

THE NINTH WORLD URBAN FORUM (WUF 9) KUALA LUMPUR 07 FEB – 13 FEB

The World Urban Forum (WUF) is a non-legislative technical forum convened by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) held since 2002.

The Forum gathers a wide range of participants including, but are not limited to, national, regional and local governments, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, professionals, research institutions and academies, professionals, private sector, development finance institutions, foundations, media and United Nations organizations and other international agencies.

The Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9), took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 7th -13th February 2018, has been recognized by the General Assembly resolution 70/210 as the first session to have a thematic focus on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III. The Theme of the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) was “Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda” – placed the Forum’s focus on the New Urban Agenda as a tool and accelerator for achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

At WUF9 the different participants showcased a wide range of ideas, initiatives, innovations and interventions aligned with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goal. In addition, more than 22, 000 delegates from the 157 participating countries engaged in events to debate concrete steps about how the different actors could work together to realising more inclusive cities by 2030. Thematic itineraries around issues like mobility, climate change, housing, land, public space, risk reduction and resilience etc. were explored as potentially powerful entry points towards achieving this goal. The WUF9 provided a great opportunity to garner the efforts of all relevant actors to deliberate on, identify and commit to implementation of concrete solutions for the transformative commitments made in the New Urban Agenda (which are also fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals).

The Urban Action Lab (UAL) which is based in the Department of Geography, Geo-informatics and Climatic Sciences at Makerere University participated in the WUF9 where we exhibited and showcased some of the work we have undertaken recently to help inform policy and action on

some of the pertinent urbanization-related issues faced by Uganda. The exhibition was successfully conducted in partnership with two of our local partners, i.e. the Uganda Housing Cooperatives Union (UHOCU), Shelter and Settlements Alternatives (SSA), together with the national delegation from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. The UAL showcased research work and outputs on thematic areas like urban infrastructure, risk reduction and resilience, as well as sustainable energy and climate change. Informal discussions were held with different participants from different countries on various urban development challenges vis-à-vis a diversity of global North and South experiences.



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
Department of Geography
Geo-informatics and Climatic Sciences

Research Areas

1. Climate Science, Climate Change and Earth Observation
2. Coastal Marine Environment Systems, Geography and Development
3. Disaster Risk Management and Reduction
4. Urban and Regional Systems, Ecosystems and Sustainability

Degree Programs

1. Bachelor of Arts Geography
2. Bachelor of Science Meteorology
3. Bachelor of Science Geography (Urbanizing)
4. Bachelor of Science Geography (Environmental)
5. Master of Land Use and Regional Development
6. MPhil (Geography)
7. Master of Science Disaster Risk Management (Urbanizing)
8. Master of Science Climate Science (Urbanizing)
9. Bachelor of Geographical Sciences (Urbanizing), Strategic Action

Strategic Actions

1. Realization of funding for research through competitive grants for students, research fellow and faculty
2. Wider dissemination of research results
3. Increased participation of department staff in events, conferences and workshops both national and international through their service to the profession and society
4. Conduct research that can aid new interventions/ research programs
5. Increased literacy and competencies of students and department in computer use IT for learning, communication and research
6. Increased use of geo-spatial/information technology in spatial analysis and research by students and faculty

Human Resources, Facilities and Equipment

1. The department has 23 full time academic staff with broad research interests in several national and globally important and innovative areas
2. 2000sqm/2000 sqm lecture theatre at ICT building
3. Expanded GIS Laboratory with full equipment including GPS, Remote sensing, Soil moisture and data logging
4. A number of other facilities including: Drones, Remote sensing, Soil moisture and data logging
5. An Urban Action Research Lab and Habitat Lab in Climate Change Hub
6. Climate and Water Resources Centre
7. Marine Resources and Coastal Management Centre
8. Well equipped bank

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URBAN ACTION LAB

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MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
Department of Geography
Geo-informatics and Climatic Sciences

Research Areas

- 1. Climate Sciences, Climate Change and Earth Observation
- 2. Coastal Resilient Development, Sustainable Development and Planning
- 3. Disaster Risk Management and Reduction
- 4. Urban and Regional Systems, Transformations and Sustainability

Degree Programs

- 1. Bachelor of Arts Geography
- 2. Bachelor of Science Meteorology
- 3. Bachelor of Science Geography
- 4. Masters of Science Geography (Urban Planning)
- 5. Masters of Land Use and Regional Development
- 6. PhD (in Research)
- 7. Master of Science Disaster Risk Management (Urban Planning)
- 8. Master of Science Climate Science (Urban Planning)
- 9. Bachelor of Geographical Sciences (Urban Planning) Strategic Actions

Strategic Actions

- 1. Realization of leading to research through competitive grants for students, research fellow and faculty
- 2. Wide dissemination of research results
- 3. Increased participation of department staff in events, conferences and workshops both national and international through their services to the profession and society
- 4. Functional research labs and new interdisciplinary research programs
- 5. Increased visibility and connectivity of students and department in computer and IT for e-learning, communication and research
- 6. Enhanced use of geo-informatics technology in spatial analysis and research by students and lecturers.

