## The Global Report on Human Settlements

Prepared under a mandate of the United Nations General Assembly, the Global Report on Human Settlements provides the most up to date assessment of urban conditions and trends globally. It is an essential reference tool for researchers, academics, planners, public authorities and civil society organizations around the world.

Urban Governance for Climate Change Mitigation

A number of distinct 'modes of governing' are being employed by municipalities to address climate change in the urban arena. The approaches used appear to fall into four categories namely self-governing, provision, regulation and enabling. These are not mutually exclusive; rather municipalities tend to deploy a combination of these modes at any one time. Given the cross-cutting nature of climate change as a policy issue, it is perhaps not surprising to find that there is no single recipe for success – leading to a 'patchwork' of approaches being adopted. Nevertheless, the self-governing mode remains the dominant approach adopted by municipal authorities in response to climate change.
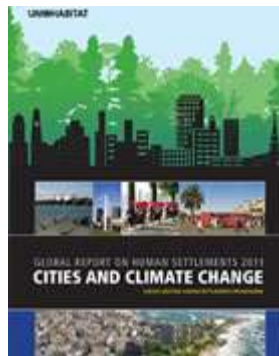
In the *self-governing mode*, there are three principal means through which municipal authorities have sought to reduce their own GHG emissions. The first is through the management of municipal buildings, fleets and services. The second is through procurement policies, including purchasing renewable energy for the municipality, or in the transport sector, buying alternative low-carbon fuels. Third, local authorities may aim to lead by example, establishing best practice principles, or demonstrate the use of particular technologies or social practices to facilitate their widespread adoption by other local actors.

The effectiveness of self-governing measures in reducing urban GHG emissions is limited by the extent of the municipal estate and operations. Also, in the majority of cases, municipal GHG emissions constitute a small proportion of the total emissions in a city.

Seeking to govern climate change through the *provision* of infrastructure and services has the potential for far-reaching impacts on urban GHG emissions. Efforts may include reducing the carbon intensity of energy, water and waste services, reducing the carbon footprint of the built environment, fostering sustainable forms of urban development and providing low-carbon energy and travel choices for households and businesses. This potential appears to be most significant in cities where municipal governments may retain ownership or control of infrastructure networks and where basic needs have been met – therefore normally in developed countries.

Although the *regulation* mode of governing is the least popular approach adopted by municipal governments, it can be very effective in terms of reducing GHG emissions. Three different sets of mechanisms are deployed in this mode. First, and least common, local governments may use taxation and charge user fees. Second, the use of land-use planning is an area where municipal competencies are often strong (at least in developed countries) and their powers can be used to stipulate urban densities and to promote mixed land use. The setting of codes,
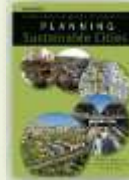
Planning Sustainable Cities - Global Report on Human Settlements 2009

Enhancing Urban Safety and Security - Global Report on Human Settlements 2007

Financing Urban Shelter - Global Report on Human Settlements 2005

The Challenge of Slums -

standards and regulations is a third approach. This is most common in the built environment sector, where they are often set by national governments, although examples can also be found at the municipal level.

However, regulation can be difficult to implement. Municipalities may also lack the institutional capacity to enforce regulations, particularly in cities in developing countries with limited resources.

In the *enabling mode*, municipalities deploy mechanisms to support the reduction of GHG emissions by other local actors. There are three main approaches for this: First, various forms of information and education campaigns have been implemented to effect behavioural change. Second, municipal governments can use incentives of various kinds – including grants, loans and the removal of subsidies or barriers to the adoption of new technologies – to encourage the uptake of low-carbon technologies or to promote behavioural change. Third, various partnerships with business and civil society organizations to reduce GHG emissions have been developed.

There are two critical limitations to the enabling approach of governance. First, such initiatives are restricted to those who are willing to participate. Second, the voluntary nature of such initiatives means that they are difficult to monitor and verify, and cannot be 'enforced', but rather depend on the capacity of municipal governments to persuade others to take action.

While significant efforts are taking place to mitigate climate change in urban areas across the world, in most cities mitigating climate change remains a marginal issue, and despite ambitious policy targets, the realities of reducing GHG emissions are often more challenging than anticipated. The overall picture is one of policy fragmentation. Islands of best practice can be identified but comprehensive approaches to addressing climate change remain the exception rather than the rule. The critical factor shaping urban responses to the challenges of mitigating climate change seems to be governance capacity. In this context, the opportunities and constraints that shape governance capacity can be considered in three broad categories: factors that are institutional, those which are technical or economic, and those which are political in character

To download the full and abridged versions of Cities and Climate Change: Global Report on Human Settlements 2011, please go to:
http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=555&cid=9272

Next Issue: Planning and Design for Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013

The report will review key trends, practices and policies on sustainable mobility and transportation patterns from cities around the world. It will also provide insights on how to improve the working and living conditions of urban populations by meeting their transport needs in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. The report will be organized as follows:

Chapter 1: The urban mobility challenge
Chapter 2: Trends and conditions of urban mobility
Chapter 3: Mass transit: Metros and BRTs
Chapter 4: Urban goods transport
Chapter 5: Mobility and urban form
Chapter 6: Access to urban mobility
Chapter 7: Urban mobility and the environment
Chapter 8: The economics of urban mobility
Chapter 9: Institutions and governance for urban mobility
Chapter 10: Towards sustainable urban mobility

The report is scheduled to be launched in October 2013