

BUILDING RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE CITIES IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS

CONTRIBUTORS: IAN ANTHONY (SIPRI), PATIENCE MUSUSA AND CRISTINA UDELSMANN RODRIGUES (NORDIC AFRICA INSTITUTE), CHRISTIE NICOSON AND LINDSEY DOYLE (MA CANDIDATES, UPPSALA UNIVERSITY)

INTRODUCTION

By 2050 it is projected that 75 per cent of the world's population will live in cities. Rapid urbanization poses a number of security and development threats, from inadequate housing to crime and from improper waste management to tenuous social cohesion. Insufficient capacity to respond to these challenges could contribute to the growth of slums, whose residents are underserved and marginalized. Cities will account for a growing share of national wealth and will compete for investment, talent and influence. As cities concentrate wealth and populations, they become targets for violence or threats of violence.

Among the 2030 Agenda's many innovations, the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 reflects the growing importance of cities to sustainable development and a powerful tendency towards urbanization. This brief considers how development and security challenges manifest in cities and how cities themselves will bear on global security and development, including recommendations for enhancing SDG 11 implementation, monitoring and evaluation. National governments will increasingly have to incorporate perspectives of municipal authorities when they are making policies and designing strategies for the SDGs, and will depend on cooperation at the city level for implementation.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In addition to being greater in number and size, the cities of the future will be increasingly diverse and youthful. Cities are expected to account for a growing share of national wealth and will therefore need to compete for investment, talent and influence. National governments will increasingly have to take the perspective of municipal authorities into account when they are making policies for the country as a whole, and will depend on cooperation at city level to implement policy.

Of the agreed 230 indicators proposed by the UN Statistical Commission to measure SDG implementation, 15 are directly linked to SDG 11. Collecting data on these indicators will be a formidable challenge since much of it is not available today, even in developed countries. In countries and cities where the human, technical and financial resources of statistical services are already stretched, the collection of data on SDG 11 will be particularly difficult. Moreover, the indicator set will be under constant review, and may be adjusted as more and better information, methodologies and tools become available.

Politically sensitive indicators measuring, for example, slum populations, informal settlements, inadequate housing, direct participation of civil society in municipal governance, efficiency of service delivery, or fair access to public utilities like power and water may be either not collected or not reported. Still, this is a challenge for all performance data measured by the SDGs. Cities may, alternatively, find more political space for collecting and reporting this data (and serve as an example for countries with lagging transparency at the national level).

Where comprehensive data is collected, it may not answer the question: Is SDG 11 being implemented effectively? The indicators agreed upon in SDG 11 were simplified to things that can be quantified, rather than more subjective factors. For example, convenient access to public transportation can be measured by calculating how many people have a form of public transport within 1 kilometre of where they live. However, what if there is a train



station, but no trains are running? What if citizens will not walk the kilometre to a bus route because they must pass through an area where the risk of crime, or harassment based on their gender or ethnicity, is unacceptably high?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Data collection by the states that have pledged to support the implementation of the SDGs is necessary, but not sufficient. The national efforts will need to be supplemented in different ways.

1. The academic and non-governmental community should contribute to SDG 11 monitoring and evaluating efforts either by building or multiplying the capacity of national governments.

- The data that will be collected and analyzed to measure progress on the SDGs is, in many instances, already being carried out for different purposes. These data, and the means used to collect them, should be incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation framework for SDG 11.
- Because measurement of elements of SDG 11 will be undertaken in fragile environments, it is essential that the personal security of those tasked with collecting data is given sufficient consideration and precautionary measures are taken. Many funders impose regulations to reduce security risks but which also act as barriers to important research. Private foundations, who determine their funding rules using different criteria from government authorities, could help finance capacity building and data collection in support of SDG 11 measurement.

2. National statistical reports may need to be supplemented by data acquired using different methodologies.

- For example, methodologies designed to measure social cohesion by using large but focused citizen surveys could shed light on key aspects of urban security. The Social Cohesion Radar developed in Bremen, Germany, is one example of a methodology that measures the degree of acceptance of diversity; the development of social networks; perceptions of fairness, solidarity and helpfulness; the level of trust in institutions; the level of trust in people; respect for social rules and the degree of civic participation.
- Combining official data with data collected using alternative methodologies could provide a more comprehensive picture of progress on SDG 11.

3. New and emerging technologies should be incorporated in SDG 11 measurement efforts.

- The rapid spread of access to mobile, digital information and communication technology has facilitated peer-to-peer information sharing and generated large amounts of data. To give one example, anonymous citizen participation through mobile devices can be used to measure quality of city services.