

Ethical Framework for a Sustainable World

International Conference, 1 – 3 November 2010, CEE, Ahmedabad, India



Workshop 7

Cities Communities and Urbanization

Report

The International Conference titled “**Ethical Framework for a Sustainable World**” took place at **CEE, Ahmedabad, from 1 – 3 November 2010**. The Conference was co-hosted by the Centre for Environment Education and Earth Charter International.

While the Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society, it also provides a clear, comprehensive framework for thinking about and addressing these issues. At the Conference and through 10 thematic workshops the focus was on developing sector-specific frameworks and recommend actions as we move forward.

One of the working groups at the conference focused on *Cities, Communities and Urbanization*. This document reports on the proceedings of the workshop.

Background Note

The Earth Charter states that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development and peace are interdependent and necessary for a sustainable future. It recognizes that personal and community commitment to these principles is the basis for the well-being for the local and global society. Sadly, it’s been the case in many places that economic globalization and urbanization weaken connections to local places, people and resources.

In fast-growing urban areas, such as in Africa and Asia, city-dwellers face particular challenges for making sustainable choices; often we are faced with trade-offs between environmental, social, and economic well-being, such as:

- People may be forced to degrade the environment in the meeting of basic needs
- When a municipality is short of resources, it may be faced with tough choices such as building schools or sewage treatment plants; or houses for the poor and protection of open green spaces

On the other hand, there are the forces of international finance driving infrastructure growth which may not necessarily follow local priorities or respond to sustainability concerns; on the contrary, large-scale infrastructure development may in fact displace the poor and come at a large environmental cost.

It is here that an ethical framework can provide guidance. An increasing number of community leaders are trying to revive communities in a more sustainable way; many of them have found the Earth Charter a suitable framework to accomplish this. The Earth Charter Initiative (ECI) suggests that the Earth Charter principles can be used in several ways in cities, such as a

- Strategy for awareness raising
- Framework for action planning and community development
- Guide for policy making and programme initiatives
- Assessment tool to evaluate progress toward sustainability

Over 400 towns and cities have endorsed the Earth Charter, which in turn led to thousands of local citizens becoming aware of it. These municipalities are located across the globe. Cities and towns such as Sao Paulo, North Vancouver, Canada; San Jose, Costa Rica; Urbino, Italy; Oslo, Norway; Berkeley, California and Bournemouth, UK have all stated their support for the Earth Charter. In Spain alone, over 220 municipalities have endorsed the Earth Charter. Earth Charter endorsement has also come from all 99 city governments in Jordan. In addition to individual municipalities, leagues and organizations of local community authorities have also endorsed the Earth Charter. The ECI Secretariat has compiled several case studies and materials on how local governments and communities are using the Earth Charter. The EarthCAT workbook is a useful tool for local sustainability planning. Earlier this year in the Netherlands, an Earth Charter Cities Manifesto was prepared. In September 2010, the city of Montpelier, Vermont, USA, has completed a process to adopt a new Master Plan for Sustainability that follows the principles of the Earth Charter, called enVision Montpelier.

The *Cities, Communities and Urbanization* workshop looked at ways in which sustainable communities can be promoted through individual and community engagement. Practical knowledge of building socially, economically and environmentally sustainable communities were shared. The workshop also identified priority actions for applying the principles of the Earth Charter.

Objectives of the Workshop

1. Share about experiences and good practices of local sustainability planning and explore commonality with the Earth Charter in these.
2. Explore ways to develop resources and tools needed to support the implementation of Earth Charter principles in the development of sustainable communities.
3. Recommendations for the EC initiative and for processes leading up to Rio 20 and DESD 2014.

Report of Day 1

Facilitators Sanskriti Menon and Avinash Madhale introduced the workshop background and objectives, which was followed by the introductory panel discussion.

