Executive Summary:

In Benin, in a number of years more than 50% of the country’s population will live in cities. This suggests that relative actions have to be persisted in an urgent manner. In this process, a wide range of measures will have to be taken. As this phenomenon has become general in almost every country in the world, UN-HABITAT has launched the New Urban Agenda initiative.

The Urban Campus of Benin that ICA Benin organized is one of fifty similar events authorized worldwide in 2017. During the Campus days, political authorities, researchers, trade unionists, private entrepreneurs, members of civil
society organizations, media, and religious leaders, focused on topics that have a direct impact on the daily lives of people living in urban areas of Benin. This campus was expected to take place last April, but the Ministry of the Living and Sustainable Development Framework wished to contribute to the success of this activity. Therefore, the Campus was postponed to October. This was the month when the government organized a whole series of habitat-related initiatives. ICA Benin wishes to thank the Government for its support, which has come in financial, logistical, intellectual and human forms. Indeed, the Beninese government is currently concerned about the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in its Government Action Program (GAP) and how the benefits of the Urban Campus would contribute to this. This is proof that the public-private partnership is a reality in Benin. The government's ambitious program of providing housing to a large number of Belizeans is already materializing with the start of construction initiatives for 20,000 housing units, supported by the revaluation of local materials. The Campus spread its work through three panels. The first focused on "Governance and Planning," the second on "Livelihoods" and the last on "Environment and Health." The Campus was held from 9 to 11 October 2017 at the Friendship stadium in Cotonou.

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**Summary of all Sessions:**

The Campus was held from 9 to 11 October 2017 at the Friendship stadium in Cotonou, including a wide range of participants and different stakeholders. The work in the Campus was broken down into three panels:

1. **Panel 1: Governance and Planning.**

The panel was aimed to find a mechanism for the population involvement in the urban planning.

1. **Panel 2: Livelihoods.**

The panel searched to organize initiatives to encourage young people and women to take an interest in handicrafts and relative job providers.

This panel focused in supporting project for women’s associations involved in activities related to the environment in urban areas.

The activities during the panels consisted initially in diagnosing the barriers that are at the root of the problems addressed. Then the letters were classified into three major groups to serve as a support after the reflections. This same methodology was used for proposed solutions to barriers to urban improvement. Overall, the debates addressed most components of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as: SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 6 (drinking water and sanitation), SDG 8 (decent work and economic development), SDG 9 (Industrial Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (sustainability of cities and communities), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production).

The implementation of the various projects selected will mobilize a wide range of actors from various sources: government institutions, research centers, the Association of Communes of Benin, associations of women and youth, universities, UN agencies represented in Benin, embassies, technical and financial partners, civil society organizations, etc.

The Urban Campus included three panels on Governance and Planning, Livelihoods, and Environment and Health.

Panel one: Governance and Planning

Participants in this panel identified various barriers that prevent or complicate good governance and effective planning of urban development projects. Such barriers were identified as low-quality decision or policy making from the governmental side, inadequate law enforcement mechanisms, mismanagement and ineffective use of the human resources, egocentrism and uncivil behavior of the citizens, poor urban planning, lack of updated database, mismatch between the population needs and the infrastructure development. In this regard all the barriers were classified into three main groups:

(1) bad governance in the cities
(2) inadequacy of the development objectives
(3) Insufficient data on planning and governance.

The panel discussed every group of the barriers and what are the reasons of such a problem set. In terms of bad governance, it caused by needy behavior of the citizens and politicians that results into the lack of political support, regulation planning and bottom-up political movement. The people are unable to vision successful government what creates a space for mistrust and more challenges.
Inadequacy in development comes from mismatch between the population needs and development scope. People are poorly informed about local innovations and opportunities for facilitating access to decent housing. Moreover, the invasion of Benin’s construction markets by imported building materials hinders the emergence of local innovations. The insufficient data on planning and governance has caused the lack of proper urban planning in the cities. The cadaster of the cities is poorly monitored and the consequences are catastrophic for habitat. Furthermore, the buildings are made without respect to the development of the cities. Thus, there is a strong mismatch between the population growth and housing abilities.

Panel two: Livelihoods
The five basic needs of man, namely: feeding, housing, healing, dressing and education have become burdens today especially for people living in cities like Cotonou. However, the environment of globalization imposes these difficulties and it is question of finding ways to adapt to it. The urban community has to show solidarity and realism to face the challenges of the century. This is the only way to avoid a collective failure for the future.

