FORUM BANDAR SEDUNIA
WUF9

THE NINTH SESSION OF
THE WORLD URBAN FORUM
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7-13 February 2018

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DIALOGUE
OPEN AND BIG DATA: MEASURING THE URBAN REALITY

Key words
2030 Agenda; Big and open data; City Prosperity Initiative; Data for decision-making; New Urban Agenda; Open governments; Sustainable Development Goals; Targets

Objectives of the session

The session aims to:

- Introduce the various tools and methodologies related to the development and use of data and information for effective monitoring and reporting on SDGs/New Urban Agenda.
- Provide a forum to exchange experiences and share knowledge on the approaches, techniques and standards to guide collective action around the use of big (and small) open data based on common norms.
- Deepen the knowledge on what constitutes the critical data needed for global, regional, national and local development policymaking with regards to the urban development agenda.
- Discuss the most effective means to ensure that big (and small) open data can be used to support decision-making based on evidence.
- Consider which are the most effective policies and practices and the most adequate governance and legislative frameworks for the production, sharing and use of urban data and information, and particularly the role of local actors.
- Build partnerships at local, regional and global levels for increased support to local authorities and Member States for monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development using data and information.
- Identify and discuss examples of the above objectives and look for political and financial support for further mobilization.

Introduction of the topic
A high percentage of cities formulate policies and action plans without clear evidence and information. It is estimated that many as 65% of local authorities do not know how and why the city is growing in specific directions and what is behind this growth.

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Many cities are like ships on the high sea often confronted to turbulent waters without adequate navigation tools, having poor chances of reaching their desired destinations. Without the knowledge of their bearing and current position, these cities have the risk to go around in circles or to find themselves in an unintended destination.

Navigation tools and the technical means for cities to formulate adequate policies based on good data, information and knowledge are needed. The metrics and tools to produce, manage, store, use and share information has become crucial to respond to the increasing demands that cities face and the opportunities they offer.

The data revolution is transforming society. (Big) data gives us unprecedented power to understand, analyse, and ultimately change the world we live in. It is estimated that 90% of the data in the world has been created in the last 5 years. Yet, many cities still lack adequate data or formulate policies without clear information. Moreover, the use of abundant and complex sets of information has become a negative externality in decision-making for several local and national governments and stakeholders, particularly when this data is poorly connected to city diagnosis, the preparation of action plans, the use of best practices, and the monitoring of results and impacts of these policies.

It is only when data and urban indicators are part of a national system of data collection and analysis, and information is treated as a public good, with clear and sound mechanisms of access and dissemination that cities can embark in a good journey and reach a better destination.

Guiding Questions

Q1: When and how can big data become open data? How can we avoid that big data generates further inequalities? In this sense, how can governments and other stakeholders contribute to make this information useful and accessible for the public?

Q2: Open data can have a meaningful impact operating with small or modest data, which are the best options and mechanisms for that?

Q3: How can global frameworks of city data collection and analysis as the City Prosperity Initiative be integrated into big and open data systems to facilitate broad access and use?

Q4: How can national and international partnerships be redefined to work with data for better use?

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Q5: How can new data be merged with traditional data in order to produce high-quality information?

Q6: How can the use of modern technologies, such as spatial analysis, be better integrated to monitoring and reporting of Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda?