

COP27

AN URBAN COP?

– Tjark Gall –

For the 27th Conference of the Parties, or short COP27, I had the chance to participate as observer for CentraleSupélec. During the first week where I was present, I followed events around sustainable urban development and urban mobility, and the role of local authorities and wrote short daily summaries, shared some photos, and referenced further materials, as well as an urban-focus event agenda on the [website](#) of the Young Academics Network of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AEOSP). This report compiles the daily recaps, some photos, and lots of links to further materials. Only minor changes are made compared to the originally published versions. Any additions or comments are welcome via tjark.gall@urban-framework.com.

Day 1 | 6 November 2022

It has begun!

Today is the first official day of the [COP27](#) – this year's climate summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. I'm participating as an observer for the delegation [COP CentraleSupélec](#) and reporting on anything related to [#Urban](#) and [#SustainableUrbanMobility](#) issues. While not at the core of the agenda, urban areas are the focus of a range of events. We compiled a list of some of the most relevant ones (many hybrid ones can be followed from around the world) on the website of [AESOP Young Academics Network](#).

The events include some of the [#LocalGovernments](#) and [#MunicipalAuthorities](#) Constituency [#LGMA](#)), [ICLEI](#), [SLOCAT Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport](#),

Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, The World Bank, Daring Cities, Resilient Cities Network, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), two interesting articles to read from Ulrich Graute AcSS, ISOCARP and Jorn Verbeeck, an urban report on COP26 by ISOCARP - International Society of City and Regional Planners, info materials from Transport for Cairo and much more.

Get in touch if you know of any events that are missing. During the next few days, more detailed information will follow on the daily events, as well as some of the key discussion points.

For now, the ceremonial opening started and is live:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/n2zNjlsbLak?feature=share>

Day 2 | 7 November 2022

What happened on day 2 of the (urban) COP27, aiming to work #TogetherFor Implementation?

Yesterday, the opening, a few small events, and lots of last preparations took place. This year's focus is strongly on #Implementation, #Adaptation and #Mitigation, #ClimateFinance, #Transparency and #Accountability, and, as a first success, #LossAndDamage has been added to the agenda.

After private jets descended nearly non-stop until late morning, today marked the start of the World Leaders Climate Summit. To get an idea of the urgency (and the role of urban areas), watch the video below (starting 0h41). <https://lnkd.in/d27afP8p>

OPENING CEREMONY

UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the stakes: We are very close to 8 billion people and 'dangerously close to the point of no return' for our climate. He called for climate pacts between developed and developing countries and emerging economies, the extension of technical support, capacity development, and either climate partnership acts or climate suicide acts. Guterres called for 50% of finance dedicated to adaptation, increased consideration of loss and damage, establishing a global early warning system within 5 years and taxing fossil fuel-based businesses. He ended by highlighting that 'we know what to do, we have the (...) tools to get it done. It's time for implementation'

President of #Senegal and the African Union, Macky Sall, emphasised again that those who pollute the most should be those that pay the most, while #MinoucheShafik outlined a possible economy of the future, and among negative ones, a positive scenario 'in which we make investments and create cities in which we can move and live and breath and

thrive'. She further called for actions from multilateral development banks to find ways of making green investment more interesting than dirty ones. #LeahNamugerwa talked about the role of the future, that of next generations, and Africa who is contributing less than 4% to GHG but suffering the most. In a passionate speech, #AlGore pointed out that there is a credibility problem: We are talking but not doing enough. He points towards estimations of up to 1 billion climate refugees in this century, leading to unprecedented challenges, and ends with the reminder that 'political will in itself is a renewable resource.'

Finally, Veronika E. discussed the different #IPCC GHG scenarios, what each of them means for the planet and how disturbingly far we are from these objectives. The narrative was continued by Mia Amor Mottley who asked why we are not moving any further. Where is the political will? How much more must happen? She ended with 'the choice is ours. What will you choose to do? What will you choose to say?'

