University of Palermo | Department of Architecture
Master Programme in Spatial Planning | Year II
Academic Year 2026-2027 | First semester

Urban and Regional Policies

Module of Planning 2 Studio + Urban And Regional Policies Integrated Course

Prof. Ignazio Vinci

Actors and Policy-Makers in Urban Policy (Part I)

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Lectures

- Policy challenges in contemporary urban areas
- Actors and policy-makers in urban policy
- Targets of urban policy
- Urban policy as a process
- European Union urban and regional policy
- Case studies

Readings

- Articles and papers

Project Work

- Policy analysis exercise

WHO PROMOTES URBAN POLICIES?

Direct support

Is the promotion and funding with their own resources of urban initiatives pursued by **Public institutions**, e.g. the national agencies or ministries, regions, metropolitan authorities, cities.

Indirect support

Usually performed by **non-governmental organisations**, whose funds are taken by associates or fund raising, consisting in studies, guidelines, awards, etc. (e.g. OECD, World Bank)

Mixed support

Both functions – funding and promotion – can be performed by some high-level intergovernmental organization, primarily the **United Nations** and the **European Union**.

WHO PROMOTES URBAN POLICIES?

Indirect support

Example of transnational organisations that play a role in stimulating the debate around urban issues there are, for instance:

The **OECD** (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

- Systematic analyses (e.g. National Urban Policy Reviews)
- Policy papers
- Knowledge Platforms (e.g. OECD Data Explorer)

The World Bank

- Reports
- Policy papers
- Knowledge Platforms (e.g. Atlas of Global Development)
- Programmes (e.g. City Resilience Program)

URBAN POLICIES LED BY TRANSNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Example of projects supported by The World Bank

Metro Colombo Urban Development Project ($213m) in Sri Lanka is helping reduce the risk and impacts of flooding while making the city more liveable and competitive through investments in public spaces, wetlands, and infrastructure.

Kinshasa Elenda Project ($500m) focuses on improving basic city-wide services – water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and power – as well as neighborhood services, including urban mobility and roads, lessening flood risk and controlling erosion, and rehabilitating public spaces and other local infrastructure.

Scaling-up Urban Upgrading Project ($240m) for the Mekong Delta Region in Vietnam, bringing innovations to urban upgrading approaches through mainstreaming green infrastructure and universal accessibility in its sub-investments financed under the project.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

UCLG
United Cities and Local Governments

It is the world organization of local and regional governments, defending their interests and making proposals concerning the role of local governments on the definition of the next phase of the global development agendas.

