. The theme chosen for the year of 2010 is “Better City, Better Life” to highlight our collective vision of a sustainable urban world that harnesses the potential and possibilities, mitigates inequalities and disparities, and provides a home for people of all cultures and ages, both rich and poor.

The Global Observance of World Habitat Day this year will be held at the Shanghai World Expo 2010. The Shanghai World Expo presents an excellent venue for the global observance because its theme, “Better City, Better Life” makes it the first global exposition dedicated to the potential and the problems of urban living in the 21st century.



This year, we again have called on our partners in central government, local government, civil society the private sector and the media to take part in organizing activities to raise awareness and stimulate debate on the important theme, “Better Cities, Better Life”.

In Warsaw, a special World Habitat Day conference sponsored by ARCADIS and the Polish Society of Architects (SARP) examined the theme, “Better city, better life” at a seminar.



The event consisted of a panel discussion on the Polish government proposals for amendment of the legislation on urban planning and how these changes can bring us “Better City, Better Life”. The panel was chaired and moderated by Jacek Zakowski one well known journalists in Poland who has been writing on the state of urban planning in Poland on influential Polish reviews and magazines. The panelists were: Olgierd Dziekonski (Secretary of State in the Chancellory of the President of Poland), Pawel Adamowicz (Mayor of Gdansk and Chairman of the Union of Polish Metropolitan Cities), Jacek Wojciechowicz (Deputy Mayor of Warsaw), Adam Kowalewski (chairman of the state Urban-Architectural Commission), Prof. Tadeusz Markowski (chairman of the Polish Society of Urban Planners) and Jerzy Grochulski (Chairman of the Polish Society of Architects). The discussion was recorded and extracts from it were printed in the Architects journal “Zawod Architekt”.



The audience of some 70 people included representatives of local government, central government, academics and urban planning professions. One of the conclusions stemming from the event is the proposal to hold a conference on the issue of urban planning in the transition economies. It was felt that such a conference should discuss issues such as: metropolitan governance, urban sprawl and education and professional training for urban planners.