At the Singapore pavilion, Michael Koh, Centre for Liveable Cities, presented Singapore's Green Plan 2030 and moderated the session 'Enhancing Cities' #Liveability and #Sustainability in the Face of #ClimateChange. The first speaker was Lauren Sorkin, Resilient Cities Network, who introduced the largest city network working towards resilience while pointing out that the biggest threats come from storm and wind, extreme precipitation, floods, and sea level rise. She argued that '#ResilientCities are better prepared to survive, adapt, and grow no matter which chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience' and that the 'resilience lens results in designing #BetterBusinessModels, capable of addressing multiple challenges at once.' Lauren further introduced the 4 dimensions of the #ResilientCityFramework: economy and society, health and well-being, leadership & strategy, and infrastructure & environment. #JamesLam, Surbana Jurong Group, continued discussing the challenges of #FloodManagement, where there are many solutions but a lack of data to implement them successfully. Esther A., City Development Limited pointed to the potential of the private sector to innovate across technical and financial dimensions, while Winston Chow, lead author of Ch. 6 '#Cities, #Settlements and #KeyInfrastructure' in the #IPCC report, discussed data and the digital twin of Singapore and highlighted 5 pillars: city in nature, sustainable living, energy reset, green economy, resilient future.



The second session, titled 'City Focus: #ClimateResilience lessons from Cities Worldwide' was also moderated by Micheal. Speakers were #LuisDonaldo, Mayor of Monterrey, #CindyKhoo, Prime Minister's Office Singapore, Eleni (Lenio) Myrivili, Senior Advisor for Resilience and Sustainability, Athens, and #EricLim, UOB. Mayor Donaldo presented the new green network masterplan of Monterrey, while Cindy focused on the complexity of the four different levels of water management in Singapore, where there is 'either too little or too much.' Eleni emphasised the often-forgotten risk of urban heat that puts many people in danger, is a rapidly increasing risk but less visible as it does not have 'the drama of the storms'. She summarised Athen's response in three dimensions: 1) Awareness raising, 2) Preparing (to protect the poor, elderly, pregnant women, kids, and workers), and 3) blue and green #NatureBasedSolutions. Lastly, Eric discussed the challenging question of who is paying for it and introduced five existing sustainable finance umbrella frameworks.

Related publications can be found here: <https://lnkd.in/dpd6ePiK> and the recordings here: <https://lnkd.in/dkeeR2Nf>

In the evening, the #LGMA (#LocalGovernments and #MunicipalAuthorities) constituency held the COP27 Global Townhall, facilitated by ICLEI. In the first part of the session, moderated by Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI, the importance of local authorities in decision-making around climate change was highlighted, with contributions from Axel Graef, Mayor, City of Niteroi, #KellyKing, Maui County, Sam Liccardo, Mayor, City of San Jose, and Marília Carvalho de Melo, Secretary of State for Environment and Sustainable Development, Minas Gerais.



In the second part, [yunus Arikan](#), Director of Global Advocacy at ICLEI, and a group of partner organisation representatives, [Andy Deacon](#) (Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM)), [Maria Veronica Arias](#)(CC35) and [Pandora Batra](#) (World Resources Institute) presented the agenda of LGMA over the next 12 days. I'll try to cover many of them, but nearly all of them are also available online and as recordings via this link: <https://lnkd.in/dHSmVDPD>

TOMORROW'S AGENDA

Tomorrow (8/11), the [#CitiesDay](#) is at the centre of attention at the UNFCCC [#GlobalInnovationHub](#) (<https://lnkd.in/dgTiq-yc>) and the hybrid events by LGMA/ICLEI. You can see our compilation on urban events here: <https://lnkd.in/dar3MHYQ>

Day 3 | 8 November 2022

Today is international [#WorldTownPlanningDay](#). I use this as an occasion to share my thoughts on the role of planners in the needed urban transitions inspired by COP27 events. This is followed by a short report of today and pointers to more information.

