

Earth Summit 2002 online debate at www.lifeonline.org/debate: 'What should Earth Summit 2002 be trying to achieve?'

Summary of the debate of week 1 (29 August - 7 September 2001):

How can cities be made part of a sustainable future? What are the key barriers, good models, roles and responsibilities involved in improving 21st century urban life? How should Earth Summit 2002 address this issue?

Purpose and structure of the debate

Ten years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the world's nations will gather again in Johannesburg next September to review progress and plan for the future. Preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 are well under way, emphasising a transparent and participatory approach.

The debate was part of www.lifeonline.org - a multi-media initiative exploring the impact of globalisation on the poverty and social development agenda of the Istanbul+5 meeting in June 2001, as well as the upcoming 10-year review of the 1992 Earth Summit. This electronic forum was aimed at initiating a focused and constructive public discussion on some of the priority issues. People were invited to share their ideas, knowledge and diverse perspectives.

The report, incl. the summaries of all four weeks, will be widely disseminated to policy-makers and all other interested stakeholders engaged in the 2nd PrepCom of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (New York, January 2002).

To download the pdf or txt version, please go to www.earthsummit2002.org/es/life/default.htm

Moderation process

The debate was moderated by Jasmin Enayati, UNED Forum (www.unedforum.org) with support from *Lifeonline* partners One World, TVE, and PANOS.

The purpose of moderation was to keep the volume of material posted to a manageable size (10-15 messages per day), as well as to ensure observance of the ground rules. In addition to the ground rules, the criteria we considered were: relevance; substance of contributions; concreteness of argument; and constructive tone.

Numbers

By the end of the debate we had more than 560 subscribers from 77 countries, representing many different stakeholder groups (academics, architects, artists, businesspeople, faith communities, governments, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, local authorities, media, scientists, students, UN officials, urban planner, women's groups and individuals).

Summary

The following is an attempt to summarise and give an impression of the arguments as they developed through the debate, using selections from the submissions.

Where possible, the name, organisation and nationality of the contributor will be given.

Initial contributions

We had invited two key actors to contribute initial articles for the debate:

David Hales, former US Government official, directed the environmental and urban programs of the US Agency for International Development from 1994 to 2001, and headed the US delegations to Habitat/UNCHS during that time;

Prof. Om Prakash Mathur, HDFC Chair in Housing and Urban Economics, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India

Thanks

Thanks to these authors and all the other participants for making this debate happen and putting their time and effort into this debate.

Introduction

Contributions to the debate focused on key issues regarding sustainable development in cities, such as the political role of cities; governance structures and a participatory approach in decision-making. Key problems related to resource management; transport; and development and planning were discussed. Key barriers to achieving sustainable urban development were identified, such as inequity, infra-structural constraints, and a common ignorance in learning lessons. Ideas on how to overcome these barriers were suggested, ranging from life-long environmental education, developing participative democratic decision-making processes, focus on the interdependence between the urban and rural area, develop an international benchmark system and a more profound sharing of knowledge. Many examples of good practice were given; roles and responsibilities of key actors were discussed, particularly the need to share responsibilities between all stakeholders in a spirit of cooperation. Several constructive recommendations were made as to how the Earth Summit 2002 could ensure a balanced debate on the issue.

Background

David Hales, one of the two contributors invited by the moderator to open the debate, outlined some of the key problems:

"Few subjects in recent decades have generated as much heat and passion as that of the role of cities in the sustainability of our planet. Few subjects in recent years have caused so much divisiveness between the developed and the developing world as the role that cities are alleged to have played in compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs... More people live in cities today than lived in the entire world in 1950. By 2025, two-thirds of humanity will live in cities, and 90% of those will be in cities in developing countries. Of the three people born each second, two are born in cities. Unless we drastically change our patterns of investment, most of those children will never receive a formal education. Already, well more than 100 million children between the ages of six and 11 are not in school, and an additional 150 million have dropped out without acquiring basic levels of literacy. Most of these children are girls... of all the forces that characterize the beginning of the 21st century, none will have a more profound effect on human lives than the concentration of people and their activities in cities..."
(David Hales, former US Government official)

"Cities absorb massive quantities of resources and generate huge amounts of waste but they also accommodate half the global population and are engines of economic growth and social development, drawing in human resources and raw materials, which, coupled with urban infrastructure, have spurred industrial and commercial development almost everywhere..."
(Urban Secretariat, UNCHS)

How can cities be made part of a sustainable future?