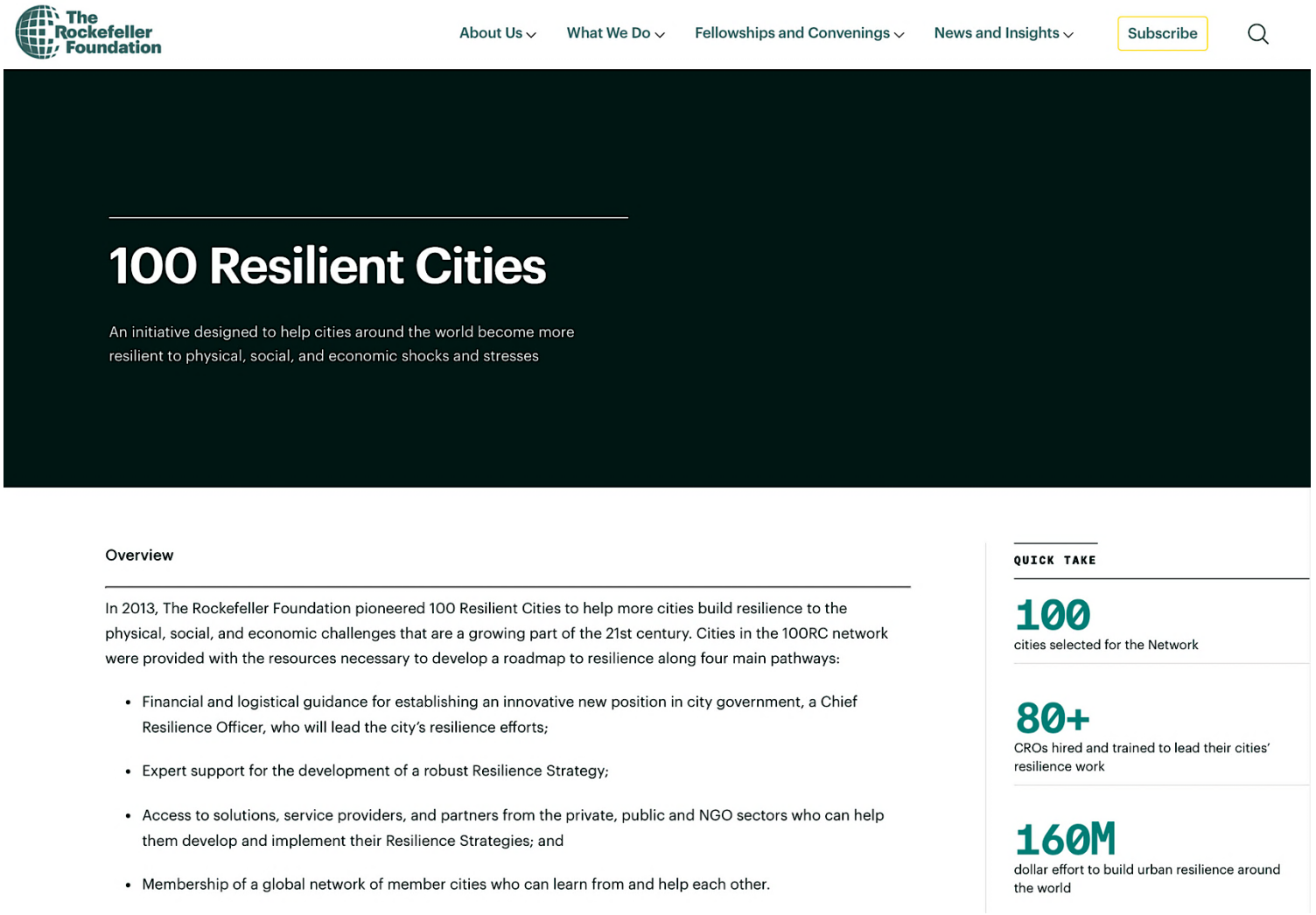
Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy EUROPE

It is the European-based and world's largest movement of local and regional governments committed to meeting the EU climate and energy targets. The signatories commit to accelerating the decarbonisation of their territories and to implement a SECAP.

C40 CITIES

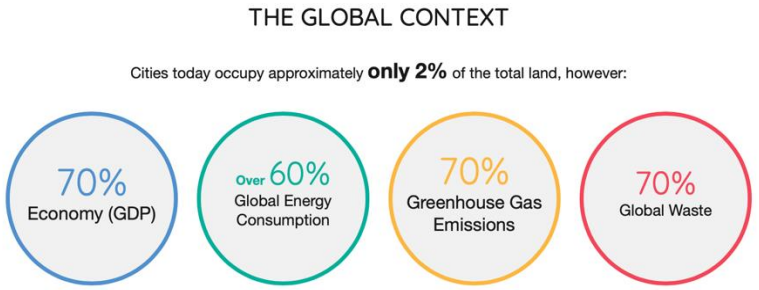
It represent 96 large across the world. The network helps cities move faster on climate through: Sector programmes, Accelerators projects to speed innovation; Research to power evidence-based action, Finance pathways to unlock resources

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS



NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)





The **New Urban Agenda (NUA)** is a global framework adopted to guide sustainable urbanization, climate action, and equitable growth in cities.

The NUA has been adopted on **20 October 2016** at the **Habitat III conference** in **Quito** (ECU).

The document consists of a **roadmap** to accelerate the **Sustainable Development Goals** (specifically SDG 11) and address global challenges like housing, poverty, and climate change.

NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)



NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)



Affordable Housing & Slums: Ensuring safe, adequate, and affordable housing and basic services for everyone, while upgrading slum settlements.

Sustainable Transport: Providing safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems with a focus on public transit and vulnerable groups.

Inclusive Urbanization: Enhancing participatory, integrated, and sustainable urban and regional planning.