Panel: Perspectives on Urban Sustainability

Panellists

- Kartikeya Sarabhai, Director, Centre for Environment Education and member of the Earth Charter Council
- Kirtee Shah, Founder-President, Ahmedabad Study Action Group
- Mirian Vilela, Executive Director, Earth Charter International and member of the Earth Charter Council

Kartikeya Sarabhai initiated the discussion by reflecting on the need for an ethical framework. Most city or state governments don't have a development ideology. A city may pick up what look like solutions from other cities, but they may not have been thought through or adapted to fit the local context. For example, a city might build a BRT, which is a perfectly good solution. But then the city might also build multiple flyovers and completely neglect footpaths. The same bias might be visible in the building of a riverfront in India, to look like a European river front while disregarding or displacing the local uses of the river by fishermen, washer-men, potters etc. We need to take a step back to look at the basis of taking these decisions or choosing particular tools or solutions. An ethical framework can help identify and prioritize problems.

Kirtee Shah drew attention to some major un-sustainability trends. Historically, cities are the products of many forces, but the modern city is a product of economic globalization. However, liberalization of national economies, their global integration, privatization, structural adjustment, corporatization of business, and free rein to market forces, while spurring economic growth, promoting technological transformation and ensuring high level of prosperity and affluence for a select few are also observed to:

- deepen poverty,
- widen inequality,
- causing exclusion and marginalization,
- promoting wasteful consumerism,
- undermining national sovereignty,
- weakening state authority,
- destroying environment,
- depleting natural resources,
- tilting investment balance in favour of cities and within them to big cities,
- causing cultural alienation, and
- seriously damaging people's capacity to find solutions rooted in their culture, social norms, value system and traditional wisdom.

How the developing world copes with these forces and factors will largely determine how humane, livable and just its cities are, Kirtee Shah also provided a range of solutions. (See presentation uploaded at http://earthcharterplus10.org/workshopthemes_Cities_Communities.html)

Kartikeya responded to Kirtee's presentation suggesting that while the solutions might vary and be locally developed, the diagnosis of the problem itself reflects an ethical framework. Kartikeya quoted Gandhiji's talisman suggesting that it is one type of ethical framework: "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away."

Mirian Vilela, Executive Director, Earth Charter International, provided a number of examples of the use of the Earth Charter by cities. These include:

- Itaipu which is a very large public sector company in Brazil has undertaken consultations with about 29 to 30 small local community groups using the EC. The consultations bring together local government, farmers groups etc.
- Sao Paulo, which is a large city with a population of about 20 million has been taking its sustainability concerns very seriously, looking at water, waste management etc. About a thousand schools are supported / managed by the city government. The Earth Charter related initiative is located within the school education department where there is a focus on teacher training using the EC, as well as on peace education since the city also has a problem of violence. More at <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Sao%20Paulo,%20Brazil>
- In San Jose, Costa Rica the Mayor embraced the Earth Charter. About 2000 staff members of the city authority participated in a training conducted over the course of a year, to consider the Earth Charter and see how it applies to the work of the city government. See more at <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/San%20Jose,%20Costa%20Rica>
- In Joondalup, Australia the city government has considered the EC in the master planning process. (<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Joondalup,%20Australia>). In Toronto, Canada (<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Toronto,%20Canada>) and Montpelier, USA, too the Earth Charter principles have been integrated into the master planning processes.
- Mirian introduced the EC Assess tool, which can be used to assess the values attached to each of the principles 5 to 16 of the EC. When the number of programmes the city govt has taken responding to those values are listed out, a picture can emerge of what the gaps are. The assessment and responses can be depicted graphically to give a clearer picture to people. The EC Assess tool is available in the Virtual Library section of the EC website.

Mirian said that while the city government or Mayor or community leader might take the lead in endorsing the EC, it needs ultimately to be embraced by people.

Kartikeya suggested that the EC Assess tool would be more effective if the responses are not aggregated, and the performance is not reduced to a number, but instead helps to reveal the extent of response and gaps in programmes in accordance with the values a community has.

Kirtee said that tools of measurement, analysis, communication etc are very far removed from the people they are supposed to be benefiting. Talking about an analysis he is currently doing, Kirtee spoke about the negligible quantum of investments made by banks such as the ADB that is pro-poor or even pro-people, even though the stated objective is that.

Reflecting on Kirtee's comment, Prof Neelkanth Chhaya (Dean, School of Architecture, CEPT University) suggested that perhaps we should explore formats of communication such as the performance of the sufi musicians and Shabnam Virmani on the previous evening. The ethical frameworks we use have to be rooted in peoples own backgrounds and histories. There is an 'up-thereeness' of the Earth Charter which people might not relate to. On the other hand, many of us have gone to school in a homogenized type of environment and deny our cultural contexts. The bridging of this gap is very important.

Manvita Baradi (Director, Urban Management Centre, Ahmedabad) asked if there were more specific tools for city managers, who often have very little time. Kirtee responded saying that city managers must make the time, else it is a sign of disorder in the institution.

There was some discussion on how does change happen. Kartikeya asked how many instances have you seen change happening because of the governments. In Ahmedabad for instance, if we were to take on an exercise of engaging with the EC, we could do it with various institutions like the CEPT, CEE, Ahmedabad University, various community groups and even as individuals.

Soumini, a PhD Student from CEPT University asked that the discussion 'get real'. She gave the example of Surat where mangroves are being planted in some areas, and being uprooted for industrial expansion in other areas. Kirtee Shah replied that such inconsistency is a part of our every day life. Governments can be held responsible and called inconsistent but it is also the responsibility of the community to tackle this situation. Alarm bells are ringing, but if the mayor or planners are not listening, it does not mean that the alarm is not to be raised. They are the reason we have to engage in discussions on ethical frameworks.

Camilla Godinho (Youth Representative on the Earth Charter Council and Diversity Institute) spoke about her experiences with training and young people. She said that engagement with ethical principles is an intensive process and takes time. Vivek

Khadpekar drew attention to the need for addressing sustainable urban livelihoods in our discussions; also, how to engage with politicians in whom public has lost all faith. These might areas would be taken up for discussion on Day 2.

Mirian closed the session asking the group to certainly think about the challenges of sustainability, but to think also about the ways in which cities can progress towards sustainability. Specifically, as brought out in the discussion, the group has expressed the need for tools that are more culturally rooted, which people can relate to, as well as for engaging politicians.

Report of Day 2

Prof Neelkanth Chhaya, Dean, School of Architecture, CEPT University chaired the sessions on Day 2. He made an initial comment that an exploration is needed on the ideas of control, expert knowledge, of a utilitarian philosophy, and whether we all are not in fact participants rather than controllers, as change happens.

Evi Steiner-Böhm, county of Amberg-Sulzbach, Germany (near Nuremberg) spoke about the use of the Earth Charter in Bavaria. This county has 26 smaller communities and two bigger towns. About 140 000 people live in the region where half the population is Catholic and the other half Protestant which is still the cause of many conflicts. In 2005 a committee drafted the counties goals for the future. It was decided to create an "Earth Charter Way" along which projects should be exposed that put the Earth Charter principles into practise. This "Earth Charter Way" should not only draw people's attention towards sustainability, but also bring the communities closer together. It also should use existing walking and cycling networks. Although agreed on by all politicians in 2006, nothing was done about it. In 2010 a civil "Earth Charter Society" was founded to create this "Earth Charter Way" as a civil society project. Since there were already many strong local Agenda 21 projects going on, it was easy to identify 26 projects in the county that can be used as "best practise" examples for the Earth Charter. An exhibition showing these projects was organised and hosted by the District Administrator. A magazine sponsored by a local bank was published: http://issuu.com/peter_boehm/docs/vias As the movement gained strength political support was obtained. Evi concluded saying, that even if political or government support is not there, citizens can still take the initiative. More information about the initiative is at <http://www.erdchartaweg-as.de/1.html>

Goran Johnson, representing Ramboll Natura AB, Stockholm presented the work done under the project Sustainable City Planning in Pune, with support from SIDA. While the Earth Charter was not the basis for the project, the aim was to enhance the possibility of integration of sustainability principles into the development plan (master plan) of the Pune Municipal Corporation. Pune is a metropolitan city of about 3 million, with a projected population increase of 2 million in the next 20 years. The main elements of the SCPP project included a Strategic Environment Assessment, transport and land-use planning, GIS capacity building, study on possibility climate change mitigation, etc. The issues of the city were identified

through a scoping process that included stakeholder consultations. The project is due to be completed in Dec 2010. It will not be immediately possible to assess the extent to which sustainability concerns will be integrated into the development plan. However, some new elements resulted, such as stakeholder consultations done to inform the planning process, and capacity building on aspects such as GIS.

