

3rd SACN Urban Conference: The State of South African Cities

Main conference objectives:

- Raise awareness and debate on emerging evidence and analysis for SoCR3 (to be published in October 2010);
- Share analysis to verify, correct or improve findings and conclusions;
- Guide and inform the editorial process for SoCR3.
- Media coverage on urban development issues.

Thanks to:

- Nelson Mandela Metro for hospitality (especially Mayoral reception) and Mandela Bay Development Agency for support;
- CoGTA and National Treasury for partnership in preparing and launching township knowledge products at this conference.
- Speakers, chairs, facilitators and reporters (especially National Government partners, Urban Landmark, Cape Town Partnership, World Bank, AFSUN, ICLEI Africa, Sustainable Energy Africa, and SACN member cities)
- Participants



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Major trends in data (progress or decline?):

Progress, BUT cities have not satisfied many people's expectation of a better life for all.

Some reasons include:

- Under-investment in municipal infrastructure;
- Slow response to migration trends and the shelter and services needs of migrants;
- The high cost-of-living impact of continued spatial fragmentation and low-density residential development (especially transport);
- Sticky land market reform to provide access to well-located housing for poor people;
- Limited employment and livelihood opportunities; and
- Disparities in the quality of public services provided to poor people (especially education and health).



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Main discussion points:

- Evidence of rising inequality: Need to deconstruct the systemic causes of inequality and fragmentation
- Governance and accountability problems
- Lack of access to land, housing, services, jobs and markets
- Limited mobility
- Densification, integration and agglomeration
- Urban food security is not about production, but about availability and affordability (77% of poor households are food insecure)
- Not enough money for municipal investment plans, and how to raise funding
- The global resource footprint exceeded the natural resource envelope by a factor of 1.5 this year



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Recommendations for city development strategies:

- Manage space in a system: Integrate transport, housing and infrastructure programmes and funding
- Understand the land and property market in the city and establish the tools for engagement with the private sector
- Mainstream youth employment programmes, and take up national funding for job creation
- The monitoring regulation of environmental quality must be strengthened as part of an integrated plan in the cities
- Intergovernmental cooperation is critical to the success of economic growth strategies and interventions (such as urban renewal) in the cities
- The SACN member cities should develop a collective voice in policy discussions

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SoCR 3 production plan:

- Editorial committee debriefing and brainstorming as follow-up to this conference;
- Further data collection , analysis and writing Dec to Feb 2010;
- Table of contents and first round of editing Jan and Feb 2010;
- Editorial committee workshop on first draft end Feb 2010;
- City workshops and verification March to May 2010;
- Writing and editing of final draft June to July 2010;
- Quality control by editorial committee and reviewers, and approval by Board of Directors.