Cultural & Natural Heritage: Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

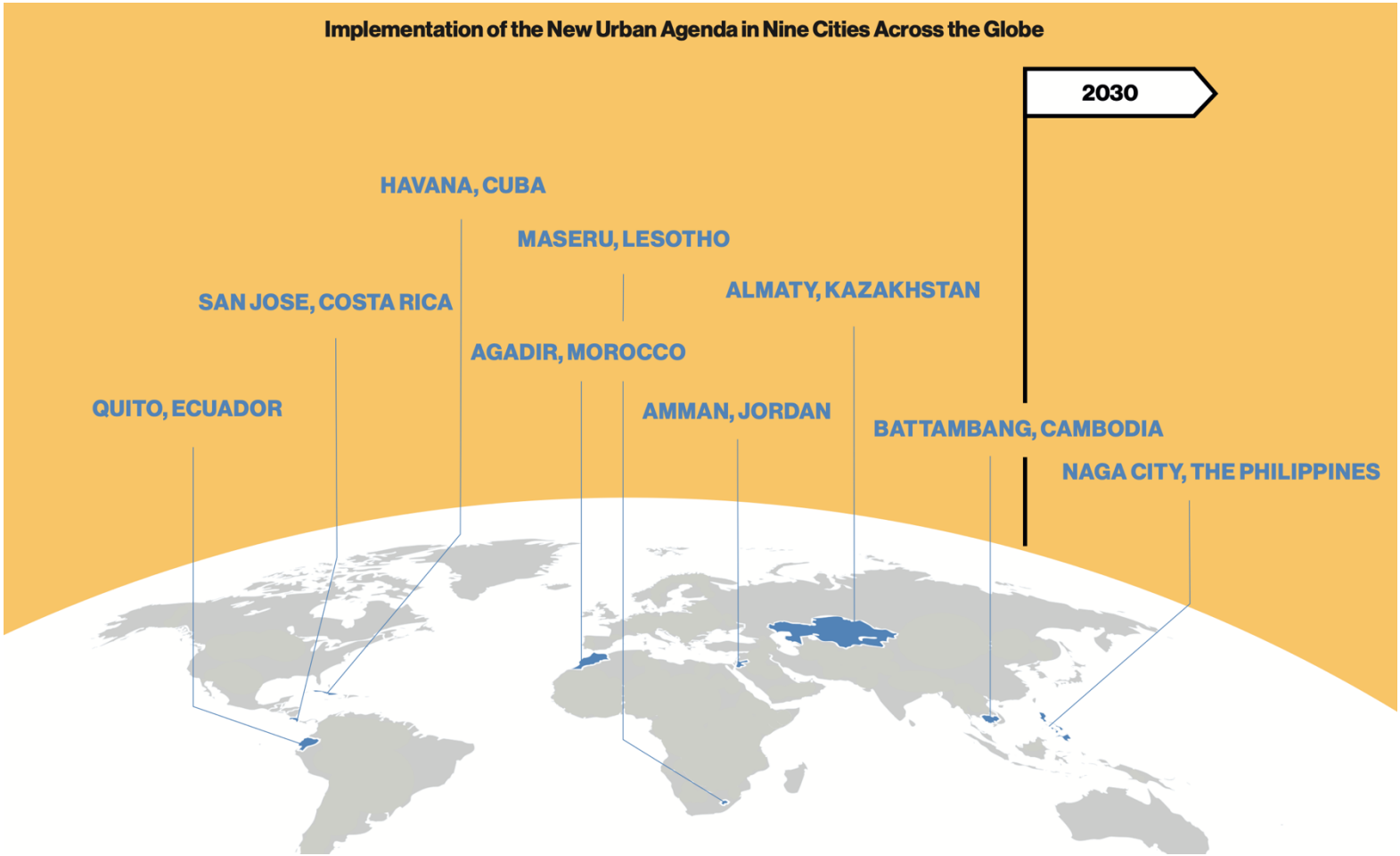
Disaster Resilience: Reducing the number of deaths and economic losses caused by disasters, including water-related and natural hazards.

Environmental Impact: Reducing the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, focusing on air quality and municipal waste management.

Green and Public Spaces: Providing universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces.

NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)

Direct implementation experiments



NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)

Mainstreaming into EU policies





Voluntary commitments

- Common programmes (e.g. International Urban and Regional Cooperation Programme - IURC)
- Harmonised definition of cities and urban areas (including FUAs).
- SDGs embedded into the EU funding programmes regarding urban and regional development.

NEW URBAN AGENDA (UN-HABITAT)

Mainstreaming into national policies

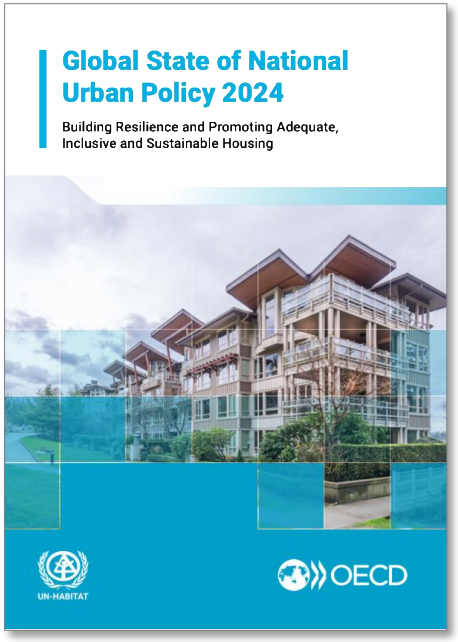
The UN's New Urban Agenda is expected to be mainstreamed into the national urban policies in the following ways.

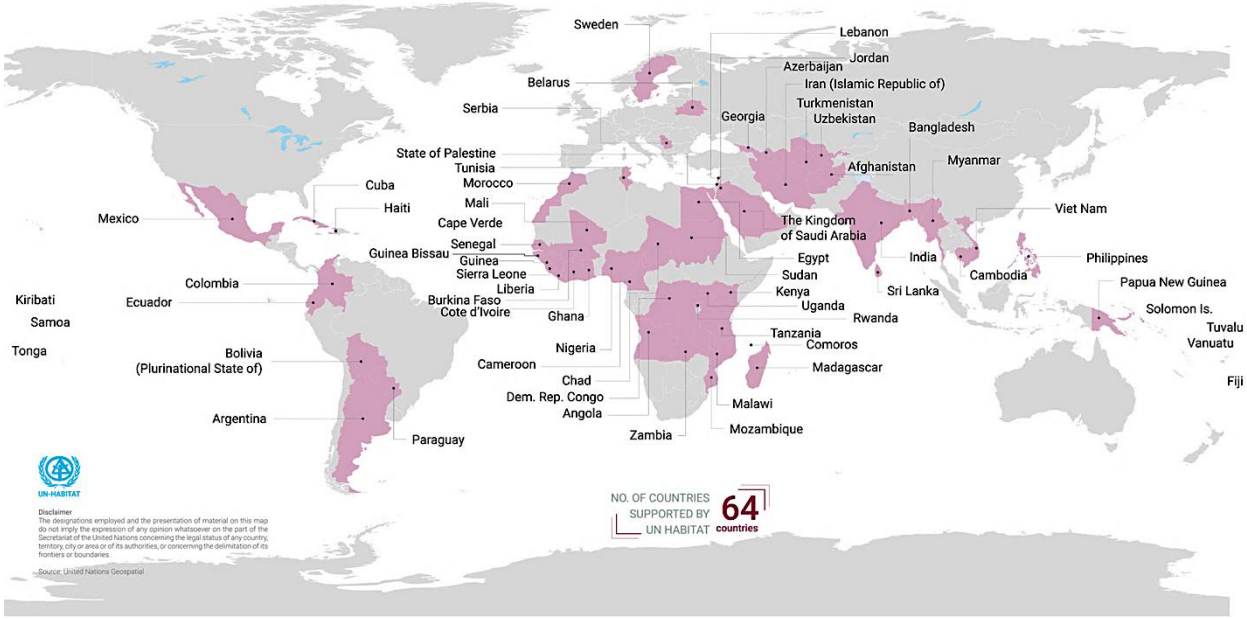
- Creating **binding legal frameworks**, **budgetary plans**, and **multi-level governance systems** that are aligned to the SDGs and Urban Agenda framework.

- Conditioning the **long-term economic and social strategies** of National Development Plans (NDPs), if there are any.