A question was raised on the ethic of the underlying development cooperation agreement, aid-based projects, potential displacement of local knowledge due to the imposition of external ideas. It was clarified that the project was more aimed at advising the processes of planning rather than working out of solutions by external experts. It was also suggested that the idea of who is a professional should be debated, and especially so, the relationship between the professional consultant and the client. The observation was that what consultants do is dictated by the clients, and so outcomes would be questionable if the client is not interested in sustainability, or is inefficient or corrupt. Dunu Roy, Director, Hazards Centre, Delhi asked whether equity was a consideration in the SCPP project, and it was clarified that while it was not a clearly articulated objective, it was implicit in the development of alternatives, at least in those prepared for the transportation options. An observation was made about the limitation of the stakeholder consultations, which were dependent on who was invited to participate by the city authorities.

Manvita Baradi, Urban Management Center (UMC) and the International City / County Management Association (ICMA), Ahmedabad spoke about her experiences of working with city managers. The work of the UMC includes performance assessments on water sanitation in 169 cities across Gujarat, city to city partnership programmes, land use mapping in Afghanistan etc. She has been involved with facilitating the formation of city managers' associations in India. Currently through the network of association members it is possible to reach over 1800 local governments in India. She contrasted the functioning of the ICMA in the US and the city managers associations formed in India, especially on the formulation and acceptance of a code of ethics. While the US associations have a strong code, which is observed strictly, the associations in India have refused to actually accept or continue the code they had themselves adopted initially. There are 13 points with respect to ethics in ICMA and 8 new codes were added by the members in India. Manvita felt that while individually people were able to accept the code, they were unwilling to continue the practice of collectively reading and affirming the code after the first one or two times. Her reflection was that a code of ethics can't just be imposed, and that even a gradual evolution of a code requires patience and persistence. Vivek drew attention to the distinction between a code of ethics and a code of conduct.

Nalin Sinha from Institute for Transportation and Development policy (ITDP) described the activities of the organization. An initial project was to upgrade the cycle rickshaw in New Delhi. Its current activities relate to providing technical inputs for transportation projects and public transport, especially bus-based and non-motorized transport solutions are advocated.

Camila Godinho, the Youth Representative on the EC Council described the work being done by in the city of Salvador, Brazil using the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter is used for initial sensitization in community leadership training programmes as well as others on Bio-Architecture and sustainable building practices. The community leadership programme deliberately includes both young and old participants with a view to promote intergenerational learning in the community. She also talked about State Youth and Environment Programme where EC is used as the framework of the programme and collective ideas of the youth is shared with the local government. The initiative involves training of local artisans and also support to project ideas identified through a collaborative process.

Prof Chhaya commented on the range of presentations in the morning session which included the experiences of community work, professionals, city managers and technocrats. While the experiences are quite diverse, a common thread is that all are concerned with a desire for rapid change. He observed that planning and directed knowledge seeks to make linear changes. However, nature does not change at the same rate, and in fact it is very slow. Technology changes rapidly, and society evolves not as fast as technology and nor as slow as nature. Ethical values on the other hand are to do with what we want for ever. Our consideration of ethical frameworks needs also to explore top-down and bottom-up change, the relationship between decentralization and centralization, between abstract global imperatives and local cultural knowledge. In his summing up he commented on the acute narrowness of view point on which we base our language. The language itself may be very far away from the groundedness of the issues of people and notions of sustainability.

