



Europäische Akademie  
für städtische Umwelt Berlin  
European Academy  
of the Urban Environment

Technische Universität Berlin



Faculty VI: Architecture Environment Society  
Planning in the International Context

CONFERENCE : 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2006

## Renewed Efforts to Plan for Sustainable Development

### Call for Papers

The Institute of Urban and Regional Planning of the Technical University Berlin, in collaboration with the European Academy of the Urban Environment, is organizing a conference on the theme of New Approaches to Planning for Sustainable Development. This will comprise the first two days of a Summer School in which city managers and planners and urban researchers and teachers from a selection Asian countries will bring their experience and engage in discussions aimed at addressing problems of sustainable development within city regions. The conference will take place during two days and the Summer School will continue for a week thereafter.

The Conference organizers call on researchers and associates interested in this topic to submit relevant **abstracts by 17<sup>th</sup> June and papers by the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006**. The selected papers will be presented in workshops within the conference and will be published in the conference proceedings.

### **Theme of the Conference**

Already in the early 1970s, with the publication of *The Limits to Growth*, a broad public debate alerted the public to the unsustainability of our current development trajectory and the way of life which it aims to promote and support. The term *sustainable development* emerged in the early 1980s and came into widespread use particularly with the publication of the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future*. Across the 1980s a strong international environmental movement pushed international agencies and national governments to take the issue of sustainability seriously. The Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), with its massive *Agenda 21* was supposed to lay the foundations of sustainable development to be achieved in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. National governments produced their own sustainability strategies and several thousand municipalities around the world initiated *Local Agenda 21* processes.

We still face the problem of a development process that is following out an unsustainable path exactly as foreseen in *The Limits to Growth* and recently confirmed by the authors of that study<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, not only has all the effort of the environmental movement and the Agenda 21 processes

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<sup>1</sup> Meadows, D., Randers, J. and Meadows, D. (2004) *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update*. Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont.

failed to halt this trajectory: the strength of the movement seems to have become exhausted and coherent and effective approaches to changing the direction of development appear no longer to be an important issue on the political agenda. The Millennium Development Goals raise the question of sustainable development only as the seventh of eight goals and even then narrow the focus down to a limited subset of (albeit important) issues<sup>2</sup>.

The focus of this Conference is on forging more effective planning tools to steer the development process into sustainable pathways. In our 2005 Summer School, participants discussed emerging urbanisation processes in the countries of the South. There, urbanisation – or rather the restructuring of settlements - is spreading across wide landscapes in disjointed patterns that look similar to the suburban and exurban expansions that happened in the United States already in the 1940s and 50s and more recently across Europe. In the case of the South, these patterns of spatial location have complex causes. On the one hand they contain a first-time urbanisation – both migration to cities and growth of new settlements - as peasants attempt to join the globalising economy, with increasing mobility and capacity, even at a very low level of income, to participate in the consumer society. On the other hand the urban settlements are growing rapidly through reproduction of already urbanised populations. The resulting patterns of land use represent the heart of the process of unsustainable development where levels of consumption of non-renewable energy and other resources are rising inexorably and environments everywhere are becoming increasingly degraded. Furthermore, the lack of economic development and hence financial resources to provide urban infrastructure result in universally degrading environmental conditions.

It was thus decided that this year the Summer School will focus on reforming planning systems such that they are capable of addressing sustainability issues effectively. This necessarily includes centrally a focus on the political will – on governance and ethics – to take sustainability issues seriously and to be prepared to take radical action to change the direction of development decisively.

The problem is not, however, only one of the South. Indeed, it can be asserted with justification that efforts to steer development into sustainable pathways in the North have been no more effective than they have been in the South. Local Agenda 21 and related processes ostensibly designed to change development processes at the local level have remained stubbornly on the margins of everyday municipal and regional development. Sustainability projects – of which there are legion - remain small and isolated and the process of scaling these up has yet to start; concepts and procedures for analysing sustainability, such as Materials Flow Analysis or Local Energy Planning, that can be inserted into existing planning processes have been developed but are hardly applied.

Thus, what this Conference is seeking is papers that will address this problem. This includes analysing why the issue of sustainable development is not being adequately addressed and which formulate concepts, procedures and initiatives that will overcome these difficulties. The papers may focus on the problematic in either the North or the South, taking specific countries or regions to illustrate the problematic at issue. We do not wish to over-define the scope of papers but nevertheless suggest that they focus on one of the following three issues – that will then be the foci of the subsequent Summer School.

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<sup>2</sup> However, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment carried out in parallel with work on the MDGs indicates clearly the increasingly unsustainability of the current development trajectory.