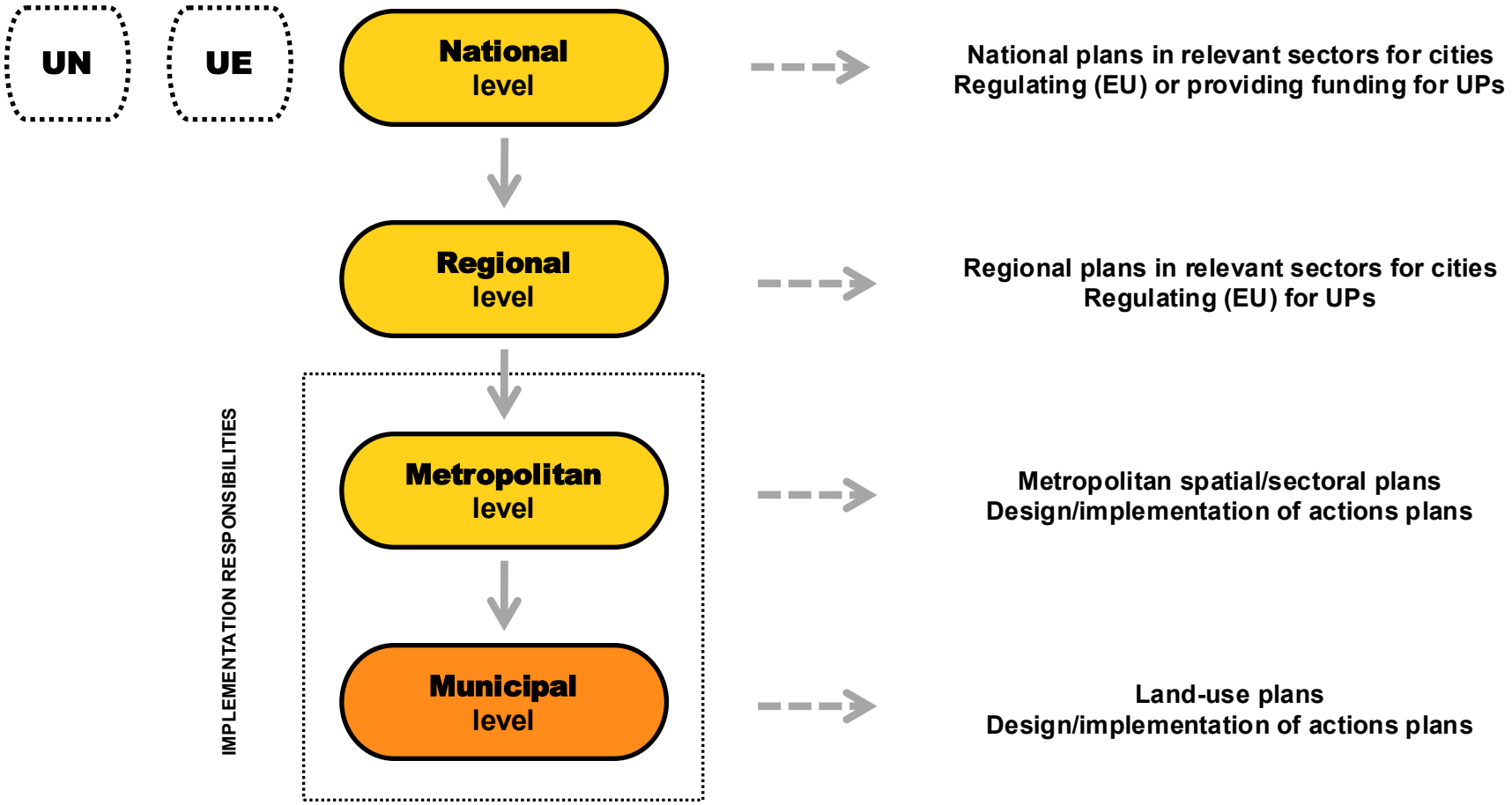
- **Linking public spending and national budgets to specific SDGs targets**, and use NUA's environmental and social goals to assess financial allocations.