Just before lunch the a small attempt to take sustainability discussions to the neighbourhood level in the form of a *mela* or fair was demonstrated by Avinash Madhale of CEE. The mela has been designed as a half or one-day event that takes place in a space provided by a residential block. It currently offers activities such as a clean-up campaign, a map based or survey-based assessment of waste management practices and for identification of spaces for sorting, a 'V-Collect' service for disposal of recyclable items/ scrap, demonstration of waste segregation, composting, a discussion platform including with service providers and the local municipal office, paper bag making, poster exhibition, etc. The aim is to include activities on traffic calming and walkability, biodiversity protection/ greening, stream restoration, rain water harvesting, participatory budgeting, etc. The objective is to take a localized, customized package of practical environmental education very close to people and especially to bring various actors together. CEE would be developing the *mela* further as a visual and localized presentation of some of the EC principles.

In the post lunch session a presentation was made by Dr. Uday Bhawalkar on his invention of a Biosanitizer and its applications. Examples of applications included remediation of arsenic contamination in West Bengal, ground water treatment in Gujarat, sewage treatment without electricity in Madurai, treatment of the Mutha river in Pune etc.

Three presentations on the status and struggles of the informal sector in Delhi, Rajasthan-Gujarat and Ahmedabad brought out the distance between the everyday reality of millions of people in the cities of developing countries and the notion of the social dimension of sustainable development.

Dunu Roy, Hazards Centre, Delhi gave the example of studies done on behalf of and discussions with rag-pickers in New Delhi. A major concern was injuries due to sharps in the garbage which they sort through to retrieve recyclables. A two-day workshop was done with the wastepickers to come up with solutions such as gloves and other protective gear. When asked what they thought, they said they wanted a tap. It appears that over the past few years, all the public taps have become 'privatized' with some persons having established control over access to public taps. The wastepickers said that they wanted taps so that they could wash their wounds and reduce the danger of infections, wash their clothes to avoid being bitten by dogs, and to be clean so that they wouldn't be harassed by the police. Another problem they expressed was that their access to waste/ recyclables was being curtailed with the privatization of waste-collection services. Since the payment terms in the contract are against tonnage lifted, the contractors pick up everything for transport to landfills. A study was devised and a visual questionnaire prepared by Hazards Centre, and which was administered by the waste-pickers themselves. The study revealed that about Rs 7 million worth of recyclables were being retrieved every day by waste-pickers. The study results were used to negotiate with the municipal government to regain the access to recyclables. The waste-pickers showed that about 80% of the waste materials would be recycled or composted, thus saving on the energy needed to transport waste to landfill. Another demand was about provision of identity cards so that they would gain more acceptance among the better off citizens. This demand was not agreed to by the city government, who instead offered gloves and aprons. The wastepickers decided to take the gloves and aprons and asked that the words 'Gift from' in small typeface, and 'MCD' in large typeface be printed on the aprons. This was done! They also asked for space for composting in the municipal parks. However this demand was not accepted on the grounds that 'good people and senior citizens come here for walks, and they may fall into the compost pits'. Dunu concluded by saying that there are many such stories related to other types of informal sector workers, and they all go to show how little the government manages to do for the urban poor and how the realization of every right has to be fought for by those who are dis.

Rajeev Khandelwal, Ajeevika Bureau spoke about the issue of migrant workers in Gujarat who migrate from Rajasthan. The conditions in Rajasthan are that natural resources are exhausted and there is not enough in agriculture, livestock, biomass, water etc to sustain people. So people are forced to move to areas of high employment, like Gujarat. Through there is a certain element of choice in the decision to move, they are largely unskilled for life in the city, and the choice is one of desperation. They may maintain a social life in the village while conducting their economic life in the destination city. Many are seasonal migrants as a result of which they remain uncounted in the census. The number may be as high as 1.2 million in Ahmedabad which has an official population of about 5 million.

We don't have control over global prices so we cut down on labour safety and wages as a way of making profits. There is no policy framework in India to address the need for protection of migrant workers or provision of services to them. When people migrate to another state, they cross an invisible line of patronage and are likely to be treated in a worse manner. Migrant labour would not have any identity proof and so would not be able to access food through the public distribution system or Public Health Service, Education, transportation, access to potable water, security concerns etc. They are forced instead to spend much more on these services than a typical resident might pay. Ajeevika is providing a range of services to migrant workers such as technical skill training, providing ID, making arrangements for clean drinking water, toilets, cheap food etc. Migrant labour are among the most vulnerable in a city as they are not in a position to be collectivised or organized which has been the traditional strategy for demanding labour rights. Rajeev appealed to think about cities as places where migrant labour can find at the least basic support needed for earning a dignified livelihood. Any ethical framework for sustainable cities needs to go beyond the general notions of justice to making a more stronger commitment to this and especially in this age of increased migration into cities.

