

# Sustainable Urban Development Challenges and Response

Jawed Ali Khan  
UN Habitat Programme Manager  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Pakistan  
August 2022

# What is Urbanization

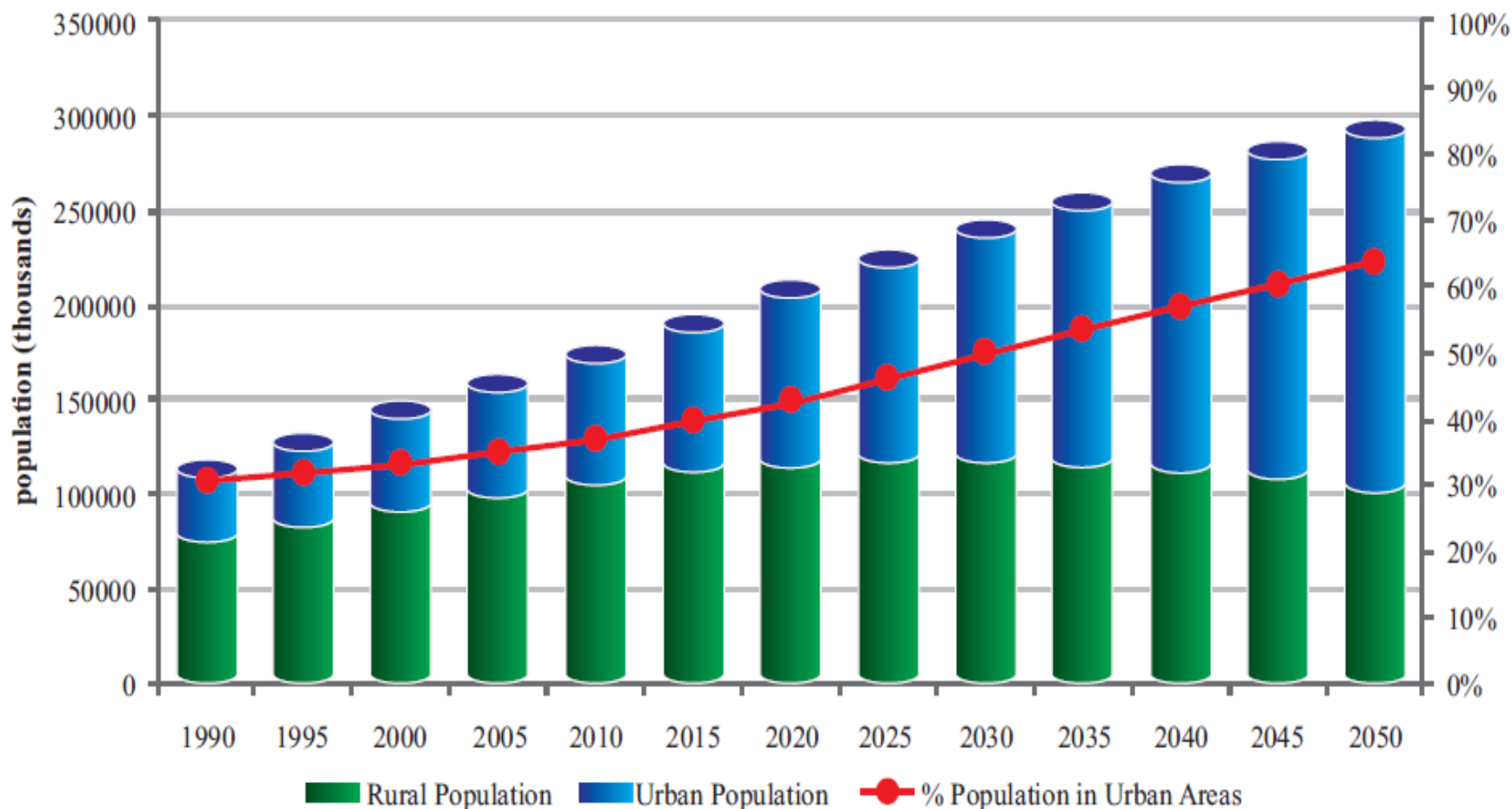
“The gradual increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas, and the ways in which each society adapts to the change”.