There is no sustainable development that does not address the needs of cities. Urban sustainability is not just about the environment, but also about political, social, economic and cultural sustainability. The complexity of urban life prescribes multi-disciplinary approaches.

Several contributions to the debate called attention to "**the political role**" of cities in promoting sustainability. There's a need for democracy, good governance and a value-based discussion in order to achieve sustainable urban development and people's ownership of the process.

"I think that for cities to be sustainable they need to be based on values, not necessarily monetary values but values of what is decent, human and environmentally responsible."
(John D. Liu, Environmental Communicator, China)

"I feel that building a sense of ownership and responsibility among the individual citizens of cities with regard to resource management, long term city planning etc is a key ingredient in any plan to make cities part of a sustainable future."
(Amanda, Australia)

"Since most sustainability issues cross political boundaries, systemic change in the structure of governments at all levels is a prerequisite to major change. Key to this change is creating both the reality and the perception that individual citizens can influence governments at all levels and governments are in return responsible to their citizens."
(Ray Jefferd, Canada)

"One must realize that the lack of consensus even in arriving at an acceptable definition of "sustainability" results from the absence of "democratic" governance structure. The key point is to develop a governance structure for all resources that will ensure intergenerational equity and a complimentary relationship between humans and nature. The existing "governance structures", be they at sub-national, national or international levels, are unfortunately not geared to ensure intra-generational equity and are based on a philosophy of development that rewards "capability" and "efficiency" in a competitive framework..."

...Lack of appropriate governance structures at the sub-national and national levels, resulting in poverty, hunger, malnutrition and unemployment. The "Washington Consensus" or the WTO agreements shape the "governance structure" at the international level — which are by no means helping reduction in inequality across nations."

(Milindo Chakrabarti, Director, CREATE, India)

A common thread in many contributions is the emphasis on a **participatory approach** in decision-making. Greater responsiveness to the voices of common people will strengthen the sense of community.

"Hierarchical systems should be displaced by more organic structures based on shared information and accepted protocols that allow local democracies to work synergistically through information and communication technologies."

(Don Scott Johnson, Citizens of Earth, USA)

"Everywhere government structures and electoral systems for the most part are out of sync with the times and the concerns of the citizens and are seriously lacking in democratic process."

(Ray Jefferd, Canada)

"By bringing citizens on board, countries can achieve sustainable urban life."

(Singy Hanyona, Network for Environmental Journalists (NEJ), Zambia)

"too little accountability for city leaders in terms of environmental action plans, unregulated unsustainable growth of cities, urbanization, no control mechanisms"

(Prateek, India)

"Democracy has not taken root in most of the societies in the world today, particularly in respect to international institutions of governance"

(Milindo Chakrabarti, Director, CREATE, India)

Several contributors pointed out that environmental and economic requirements of development need to be integrated.

The **planning stage** is key for integrating environmental and economic concerns:

"The planning of cities in an economical and environmental sense is imperative. Property Development will not happen unless it is economically viable to a developer. You cannot have property development without profit. The very real issue is therefore economical as well as environmental. The town planning stage is paramount to the long term sustainability of our cities as is the actual process of development."

(Sandra Hawke, Property Valuer, Australia)

Ecological footprint

"An urban ecological footprint of some disproportionate size cannot be avoided but, under the right policy conditions, it may exhibit positive, rather than negative long-term influences on rural economies and cultures...the ecological footprint will always be joined, politically, by the complementary reality of the economic footprint. Cities have always been the driving force behind rural development, not the other way around."

(Urban Secretariat, UNCHS)

"The "economic footprint" is entirely dependent on the "ecological footprint". If we are eating up all of our planet's resources, there is nothing left to generate the economy. And, the fact that we are currently in overshoot, that is using more resources than the earth can regenerate in a year, suggests that economic growth - as long as that implies increased throughput of resources - is not a viable solution to our dilemma. Cities, therefore, rather than acting as engines of economic growth, need to act as engines of economic efficiency, generating innovative technologies that reduce resource use. Political, social, economic and cultural sustainability are all possible in the long run only if we are able to live within the means of nature. And conversely, increasing equity in all of these dimensions is probably critical to getting to that point."