NATIONAL URBAN POLICY MONITORED BY THE UN





INSTITUTIONAL HIERARCHY AND URBAN POLICIES (UPs)



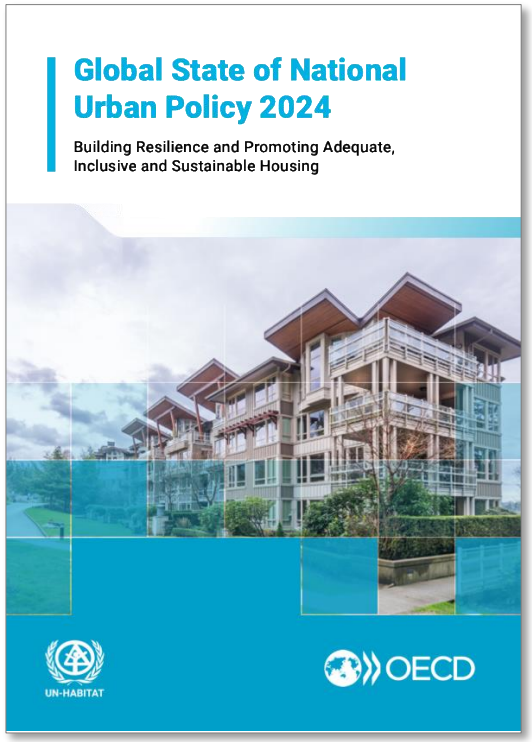
NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES

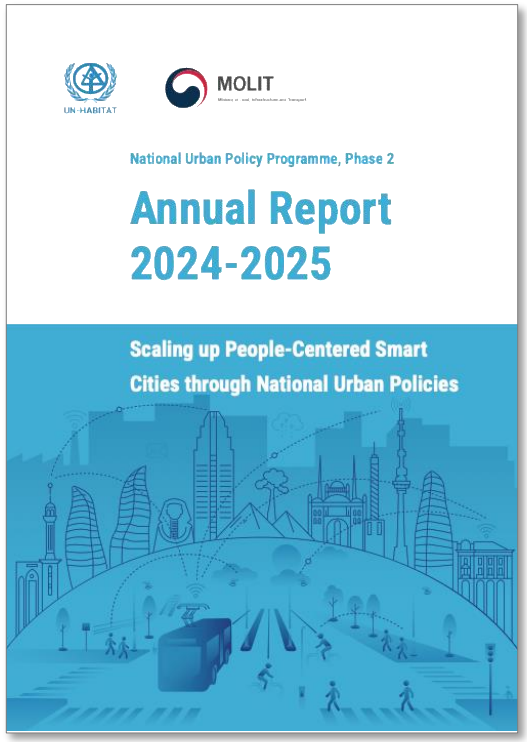
The State has usually **key competencies to promote and regulate urban development**, including housing, transport, energy, environment, welfare, etc.

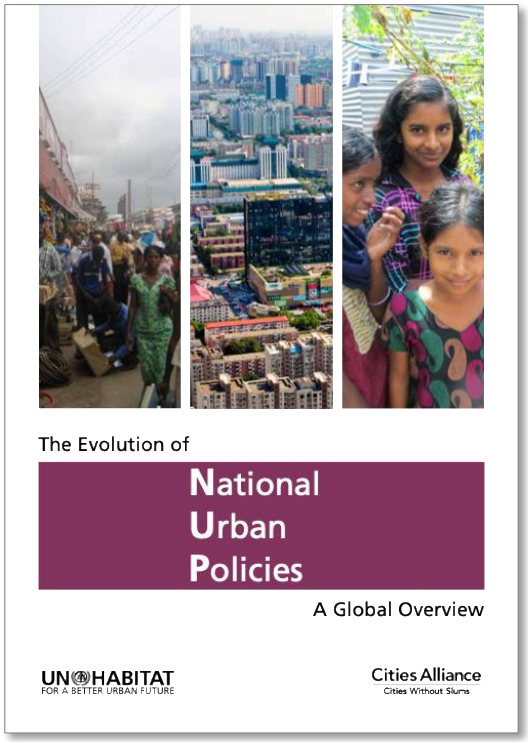
Despite that role, few countries have historically developed a **national urban policy**.

