



Urbanization: Processes, Policy and Emerging Challenges

June 16-18, 2021

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS



About CUF2021



The University of Guyana (UG), Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences, will be the lead host for the 10th Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF 2021) to be held from 16th to 18th June 2021. Co-hosts include the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) based at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago; the Central Housing and Planning Authority; the Guyana Planning Association; and other national, regional and international organizations. This will be a virtual Forum and brings together urban planners, environmental experts, municipal managers, community developers, policy makers, academics and allied professionals in an effort to address urban issues in the region.

The CUF 2021 theme is **Urbanization: Processes, Policy, and Emerging Challenges**. This theme aims to confront the issue of urbanization in the Caribbean context and to critically examine the range of policy responses to this phenomenon. The dialogue starts with the recognition that the Caribbean is one of the fastest urbanizing regions in the world. This fact presents critical challenges to planning and managing the urban environment. The manner in which the process of urbanization is managed determines the extent to which our human settlements will be safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11) and if our countries will achieve targets in the other Sustainable Development Goals. On the other hand, new urban development challenges are likely to emerge in light of issues such as the global COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of resource use on the urban sector in countries, including Guyana and Suriname with their new oil and gas industry.

While there are various interpretations of the nature of urbanization and many policy response options, it is clear that good urban policy is an essential factor in dealing with the challenges of urbanization in a sustainable manner. It is known that many Caribbean countries do not have clear urban policies. On the other hand, some countries have put in place broad policy documents that bring into focus key policy issues pertaining to the planning and functioning of the urban environment. In the case of Guyana for example, two such interventions were the Low Carbon Development Strategy and the Green State Development Strategy which contemplated an urban future of inclusive and green settlements.



Under the broad theme of urbanization, urban policy and emerging urban development challenges, various sub-themes will address specific issues or concerns related to the broad theme.

Conference Objectives



A presentation at Caribbean Urban Forum 2018, held in Kingston, Jamaica.

This conference will examine the nature of Caribbean urbanization and the effects of urban growth as a feature of the Caribbean urban landscape. This is an area of many challenges and problems and it is important to understand the effectiveness of previous and present responses to the problems. There is need for appropriate policies or policy reforms in order to guide the urbanization process.

Through presentations, workshops and (plenary) discussions, the forum will:

- 1) Explore the nature, trends and pattern of the urbanization process in the Caribbean.
- 2) Critically examine the impacts and consequences of Caribbean urbanization.
- 3) Examine Caribbean urbanization issues in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and the quest to develop sustainable cities.
- 4) Discuss the challenges and opportunities that may come with urbanization.
- 5) Examine policy responses and consider the factors necessary to chart a more sustainable urban future through appropriate policy interventions.
- 6) Examine how the emergence of non-traditional dimensions to economic activities and resource use associated with the emergence of the oil and gas sector in Guyana and Suriname, for example, can impact on urban land use and present new urban development challenges.

The following are broad areas under the themes under which papers can be contributed.

Abstracts may focus on, but are not limited to:

1 The evolving nature and challenges of Caribbean urbanization



In order to respond to the challenges posed by Caribbean urbanization through policy and planning interventions, it is essential that there be a clear understanding of this phenomenon; how has it evolved over time and what are the specific challenges. In this regard, it is useful to start with the recognition that urbanization in the Caribbean and other less developed countries show distinct differences to that of the industrialized countries and countries of Latin America. This consideration suggests the need to delve deeply into the nature of Caribbean urbanization, as we seek to understand its implications for development policy and future planning, whether in the context of micro islands, small and medium islands or continental states.

2

Urbanization and Social Issues



It is a fact that urbanization brings with it an array of social issues. In this regard, high population densities, inadequate infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, flooding, slums and squatter settlement creation, crime, congestion and poverty work in ways to present serious challenges from a social/welfare perspective to many who live in urbanized environments, as well as to the institutions planning and policy-makers tasked with managing such environments. While this may point to the need for an integrated urban development policy framework, a lack of research to inform effective policy-making in view of the complex nature of urbanization and associated social problems presents another layer of challenge.

3

Policy and Legislative Responses to Urbanization



It is important to examine the policy and legislative responses by various governments to the process of urbanization and assess how effective were these responses. Few countries have had specific urban policies but in most the nature of urban policy needs to be assembled or implied from components such as land use plans and policies, the intent of urban interventions and positions taken with respect to international frameworks and agreements such as the UN-Habitat process and sector reform and implementation programmes supported by multilateral agencies such as UN-Habitat and other UN agencies, the World Bank, the IDB and the CDB. There are also some regional initiatives which may be examined, such as the Caribbean Urban Agenda, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Sub-Regional Implementation plan of the NUA for the Caribbean and the urban sector policies of the IDB and the CDB.

The following are broad areas under the themes under which papers can be contributed.

Abstracts may focus on, but are not limited to:

4



Informality, Public Health Risk Reduction & the Urban Environment

This area of concern is particularly important since it relates directly to the environmental conditions within which large urban populations have to live. The rapid, especially the unplanned and unsustainable patterns of urban development characteristic of urbanization in Caribbean cities require concurrent focus on issues of public health in the urban environment, both from the standpoint of policy and regulations. The World Health Organization for example, has notably recognized that as urban populations grow, the quality of global and local ecosystems, and the urban environment, will play an increasingly important role in public health with respect to several risk-related issues, ranging from solid waste disposal, provision of safe water and sanitation, and injury prevention, to the interface between urban poverty, environment and health. The issue of urban informality as a particular feature of Caribbean urbanization is notably a high priority issue on the Caribbean Urban Agenda. Key considerations in the debate on this issue revolve around tenure security, informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas and the informal urban economy.