# Urban Development Challenges

# Urbanization in Pakistan and South Asia

- Pakistan is the most urbanized nation in South Asia
- Urban population has increased from 43.0 million to 75.19 million between 1998 to 2015 and is expected to become pre-dominantly urbanized by the year 2025.
- 47 percent of urban population lives in nine major cities
- More than 50 percent population of major cities lives in slums and squatter settlements .The primary factor in this conglomeration is increase in rural-urban migration.

# Pakistan Urbanization Trend



Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat

# Urban Management Challenges

- The urban management functions are dispersed among several institutions, mostly semi-autonomous bodies, functioning under provincial government departments.
- Public land ownership is fragmented and is divided between municipality, development authority, cantonments, industrial estates, provincial government departments.
- Each agency has its own building, land use and environmental control provisions and is autonomous in carrying out the development works and maintaining the facilities within their jurisdiction.
- Urban planning and management remains limited due to the lack of relevant information and statistical urban data.
- Furthermore, city planning do not take census dates into account and consequently the base data used for urban planning have to be projected or extrapolated making comparisons or measuring progress difficult.

# Urban Basic Services Challenges

- The provision of urban services and infrastructure in most Pakistani cities lags some 2-3 decades behind the needs of its current populations
- Urban authorities and other sub-national bodies rely overwhelmingly on provincial or national bodies for funds for delivery of basic urban services. This has largely eliminated all incentive and initiative for the search for local self reliance and sustainability.
- Since provincial authorities collect local revenues no efforts are put into strengthening the fiscal and financial capability of local bodies.
- Access to clean water continues to be a major problem in Pakistani cities. Only 65.2 percent of households in Pakistan's 10 major cities have access to piped water connections.
- The cities lack sewage treatment facilities and solid waste management which leads to severe environmental pollution and contamination of surface and ground water bodies

# Housing Challenges

- Housing shortfall in Pakistan is 10 million units and it is expected to double in the coming ten years
- The total number of houses built every year is between 0.15-0.3 million while all estimates indicate that formal supply covers less than 50 percent of new demand.
- 30% to 50% of urban dwellers live in katchi abadis



# Environment and Climate Change Challenges

- The general understanding and appreciation of the environment and climate change is low and narrowly defined.
- Air and water pollution is a serious issue as the level of pollutants are higher than the permissible limits of National Environmental Quality standard (NEQS) in the major cities.
- Solid waste management especially its inadequate collection and inappropriate dumping contribute to water and soil pollution in the urban centres.
- Public space in Pakistani cities has been continuously shrinking due to the high commercial value of urban space and urban land.
- Cost of environmental degradation has increased from 6 per cent of GDP in 2006 to 9 per cent in 2015.

# Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and New Urban Agenda

# Sustainable Cities and Communities

- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs is Sustainable Development.
- In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). This Agenda includes [17 connected goals](#) aiming at a sustainable future for everyone.
- One of them, the eleventh one, is known as “Sustainable Cities and Communities”. This one focuses on sustainable urbanization by making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, and resilient.



# Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG11)

ENVIRONMENTAL  
DIMENSIONS

ECONOMIC  
DIMENSIONS

SOCIAL  
DIMENSIONS

INSTITUTIONAL  
DIMENSIONS

*Global Report on Human Settlements*  
(UN-HABITAT)

# Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

- SDG 11 aims to change the present situation that happens in the big cities. The main vision is the creation of sustainable urbanization in which prosperity will be flourished.
- [SDG 11](#) has set significant targets, aiming to achieve them by 2030. One of the targets is the importance for all people to live in a safe house with all necessary services. Moreover, there is an established plan that pays attention to the needs of vulnerable people, including a better housing and bigger transport system with safe roads.
- SDG 11 focuses on leaving a healthier world and environment for the next generations. Climate change and environmental pollution increase so fast. If we do not act immediately the consequences to our health and to the planet will be very serious.

# Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

- SDG 11 highlights the need for reform to achieve environmental goals and the achievement of a balance with social and economic considerations.
- It seeks to create cities and towns that improve the long-term health of the planet's human and ecological systems
- By Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems in urban areas
- & Create urban environment that nurtures human potential using land and resources wisely and facilitating human life- styles that contribute to global sustainability

# New Urban Agenda

- The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016.
- It provides a roadmap for implementation of SDG 11 and building cities to serve as engines of prosperity, centers of cultural and social well-being and protection of the environment.
- Provides guidance for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and provides the underpinning for actions to address climate change



# Way Forward for Sustainable Urban Development in Pakistan and South Asia



# Urban Planning

## Short-term

- Formulate National and Provincial Urban policies, regulatory framework & Spatial plans
- Strengthen financial & technical capacity of local/city govts

## Medium Term

- Strengthen linkages between urban centers & rural areas to ensure that the two remain mutually reinforcing
- Introduce city information management system/ Urban Observatory
- Develop small & medium towns to check growth of squatter settlements
- Laws & regulations related to land acquisition, land use planning, building code/By-laws, town planning need to address emerging challenges of urbanization, climate change, disasters & ecosystem rehabilitation

## Long-term

- Make urban centers engines of economic growth by integrating urbanization & sectoral policies

# Urbanization & Environment

## Short term

- Mainstream climate concerns in the Policies
- DRR Program up to 2030 may be prepared focusing on Strengthening disaster risk governance to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation & reconstruction
- Introduce of environment friendly technologies
- Enforce of approved National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS)
- Promotion of Renewables & Energy Conservation

## Medium-term

- Improve urban environmental governance
- Strengthen Capacity building of stakeholders
- Initiate programs for preparation of sustainable development plans & regulations

## Long-term

- Reduce, reuse, & recycle materials used in production & consumption systems

# Urban Governance & Legislations

## Short term

- Make governance system more responsive, efficient & accountable to control terrorism, crime, land tenure insecurity & disasters
- Improve collaboration between govt, NGOs & CBOs to achieve tangible & sustainable results in alleviating poverty
- Enhance role of mass media in raising awareness of ecological & social challenges & their safety measures

## Medium-term

- Undertake measures to address the needs of vulnerable & marginalized segments of the society
- Improve urban legislation; ensuring involvement of local communities including women, special persons, minorities & youth; & improve enforcement of existing legislation

## Long-term

- Flaws in regulatory framework planning & zoning regulations, development standards, land registration/transfer procedures, rent control laws, property taxation, etc need to be removed as these constraint land supply & abnormally raise its price

# Urban Economy

## Short term

- Increase Local Government revenue by renegotiating terms of revocable leases of assets as per market based system

## Medium-term

- Access domestic capital market through floating municipal bonds & financial restructuring to expand revenue base
- Increase Public Private Community Participation for Slum up-gradation
- Provide strong incentives, reform governance & simplify regulatory environment to help formalize informal sector

## Long-term

- Ensure that trade supports sustainable resource use, env. Protection & progressive labor Standards to become competitive in global market
- Promote existing & develop industrial clusters along main transportation corridors to enhance economic dev

# Housing and Basic Services

- Remove bottlenecks such as acquisition of land, un-standardized building components,
- Promote water & energy efficient buildings
- Modes of housing finance explored such as housing bond, utilization of pension, benevolent & insurance fund
- Reduce transaction cost in housing sector associated with acquisition & development of land etc.
- Introduce Housing information system
- Replace 'Katchi abadis' by low income residential buildings & service plots developed with local community participation for adequate provision of utilities
- LGs to expand coverage of clean drinking water up to Union Council & neighborhood level

# Conclusion

- South Asian cities need to better plan and manage their development to meet the needs and demands of their citizens.
- To prosper, cities need to be more responsive to the needs of the environment and respective of available resources and to adapt and adopt technologies and economies that are less wasteful and destructive.
- This means taking a more realistic look at what needs and can be done without compromising our local as well as our global future.

THANK YOU