No National urban policy	Implicit urban policy	Explicit urban policy
No national organisation, legal framework, initiatives to address urban issues	Some kind of institutional coordination between state, regions and cities on urban matters (often sectoral) Occasional national programmes to address urban issues	Ministries or agencies focusing on urban development and policy National strategy on cities and urban areas Systematic legal interventions or programmes to address urban issues

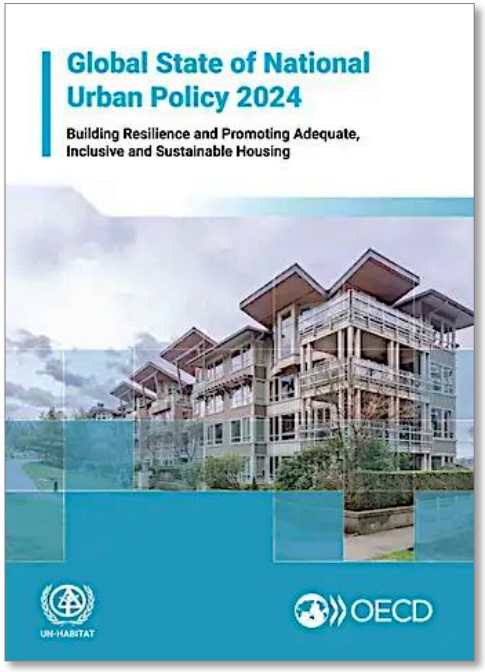
NATIONAL URBAN POLICY MONITORED BY THE UN