To summarise the majority of followed discussions: [#MoneyMatters!](#) Or as [#KlausKunzmann](#) put it in his keynote at a recent [#ISOCARP](#) Congress; it's not planners who are planning urban areas but investors. At COP you can observe this clearly: The discussions taking place on urban issues are largely independent of practical planning

and design perspectives. They highlight that we need to create bankable solutions to unlock the needed capital. At other professional events, we have 'our' planners' discussions with little attention to the world of finance, national or international policies, and only sometimes on local policymaking of connected but not central issues. Where does this gap come from? How to address it?

I think that ample knowledge on how to build sustainable and people-centred communities (even if following different but aligned models) is already there. But the global reality looks very different: We don't know yet how to get there, don't know how to pay for it, don't know how to build the capacity for implementing it and not 'just' creating select pilots. We have many ideas but are far from matching the necessary scale and impact.

So, how can we move forward? Do we need more integrated discussions between practitioners? Do we need a new profile of planners? A research focus shift towards urban system transformation and integrated implementation processes? More generalists or more specialists? If the latter, which profiles, where, and in which positions? How do we enable practitioners to keep an overview of everything relevant in times of accelerating information abundance? Many questions and few answers... What are your thoughts?

What happened today at COP27? A small selection of today's events includes two sessions at the UN Climate Change Global Innovation Hub moderated by Michael Sheren. The first session was on '#TransformingCities – Money! The Role of #Finance and #Capital.' The speakers Divyata Ashiya, #JonahKamleh, Julio Lumbreras, Rodrigo Massi, and Thomas Osdoba discussed current funding gaps, the roles of public and private actors, as well as showing some promising avenues for funding urban projects. In the second session, Solla Zophoniasdottir, Emma Presutti, Axel Grael, #RehamYoussef, Dr. Eduardo Noboa, and #RajKali discussed pathways for cities transformation, focusing on enabling systemic change. Many of the contributions focused on the role of capacity development, inward-oriented transformations, systems thinking in a messy world, and ways to create deep collaboration. You can find more info (and hopefully soon recordings) here: <https://lnkd.in/dY9CaFrk>



Next up was the screening of a documentary in the session on 'Sparking Change: Film and Science Together for Desirable #UrbanFutures' by #DirkWilutzky and #MathildeBonnefoy at the Action Hub. The film, part of a series, will be freely available. Once I find a link, I'll add it here.

Last was my favourite part of the day: The #GlobalStocktake Technical Dialogue World Café, focusing on #SystemicTransformations. I followed the discussions in the groups of #TransformingTransport systems and #UrbanSystems (jointly defining 80% of my personal research). Both sessions were animated by experts: Peter Newman, lead author for Transport on the #IPCC, and Josh Byrne on transportation, and Siir Kilkis, IPCC Lead Author for 'Urban Systems and Other Settlements.' The World Café compiled a global range of solutions from a diverse audience, including electric vehicles (primarily busses and 2-3 wheelers), demand management, small and shared vehicles, place-based transport policies, people-centred system design, and nature-based solutions. I will try to report more in detail later. In the meantime, have a look at the cities IPCC chapter: <https://lnkd.in/deZ7bxPi>



After the session, I had the chance to ask some questions to Siir on a few of the pressing issues and challenges in the urban field, as well as what is needed to tackle them. Additional to the preceding discussions on urban systems and, in particular, their transformation, Siir highlighted the importance of integrating **#people** in the process and responding to their needs. A key challenge remains the **#LocalImplementation** of climate change action. On the question of what can be done, Siir highlighted that national governments need to ask cities to step in and build the necessary support structure that allows cities, supported by practitioners and academia, to implement local solutions that tackle our global climate crisis. She further emphasised the dual role of bottom-up action from cities and national governments, enabling and pushing the local authorities. Lastly, she pointed to the need for and potential for more **#CapacityDevelopment** across sectors in the climate change context, integrating it into curricula as individual and thematically integrated subjects.

So much about day 3 – What’s next on the agenda?