Participants in this panel noted with concern the almost uncontrollable increase in the population of the cities. The direct consequence of this situation is the appearance of a good fringe of the homeless population. Certes, the government currently leads a fight against this phenomenon, but this must continue in time. It also discussed the cost of basic necessities such as fruits and vegetables that become scarce at certain times of the year: domestic production should be encouraged.

As in the previous panel, the participants identified the key barriers to the improvements of the livelihood in the city. Such barriers were seen as limitation of social housing availability, high fees for housing, lack of training centers for craftsman, lack of proper waste management and hygiene conditions leading to health issues, youth unemployment, and traffic congestion. The panel clustered the barriers in the following groups:
(1) financial difficulties,
(2) environmental issues,
(3) problems related to accessibility in the city (transport).

The financial difficulties are mainly caused due to the high rental fees, unemployment of the youth, lack of social assistance, and limited effort coming from the government. At the same time, the environmental issues are caused by the improper behavior by the citizens; bad waste management, unhygienic
conditions, and floods in the city of Cotonou. The issue related to the accessibility in the city is caused by the poor transpiration system, high pricing of the public transport, and traffic congestion on Cotonou.

Panel three: Environment and Health
Participants in this panel unanimously acknowledged that the environment and health are inseparable areas: a population living in an unhealthy environment is potentially ill. The debates that took place there were very rich and varied. Concrete and effective actions have been recommended in order to give the impression of being out of place. While civil society organizations need to continue with advocacy and advocacy initiatives, policymakers should support these efforts with repression if this proves necessary.

The various types of pollution: air, water and earth, were combed and proposed solutions approaches. Participants lamented that, despite the many awareness campaigns, there are still citizens who seem to ignore the law. The panel identified following barriers: excessive use of chemical fertilizers, lack of environmental laws, anarchic settlement of populations in areas unfit for habitation, poor waste collection, air pollution, poor maintains of gutters, and voice waste harming the population. The issues were grouped into three boxes: (1) the different types of pollution observed in the cities, (2) household waste management, (3) non-compliance with the texts in force.

The different types of pollution observed in the cities are mainly connected with the air pollution, especially the one caused by vehicles and motorcycles. Moreover, the stagnant waters in the city of Cotonou are nests of potential diseases, as well as excessive use of chemical fertilizers does not guarantee healthy foods to people.

The household management is caused by bad faith of some citizens who refuse to subscribe to the garbage collection structures, as well as poor waste collection strategies by some collection structures that do not remove at regular intervals. This kind of waste is harmful to the human health, and the plastic waste in harmful to the environment.

The non-compliance with the texts in force is due to the fact that the government and population do not respect the laws for the protection of the environment. There is also the complicity of the people who do not denounce those who do not act in accordance with the law.

Key Outcomes
The Benin Urban Campus was run in good conditions and despite the novelty of the method used, the participants were deeply involved in discussions and opinion exchange during all tree panels. Not only the UTC served as a great platform to connect stakeholders, but also to identify the main issues in the urban areas in Benin, classify the barriers, put structure to the problem set, as well as create valid policy recommendations. During the analysis phase of the current urban issues in Benin, the participants obtained consensual and satisfactory results. While the theme of the campus was: "Citizen's contribution to urban development for the next twenty years, some participants wished that actions to be proposed go beyond a century," because, they say, if we find ourselves face to this situation today it is for lack of effective forward planning in the past ". Additionally, the participatory method used allowed all the participants present to express themselves freely.

Conclusion & Way Forward:

The main result of Urban Thinkers Campus was coming up with the solutions to the existing urban problems in the city. According to panels, the panelists came up with the proposals for the solutions, as well as recommendations.

Panel one: Governance and Planning
As the barriers were clusters in three groups, the same approach was adopted with the solutions. Thus, for the Governance and Planning issues, the participants came up with three groups:
(1) priorities for a good management of the cities,
(2) revitalization of the operational perspectives,
(3) creation of a participative framework for the sustainable development of the cities.
The recommendations for the priorities for a good management of the cities are following:

- Develop an awareness and civic education strategy for the populations in the cities;
• Promote the local values;
• Initiate popularization campaigns of laws and texts in force in many areas;
• Encourage policymakers to live up to their promises made to the people in election campaigns;
• To involve more people in the design and implementation processes of urban development projects;
• To strengthen the patriotic spirit of citizens to better support the efforts of decision makers in the implementation of texts and laws for the happiness of all;
• Combat impunity in all its forms;
• Inform and sensitize the population on the acts of good governance;
• Share information to help limit mismanagement;
• Make the rigorous application of texts a priority.

The recommendations for the revitalization of the operational perspectives are following:

• Better involvement of the population in decision-making;
• Develop strategies with long-term positive effects;
• Strengthen, plan and effectively enforce good governance laws;
• Organization of public sessions of popularization of urbanization plans;
• Encourage free forum sessions on key issues that undermine urban development in general;
• Design ambitious urbanization plans for our cities, taking into account new current and future challenges;
• End with laxity in the application of the standards in force in urban planning;
• Support real estate developers who innovate to improve the urban living environment;
• Create focal points for the delegation of the territory in the communes;
• Constitute a database for prospective planning.

The recommendations for creation of a participative framework for the sustainable development of the cities are following:

• Take into account the needs of the population during planning (objective data, territorial dimensions, compliance with environmental standards, etc. ...);
- Design urbanization strategies that take into account our cultural and sociological realities and map them accordingly;
- Take into account the opinions expressed by the population during the public sessions of popularization of texts on urbanization.

Panel two: Livelihoods
The participants of this second panel put a few ideas forth to face the challenges facing the population. For housing, for example, participants proposed that a law be passed to control price setting. It will be necessary for the government to establish facilities for the creation of wealth by the private sector; strengthen the staff of the environmental police and empower them.

The following groups of the solution projects were made:
1. role of the state for the reduction of poverty,
2. problems related to accessibility in the city (transport),
3. construction of adequate infrastructure for transport.

The recommendations for the role of the state for the reduction of poverty are following:

- The government will need to establish private wealth creation facilities;
- Need to build social centers for average incomes;
- Promote the acquisition of social housing to the greatest number of Beninese;
- Local production must be given special attention by the state but also by certain individuals who have the capacity to invest in it;
- It is urgent to think about regulating the costs of renting houses to avoid the continuation of bidding that accentuates poverty;
- Create favorable conditions for the development of private micro-enterprises;
- Put in place incentives for the revaluation of local products;
- Proposed to reduce costs to health care;
- Build adult training centers outside of classical technical high schools.

The recommendations for the problems related to accessibility in the city (transport) are following:

- Access roads will need to be widened to facilitate traffic;
- Ensure the regular maintenance of the gutters to facilitate the flow of rainwater;
Open access news if possible to offer more choice to the population;
Continue the policy of paving secondary streets in Cotonou.

The recommendations for the construction of adequate infrastructure for transport are following:

- Apart from awareness campaigns, repression against citizens who refuse to comply with the law should be involved;
- Encourage reforestation and maintenance of trees planted in cities
- We will have to prevent our country from becoming a garbage dump for old end-of-life vehicles;
- Strengthen the staff of the environmental police and empower them;

Panel three: Environment and Health

Proposals were made for the participants to improve the living conditions of urban populations. Some of these proposals include: strengthening the environmental police and giving it more means to act; capacity building of structures involved in the field of the environment; set up public latrine and urinal facilities that are easily accessible to the public; Empowering people to become more involved in issues related to the improvement of their living environment.

The proposed solutions have been classified into three categories namely: (1) environmental management for sustainable development, (2) the application of the texts in force and repression, (3) promote effective communication for behavioral change.

The recommendations for the environmental management for sustainable development are following:

- It requires efficient management of waste managers to better rid our cities of these sources of pollution;
- Invest in techniques for upgrading household waste;
- It is essential to choose a fixed place as a place of storage and treatment of this waste;
- There needs to be better monitoring of waste collection structures to effectively play their role;
- Review of the framework law on the environment and the text of public hygiene with a view to inserting a legal and institutional framework allowing the repression of incivism;
• Establish public latrine and urinal facilities easily accessible to the public;

The recommendations for the application of the texts in force and repression are following:

• Associate awareness and repression in the application of environmental texts;
• Strengthen the texts currently in force,
• Even if the authorities go through the repression phase, civil society must, in turn, continue its sensitization initiatives;
• Strengthen the environmental police and give it more means to act,
• Our country must take action for the fight against tobacco;

The recommendations for the promote effective communication for behavioral change are following:

• Rethinking Education for Eco-citizenship at the grassroots level;
• Regulate diesel vehicle traffic and adopt a sustainable management plan;
• Make people aware of the behavior to adopt in order not to be too exposed to polluting manifestations;
• Make exhaust control operations more dynamic;
• Empowering people to become more involved in issues related to improving their living environment;
• Train farmers on the production of organic fertilizers;
• Rigorous enforcement of noise pollution regulations;
• Capacity building of structures involved in the field of the environment;
• Reduction of sanitation procurement procedures;
• Multiply IEC campaigns (Information, Education and Communication);