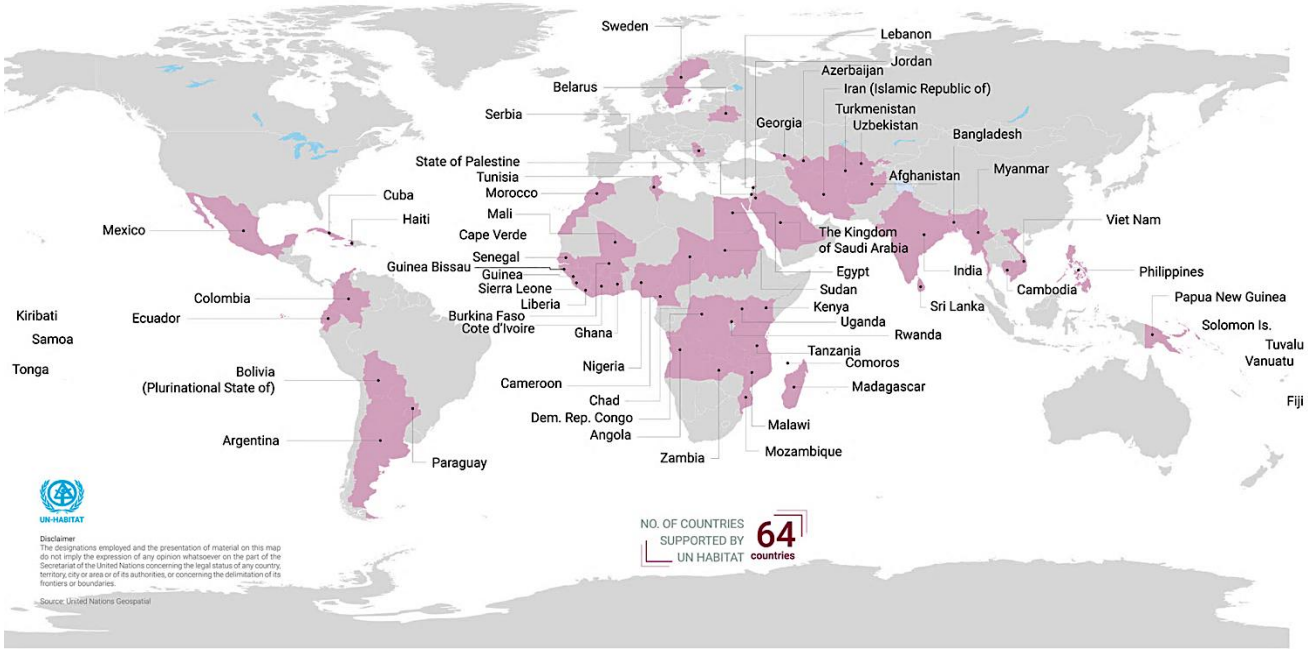




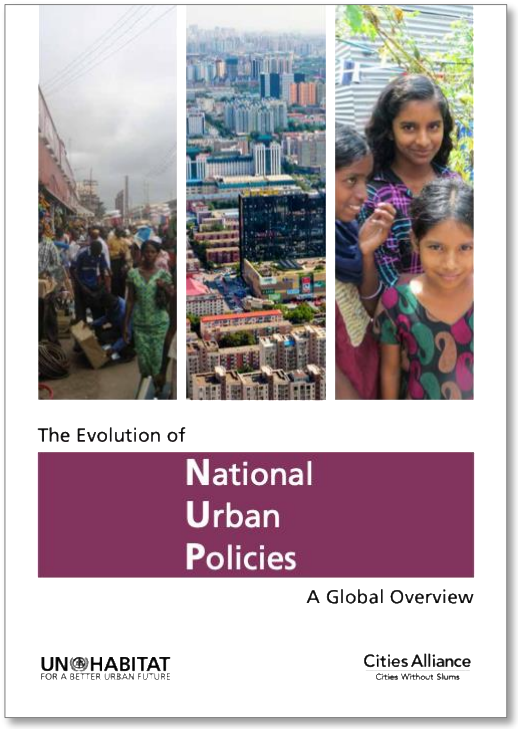


NATIONAL URBAN POLICY





NATIONAL URBAN POLICY



According to Turok (2014), in their recent development, national urban policies are characterised by four main goals.

1. **Physical regeneration**, with a focus on densification, re-development of decayed sites, often accompanied by deregulation and private investments.

2. Search for **economic competitiveness and urban innovation**, recently led under the 'smart city' paradigm.

3. Driving a **sustainable transition** within cities, with a focus on greening, clean transport and energy.

4. Tackling **social exclusion and economic disparities**, with a focus on marginal neighbourhoods.

NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES: ITALY

Urban renewal programmes in the 1990s

1993

Programmi di Recupero Urbano (PRU)
Urban Recovery Programmes

1994

Programmi di Riqualificazione Urbana (PRIU)
Urban Renewal Programmes

1997

Contratti di quartiere (CdQ)
Neighbourhood Contracts

MAIN FOCUS ON PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND MARGINAL NEIGHBORHOODS



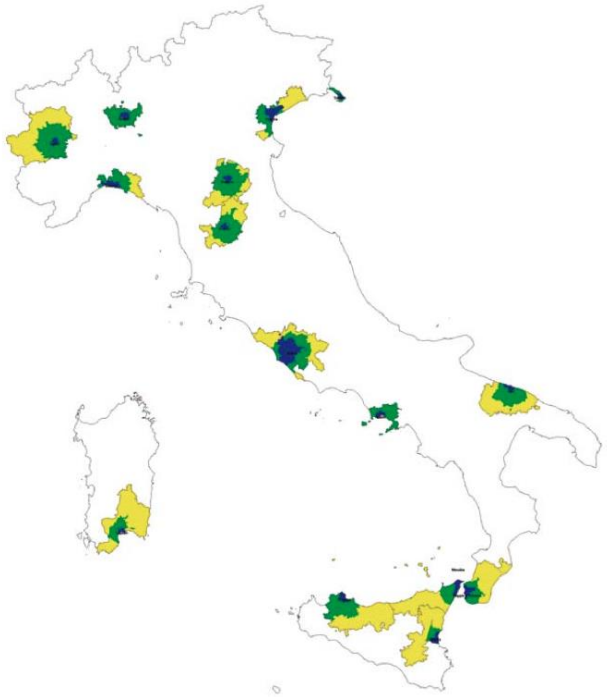






NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES: ITALY

The National Operative Programme 'Città Metropolitane' 2014-2020



THEMATIC FOCUSES

SMART CITY

- **Metropolitan Digital Agenda**
- **Renewable energy for the built environment**
- **Green and sustainable transport**

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- **Social housing for disadvantaged neighborhoods and marginalised people**
- **Social innovation**

TARGETED AREAS

14 metropolitan areas established in 2014

CONTACTS AND MATERIALS

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Teaching materials for the course will be published on a web page at the following link: **www.ignaziovinci.net**