

DR. MORENO: Good morning to all of you. Thank you, John, for the invitation to be here.

Let me perhaps start explaining in one or two minutes what do we do for you to understand some of the implications in terms of international collaboration and the UN; it is relevant for this forum.

We are a unit, I would say a small unit, of monitoring and research in the UN-HABITAT. Our headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. We are in charge of producing urban trends, urban policy analysis, for the whole world in terms of urban policy for cities.

We do that through two different ways. The first one, we have created something that we call our global sample of cities, which are something like 500 cities in the world that we are monitoring in a constant way in order to look at trend analysis, what is happening in the world. These 500 cities represent something like 8 percent of all cities of the world, but because of the statistical way these cities were selected, they represent, in terms of demographics or population, 30 percent of the world. So we can extrapolate some of the conclusions and say that the world in terms of urban trends is like this.

The second important thing, this global sample of cities is made of cities both from the developed and developing world. We have selected for the different regions 50 cities around Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, et cetera.

In addition to this, we have created in the last 12 years something that we call local urban observatories. These are local groups of stakeholders, very often within

universities, NGOs, sometimes with the government, local authorities. They produce urban indicators for us. They produce policy analysis. They do studies for us.

We have today in the world 350 local urban observatories. So we have a critical mass of information that we are processing and we are analyzing in order to make sense of all these. We are in charge of something that is called -- and I brought two or three reports -- the State of World's Cities report that we are mandated by the General Assembly to produce, in which every two years we need to highlight which are the specific trends, which of these trends we can use as an opportunity for development, in which we should intervene to avoid, that some of them are going in the wrong direction according to what we are analyzing, et cetera.

All these really represent for us international collaboration for research. We are doing this in order to try to provide some examples that I think are important for you. Let me mention the following.

We do international collaboration for research, but the main objective for us is not to advance science per se or produce knowledge. Of course, this is a fundamental thing, but we need to move beyond that in our own studies. We are always saying, when we produce this State of the World's Cities report, this is very important information, very important data, but how we translate this into policy, how we translate this into something that we call advocacy or enforcement, how we can convince local authorities, central governments, that this is a fundamental finding of all these analyses, is going to change their cities.

Then I would say we are moving from research to a knowledge stage that will be translating this research, as the last speaker mentioned, into something that we

can really say, "Please look at these fundamental steps that will represent a change in your city."

This is a globalizing world and, I would say, urbanizing world. When we are doing this, we are facing some fundamental problems. Let me give you two examples of this.

When we talk about a specific study, we need to look at the very broadly accepted definitions, broadly accepted by the north, by the global south, by developing countries, by more or less totalitarian(?) regimes and democratic governments. It means that we need to look at definitions, we need to look at concepts of analysis that are both universal and local.

In trying to do this, we will find ourselves with some fundamental problems. Some examples. For instance, we want to look at, just as an example, basic service delivery and housing in cities. Then we are going to try to find a definition of what do we mean by adequate housing.

Now, the first thing: With whom are we going to work? In the introduction this morning, Dan Mote mentioned that in some cities or countries, it is very easy to strike some arrangements to work with them. But for us it is not only that. Since we need to use this information, this knowledge, for policy purposes, we need to make sure that our partners are those that are going to make these policies. Then we need to see, as much as possible, according to each context, that we are working in a very democratic way. That is not always the case.

In this example of housing, what is going to happen is the following. If we want to work with local authorities that would be happy to think that housing is a

fundamental problem, almost all actors in different cities and countries will visualize the problem in the same way, but not the solution. When we talk about the solution, for instance, NGOs, civil society would say it is not a matter of decent housing or adequate housing; it is a matter of housing rights and human rights. Then central government would say no, it's not a matter of housing rights. Housing rights will bring us to some problems if we are delivering this. For us it is just a matter of technical issues to respond to rights to housing.

The private sector would perhaps tell us, yes, rights are okay, but in some countries the private sector, the real estate sector, sometimes would not like to open discussions on how these land properties are in their hands, why they are accumulating a lot of property in the city, and they would say, Please do not talk about housing rights. Let's move toward something which is, I would say, we call it more operational definitions of what we are doing. These operational definitions are nonthreatening definitions to all these local actors.

As we move to that, then what we need to do is to create conditions for all of us to collaborate together in specific cities in the whole world. Collaboration means two things to us: Looking at the intersection of interests of actors and trying to build some local consensus. By doing this, research will become a reality.

But if that happened, there would be a problem, I believe, and that is what we are analyzing in this. Which is the main objective for us? Sometimes we will conclude -- and I remember Lawrence's comment on this in one of the points that he mentioned -- is the use of the information in terms of democracy. We are saying research for us is this call of democracy in specific cities and countries.