Human Resources, Facilities and Equipment

- 1. The department has 18 full time academics staff with several research interests in several nationally and globally important and information areas.
- 2. SPOTNET/2 Satellite Receiver at GIS building
- 3. State-of-the-art laboratory with field equipment including GPS, Remote sensing, field notebooks and water testing
- 4. A Weather Station near Festival Square
- 5. An Urban Action Research Lab and Habitat UN in Climate Change Hub
- 6. Climate and Water Resources Centre
- 7. Mountain Resources and Disaster Management Centre
- 8. Well stocked book bank

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Key learning points from some of the events at the World Urban Forum:

Urban Underground Spaces for the Cities of the Future

- Underground space can play a key role in mediating underground infrastructure through enhancement of spatial connectivity as well as other important roles to play in respect to the achievement of environmentally-sound urbanization and therefore .

Cities for All: Addressing Forced Eviction

- Communities are part of the government and need to be enrolled in the processes which engender transformation of the relationship between them and local governments.
- Forced evictions should be treated as criminal offences and there is need to know what is to be monitored, i.e. the eviction processes and all the actors that are involved (both the visible and the invisible actors).

Urban ecological landscapes: Achieving urban health addressing climate change

- There is a need for planning with ecosystems protection in mind and to connect cities with their hinterlands/the rural areas. This requires the creation of ecological corridors that connect urban and rural landscapes.

- Open space must be viewed as an important element that provides natural services, therefore, it is important how such space is organized, located and arranged across cities.
- Researchers need to work better with city enforcers and looking at various urban sectors in an integrated/interconnected manner and not in isolation.

Fostering Sustainable Development Through Urban Health

- Cities are critical hubs of growth and development, as well as the cultivation of science, knowledge and ideas. Cities also come with many challenges. In this context, key question that arises is: do we need more science or more knowledge especially in response to the problems and challenges that cities come with? Science and knowledge need to be better harnessed to make cities better
- Knowledge is not static, it's dynamic just like cities and thus we need to know and understand city systems better because they are highly dynamic spatially, socially, economically, politically and in their interconnectedness
- Need to determine the kind of science we require to better integrate knowledge, it's not necessarily about generating new knowledge or re-inventing new urban science but having more cohesive and integrated science to address existential and emerging urban challenges
- Need translational science to bridge the disconnect between social and natural sciences, local knowledge and experiences which can be translated into meaningful programs
- Local knowledge is key, rather than simply copying models and paradigms from different settings/contexts
- Urban health offers a unifying framework for sustainable development, where decisions are based on sound scientific evidence together with heuristics, and focal points of data and information are well organized to generate the change we need in our cities

Informal Settlements and Slum Upgrading

- Informal slum upgrading is a long term process and this is key when approaching slum upgrading
- Need to search for workable solutions to address market and political failures, by leveraging funds for upgrading and state guarantees with private capital to bring about tangible transformation
- Regularization of tenancy for informal settlement communities is also key in slum upgrading, together with service provision (healthcare, education, water, sanitation, power etc.)
- Land-swaps can be considered as a viable alternative/strategy for dealing with slum/informal settlements in our cities

Integrating Urbanization in National Development Planning in Africa (UNECA)

- The story/narrative about urbanization is incomplete, where planning for urbanization remains largely sectorized and divorced from rural sector planning. We need to move away from compartmentalizing the urban and the rural in planning processes
- Asian countries have transformed their economies largely as a result of this change in thinking, unlike Africa where planning has remained fully compartmentalized resulting in a disconnect between the urban and the rural planning processes
- African cities are sites of rising consumption and thus we need to transform this potential into productive capacity that creates jobs in an integrated planning approach
- Urban growth without economic growth leads to low productivity and thus resulting in a cycle of crisis, which needs to be broken
- A better understanding of Africa's urban realities is needed, by debunking myths of disregarding agriculture, agriculture can be transformed for economic growth and development
- Mining, tourism and the service sectors are some of the focal areas that many African NDPs are targeting, manufacturing and tradable services are productive, however, non-tradable and informal service sectors, which are NOT very productive, currently dominate urban landscapes in much of Africa
- Structural transformation requires increasing productivity of urban populations and generating more employment opportunities
- Urbanization is key for creating demand that will lead to increase in demand and thus productivity, especially through infrastructure expansion, housing, middle-class consumption rise (demand for traded/manufactured/processed goods, services etc.). Urbanization is a critical catalyst for economic growth and development
- Urbanization comes with vital agglomeration economies (sharing intermediate inputs, labor pools, labor matching and knowledge spill-overs) that are critical for economic growth and development. Of course, we cannot forget that urbanization has critical political dimensions, policies need to match realities
- Urbanization needs to be treated as a cross-cutting multi-sectoral issue like gender, environment, HIV etc.
- Housing should be looked at as a strong driver of economic growth, given the multiple backward and forward linkages it can create, it should be looked at as an industry and NOT as social service
- Slums are a manifestations of larger structural problems, which, partly stem from the lack of gainful employment opportunities
- With the experiences of Asia, South to South cooperation is key if Africa is to unlock the potential inherent in its urbanization process
- We do not need clean and beautiful cities per se, but productive cities!