(Kim Rodgers, Redefining Progress, Oakland, US)

Key problems

Resource management

Any approach for working towards more sustainable cities will need to revolve around reducing resource inputs and waste outputs (eg, Ian Finlayson, The Community Builders, Inc., USA). The main problem is our current unsustainable pattern of production and consumption:

"Cities, i.e., – what they produce, what they consume, and the way they are formed and designed – contribute to unsustainability, whatever this term may mean. Many have bluntly argued that the production and consumption patterns of our cities and their physical forms are incompatible with a sustainable future."

(Prof Mathur, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, India)

"The volume of the [cities'] consumption of resources and production of waste has spiraled out of proportion with the Earth's capacities as a source and a sink."

(Dushko Bogunovich, Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand)

"There will need to be radical changes in the energy flows, urban form, and management processes of cities in order to adequately address the above questions and their associated challenges ... [as well as changes in] ... consumer attitudes, expectations, lifestyles and consumption patterns"

(Xavier Menage, Postgraduate Student, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Australia)

Transport inside major cities

Public investments often favour private transport solutions instead of providing the infrastructure for long-term public solutions. This results in a vicious circle of greater car use, greater congestion and poorer quality of public transport and again in a global growing dependence on cars. The use of mass transportation should be increased and cities should be made more pedestrian and cyclist friendly.

"The personal car is a great problem in urban environments"

(Elaine Baker, Ireland)

"Pollution in cities results in Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI), particularly with children."

(Bhargavi Nagaraja, Development Journalist/Policy Analyst, India Civil Society Collective, India)

New York: "Quality of life and safety of residents and tourists are threatened by the excessive amount of cars and trucks which constantly disobey driving and parking laws. Public transport subway and bus systems are inadequate for the huge amount of riders."

(Marie Samuel, Yachay Wasi, US)

Development and Planning

Urban developments are often characterised by short-sighted design and planning processes:

"urbanization process underlies bureaucratic needs instead of taking into account environmental requirements, such as hydrogeological characteristics of soil, water and underground"

(Franco Cavalleri, Centro Studi Sviluppo Territorio, Italy)

"property development is integral part of the development process; however, there is a lack of proper cooperation/communication between property developers, local authorities and legislation"

(Sandra Hawke, Property Valuer, Australia)

"most cities have in the recent past adopted their planning and zoning ordinances based on research done in the 50's, 60's and 70's. These should have been reviewed more thoroughly with the intention of accommodating modern technology in construction, population explosion, environmental laws and social-demographical changes, social divisions and inequalities."

(John Ngunjiri, Kansas State University, USA)

What are the key barriers?

"Perhaps the most important barrier to greater urban sustainability is inequity: too much wealth versus too much poverty. Each of these two extremes has considerable impacts on the global living environment in general and urban social, political, cultural and ecological environments in particular."

(Urban Secretariat, UNCHS)

Some of the key barriers to sustainable development in cities are waste generation, social stresses from overpopulation, poor planning, segregation, poor public transport networks.

Some other issues that had been discussed were political and economic pressures, infrastructural constraints in third world countries, the indebtedness of poor countries and corruption as key barriers to achieving sustainable urban development.

"I come from Pakistan. If this country could be freed from debt, then there would be a chance for sustainable development. Unawareness, unlawfulness, illiteracy, shortage of finances, lack of planning, corruption and poverty are the key barriers. Provision of basic needs, skills training, employment and opportunity would help in improving life in the 21st century."

(Babar Khurshid, General Secretary, Organisation of Pakistani Women in Development, Pakistan)

"Technology is placed before people: In Asia money invested in high-tech/info technology instead of greening cities, e.g. Bangalore, which was ranked among top 10 tech cities in the world traffic cops wear masks to endure air pollution"

(Bhargavi Nagaraja, Development Journalist/Policy Analyst, India Civil Society Collective, India)

It has been pointed out again and again - one of the key barriers to achieving sustainable urban life is **ignorance**:

"In almost every case, we have more knowledge than we employ. The key barrier to achieving sustainable development in cities is lack of national competence and will to address the problems of cities."

(David Hales, former US Government official)

"danger of ignoring lessons that have been learnt during the last 10 years of working with Local Agenda 21 programmes all over the world (see ANPED report on "Barriers to local sustainability at www.anped.org)"

(Chris Church, ANPED, Northern Alliance for Sustainability, UK)

One way to leave that ignorance behind us, is **education**:

"the ordinary citizens can be educated and thus empowered to say no to all items that cause degeneration of the environment. Thus the major role and responsibility will be on the citizens to safeguard the environment, a responsibility, which had been left to the government and highly misused."