### **Three Sub-Topics**

**Topic 1:** The first topic is concerned with existing planning systems and asks: **what approaches do the planning systems take with regard to attempting to analyse the environmental sustainability of spatial development and the ways in which these fail to ensure sustainability?** This looks into the analytical procedures of the planning systems – both those of local government and related non-government interventions - and what is taken into account with respect to devising the framework both for encouraging sustainable development and for inhibiting or restricting undesirable kinds of development. It then looks at the limits of the planning system from the point of view possessing knowledge of what is actually happening in terms of development. It looks at how inadequacies in knowledge come about. It looks also at how development decisions on the part of different developers – government agencies, formal private sector enterprises and informal actors - bypass the planning system, either through inadequate control or through looseness in decision-making, including corruption. The following are some of the questions that might be addressed in papers on this topic:

- What are the different kinds of plans which regulate the use of land and to what level of detail is control over development exerted?
- What analysis is carried out to decide what land uses and developments will be allowed at particular locations; how does this bring sustainability issues into the plans and with what result?
- Who is involved in deciding on the content of plans (planners, politicians, CBOs/NGOs, etc.)?
- What are the procedures used to control development and how does this satisfy the requirements of sustainable development?
- How is it that unsustainable developments are allowed or even bypass the development control procedures and what measures, if any, are taken to reverse actions that have not followed the development control procedure (eg demolishing illegal structures)?
- What factors including economic, political and cultural (or any other) inhibit the implementation of a planning system that will bring development into line with the requirements of sustainability?

**Topic 2:** This topic looks at **concepts, techniques and procedures designed to enable the planning system to engage effectively with sustainability problems and to build these into the planning decision-making process.** For many years now, Environmental Impact Assessment has been a standard part of national planning systems but has fallen far short of the necessary framework to ensure sustainable development in general. Many serviceable concepts and procedures exist - such as 'size distribution of settlements', 'Compact Cities', 'Carrying Capacity', 'Material Flow Analysis' and Local Energy Planning but are hardly ever applied. Papers addressing this topic should take up these or related concepts and procedures and show how they might be built into national and local planning systems, taking account of specific economic, political and cultural circumstances. The following are some of the questions that might be addressed in papers on this topic:

- Outline one or a small number of concepts and procedures you think might be substantively introduced into the national and/or local planning system to analyse sustainability problems and suggest solutions.
- Indicate how these should be built into existing planning mechanisms and procedures.

- Indicate who should be involved in developing and thence implementing these mechanisms and procedures.
- What new methods will need to be adopted to ensure the relative ineffectiveness of existing planning procedures is not reproduced when introducing new procedures?
- Make an assessment of what the impact could be of implementing the chosen concept(s) and procedure(s) in terms of spatial development, if implemented effectively.

**Topic 3:** This topic now turns to the **economic, social and political decision-making process that will be necessary to implement new approaches to planning effectively.** No amount of technical work will suffice on its own to achieve sustainable development. It requires an adequate ethical framework – an agreement among the population on common ends and the means to achieve these. Technocratic planning procedures work more or less well in Europe because there were ethical and political movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that confronted corruption and loose decision-making that had then led to badly built cities and highly polluting industries. Without conscious movements aimed at overcoming the problems (of unsustainable development), new planning procedures will not be effective. Whilst a single conference cannot bring social movements into existence, it is possible and useful to discuss the social and political framework within which such movements can thrive. The following are some of the questions that might be addressed in papers on this topic:

- Who in the present situation is included and who excluded from the official planning system and what effects does this have in terms of the result (actual emerging land use patterns)?
- Outline an overall concept for planning decision-making that opens up the possibility to create a system of planning that answers the long-term needs of the society as a whole.
- Describe critically, in terms of its proven strengths and weaknesses, a system of participatory planning that aims to be effective in answering the longer term needs of local populations (eg a Participatory Action Research (PAR) or Local Agenda 21 process)
- How can the incoherencies between local participatory planning and decision-making at the municipal, city and regional levels be overcome (interconnection and coordination of levels) without diminishing the participatory dimension?
- Describe how not only planning decisions but also financing decisions can be brought into a participatory decision-making framework both with relation to public finance (Participatory Budgeting) and in terms of intervention in private sector financing that has spatial results.

### **Call for Papers**

1. Abstracts in English language of no more than 400 words should be submitted by the 30<sup>th</sup> of July. Authors should send these electronically (Word format) to [urdn@urdn.tu-berlin.de](mailto:urdn@urdn.tu-berlin.de). Any additional information required can be obtained from this address or by sending a fax to: +49 (0)30 314 78520 Alternatively, queries can be made by telephone: +49 (0)30 314 78526 or 314 28 101.
2. Papers, to be submitted by authors not later than August 15<sup>th</sup>, should clearly address one of the three themes and authors should indicate their choice of workshop and the specific issue their paper deals with. They should provide keywords for reference purposes as well as an abstract which should not exceed 200 words. The actual text should be between 4.000 and 6.000 words, written in English.

3. All accepted papers will be included in a published (ISBN Referenced) book of conference proceedings.
4. The conference fee for both days altogether is 75,00 EUR. For students, there is a reduced fee of 15 EUR. The fee includes participation in all conference activities, the conference documents, snacks and drinks and a free sample of the publication for everyone having submitted a paper.
5. Those who wish to take Lunch with us will be charged 10 EUR per person per day separately.
6. Accommodation must be organized personally. If you wish, we can help you finding a hotel room.

This Call and further information can also be found on the internet site <http://urdn.tu-berlin.de>.