Tomorrow (9/11) is **#FinanceDay**. Thus, many events will put generating and unlocking the funding needed to tackle climate change even more in the focus. Check out the urban events of tomorrow, mostly by ICLEI at the Multilevel Pavilion: <https://lnkd.in/dar3MHYQ>

Day 4 | 9 November 2022

The 9/11 was **#FinanceDay** at **COP27**, thus lots of events focused on how we can pay for needed climate actions. In the urban context, many sessions highlighted current financing gaps, the role of private and public funding, and national governments to enable local action, as well as the untapped potential of multilateral banks.

TLDR: We need **#integrated** and **#collaborative #planning** and **#financeat #subnational**

scales as the arenas for #localisingSDGs and achieving #NDCs (national emission goals).

At the #MultilevelActionPavilion of Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (ICLEI), the #SURGe initiative was presented in the morning, followed by '#UrbanAfrica in Action at COP27: Unpacking the urban climate finance journey: Linking policy and planning to a pipeline of bankable projects.' In the afternoon, two sessions elaborated how we can activate 'an Expanded #ClimateInnovationAgenda in Response to the #ClimateEmergency: Cities and Regions in the Focus' and how to invest 'in the new zero and green potential of cities – the next steps.' More info: <https://lnkd.in/d/HSmVDPD>



Aside from pavilion and side events, one of the main activities at the COP are negotiations between parties (country/interest groups and countries) to come to agreements (such as the Paris agreement in 2015) defining future ambitions, methods, implementation frameworks, and more. A few key topics are #Mitigation (reducing emissions), #Adaptation (adapting to the present and expected climate change consequences), and newly added: #LossAndDamage (paying for the measurable global impacts, mostly on disadvantaged communities, already present).

I followed some of the discussions around the Glasgow-Sharm El-Sheikh work programme, in particular reaching the #GGA (Global Goal on Adaptation). Great to hear that Zambia on behalf of African countries proposed four focus sectors for the developed

framework, including one on [#Cities](#), [#Settlements](#) and [#Infrastructures](#). More info: <https://lnkd.in/d-Eq5EvM>



Finally, an external event by [ITDP Africa](#) discussed the transformation of urban mobility in African cities, with a focus on [#TransitOrientedDevelopment](#), the role of [#Paratransit](#), and enabling [#Cycling](#).

Day 5 | 10 November 2022

Today is [#ScienceDay](#) and I used this occasion to continue the urban focus, but also expand and look at connected fields.

To make the very complex crisis even more challenging: What other topics are discussed? Only [#emissions](#), [#policy](#), climate [#tech](#) and [#finance](#)? No, not at all. Many are on social issues, [#gender](#) equality, [#violence](#), [#indigenous](#) groups, participation, youth, and others. Why? Of course, they are relevant topics but, in some cases, these don't mention climate at all. Back to my preferred scale of urban areas – hotspots of urban civilisation; the spatial manifestations of society. Every global issue exists more extremely in urban areas. Women, children, indigenous people, refugees (among others) have lower adaptive capacity to respond to climate disasters. They are often located in areas most at risk, often remnants from colonial urban planning. Just 1 example: In 2018, I worked on flood risk in [#Kampala](#), a city built on 7 hills. From early starts, settlements of urban poor were in flood-prone areas in between the hills, reserved for colonial/royal administrations & rich settlements. Each year, millions in similar situations are affected by disasters. Most of them the urban poor. Additional to higher risk, it's aggravated by less [#resilientinfrastructure](#), less insurances, less financial and social resources to respond to

disasters.

Today and tomorrow's challenges are intertwined. We can think of our world as a system of systems; social, environmental, technical, economic. All overlaid in the urban. Each of them with internal dynamics, e.g., climate tipping points. But interconnected in many ways. We cannot address climate challenges without looking at linked issues. Nor can we ignore disproportionately affected groups suffering from climate crises' consequences.

Many solutions are there, many challenges persist. One discussed today is that while many disadvantaged groups are (somewhat) present at COP, they are largely excluded from negotiations. My tiny personal observation is that there are 3 COPs in parallel: 1) the political, official one, 2) the tech, finance, solution one, and 3) the civil society, activism one. They largely co-exist with little exchange between.

