



UrbanShift Rwanda 1st National-Local Dialogue

Summarised by Pratibha Caleb

Country: Rwanda

Topic of First National-Local Dialogue: New-Age Infrastructure to Build Flood Resilience and Enhance Biodiversity in Rwandan Cities

Level of Representation:

- National government representatives – Ministry of Environment, Rwanda Housing Authority, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ministry of Infrastructure, Rwanda Meteorology Agency, Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), Program Design Specialist/E-Mobility Focal Point, Fund for Environment and Natural Resources for Rwanda (FONERWA), Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA)
- Local government representatives from seven cities – Kigali, Rubavu, Muhanga, Huye, Musanze, Nyagatare, Rusizi and two districts, namely Karongi and Rutsiro
- Other Representatives from UN agencies, research institutes and NGOs

Overview:

The national- local dialogue focused on assessing the current status and defining the future goals for sustainable urban development in Rwanda, emphasizing on building flood resilience and enhancing biodiversity.

1. **New age infrastructure for flood resilience and biodiversity:** Emphasis on integrated planning, leveraging data, and aligning policies for flood resilience and biodiversity.
2. **Resource mobilization and execution of urban sustainability initiatives:** Enhancing local revenue, engaging the private sector, and incentivizing green infrastructure.

How the National-Local Dialogue Contributed to Existing Policy:

National and local level:

The National-Local Dialogue was pivotal in shaping Rwanda's sustainable urban development policy. Focused on the theme of "New-Age Infrastructure to Build Flood Resilience and Enhance Biodiversity," this dialogue facilitated high-level discussions between local governments (represented by mayors and senior officials) and national governments (represented by the Minister of Environment and senior representatives from other ministries). It assessed Rwanda's current urban development landscape and charted a strategic course forward, emphasizing the alignment of national and sub-national efforts. The dialogue highlighted the integration of Rwanda Urban Development Project (RUDP II) initiatives with UrbanShift's objectives, particularly in wetland rehabilitation and wastewater management. Discussions also



underscored the importance of revising urban policies, enhancing coordination, and mobilizing financial resources for sustainable development. Local initiatives presented district-level efforts in flood management and biodiversity conservation, emphasizing the need for integrated planning and policy reforms. The dialogue concluded with a proposed roadmap outlining multilevel governance strategies aimed at advancing Rwanda's urban resilience and environmental sustainability goals, providing a clear framework for future policy implementation and collaborative action.

Outlook for the Second National-Local Dialogue:

The second Multilevel Governance Dialogue, scheduled for a date in 2024 determined by the Government of Rwanda, will evaluate the progress made in implementing the Roadmap. This dialogue aims to further discuss the topic, assess the advancements made since the first dialogue, evaluate the ongoing support provided, and facilitate the achievement of strong outcomes.

Reflections on National-Local Dialogue: Key Challenges and Opportunities

During the NLD stakeholders collectively addressed the complexities of achieving sustainable and integrated urban development through new-age infrastructure. Discussions highlighted significant challenges across policy, sustainability, and financing domains.

Challenges:

1. **Policy and Governance:** Key challenges included the need to tailor policies to local contexts, align them with practical implementation, and clarify institutional responsibilities. Participants identified bureaucratic hurdles, insufficient coordination among stakeholders, and gaps in grassroots engagement as critical obstacles. Proposed solutions emphasized integrating environmental responsibilities into governmental mandates and enhancing monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
2. **Sustainability Challenges:** Issues centered on integrating accurate climate data into planning processes, addressing resource capacity gaps, and ensuring effective enforcement of urban development interventions. Challenges also included coordination issues between local and central governments and concerns about modifications to urban master plans that could compromise sustainability. Recommendations focused on capacity building, improved integration in planning efforts, and stronger enforcement mechanisms.
3. **Financing and Implementation:** Participants highlighted challenges in internal revenue generation, such as issues with property tax collection, incomplete databases, and manual fee collection processes vulnerable to fraud. Solutions proposed included digitizing tax collection, raising community awareness about tax compliance, and exploring private sector partnerships through initiatives like green bonds.

Opportunities:

1. **Policy and Governance:** Opportunities lie in fostering policy coherence and collaboration through joint coordination mechanisms and actionable plans.



Strengthening environmental governance and increasing grassroots involvement were identified as pivotal opportunities.

2. **Sustainability Challenges:** Integrating climate data into planning, improving coordination between stakeholders, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation frameworks were seen as opportunities to bolster flood resilience and biodiversity conservation. Participants also highlighted the potential of sustainable infrastructure design and implementation practices.
3. **Financing and Implementation:** Opportunities included implementing digital solutions for tax collection, enhancing tax compliance through community engagement, and exploring innovative financing mechanisms like green bonds. These efforts aim to ensure financial sustainability and support the implementation of infrastructure projects.

Next Steps:

Looking ahead, the Multilevel Governance Roadmap being developed will guide Rwanda's efforts toward urban resilience and sustainability. This will involve:

- **Policy and Governance:** Implementing joint action plans to address policy gaps, improve coordination, and integrate environmental considerations across governance levels.
- **Sustainability Challenges:** Prioritizing the integration of climate data, strengthening stakeholder collaboration, and implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure sustainable urban development.
- **Financing and Implementation:** Rolling out digital tax solutions, enhancing tax compliance through community outreach, and exploring new financing mechanisms like green bonds to bolster financial sustainability.

In conclusion, the NLD identified critical challenges while revealing significant opportunities for advancing Rwanda's sustainable urban development agenda. The insights gained will inform actionable strategies outlined in the Multilevel Governance Roadmap, ensuring coordinated and impactful policy implementation.