Sometimes the main conclusion of the data, of the analysis, is important but secondary, because the real advancement in this specific city is that a regime that was not open to discuss with some partners, a party that was not open to discuss with other partners, we will sit all of them at the same table and we will discuss. That is a very specific objective for us, but it is not bringing either specific knowledge, perhaps nor the possibility of applying this knowledge.

So the goal here would be to open these democratic processes within cities. It is implicit knowledge; then we move to the explicit one. The explicit one would be to produce this information, this policy analysis. All what I described to you what we are going to find is that we are going to obliterate nuances. We are going to reduce the local because of this universal concept, and we are going to try to integrate what makes sense in terms of rational in a horizontal way.

I believe, really, that when we talk about change in cities and countries, it is very often that what we need to analyze is the extremes, is the positions that are extremes in terms of ideas, in terms of producing something different, in terms of innovation.

All these processes with all these filters will bring us very often to the middle, not to the extremes, and then we will be losing the possibility of change. This international cooperation has this limit when you talk about global research.

Another example, when the Millennium Development Goals were adopted through the Millennium Declaration in 2000, and then two years later we were requested to do these targets and goals and to think about them, UN-HABITAT and myself, I was

one of these targets, which is so-called Target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals related to the slum reductions, poverty reduction in the slum areas.

At that time there was not an agreed definition of what is a slum in Mexico, in China, or in Africa. So the first thing to do here is to agree on something that all of us will believe is the same concept for all. The main problem on this is that in order to do that, you will have some countries that are reluctant to discuss the slums because they are politically loaded as a concept. Then what is going to happen is that we are going to look at a definition again that is pragmatic, and this definition will be translated in something that we call slum indicators for us to measure in the world as slums.

When we do that, we decided that we should do it in a sort of incremental way. We will have a definition based on five key indicators. These indicators have something very particular. Even if a specific government does not want to talk about the slums, doesn't want to measure its slums, our definition with these five indicators -- lack of access to water, sanitation, durable structures, overcrowding and security of tenure -- will enable us, the United Nations, to conduct analyses in these countries even if they don't want to do so.

That is important for us because, again, this advocacy and this enforcement level will tell us that these cities and countries need to understand that in one moment they need to open a discussion on the existence of the slums. We have some countries in which the slum population in cities with slums is 80-to-90 percent of the whole urban population. These countries in their policies, when they produce poverty-reduction strategies or other important documents, they hardly mention the word "slums," they hardly mention these urban poverty issues.

For us, the fundamental objective of this international research is to create a basic platform of analysis but also something that is sustainable, something that will enable us in 10 or 15 years to look at the evolution of these cities and countries in terms of the slum populations.

That is why this definition for some people would say it is based only in the shelter-deprivation concept of this informal settlement and is not looking at other fundamental issues that are related to cultural rights, political rights, or other aspects that characterize deprivation in the slum areas. We are saying in an incremental basis once that the international community would endorse the necessity of looking at the slums, to move to other indicators that will be growing in terms of integrating other dimensions of a more inclusive city and society.

With whom do we work in doing this? John mentioned very interesting aspects of this. I would say, since we need to produce every two years a State of the World's Cities report, we need to do it in a timely and quality manner. Then there are two or three problems with that. One is that we will end up always working with the same excellence of pools of knowledge, and I would say we will rely, especially in the developing world, always, because for us the objective even as a fundamental one is not to open this process of supporting research departments in universities; it is to make good information as much as possible, as I mentioned, with this democratic objective.

We will find out two or three interesting things, and let me give you examples. When we produced these urban indicators through the local observatories and other partners, we noticed that we were giving contracts to them, we were doing this in international collaboration. But if we wanted to come back to analyze some of

the indicators, let's say 3 years after, the people were not there. The research department was not interested in this analysis.

So we decided it is something that is very counterproductive to local development. We decided that we should control our own database. Then we are going to cities and to national governments to collect their census information, raw data, all kinds of surveys, also raw data, and we don't need to come back to them when we do our analysis. We try to develop partnerships, of course, as much as possible, but that will limit a lot the possibility of looking much more at the process, because we are looking at the product of these 3 years' production of information.

Sometimes, recently for instance, we were conducting specific research on innovation of our cities, and there were some institutes in Africa, not always South Africa, by the way, but other parts of Africa, that they were having very interesting, I would say, research and policy analysis on innovation at the urban management level. When we submitted this for funding and for approval of working with these institutions, the response is they don't have any track of their capacity to deliver. So the real innovation, that yield with this institution, it was impossible to contact them because we need to work with those that have proven this capacity. Those that have proven this capacity sometimes are dinosaurs that have 10 or 15 years working with us and very little possibility, I would say, little scope for changing, for innovation, for looking at something different. That is a big limitation on what we are doing.