While looking for solutions, damage has been already created, largely unequally distributed. Those who pollute the most are not those suffering the most from proven consequences thereof. This damage will be increasingly extreme in the years to come – accentuated by our failure to implement COP ambitions and #SDGs.

This brings me to #LossAndDamage. The topic added to the agenda. What does it mean and why is it important? I tried to outline the latter. For the first, I recommend this short video which will help to understand what many of the COP27 discussions of the future will be about. <https://lnkd.in/d2dVKV7j>

Day 6 | 11 November 2022

Today, the last post on the COP27 for now. I'm back in #Cairo for some last work related to my research visit before returning to Paris tomorrow.

The major event on Friday night was the presentation of the Summary for Policymakers (#SUP) of the IPCC report, presented by a panel of Youba Sokona, Seth Schultz, Aromar Revi, Panmao Zhai, #DebraRoberts, #JimSkea, Minna Arve, IPCCel de Araújo, Jo da Silva DBE and #ThelmaKrug, with many more contributors present in the room. Now, you have access to the key information of the IPCC reports relevant to urbanists. It includes a short summary of the scientific foundation as well as findings connected to #mitigation (primarily IPCC Assessment Report (AR) 6, Working Group (WG) II, Ch. 8, and #adaptation (AR6, WGIII, Ch. 6). You can find the report here: <https://lnkd.in/djQjxwtS>

It's the easiest and quickest way to understand clear findings and how to implement them in varying contexts. Relevant for everyone working in the urban realm – as Jo put it, 'climate change is not a theoretical question. It's how we design places and spaces for people.'



Other great sessions included 'Financing the Transition to Climate-friendly & #InclusiveTransport' at The World Bank Pavilion, presenting, among others, a new report on 'The #Economics of #ElectricVehicles for #PassengerTransportation' (<https://lnkd.in/dYDMvtnC>)

At the #German Pavilion, a session outlined the current state of the art and remaining challenges of scaling up #GreenHydrogen. One of the key challenges appears to be the assumption that prices will fall over the next years; thus, little interest in investing now. The challenge is thus to bridge this gap and ensure that enough projects are going on to actually achieve the price reduction. More information can be found via H2Global: <https://www.h2-global.de>

Here the full recording: <https://lnkd.in/d92Bh3zh>

After visiting my 'national' pavilion of #Germany, I passed by my 'residence' pavilion of #France. The high-level session 'Construire des villes résilientes à l'ère des migrations et du changement climatique : Des vulnérabilités aux opportunités' focused on the challenges and opportunities that come with climate-crisis-induced migration, in particular, that of the global youth as most impacted group. If I remember correctly, over 1 billion climate refugees are expected in this century, possibly resulting in the single highest risk for social, political, economic and geopolitical 'stability.'

Finally, IFC - International Finance Corporation and The World Bank launched the #APEX initiative, acronym for Advanced Practices for Environmental Excellence in Cities. More info: <https://lnkd.in/deq6sgxK>

It's been an intense yet informative first week, marking also the transition from the first delegation of COP CentraleSupélec (Louise, Emilie, Julien, Morgan) and the start of the second half of the delegation full of energy: Clara, Julien, Gabriel, Ayman, Guilhem.

If you post on urban issues next week, notably on the 17/11 ministerial meeting on #UrbanDevelopment, please reach out or tag me to share the news in #AESOP and #ISOCARP networks. A more detailed report on urban progress at COP from will follow after the event. Contributors are welcome!

You can follow or reach out to fellow #ISOCARP member Eric Huybrechts who is there the second week, other urban experts writing on #UrbanCOP: Ulrich Graute AcSS, ISOCARP, Martina Juvara or Jorn Verbeeck. And pay particular attention to the #LGMA Multilevel Action Pavilion, managed by ICLEI. Their daily newsletter tells you everything important: <https://lnkd.in/d5RTD9BX>