

UN SCIENCE-POLICY-BUSINESS FORUM ON THE ENVIRONMENT



Third Global Session
18-20 February 2021

Integrated Solutions
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Rethinking Cities: Bringing Nature to the Urban Environment



FEB 19th

**15.00 - 18:00 EAT
ONLINE**

Co-convened with the Sustainable Cities Impact Programme, the Integrated Urban Solutions Partnership and the Global Alliance for Building and Construction (Global ABC)



GREEN CITIES SESSION

Close to 66% of global populations are expected to live in cities by 2050. The resource requirements of urban areas could grow to nearly 90 billion tonnes per year by 2050 with high demand for land, food supplies and raw materials that will far exceed the planet's threshold. Cities are already responsible for some 75% of greenhouse gas emissions. In and around cities, biodiversity and green areas provide ecosystem benefits and services increasing the resilience of cities and improving human health.

According to the report The Weight of Cities by the International Resources Panel (IRP), cities that become more resource-efficient in transport, commercial buildings, and building heating/ cooling could achieve reductions of between 36 to 54 percent in energy use, GHG emissions, metals, land and water use.

The argument has been made that urban planning, sector optimization, cross-sector optimization towards circularity and behavioural changes will together provide cumulative benefits far greater than the those provided by each of the four levers individually.

Building Better in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is helping reimagine city concepts such as the "15-minute city", shifts to active mobility, shorter value chains, and an emphasis on bringing nature back into cities - not least by taking a hybrid approach to infrastructure, connecting the grey infrastructure with nature-based solutions.

An annual average of USD6.9 trillion in infrastructure investment up until 2030 is considered indispensable for the achievement of global development and climate agendas.

The bulk of this investment, according to the OECD, involves developing countries – including fragile low-income economies and emerging economies driven by population growth, increased income levels and rapid urbanization. However, developed countries will also require action to bridge infrastructure and capacity gaps, given the need to invest in retrofitting ageing infrastructure – particularly in light of renewed climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The session will examine the following key questions:

What strategies to redesign, rethink and transform cities, and the infrastructure that support them, will lead to the greatest efficiency, resilience and inclusion?

What policies, investments and multi-sector initiatives are required to implement these strategies at scale to achieve the SDGs?

With a view to supporting changes in present consumption and production patterns, what cross-cutting interlinkages in different infrastructure systems, including cross-sectoral infrastructure integration are essential?





GREEN CITIES SESSION



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