ECO2 CITIES: A NEW APPROACH FOR URBAN PLANNING DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The world is increasingly urban. Since 2008, more than half of the world's population is living in urban areas. The number of urban residents is expected to continue to grow, especially in developing countries. The expanding urban population will require a whole range of infrastructure, services, housing and jobs, not to mention land. The urban land expansion could threaten agricultural land supply, cause growth in traffic volumes and increased pressure on the environment, and be massively unsustainable for the country and the rest of the planet. It is vital that sustainable urban development be pursued as cities continue to grow.

Dramatic urban demographic expansion and keen competition with globalization have called for urgent actions in the management of the human–environment interactions especially in the wake of rising consumerism.
Indiscriminate material consumption patterns if unchecked can contribute to large amounts of wastes and unsustainable development of cities. Mounds of solid wastes on dump sites of many cities in developing countries visibly illustrate this challenge. Wastes of plastic materials, for instance, are durable and resistant to natural processes of degradation as their total natural decomposition may take hundreds or thousands of years. Furthermore, burning plastics could produce toxic fumes and manufacturing of plastics often creates chemical pollutants.

The cycle of modern production, consumption and disposal which motivates urban metabolism must be re-examined from a new perspective.

As the name implies, an Eco2 city builds on the synergy and interdependence of ecological and economic sustainability and the fundamental ability of these to reinforce and strengthen each other in the urban context.
Innovative cities have demonstrated that, supported by the appropriate strategic approach, they are able greatly to enhance their resource efficiency by realizing the same value from a much smaller and renewable resource base, while decreasing harmful pollution and unnecessary waste. By achieving this, they improve the quality of the lives of their citizens, enhance their economic competitiveness and resilience, strengthen their fiscal capacity, provide significant benefits to the poor, and create an enduring culture of sustainability. Urban sustainability of this kind is a powerful and enduring investment that will pay compounding dividends. In a rapidly paced and uncertain global economy, such cities are most likely to survive shocks, attract businesses, manage costs, and prosper.

It is for the purpose of enabling cities in developing countries to realize this value and take on a more rewarding and sustainable growth trajectory that the Eco2 Cities Approach has been developed as an attempt to dovetailed ecological and economic considerations so that they result in cumulative and lasting advantages for cities.

Key words: *Ecology, Economy, Urban Sustainability, Cycle, Resource Efficiency, Globalization, Developing Countries*