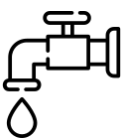
5



Resilient Urbanization

This sub-theme brings together the discourse on energy efficiency in the urban environment, urban resilience and the green economy. It recognizes the need for an integrated approach to the issue of resilient urbanization, especially in the context of the sustainable development goals currently being pursued. There is also a growing trend that points towards more innovative approaches to urban resilience. This is evident by the fact that many cities are adopting smart city approaches to building urban resilience.

6



Water Management in an Urban context

Urbanization places strenuous demands on water resource use. While some countries such as Guyana have the opportunity to exploit ground and surface water options, other countries are limited to the ground water option. Water resources in this context may be sourced from ecologically sensitive watershed areas that are likely to become more endangered due to urbanization (particularly informal settlements). There is also the need to note that many Caribbean cities are situated in low-lying coastal areas prone to flooding – a situation made worse due to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. It is therefore increasingly important that water management be considered in the wider debate on and response to Caribbean urbanization, particularly from the perspective of building urban resiliency in the face of climate change.

The following are broad areas under the themes under which papers can be contributed.

Abstracts may focus on, but are not limited to:

7

Transformation of Rural Areas through Urbanization



In the traditional sense, there is a tendency to think of urbanization and the policy and planning responses only in the context of the major cities in a particular country. However, the experience in some Caribbean countries is one whereby rural marketing and service centres are experiencing rapid transformation into more full-fledged urban centres. This trend has to be properly managed if more sustainable results are to be achieved. In this regard, strategic urban spatial development policies may be required since the rural to urban transformation will require management and tremendous improvements. There will be for example the need to reach minimum standards on services, infrastructure and housing, as well as in local governance, institutional capacity and security of tenure. The policy perspective on the transformation of rural areas through urbanization may also most likely point to the need for policy towards more balanced urban-rural urbanization – quite a challenging area for future policy research and policy formulation that may be of significance to countries such as Guyana and Belize.

8

The Impact of Oil & Gas Sector on Urban Land Use: Guyana and Suriname



This sub-theme starts with the position that urban land use needs associated with the new oil and gas sector in both Guyana and Suriname can cause profound changes to the urban environment. Urban land use changes at the land/water interface and the need to respond to new competing demands for the use of limited urban land are highly likely to emerge as key areas requiring strategic spatial planning interventions and more pro-active approaches to managing coastal urban development. Of significance as well is the need to respond to new development planning challenges, while still embracing the goals and objectives of sustainable urban development.

9

Urbanization in a Digital Era



Urbanization clearly brings into focus the ability of cities to effectively manage urban growth, provide essential services to large populations and function as a loci of productivity. In dealing with this multi-faceted dimension of urban life, more and more Caribbean cities are moving towards reliance on digital infrastructure for the delivery of essential services, such as education. While COVID-19 provided a notable impetus for more digital infrastructure, in the long term, one key question that readily comes to mind is whether digital and frontier technology can bring new perspectives to the way we seek to examine urbanization and respond to its many challenges. In this regard, one may also be inclined to consider how digital infrastructure may impact on the notion of an urban/rural divide and the functioning of urban real estate market; are there digital infrastructure gaps in Caribbean urban as opposed to rural areas and the key associated implications.

Submission Criteria



Submissions are invited under the following criteria:

Papers

For acceptance to present at the conference, an abstract must be submitted. The abstract should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) the research methodology; (c) the relevance of the paper to the theme and/or sub-theme; (d) the (expected) results; (e) the conclusion. Abstracts must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words. At the bottom of the body of the abstract, no more than five key words must be stated. These key words must closely reflect the content of the paper.

Posters

The 10th Caribbean Urban Forum is providing an opportunity for professionals and students to showcase their research.

For acceptance to present the poster at the conference, an abstract must be submitted. The abstract should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) the research methodology; (c) the relevance of the research to the theme and/or sub-theme. Abstracts must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words.

Guidelines for poster submissions will be published together with the final screening of the feedback on acceptance of abstracts.

Urban Planning Projects

Presentations on urban planning projects are welcomed. Such presentations must however include a clear and concise project description and sample image of the urban planning project. The description should outline the following: (a) location, (b) client or commissioning agency (c) whether built or unbuilt (d) relevance to the conference themes (e) relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals and (f) relevance to the particular country's national policy context. Projects from architectural, urban design and urban planning students are welcomed and student projects should be clearly indicated. Combined text and images of submissions should be forwarded in single page pdf format.

Papers and Project submissions should include:

- 1) Title of the proposed presentation;
- 2) The sub-theme to which it relates;
- 3) Name(s) of author(s); (no more than 3)
- 4) Position or title of author(s);
- 5) Author(s) employer or affiliated institution;
- 6) Contact details including - e-mail address, telephone/fax numbers and postal address.

Abstracts should be submitted to:

E-mail: submissions.cuf@uog.edu.gy

Deadline: **April 21, 2021**

Feedback on acceptance will be provided by **April 28, 2021.**

CUF 2021 is a free, online conference. There is no registration fee.

We encourage authors to submit papers for publication in our peer reviewed conference proceedings.



Hosted by the University of Guyana, Faculty of Earth and Environmental Sciences

For further information on CUF 2021 as well as the events being held prior to the conference, please contact:

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