Reconciling Climate Resilience and Sustainable Urban Development: Perspectives from Vietnam

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- Rapidly urbanising: 3% urbanisation rate. Expected 40-45% urbanised by 2020.
- Since *Doi Moi* urban development attracting migrants. Expansion into surrounding countryside.
- Impact of *Doi Moi*: rural-urban disparity, rich-poor gap and environmental problems.
- Growth of inadequate housing and urban poor informal settlements in hazardous/marginal areas.
Urban Context in Vietnam
Expected to be severely affected by climate change.

- HCMC >43% could face inundation. Half of areas planned for future development located <2 metres above SL.
- HCMC ~20% to GDP. Vulnerable to significant economic loss with national repercussions.
- Understanding/Application of CCA/M measures largely lacking.
Mekong Delta SLR Scenario

Source: ADB 2008
- 3 main type of plans:
  - Socio-economic – MoPI
  - Sectoral – respective line ministries
  - Spatial (4 types) – MoC

- Top-down centralised multi-layered planning: time-consuming, inefficient dissemination of info, delays, parallel work, overlaps, etc.

- Master plans not mandatory – not followed, often informal developments.

- “Idealised” plans - not possible to realise in socio-economic and environmental context of Vietnam.
Strategic Planning: Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

- Localised environmental problems assume priority:
  - Water supply and sanitation
  - Solid waste management
  - Infrastructure & services
  - Housing
  - Industrial and traffic pollution
  - Transport delays, noise, etc.

- Most institutional work reactive and *ad hoc* - not geared towards addressing long-term issues such as climate change.
Strategic Planning: Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

- Built environment: high energy use and GHG emissions.
- Mitigation has to go together with adaptation of buildings.
- Need to draw on traditional passive design and low energy principles.
- Contextually appropriate rating systems (e.g., LOTUS).
- Some RETs in rural areas, need for promotion in cities.
- Need to make RETs cost-effective by removing legislative, technical, financial and infrastructural barriers.
Strategic Planning: Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

- Necessary to treat CC not as sectoral (now under MoNRE), but cross-cutting.
- Need to move beyond focus only on floods, typhoons and SLR on coastal areas to inland impacts (eg drought).
- Necessary to broaden out by also considering social aspects instead of only bio-physical aspects.
- CC impacts to be the most severe on urban poor: ‘unregistered’ status, lack of info and weak institution-community linkages – need to be addressed.
Potential for Sustainable Urban Development & Climate Resilience

- Vast national ‘construction site’ - opportunity for advancing sustainability/adaptation agenda.
- From one of world’s poorest countries to among fastest growing economies in Asia.
- Since Doi Moi per capita GDP from < $100 to > $2,000.
- More disposable funds available - increased urban consumption patterns.
- Huge scale of urban development and funds invested. No fund constraint for sustainable development.
Potential for Sustainable Urban Development & Climate Resilience

- Shift towards decentralisation - increased local level capacity development needs – can include sustainability and CCA agenda.
- Need for changing existing perceptions, priorities and political will.
- Need to encourage ‘green champions’.
- Potential for leapfrogging by avoiding mistakes made elsewhere.

Source: UN Vietnam 2008
Thank You