



In Focus: SDG 11

Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities require sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture

Co-organized by UNECE, and the [Geneva Cities Hub](#)

Back-to-back with the 83rd session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (3-7 October 2022)

1- Learning from Covid -Environmental Crisis Nexus

Leaving Labs

Place of mercantile commerce and economic production

Places of proximity and social interaction

Places of training in hybrid thinking and approaches that couple scientific knowledge with local practices, indigenous understandings and practices

Places of training in virtues of patience, empathy, courage and ethical conduct

Places of innovation and craft: reuse, reinvention, recentering of humans in places



Traditional tools of urban development unsuited to deal with intertwined current challenges (environmental , demographic change, public health etc.) and the need for integrated solutions.



Need for holistically planned socio-economic and ecological investment and integration of visions across various stakeholders.



Direct Urban Resources and flows towards greater resource efficiency: Energy, waste, water, food, transport.



Aim for greater Well being of current and future citizens and communities and acknowledge new socio-cultural dynamics and aspirations of the population.



2- Green Infrastructure in Cities are not enough to address multifaceted challenges and needs



Current approach is often a feel good one, esthetic and /or small interventions on urban infrastructures that were **built in a manner generally incompatible with the goals of GI.**

Cities have mostly not been designed with GI or nature's services in mind:

Modified topography

Modified hydrology

Modified soils

Lack of attention to weather and climate: wind patterns, sun, rain and more



3- Solution forward is Integrated planning

Overall objective is to introduce a **systemic and integrated approach in urban planning, which aims at improving urban livability and overall quality of life** by:

- Assisting in the creation of a new urban reference framework.
- This involves defining best practices, know-how dissemination, input on policy and legal aspects, developing project financing based on interactions between the Built Environment and Infrastructures with Natural Environment in Cities while bringing citizens back in:
 - Co-Defining the problems,
 - Co-Designing the solutions ,
 - Co-implementing the strategies and policies
 - Co-monitoring the outcomes



4- Blue-Green-Grey Integrated approach to planning

- Conceptualising the city and its infrastructure - **including the urban water system (blue assets) and its vegetated areas (green assets)**
- As a living (eco) system, is transforming the existing divide between cities and environment into an **integrated approach of nature based Blue-Green solutions while addressing the social conondrum of equity and equal access.**

While...

- Enhancing the inclusivity, equitability and livability of cities,
- Regenerating deprived districts,
- Improving mental and physical health and quality of life for the citizens,
- Reducing urban violence and decrease social tensions



5- Integrated planning towards co-benefit production

Aire River ecological retrofitting Geneva

- The poor quality of the Aire River natural environment and loss of biodiversity in the absence of natural habitat as a result of concrete channelization triggered the state authorities to launch a revitalization programme for the river and surrounding land.
- The “**SUPERPOSITIONS**” multi-disciplinary group composed of architects, hydraulic engineers, civil engineers and biologists, developed a completely new retrofitting concept that **aimed ecological retrofitting, environmental risk processing as well as populations wellbeing.**
- Creation of New spaces for leisure and recreation for the population that can also be flooded in the case of heavy rain and protect neighbourhoods.



Plage des Eaux-Vives : Prolonged consultation approach to
Restore lakeside wetlands, new recreation areas with new
opportunity for local economy



Flexible and agile Governance to enable retrofitting lakeside Greater space for soft mobility, Pavement Permeability, extending urban biomass



Key Messages

Cities will keep being engines of economic growth, environmental negative externalities and socio-economic divide if same planning tools are our references

For cities to reduce their impacts, they must recast the planning process

For this to happen, we can only change incrementally within a transition period.

We need to reduce energy and materials flows, and consider alternative models of growth while focusing the planning on people, place and environment.

We need to rethink cities – the resource consumption- the role of Natural environment and its link to the built environment



- THANK YOU -



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