(Huha Chege, Heinrich Boll Foundation Regional Office Nairobi, Kenya)

Chris Church (ANPED, UK) also pointed out that some governments are suggesting that the role of cities has already been discussed through the Habitat II process - "where it can be left to moulder".

Good models / ideas to overcome barriers

Building upon the existing advantages of cities to make them more sustainable will require changes to the processes of government at all levels and of the industrial / commercial sector, as well as changes in the roles of community groups and organisations and the family unit.

Measures and approaches for working towards sustainability may include:

- developing more participative democratic decision-making processes, where people are encouraged and empowered to contribute to and influence the decisions that effect their local communities, i.e. Local Agenda 21 to create new networks and links between different sectors of society;
- sustainability meetings among major stakeholders (developers including consultants, governments, legislative) could be facilitated through new educational programme run by public sustainability officers;
- planning and redeveloping more strategically:
 - enhancing public services;
 - increasing the extent of pedestrian areas;

- emphasising historic preservation;
 - utilising environmental science for planning: *“urbanisation process should achieve a balance of the different loads burdening on the territory”* (Franco Cavalleri, Centro Studi Sviluppo Territorio, Italy)
 - incorporating guidelines for greater energy efficiency and water sensitive design principles in new buildings;
 - shifting away from the dominant existing engineering paradigm that focuses on large centralised infrastructures, and which takes little account of the natural environment or ecological processes;
 - addressing design issues (urban master planning, infrastructure engineering, architecture, landscape, construction). The subject of design is a dynamic, evolving, quasi-living entity:

“Sustainable cities are about sustainable design.”
(Dushko Bogunovich, Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand)
 - heavily promoting public transport (mainly light/heavy rail services, complemented by bus feeder systems) so as to reduce automobile dependency; and enhancing traffic alternatives through new transport principles, eg “Dualmode” transport with less environmental impact and higher mobility - www.ruf.dk/cnn.doc;
 - reducing energy consumption and greenhouse emissions by taking part in initiatives such as the “Cities against Climate Change” Campaign, and by strongly funding research into renewable energy sources;
 - running public campaigns on good consumption practices and energy (Desiree, IMSA, Netherlands);
 - moving towards smaller-scale solid/liquid waste management, and funding more research into this area;
 - stimulating innovation in recycling / resource recovery industries; encouraging urban agriculture in public places, communal gardens, road verges, gardens etc and creating urban forests that could be integrated with urban food production, renewable energy, bio-remediation of urban waste and wood:

“The importance of green areas for the liveability of suburban areas is recognized today locally as well as internationally.”
(Brenda Bussche, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Flanders-Belgium)

“A variety of urban farming systems exist both within the inner city and in the peri-urban zones... agriculture is able to turn urban organic waste and waste water into productive resources. Rather than disposing these “wastes” cities should create decentralised systems for treatment and re-use of these “wastes” in agriculture... Urban agriculture can play an important role in greening of the city and the maintenance of such green areas against squatting and degradation. In many cities we also see the mixing of agricultural production functions with recreational, educational or social functions.”
(Henk de Zeeuw, Coordinator Resource Centre on Urban Agriculture and Forestry (RUAUF) www.RUAUF.org, the Netherlands)
 - promoting more communal living patterns that move against existing trends;
 - structuring fiscal policies so as to internalise environmental costs; for example establishing an *“environmental levy, so that everyone would pay rather than just a committed portion of society who make an active effort to regenerate and protect.”* (Paul Barratt, Landcare Queensland, Australia) or heavier taxation of more polluting technologies;
 - shifting the current paradigm from *“the neo-classical model of economics to ecological economics wherein the economy is a subset of the environment.”* See, for example: The Baltimore Ecosystem Study www.ecostudies.org/bes/; Smart Growth and New Urbanism (www.smartgrowth.org and www.cnu.org) (Ian Finlayson, The Community Builders, Inc. USA).
 - paying greater attention to pricing policies as a means of enforcing more sustainable consumption patterns
- Tim Worstall, TTE Metals, Portugal emphasized that it is multi-national capitalism that will act in the interest of sustainability as long as it will make profit: *“Capitalism contains its own resource limitation feedbacks...when they get scarce, the price goes up, people use less”*