Shalini from Self Employed Women Association (SEWA), spoke about the issues of the street-vendors in the city. The case of Manek Chowk in the old city of Ahmedabad was presented as an illustration. In 1982, about 313 vendors in the area were harassed by the police, municipal corporation etc and were to be displaced. With the help of SEWA they organized themselves and filed a case in the Supreme Court, and ultimately they were granted licenses to vend. Over 60,000 street vendors have been organized and are part of the SEWA unions. The strategies used by SEWA have largely been to encourage collectivization and organization of women vendors (and other informal sector occupations). Public interest litigation has also been used. An innovative method, which was developed as part of a training event for the World Bank was to invite city decision makers into the homes of these informal sector women, where they would stay for two days. In one such case, the daughter of the house where the municipal commissioner stayed was taken ill. Her mother had to go from house to house to collect money for her daughter's treatment. This helped open the commissioner's eyes, and he then arranged for social security measures to be provided to the informal sector women. However, the struggles for livelihood continue. Data to help develop solutions are gathered by the unions, including enumeration of vendors, mapping of natural markets in the city, design of spaces etc.

Raj, a student from MEC-CC, Gujarat University asked that looking at the all presentations it is clear that examples like cycle rickshaw are a great solution for sustainability, but why can't we use such simple practical solutions to achieve sustainability. Another remark was made about the potential conflict between the rights of street vendors and rights of pedestrians.

Gwendolyn Hallsmith from Montpelier, Vermont, US provided a presentation over skype, and spoke about a cycle repair shop set up as an aid-based project in

Diepsloot, South Africa. HIV AIDS and lack of adult heads of families are major issues. The project was aimed at youth development and empowerment. Land was obtained from the local church. An initial shipment bicycles and tools was provided. The shipment container itself was used to build the shop. Trainers came in from the US to provide training to the local youth. In some time the cycle shop has become a self-sustaining venture. In response to a question on the connection between the bicycle project and sustainable cities, Gwen replied that the principles of the EC were tried to be incorporated in the project. Reducing carbon footprint, encouragement; training, and providing affordable transportation to youth were looked after. The total project cost was 35,000 US dollars provided as a grant by the Rockefeller Foundation. Trainers had to be sent from the US as there had been a problem earlier of the local project contact disappearing with the money.

The subsequent discussion, especially in the light of the issues of the informal sector in the developing world, highlighted the point that there are issues of class, equity, power and inherent conflicts in society. Sustainability is a political process. The ethical framework we may use needs to acknowledge and address these in a much more focused manner. It has to be more than a set of feel good statements. Shalini said that the EC could be helpful in their struggles, but also pointed out that the International Labour Organization which is the most relevant UN agency for this sector has many charters and treaties but these too have had limited effect. It is not realistic that the EC could be used to bring pressure on local governments.

In the concluding remarks, Dunu highlighted some issues which were proposed for further discussion: Its clear that the reality of the cities of the developing world is that 70% of the population have no voice, no access to consultants or even their own municipality. What happens when their voices come to the fore? Whose sustainability are we talking about? Is it that of the slum dweller or the waste picker or the migrant? Whose ethic? Is it that of the senior citizen? Is it is of the private corporation or the city government? Why do we talk about slum- or beggar-free cities and not car-free cities? India is a deeply imperfect society. These imperfections need to be acknowledged and addressed. If we want ecological balance, then the nature of economic development cannot be the same as it is now.

