



The Resilient City We Need

25 - 26 September 2019
India Habitat Centre, New Delhi



National Institute of Urban Affairs

PIONEERED BY THE
ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

100 RESILIENT CITIES

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



GLOBAL CHALLENGES
FORUM

Outcome Note

Introduction

Cities are estimated to support more than 40% of India's population and more than 75% of national GDP by 2030. National programs like Smart Cities and AMRUT focus on improving city infrastructure and service delivery to ensure that cities develop in a sustainable manner creating a livable environment for its citizens. However, added to the stresses of urbanization, cities are challenged with acute shocks like flooding, earthquake, heat wave etc., that pose risk to the urban infrastructure, quality of urban life and the entire urban systems. Poor planning and urban management are expected to cost Indian cities somewhere between \$2.6 and \$13 billion annually. Furthermore, trends like climate change will cost the Indian economy \$1.178 trillion by 2050 if emissions continue at their current rates. Given the significance of India's urban development, building urban resilience will be key to safeguarding urban investments, implementing the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As India urbanizes with increasing risk to acute shocks, it is evident that the city we need is a 'Resilient City'.

With an intent to strengthen resilience building in urban India, the Urban Resilience Unit within the National Institute of Urban Affairs in partnership with 100 Resilient Cities – pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation; UN Habitat - India; The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI); Centre of Excellence for Governance, Ethics and Transparency (CEGET) at Global Compact Network India; the International Urban Cooperation, India and the Global Challenges Forum Foundation organized the Urban Thinkers Campus – 'The Resilient City We Need' in New Delhi on the 25th and 26th September 2019. The Campus was part of the series of events being organized across the globe as part of the World Urban Campaign (WUC) by UN Habitat in the run-up to the World Urban Forum that will take place in February, 2020 in Abu Dhabi.

Format and program

The 2-day campus was conducted as a mix of urban labs and a policy discussion forum on various thematic areas related to building urban resilience.

Day 1 of the Urban Thinkers Campus opened with an engaging discussion with Mr. Pedro B Ortiz, International Governmental Organizations Metropolitan Consultant, New York University Scholar and Dr. Partha Mukhopadhyay, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research. The discussion focused on what 'resilience' means for cities in the Indian context and how can local governments, planning and development agencies build their capacities to formulate and implement resilient urban solutions.

The rest of the day was structured with four ‘Urban Labs’ wherein urban experts, businesses and corporate sector, municipal corporations and representatives from Smart City SPVs deliberated the ways and means to implement the resilience agenda for cities in India. The discussions focused on mainstreaming resilience in policy, governance and urban financing, data informed decision making and developing partnerships for enabling resilient cities. An interesting feature of Day 1 was a special lab with urban planning students to come up with innovative solutions for sustainable and resilient cities. More than 35 students from Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru and Bhopal participated in this session.

The second day of the Campus was the ‘National Policy Forum’ inaugurated by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). In his inaugural address, Shri Mishra highlighted the need to design cities in a manner that they provide ease of living and better quality of life to the residents. He opined that resilience building of cities is the key to a better tomorrow.

The National Policy Forum deliberated on the ‘Future of Urban India’, leveraging the Sustainable Development Goals, maximizing co-benefits of climate action and disaster risk reduction, and urban innovation. More than 150 representatives from UN agencies, bi-lateral organizations, international networks, city governments, urban policy makers, city managers, civil society, private sector and academia participated in the 2-Day Campus.



Key Outcomes

In order to mainstream resilience in Indian cities, the Campus focused on the following objectives –

1. MAINSTREAMING URBAN RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

Developing evidence and policy frameworks for mainstreaming resilience in urban planning, development and management.

Illustrating the need for resilience in an Indian context is critical to orient cities towards the challenge of not only addressing chronic stresses like aging infrastructure, lack of affordable housing etc., but also acute shocks like heat waves, urban floods etc., in a holistic manner. The Campus provided a platform for a dialogue on how cities can embed resilience within their urban planning and governance processes and maximize the resilience dividend by mainstreaming it within their ongoing urban development activities. The objective was to enable the stakeholders identify the way forward for improving sectoral and inter-department coordination for effective implementation of strategies towards urban resilience building. The major takeaways from the group discussions revolved around the need for effective data management, enhancing institutional capacities, and adopting a cross-sectoral approach for developing urban governance and planning frameworks.



2. STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES

Understanding local capacities required for building resilient cities.

City leaders play an important role in championing resilience, and urban planners and city engineers play an important role in implementing resilience strategies. Therefore, it is important to understand the landscape of local capacities of not only the identified actors but also future urban planners and managers. The Campus focused on learning and peer exchange between stakeholders towards enabling resilience discourse in India addressing national level policies, discuss latest global developments, strengthen capacity of local leaders to implement resilience actions, and foster resilience thinking among future urban planners.



3. DATA-DRIVEN GOVERNANCE

Constructing framework for data informed decision-making for resilient cities

Multi-stakeholder collaboration is imperative in resilience building initiatives. Today, data is being generated by urban stakeholders including but not limited to urban local bodies. By understanding the data landscape holistically, decision makers will be able to address urban challenges and strengthen systems to ensure they are resilient in the face of shocks and stresses. The campus brought together city government officials, business leaders, NGOs and academia to deliberate and define a way forward towards informed decision making.

The discussions highlighted that the need for data for resilience building is well understood by experts amongst various stakeholder groups. However, operational and technical challenges constrain the usage of data for decision making. As Indian cities adopt initiatives such as DataSMART Cities and the India Urban Data Exchange to promote data sharing amongst stakeholders, there must be a framework to guide cities and stakeholders in setting up these platforms with clear standardized operational procedures regarding data sharing, privacy, collection, quality, ownership and format. There is also a knowledge gap regarding using data in an actionable manner to solve problems and inform decisions. This can be addressed through the development of use cases and technical assistance to cities.



4. FOSTERING ENGAGEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Bringing together different stakeholders to initiate and prioritize the urban resilience agenda

Resilience action requires a crosscutting, multi-level and multi-stakeholder engagement, and strong commitments and cooperation not just amongst various city level agencies and utilities, but also businesses and communities. The campus explored the strategic, tactical, and operational roles of partnerships, especially the public-private-people partnership framework to improve city resilience, and present a case of implementing a sustainability transition vision. Case examples on private sector collaboration with community and urban local bodies were also highlighted.