Many contributors suggest that we need to focus on **interdependence** between the urban and rural areas and consider cities in relation to the suburban and rural areas required to support them; we should try to blend natural and urban environments within the cities; fight urban sprawl by on the one hand attempting to refurbish the cores of the city and, on the other hand, seeking to develop regional entities that counteract the tendency for urban growth to overwhelm rural areas:

"Cities which blend natural and urban environments, pedestrian-friendly cities, inter-linked neighbourhoods which are planned as smaller communities within larger cities, efficient and accessible public transport networks, use of renewable and recycled materials in construction of new houses and business premises, use of natural energy resources."
(Juan Sebastian Mariz Chiline, Spain)

"There has to be a greater understanding and connection between rural productivity and urban consumption. The urban sector puts so much pressure on rural systems (water, food, open space, recreation,). Urban citizens -like me, need to understand the dependency we have on the rural areas and be better stewards of the land."
(Joaquin Murrieta-Saldivar, Sonoran Institute, Mexico-USA)

"it is important not to get trapped into just focusing on urban centres as isolated elements of sustainable management and evolution. Their place within the larger environmental, social and economic picture needs to be examined to take account of cross-boundary issues, eg energy use and global warming, and remain open to cross-border initiatives, eg water management, and opportunities for information sharing."
(Kumalie Elford, Student, Australian National University, Australia)

In order to achieve measurable results, many contributors urged for the creation of an **international benchmark system** for sustainable cities, incl. environmental, educational and economic indicators:

"set up regulations that would be reviewed continuously to stop the interplay of the various forces contributing to uncontrolled growth of cities, e.g. norms against pollution, waste disposal, traffic then followed by dissemination of according success stories"
(Prateek, India)

"I believe that the Earth Summit should address the issue of sustainable cities on the basis of integrated systems analysis (ISA) and population distribution patterns which need to be developed for each country. The most critical system is the population system as it impacts on water resources, land use planning and ecosystems. Sustainable cities need to be considered in conjunction with population systems and in relation to human perceptions of the future."
(Dr Soroczynski, Principal, Systems Analyses Consultants (NSW), Australia)

"The new set of European Common Indicators - Towards a local sustainability profile. Developed by a partnership of European towns and cities with the European Commission and city networks association, the 10 indicators are now being tested by over 90 municipalities right across Europe. They are highly integrated and based on a mixture of principles that ensure local, global, social, cultural, economic and environmental issues are incorporated. Details and methodologies are on the site www.sustainable-cities.org/indicators. An 11th Indicator, that is standardising Ecological Footprint methodologies is to be added to the trial."
(Martin Fodor, Bristol City Council, UK)

Such systems could facilitate **sharing of knowledge** and solutions between urban communities on a global scale; networking among the cities through exchanging of best practices needs to be enhanced. A virtual learning center at the global scale could be set up to make the infrastructure and contacts available to share best practice sustainable management.

"2002 Earth Summit builds on what has been learnt around the world since the Earth Summit in 1992... The focus should be on what has been learned, and how can we build on the best and most effective lessons learnt - and from those that didn't work to date... we now live in an age where, as in this e-forum, we can pool our global knowledge."
(Brian Curtis, Acting Director State Strategic Planning, Department for Infrastructure and Planning, Australia)

Examples of good practice:

- Johannesburg, South Africa, the host of next year's WSSD: GreenHouse Project www.earthlife.org plans to build a "green" center in the

Johannesburg inner city park that will not only showcase environmentally sound design and construction principles, but provide a home for environmental and social activists in Johannesburg. (Melinda Swift, South Africa)

