

THE ACCESSIBILITY WE NEED



MESSAGE
FROM
CODATU
TO
HABITAT



25 may 2016

CODATU is an international association based in France that was established in 1980 with the aim of promoting sustainable urban mobility in developing countries. In particular, it brings together researchers with policy makers and local governments, promotes the exchange of good practice and contributes to building capacities in the field of urban transport and mobility.

In 1996, CODATU sent a Message to HABITAT-II identifying the main requirements for sustainable urban transport systems in developing countries. We have reviewed the situation 20 years on, highlighting persisting challenges and proposing solutions to improve transport and the quality of life of citizens in cities of developing and emerging countries.

Echoing the manifesto of the World Urban Campaign on “The City We Need”, CODATU’s Message to HABITAT-III focuses on “The Accessibility We Need” as a basic right of city residents. In doing so it recognizes that access should not be unfettered, but designed to minimize impacts on natural resources and social equity.

ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESSIBILITY

1. Develop National Urban Mobility Policies (NUMPs) more adapted to cities' needs

National laws and regulations are not always appropriate to the problems and capacities of cities. Sometimes they are out-dated; more often they are not implemented. Usually they completely lack a multi-sectorial vision. The development of a NUMP must be done with the involvement of local governments and of the main transport stakeholders with the support of a group of interdisciplinary experts. It must aim at building a common framework, introduce national reforms and give recommendations for helping local governments in developing sustainable urban mobility systems.

3. Promote participatory approaches in the planning and decision-making processes

Involving stakeholders, citizens and the civil society in general in the decision-making process remains an institutional challenge¹, which was already one of the main messages from Habitat-II. Citizens' participation must be promoted by establishing realistic mechanisms to bring together decision-makers, experts, stakeholders and users in the field of urban transport and mobility.

2. Coordinate responsibilities at both national and city levels

National responsibility for transport typically falls between departments of urban development, planning, transport, environment, economy and finance. NUMPs need to be developed as documents which coordinate the interests of each of these government departments. Similar coordination is needed at city level to ensure that SUMP reflect the interests of different tiers of government, and are consistent with policies for land use, economy and the environment.

4. Improve capacity building programmes

Capacity building is still not understood in its wider meaning; it is not just human resource training but also crucially involves institutional development and regulatory reform². Effort must be made by cities, regardless of their size, and by aid agencies to introduce proper capacity building and overcome related obstacles.

5. Improve educational programmes at the national level

There is a general lack of specialist skills in transport engineering and planning in the city technical cadre. In countries where University education on "transport engineering and planning" does not yet exist, support is needed to develop and promote such courses. In countries where it already exists, professional and institutional development frameworks are needed to ensure that these skills are acknowledged and used effectively in cities. In addition, effort is needed to establish related multi-disciplinary Post Graduate education in urban mobility and accessibility.

6. Develop new business models for public transport including also the private sector

Cities of the developing and emerging world suffer from a lack of appropriate financing mechanisms for public transport and numerous regulatory and legal hurdles on the use of public budgets, in part because of the strong centralisation of decision-making. The private sector faces many obstacles to participating in financing and operating public transport systems, which are usually non-profitable. New financial models and effective mechanisms must be developed locally, while upgrading contract management and improving the supervisory role of the city. Public authorities need to ensure durable funding for urban transport.

1. GRHS, 2013.
2. UNDP Capacity Building - Agenda 21's definition, UNCED, 1992



FOSTER BETTER ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

7. Develop Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) to coordinate land-use and transport and create a consensus on the common vision for the city development

Urban transport managers and decision makers in developing countries, being engaged with solving day to day problems, usually deal with sectorial and very short term issues without any long-term or interdisciplinary approach. SUMP are a strategic planning tool to build a common vision for the development of a multi-modal mobility system for the long-term. Having a vision also helps in better scheduling and implementing of short-term measures.

9. Consider a wide range of possible measures

Cities still tend to focus on infrastructure-based solutions. In practice, better management, information and pricing often offer more cost-effective solutions, and these measures can be packaged to further increase their effectiveness and acceptability. Intergovernmental agencies should assist in encouraging cities to consider the full range of such measures.

3. GRHS, 2013

8. Promote functional and social mix to avoid segregation and inaccessibility

Integrating equitable accessibility for all with human rights is a persisting challenge³. Land-use policies have a crucial role to play in sustaining social and functional mix especially in suburbs, rural areas and new satellite cities which grow up rapidly and without any planning around big capitals. Such areas need to be designed to be served by formal public transport, paratransit, cycling and pedestrian facilities, rather than becoming dependent on the private car. Mixed high density development will improve accessibility and reduce the need for mobility by offering basic services to people within walkable or cyclable areas. Social land market policies will help in keeping urban land affordable for poor people and avoiding segregation.

10. Promote the needs of all urban dwellers

Women and men, children and the elderly have different needs for accessibility; those with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged. Cities need to develop their SUMP to meet the needs of all. Designs which accommodate disabled people are more likely to meet the needs of others as well.

