Human Settlements and Adaptation

11ᵗʰ Focal Point Forum of the Nairobi work programme

8 November 2017

Focus Group Discussion 1: Assessing Sensitivity & Vulnerability to Climate Change

The discussion in group one focused on challenges, successes and opportunities that relate to the assessment of sensitivity and vulnerability to climate change.

I) Overview of the <u>key challenges</u> met by the participants in relation to the focus area:

- The quality of available data and information is often poor:
    - There is a specific need for data related to extreme weather events;
    - There is a need to analyze/transform/ package data to fit the needs of various stakeholders;
    - Different problems require different types/ sets of data.
- Vulnerability assessments need to be carried out at regular intervals, because vulnerability is not static.
    - Vulnerability is dependent on many factors and therefore viewing a city as a single entity for an assessment is insufficient. Assessments need to be more fine-grained, taking into account local circumstances and socio-economic conditions. For example, vulnerability is not only about impacts, it is also about how groups respond to those impacts.
- Cities are complex systems with multiple sectors.
    - There is often a disconnect between sectors.
        - Each sector has its own "limited picture" of what the city's vulnerability looks like
        - Each sector has its own jargon, which makes it difficult for sectors to collaborate
    - Risk maps can be created to plan for the change that will happen in the future. However, it is challenging to take into account the circumstances of private sector companies when preparing such maps.
    - Without effective analysis of system inter-dependencies, including consideration of both public and private organizations, there are risks of cascading failures (e.g. if a power utility goes offline

what happens to organizations dependent on that power).

- Capacities at the city-level need to be strengthened, particularly for:
  - Data collection;
  - Data analysis;
  - Using data, including in relation to forecasting.

II) <u>Successful experiences</u> and <u>relevant research</u> that could help address such challenges:

- Data collected and transferred to/from communities;
- Disaggregating data (gender, spatial, time-series etc.);
- Disaggregation of climate-related problems (e.g. talking about heat waves, rather than using the fuzzier term "climate change impact" helps lay-people to better understand the context);
- First focusing on the risks facing settlements and then collecting data accordingly;
- Translators (moderators/interpreters) to make data useable for practitioners, decision-makers and community members;
- Identifying economic impacts (e.g. for utilities). This can be a lever to motivate decision-makers to take action;
- Collaboration between the local government and privately run utilities and companies:
  - Bringing in the private sector can result in acquiring more data.
  - Working with the insurance company can help improve risk assessment methodologies and foster the engagement of other companies

- Scenario planning with various stakeholder groups to imagine, for example, the future in relation to water and climate change

III) Ideas in terms of <u>possible response measures</u> that could be undertaken, including through <u>collaboration</u> and/or by the participants in the group, to address such challenges:

- Working together with residents, through participatory processes, to identify risks and vulnerabilities
  - Developing spatial and gender disaggregated data (particularly for vulnerable populations in risk assessments for cities);
  - Participatory scenario planning can enhance local ownership and facilitate implementation of resiliency measures;
- Working within environmental limits of a given location (e.g. planting trees in some very dry climates will not be effective);
- Increasing education and awareness (e.g. development of climate change curricula);
- Enacting regulation.