- *"There are economies to be found in sharing, recycling, using natural and renewable building materials. By approaching housing as part of a community rather than as customers for developers, we may find that we can build more lasting and sustainable urban institutions. There are many pioneers building co-housing and eco communities all over the world and these ideas should be explored"*
(John D. Liu, Environmental Communicator, China)
- Develop the concept of 'The City of the Future':
"a small human settlement with a population of 25,000-50,000 or smaller. Other characteristics would include: (1) Single and multi-family homes that are energy and water self-sustaining; (2) Green paths along wooded areas and wetlands for pedestrians and cyclists; (3) Minimal use of motorized vehicles; (4) Home-based and community-based local businesses; (5) Organic local food production and distribution units; (6) Cooperative interethnic educational institutions; (7) Community-based health and safety institutions; etc."
(S. Diaz-Garcia, Faculty, Johns Hopkins University, USA)
- International Conference on Culture in the Sustainability of Cities
"Kanazawa in Japan is looking at its rich cultural heritage in traditional arts and crafts and traditional built environment as one of the important means to revitalise its economy and to promote itself as a world city renowned for them. The Cultural Cities' Network (CCN) will be established as a network of cities interested in fostering sustainable urban culture and will be anchored in ISHIKAWA International Cooperation Research Centre (IICRC), Kanazawa, Japan."
(Nadarajah, Lecturer, Manickam, Malaysia)
- Curitiba, Brazil
*"transportation tokens were handed out that provided opportunity to people in favelas to earn money in two ways:
1. take organic garbage to farmers and exchange it for food.
2. take recyclable material to a site where they received money.
Apparently this cleaned up the rats in the favelas, provided income, and got people out of favelas to look for work."*
(Dusty Becker, Professor, KS University, USA)
- Bhakatapur (a small city adjuncted with Kathmandu the capital city of Nepal):
"Ten years back the city was such a dirty and unmanaged place, but now it has changed entirely. This is not due to the additional infrastructural developments in the city, but with a good management practice adopted by the town development committee."
(Govinda R. Timilsina, Ph.D, Canada)

Roles and responsibilities involved in improving 21st century urban life

One simple statement brings the complexity of that question to the point:

"Visionary leadership by public authorities, organizations and individuals is needed"
(Elaine Baker, Ireland)

How shall that achieved? All stakeholders have their part to play. Many contributors stress the importance of lifelong **environmental education**, in order to involve and empower citizens in an effort to raise awareness of this process and to achieve a sense of environmental stewardship and civic responsibility:

"people must be taught about this issue and that it isn't someone else's matter, in another country with whatever problem to be solved. It touches each and everyone on this planet"
(Jessica Arango, Panama)

"I expect the role of civil society organizations and generally citizens to be more enhanced during the Earth Summit. It is also the duty of us all to educate our constituents on the relationship between their day-to-day activities and the environment."
(Huha Chege, Heinrich Boll Foundation Regional Office Nairobi, Kenya)

"A reassessment and modification of the existing teaching curriculum for primary, high school, and tertiary education will be required. Once sustainability principles and different 'world views' are provided to our young children in appropriate ways, and subsequently reinforced throughout the duration of school / university life, we can reasonably expect significant changes to take place."

(Xavier Menage, Postgraduate Student, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Australia)

"Governments need to take leading role to educate people first and then change building standards. Future cities need to be much more compact where most people use efficient and cheap public transport. In order to achieve this objective "new houses" which should be compact and environmentally friendly need to be developed and accepted by the public."

(Dr Tad Soroczynski, (PhD), Systems Analyses Consultants, Australia)

10 years after Rio, the **role of governments** needs to be re-evaluated:

"we have to put more emphasis on the role of civil society, have more participation. NGOs should be more involved in decision making."

(Daniel Brisard, Fondation Haitienne Pour La Science, la Technologie, Haiti)

"Strong political leadership, motivation and dedication is the essence for action-oriented programmes"

(Tariq Bin Yousuf, Environmental Engineer, Dhaka City Corporation, Bangladesh)

Many contributors stress that we need practical coalitions of cities. **Local governments' preparations** for the Summit are well underway:

"I see the Summit as a unique opportunity for local sustainability efforts to be better understood and supported. Local governments, working in concert with their local partners, have made significant progress and have much to offer the global community through the Summit process. ICLEI is coordinating a worldwide review process that will assess opportunities and recommend strategies for accelerated action for sustainable development at the local level... ICLEI is facilitating the contributions to the Summit by local governments with endorsement from the UN Summit Secretariat, IULA and other associations. We hope to be able to involve all parties that are interested in the role of municipalities in achieving sustainable development. The first significant stage of this process will come to fruition in November 2001, in North Vancouver, Canada, at the Local Government Preparatory Committee Meeting where the final report from the consultations will be endorsed (www.iclei.org/johannesburg2002)"

(Sean Southey, Secretary General, ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), Canada)

Roles and responsibilities need to be shared by **all stakeholders**. The buzzwords are **co-operation, partnerships, participation and good governance**:

"there is a need for leadership by central governments and implementation by local authorities. Individuals need to be made aware that every incremental change they make is of value in the global context even though they may not see any direct local benefits from their actions."