11. Pay attention to urban freight transport

Very often urban freight and accessibility of goods vehicles to markets and warehouses are ignored in the planning process⁴, and in the attempts to integrate transport planning and land use planning. As a result, the movement of commercial vehicles often has an adverse impact on traffic congestion, safety and emissions and, hence, on access and mobility. Cities are urged to pay more attention to provide better ways of efficiently managing the movement of those vehicles on the street network and introducing interchange terminals at the peripheries of the city. Researchers are urged to provide better tools to include goods transport in the planning process and to reduce their negative effects.

13. Enhance data infrastructure

Regular, comparable, reliable, transparent and accessible data and a sufficient data infrastructure are crucial in developing countries. Governments should pay attention to building the capacity of cities' data infrastructure and institutions and the culture of data transfer, not only between concerned city entities and professionals, but also among researchers and academics.

4. GRHS, 2013

12. Consider the effect of fast expanding communication technologies

Fast expanding communication technologies, such as smart phones and social media, are likely to have profound effects on urban travel demand, by providing alternatives to travel and at the same time increasing awareness of alternative options such as shared usage. The take-up of such technologies needs to be understood in a developing country context so that transport planning and transport projects remain sustainable and continue to achieve improved access to all. In addition, smart phones can be used to collect data on the travel patterns of urban dwellers and hence provide a sound information database for the development of more effective transport strategies.



ENCOURAGE NON-MOTORIZED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

14. Develop facilities and reshape public spaces for non-motorised transport (NMT) in cities

NMT is predominant accounting on average for 37% of total urban daily trips worldwide (GRHS, 2013) and 40% to 90% in cities of developing countries⁵. Unfortunately, NMT are often not a choice but the only available mode to those who are captives to it; mostly the low-income. In order to make NMT a real choice it is necessary to improve facilities, to give more space to person travel and less space to motorized modes. There is a need for innovative financing for NMT facilities⁶ in developing countries and emerging economies to encourage walking and cycling and make them safer.

16. Pay attention to paratransit

Paratransit is an essential component of the urban mobility systems in most cities of developing countries, provides good access to many destinations that cannot be reached by formal public transport, and offers integration with mass transit where it exists.

15. Develop a more adapted public transport supply and fares for different groups of users

The cost of travel in developing countries still remains high especially for low-income households⁷. The car is still a status symbol and a personal dream in some societies of developing countries, or in some cases a necessity due to inefficient public transport. Travel conditions on formal public transport and paratransit are often not acceptable especially for the elderly, children and women who sometimes prefer walking to using a crowded bus. In order to change the paradigm and make public transport more attractive, decision-makers and transport operators must work to develop a differentiated supply for a differentiated public, establish quality standards for operators (both private and public). They should also develop a mechanism to introduce a fair fare policy which offers targeted subsidies⁸ according to social and economic criteria.

Paratransit is a major source of employment. However, it is also a major source of adverse externalities. As many of those cities are heavily dependent on paratransit and will continue to be so, it is vital to find pragmatic ways to control and to reduce those externalities.

CODATU'S MESSAGE TO HABITAT-III FOCUSES ON "THE ACCESSIBILITY WE NEED" AS A BASIC RIGHT OF CITY RESIDENTS.

It raises crucial issues related to two time horizons for urban transport in developing countries: the immediate challenges that persist since HABITAT-II and the future possible keys for the next 20 years to HABITAT-IV.

In considering them, HABITAT-III also needs to address how best to develop and disseminate good practices. At present, the UN-HABITAT GRHS biannual series of reports are produced by mandate from the UN General Assembly and forwarded by its Secretary General to all UN member countries. Unfortunately, there is rarely a mechanism in developing countries for implementing the recommendations of the UN, and other international organisations, and equally often the recommendations do not recognize local conditions to ensure implementation. As a result, the UN's initiatives are not cost-effective and represent often a serious waste of resources.

Effort is needed to establish mechanisms within countries to consider and act upon the advice of international agencies and within international agencies to create awareness among its experts to better attain to local conditions when setting the recommendations.

This is best be achieved by developing a cadre of expert and professionals within countries and within international agencies to reach common grounds on reaching pragmatic country-specific advices and favour the dialogue between experts and decision-makers.



5. Urban Transport in the Developing World: A Handbook of Policy and Practices, Dimitriou, Gakenheimer, 2011
6. Statement of the Independent Advisory Panel, EIG/WB Report 2007; and GRHS, 2013
7. Affordability of public transport in developing countries, WB, 2011
8. GRHS, 2013

This Message has been written by the Permanent Scientific and Technical Committee (PSTC) of CODATU with the contribution of CODATU's members and partners that met in Paris on April 13th, 2016 to formalize the key-messages to be sent to Habitat III. It thus combines the views of transport researchers and experts from developing and emerging countries, and of experts and researchers from the industrialized world who support these countries in developing sustainable urban accessibility for all.



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