Report of the Concluding Session on 3 Nov 2010

Mr I P Gautam, IAS, Municipal Commissioner attended the concluding session of the workshop. Prof Chhaya who continued as the Chair opened the Concluding Session with a summary of the discussions of the previous two days and issues emerging there from: The workshop opened with Kartikeya Sarabhai briefly exploring the question 'why do we need an ethical framework'. The quest for sustainability is that of a good, just and healthy life. We are looking for solutions to the present crises in order to lead a good life. According to him the ethical framework precedes the selection of solutions. It is the most important foundation of our work in the area of sustainable cities. It helps us identify what to do.

Kirtee Shah described the urban situation across the world. Economic globalization may have brought benefits to some but has promoted an unsustainable use of natural resources and also resulted in deep crises in society. Cities are not only engines of economic growth but are also products of economic growth. It is not arithmetically possible to continue this progression since resources are finite. He suggested that while at one level sustainability is about individual choices, it is also about politics and the administration of cities and the economy. Mirian provided useful examples of the use of the Earth Charter in various cities, and introduced the EC Assess tool.

The second day began with a presentation of community initiatives by Evi in Bavaria which were not initially accepted by the political leadership but because of the large-scale community involvement, the politician were forced to support the initiatives and projects identified by community groups. The presentation of the Sustainable City Planning in Pune by the professional from Sweden provided an example of a planner's method and view. The presentation by Nalin Sinha of ITDP was an example of another professional organization's methods, albeit informed by a particular view of what is being promoted, in this case, a strong focus on public transportation and non-motorized transportation facilities. Camilla Godinho also spoke about community initiatives using the Earth Charter as a base, and linking up with support to local artisans and local projects.

Dunu Roy's presentation and example of the work with waste pickers in Delhi posed some sharp questions about whose ethic and whose sustainability is being accepted – is it of people who are comfortable or is it that of the waste picker, or the slum dweller or the homeless. As important as the ethical framework is the understanding of the politics of the situation and the recognition that large scale commercial interests influence it fundamentally. Rajeev Khandelwal's presentation drew attention to the conditions of over a 100 million migrants in India, who come to cities. They lead a fragmented life, with a social life in the village and an economic life in the city. The economy of a city is much supported by their presence. It is extremely important that these invisible citizens become visible and are able to take part in the discussions about the city, and that the city recognizes what the city is gaining from them and provides them support. Shalini's presentation dwelt on the livelihoods of street-vendors and their presence in natural markets in the city. She felt a radical change is needed in the attitudes of politicians and administrators as regards the poor and the informal sector occupations and economies in the city.

Prof Chhaya concluded his introductory remarks observing, "Two viewpoints are in balance: one viewpoint accepts that the ethical standpoint is the basis for action. The other view says that the ethical stand point as it is generally presented may hide the real issues; there are structures of interest that are built to make large-scale profits; they are detrimental to the city, to society and to sustainability. The other view point acknowledges that any discussion on ethics and sustainability has to go into the politics of the development, and explore the questions of whose ethics and whose sustainability".

Mr. I.P. Gautam, Municipal Commissioner, Ahmedabad responded to the remarks by Prof Chhaya, saying that it is true that cities are hard-pressed to find long-term solutions for the poor and the informal sector.

Mr Gautam drew attention to the lack of development support to rural populations which forces people to migrate. He gave an example from his earlier posting in the State Transport department. Dependable transportation services can help to some extent as it can provide vital services and physical access and linkages to markets, schools, healthcare etc. If a route is closed down or if the timings are changed, the result is that children can't go to school. People from surrounding areas such as Surendra Nagar can come down to Ahmedabad for selling their wares and go back.

In earlier times there were cheap and low-cost *dharamsalas* in cities where travellers could board and lodge in the city. Very few hotels were there, people would stay with their extended families. Now the number of people coming to the city is much higher. And it is not only the visitors or floating populations but migrants who are spending substantial amount of time in the city. However, the city's infrastructure to cater to visitors and migrants has not kept pace with this number. Poor migrant workers initially find some place on pavements or around railway stations and then go into slums. Eventually if they become part of some organized group they demand for some services. This is an area that needs to be addressed to improve a city's response to sustainability questions.