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**Monitoring and Report:**

In order to put into practice, the solutions and recommendations, the participants on this campus proposed some concrete projects and the methods to be used for their follow-up. Then, it was decided to select by panel, a priority project to implement in a **short-term period of 1 to 2 years.**
Panel one: Governance and Planning
The action plan for the Governance and Planning related issues is to come an inclusive and affective way to engage the population in the policy-making process, as well as make possible improvements in the governmental structures. Thus, it is to project for the effective involvement of the population in the debate on urbanization. It was also proposed to collect and disseminate texts and experiences on urban development for a better awareness among the citizens. It was considered that the organization of start-up promotion activities oriented towards innovation in the living environment of the urban environment. The priority project in this regard is to effectively involve the population in the debate in urbanization.

To fulfill these projects, the Urban Thinkers Campus came up with a specific system of monitoring methods:

- Collection of information from specialized structures in opinion polls;
- Conducting Interviews with local population;
- Observations on the implementation of the projects.

To make sure that the method are reliable, there are specific indicators that can assist in this monitoring:

- A reliable database accessible to all;
- Social and behavioral change with respect to public goods is effective with the populations;
- The living conditions of our neighborhoods have improved.

**Panel two: Livelihoods**

The action plan for the livelihoods related issues is to propose an advocacy plan for state structures so that initiatives to support entrepreneurship are strengthened, as well as to organization of initiatives to encourage young people and women to become interested in crafts, which in the future will lead to job creations and employment of the local population. Additionally, design an ambitious urban agricultural production project to make products such as fruits and vegetables available throughout the year. The priority project for this theme is the organization of initiatives to encourage young people and women to take an interest in handicrafts, job providers.

The monitoring methods for the project are following:

- Find the rate of unemployment reduction, especially among young people;
- Collect information on the rate of inflation;
- Get closer to INSAE to obtain information;
- Make an assessment of the impact of the projects on the chosen targets.

The monitoring method will relay on these indicators:

- By complying with environmental regulations, people live in peace and harmony;
- Traffic is smoother and the accident rate is reduced;
- The five basic needs of man are assured.

Panel three: Environment and Health
The action plan for the environment and health section is to organize workshops for the harmonization of texts and laws on environment, sanitation, hygiene and health. Additionally, the panel proposed to initiate a project waste management and reclamation. Further attention should be paid to youth training project in technologies for the manufacture and installation of renewable energy materials. The priority project is to create support project for women's associations involved in activities related to the environment in urban areas. The monitoring methods for the project are following:

- Observations made on the general state of the city;
- Surveys in health facilities on the situation of diseases directly related to the environment;
- Surveys and interviews.

The monitoring method will relay on these indicators:
- The city is clean: rid of wild dumps and pollution in its various forms;
- Waste management activities have become job providers;
- Environmental diseases are decreasing.

The selected priority projects will be implemented in the short term within 1-2 years. The others will be spread over the long term, going beyond 50 years depending on their nature and the availability of resources. The information contained in the report will be reviewed every five years with a view to updating it, taking into account the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Benin country.
List of Key Speakers:

Key Speakers:

1. Nodagovi Rufin Directeur Général de l’Habitat et de la Construction
2. Ballè Ifédé Directeur de l’Habitat et de la Construction
3. Sounon Ferdinand Centre National d’Etudes et de Recherches en Travaux Publics
4. Adékambi Raymond Agence d’Exécution des Travaux d’Intérêt Public
5. Kassimou Issotina Directeur Exécutif ICA Bénin

Facilitators:

1. Gnanha Baudouin
2. Laou Daouda
3. Tonoukouin Judicaël
4. Ahokpè Boris
5. Agbai Anas
6. Djissénon Mireille
7. Fagnon Frangis
8. Fagnon Sadar

List of participants:

List of Organizations represented:
01- Ministry of the Framework of the Framework of Life and Sustainable Development
02- Ministry of Planning and Development
03- Ministries of Education
04- Ministry of Health
05- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
06- National Assembly
07- National Center for Studies and Research of Public Works
08- Execution Agency of Public Works
09- Calavi Town Hall
10 -Mountain of Cotonou
11- PROSIGN company
12-NORMAT Company
13-AMK company
14- NGO BED
15 -UN ICA Benin
16- DERCON BUILDING
17-TRACOBAT
18- CONTRELEC
19- Nation Bricks

List of countries represented:

1. Benin

List of Patner Groups represented:

1. Local and Subnational Authorities
2. Civil Society Organizations
3. Grass-root Organizations
4. Women
5. Children and Youth
6. Private Sector

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