(Blair Taylor Masefield, New Zealand)

"Strong partnerships that involve the equitable allocation of roles and responsibilities to all stakeholders in civil society and the private sector to promote active participation and ownership of new initiatives."

(Nadarajah, Lecturer, Manickam, Malaysia)

"As a governmental department... we try to realise a sustainable combination of the recreational, environmental, economical and ecological roles that green areas fulfill, both in city centres and in the countryside. In order to achieve this we work together with other administrative departments and authorities, private owners, interest organisations and the public."

(Brenda Bussche, Ministry of the Flemish Community, Flanders-Belgium)

"The role of participation and the concept of decentralisation need to be re-defined. There is need to re-inforce the ideas of Resident Development Committees (RDCs) in urban cities. These committees must have local leadership representation, with constitutions that are drawn by communities themselves."

(Siny Hanyona, Network for Environmental Journalists (NEJ), Zambia)

To sum up these different views, the Earth Summit 2002 must take the lead in democratizing **governance** structures. There's a need to develop federated democratic institutions at all levels involving all stakeholders and taking account of their conflicting views. It is hoped that such institutions will decide the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders.

How should Earth Summit 2002 address this issue?

The Earth Summit 2002 should address the **political conflict** between national interests and urban needs:

"conscious effort has to be made to force countries to respond to their Habitat Agenda commitments, and include on their delegations those who work daily with the challenges of the urban..."

...For the Earth Summit to address the urban challenge, we must have a strong Urban Caucus of participants, official delegates and otherwise, mayors and elected local leaders must speak out clearly, and there must be a strong voice for women."

(David Hales, former US Government official)

Another proposal to strengthen the global solidarity of cities was a: "**Declaration of Interdependence**":

"...a global coalition of cities that would further be organized into national coalitions within each country with the purpose of:

- *increasing the political influence of cities on national and foreign policies.*
- *strengthening democracy within cities*
- *mandating higher levels of civic responsibility from large corporations through solidarity of city and local governments."*

(Don Scott Johnson, Citizens of Earth, USA)

Partnerships should be fostered involving the **corporate world**. One suggestion involves setting up "new cooperatives" between the public and private sector:

"When the cities need "public" and "private", the alternative would be "new cooperative"... The Summit 2002 therefore should define the ultimate objectives of cooperation."

(Tjahjokartiko Gondokusumo, Chairman, CHP Cooperative, Jakarta, Indonesia)

"It is time to IMPLEMENT policy that integrates economical and environmental concerns... The integration between government and private enterprise is imperative if we wish to achieve sustainability in every sense of the word"

(Sandra Hawke, Property Valuer, Australia)

Other **recommendations** to ensure a balanced debate include:

"The Earth Summit 2002 must re-think its motivation and agenda, putting more personalities and participation from Third-World nations, being underwritten by the G-7 Group."

(Allan Fortuna, Philippines)

"How did the urban environment get on the agenda at Rio in 1992? Because we (cities, NGOs, city organizations, multilateral agencies, donors, etc.) worked together to raise the profile of cities. This included organizing a high-profile conference in Curitiba prior to the Earth Summit, preparing publications, holding events and lobbying at the Summit itself. So, two modest proposals:

a) Individually, we should participate in the various PrepComms and other events leading up to Rio+10 to raise issue of urban sustainability, and

b) Collectively, we should organize a major urban/environmental event just prior to Rio+10 in a South African city with a commitment to sustainability, e.g. Cape Town."

(Josef Leitmann, Senior Urban Planner, World Bank, Brazil)

"In May 2002, UNCHS (Habitat) is scheduled to hold an Urban Forum to discuss the issues of cities and urban sustainability, in reference to Chapter 7 of Agenda 21, as a preparatory meeting for the Johannesburg Summit."

(The Urban Secretariat, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat))

Summary provided by Jasmin Enayati, moderator of the Earth Summit 2002 online debate. For further information please contact Jasmin Enayati at jenayati@earthsummit2002.org UNED Forum [an international multi-stakeholder forum for sustainable development] 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL, UK
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