However, the discussions have to go beyond demands and rights. The solutions cannot be designed by the municipal authority alone, and compromises have to be made in situations of conflicts. For example, while street-vendors need place to sell their wares, so do pedestrians need space to walk. As per our law, there is no restriction on the number of vehicles that can ply in the city. Nor is there any restriction on the number of people who can come into and live in the city. In any case just the enactment of laws, policing and regulations does not work. That is why some self-discipline and ethic is needed in the search for solutions.

On the environmental front, the city of Ahmedabad has taken many initiatives and is committed to environmental improvement. For example, we have already commissioned new sewage treatment plants and within a year or so we will achieve 100% sewage treatment capacity. We have shifted over to CNG for rickshaws. The new BRT system has helped in improving public transportation and both these projects have helped improve air quality. We have completely revamped the system of solid waste management to improve collection and disposal and a new scientific landfill site is already under construction. Projects for revitalization of lakes and water bodies have been done, such as for Kankaria Lake. A number of steps have been taken to control industrial pollution. Agreements have been done with the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation for management of waste in the industrial estates of Vatva, Naroda and Odhav. The AMC collects tax but 75% of it is returned to the estates for pollution control and remediation. The AMC has provided a bank guarantee to the GIDC for obtaining funds to install the required infrastructure.

Different stakeholders have to come together to search for solutions. I have visited the CEPT library and I find that much extensive and detailed work has been done by students and researchers on so many different dimensions of the city. This is good and useful work and it needs to be taken further.

Mr Gautam in conclusion appreciated the initiative taken by Centre for Environment Education in organizing the conference and said that he would discuss with the Mayor and Standing Committee about the possibility of the city of Ahmedabad entering into a dialogue with the Earth Charter.

Following the talk by Mr Gautam, a presentation was made by Mr Kobedi Pilane, South Africa about dolomite risk awareness program and a lake conservation campaign in Ekurhuleni, South Africa. Ekurhuleni is a city of about 4 million people, and its economic base is manufacturing. The ethnic composition is about 70% African.

Mr Prashant Pandya, Deputy Director, Solid Waste Management and Conservancy Services, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation presented about the initiatives taken up by AMC for safe collection, transport and disposal of municipal waste. Concern was expressed about the displacement of the informal recycling sector. Mr Pandya replied that the waste collectors and scrap dealers have not been touched at all in the new SWM systems set up by the municipality. Ahmedabad is managing all its waste within its municipal limits. The compost, RDF and incineration plants being set up will take care of processing of most of the waste, and only rejects from these plants need to be sent to landfill. The rejects will be of much smaller volume. With the new scientifically constructed landfill which will be ready within a year, the city need not worry about the shortage of space for safe disposal.

Ms Marianela Curi, who is a member of the Earth Charter Council made some observations about the discussions so far. She said that the point made about the need to improve urban-rural linkages was very important. Much improvement is necessary in rural areas which will help to stop the growth of cities. Our cities are unsustainable currently and there is a direct link between growth of cities and unsustainability. As growth is happening, cities have to be respecting of different ways of life as people from many different cultures. Participation and equity are important principles; people need to feel ownership as change is created. Socio-economic issues and partnerships between stakeholders would be important elements in the common future we create. An ethical framework is necessary to guide our actions in our efforts for making cities sustainable.

A short discussion was undertaken to summarize and conclude the entire workshop. The workshop ended with the following three recommendations to be placed in the concluding plenary session of the conference. The participants have made these recommendations to ourselves, to the Earth Charter Initiative and for consideration in the processes leading up to the DESD 2014 and Rio + 20 conferences.

Recommendations

For ourselves, to the Earth Charter Initiative, and for processes leading up DESD 2014 and Rio 20

1. There is a need to recognize the urban and rural context are inseparably bound in an integral system and that affect all aspects related to their sustainability. At the same time decentralized locally relevant approaches recognizing the diversity view points, cultures and way of life must be in order to sustainable form of living.
2. The global environment is greatly affected by the outlook and activities of the corporate profit making ethics need to be ethically questioned politically addressed.
3. There is a need to frankly and openly acknowledge that there exists a politics of exclusion which affects large section of urban population. Equity and urban participation of all segments of citizenship in the process of decision making is vital to achieve sustainability.

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