Another important thing is when we do the analysis, let's say for instance in the 2008 State of the World's Cities report, we were looking at a very fundamental point of cities, which is what triggers, what is the driver of prosperity of cities, why some

cities in some countries are growing very fast, in the case of Singapore, as we just saw, and others have not happened in this kind of level of success. Which are the key drivers for change?

When we conducted this research in 250 cities in the developing world, we found something quite interesting in my own analysis. What we found is not only the problem of attribution of these drivers of change -- in other words, the causality of what is producing what, which is a scientific problem -- but more interesting for this forum is the following: All Latin American research concluded that cities that prosper were because of civil society and cultural and political rights. More of the Asian countries and cities collapsed because of national government intervention. Then Africa countries still have a mix of private sector and local authorities.

What I want to conclude with this is that all this research which was scientifically thought and defined was facing a fundamental limit, which was not only the cultural but the ideological position of these blocs of regional development; in other words, for Asian cities, the role of central government was fundamental. What we found in these countries in different geographical locations that are somehow under this ideological concept of the Washington consensus, they told us the private sector is what is changing everything and is the competitiveness of the city.

Our own analysis is that it was really none of those; it was fundamentally the articulation of local, central, and provincial governments. It was the articulation of different actors and this multi-dimension of doing this, having a vision, learning to work together. But the conclusions were not pointing towards that direction.

So what we need to do in this report is something fundamental, either to conclude what we want it to conclude, which is not empirically scientifically serious, or to try to summarize all these regional positions and to conclude with something that will be in the middle of that. And in the middle of that is a salad of things that are not making sense to the world, because it will be a compromise, I would say, scientific decision in what is bringing change in the cities today in the world and by no means what we concluded at the first peer review was what we wanted to do, remembering we wanted to translate this into policy orientations.

So we came back after several discussions with different partners, with different international reviewers, that the fundamental conclusion that we got to the empirical analysis of the raw data was that this articulation of factors is the driver of change, and that's what we presented. But it was somehow against the local findings or not exactly fitting the local findings. I think that illustrates very well this point of with whom we are working, what we are analyzing.

Then we move to the last point: How would we explain change? Same example of this prosperity of cities. When we want to write for a mayor in a city in Colombia or a mayor in a city, let's say, in Kampala or in another place, to understand what is the progress measure and how they can adopt some specific steps for that, we will find that fundamental problem which is the following: We need to rely, I think personally, executively, in best practices, since the only thing that we can really show from one part to another is to say, Look at this country or this city. What they did through a specific best policy or best practice is this, and we can unpack this concept or

rationale into something that will translate into several steps of pragmatic ways of doing this.

But relying too much on these best practices to me has fundamental problems. Let me tell you that the best practices section in the UN is under my coordination. But this critical aspect I think is still relevant. The attribution part of this best practice is not very clear always. It is really the best practice that changed the whole city or there were solid other elements that were behind that. How we measure the impact of best practices and how peer-reviewed the best practices are, very often we don't have a real means to do that.

Since in these two years we need to present something that makes sense, then best practice would become a fundamental element of explanation but not very good in looking at transfer of the best practice, transfer not only at the international level between one city to another, but I would say we have analyzed that the best practice that works in one city, 10 years later, it doesn't work in the same city. So best practices have serious limits in doing this. Then research in this global perspective that translates into producing knowledge, policies, and best practices will have a limit because we will not be sure that what we are suggesting in terms of drivers of change was really behind these drivers of change.

Let me conclude with something. We are going to work with institutions at different levels, let's say local or national. We have found something quite interesting. Many of these institutions, for instance I would say in the developing world mostly -- Africa, many parts of Asia and Latin America -- were created in the 1970s and 1980s with very specific aims; for instance, the centralization of local government, the

centralization from municipalities to the local government. Our main conclusion is that this decentralization that is posited(?) in our analysis is not what really is driving the change of the city. Today there is no city in the world with only one municipality which is more than 100,000. They are made of two or more, sometimes 20 or 30 local authorities together.

One of our main policies would be, for instance, to create metropolitan governance mechanisms in order to put together all these efforts of local authorities. But the institutions that we work with are made still to decentralize, and to look at the real unit level of the municipality, here we are working with different perspectives, different approaches.

In many of the places, for instance in the eastern part of Asia, in the former republics of the Soviet Union, many institutions were created, also again in the 1970s and 1980s, with the aim of controlling urban growth. Today 60 percent of the cities and countries are shrinking in population, and they are still adopting policies for controlling urban growth.

When we analyze this, we are explaining to them it doesn't make sense to talk about smart growth; you need to talk about smart shrinking of urban populations and economic and political dynamics of the city.

Then we have here institutions that are outdated, and we are trying to bring some information in terms of best policies, and we will find a fundamental problem that it is not only the knowledge but it is the completely reshaping and changing of these institutions that we would need to do.

I have concluded just exactly in the moment. Thank you very much.