

Cities Workshop

INTRODUCTION

The discussions of the sustainable cities working group took place against an increasingly urbanization, already at an extraordinary level, will only intensify as the economies of the Asia Pacific region continue to grow. Early in the next century, East Asia

Leader:

Art Wright, Sustainable Development Research Institute (SDRI)
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

In terms of addressing these issues, and deciding where to focus the group's energies, the **Recorder:** Xavier Furtado

To begin addressing these issues, the group was asked by the chair to outline what they saw as the general objectives of our discussions. Some argued that what is needed is an expanded awareness of the possible scenarios in which we, as increasingly interdependent countries and societies, could choose. The general public, it was thought, is not necessarily aware that there are alternatives to the status quo. Insofar as we try to arrive at alternatives, it was added that we should attempt to address the basic needs of all people, such as housing, welfare, employment and personal security. Finally, it was also noted that what was needed was a clearer understanding of the link between economic development and social issues.

In identifying some of the specific issues and problems, the group highlighted the following: population pressures, push and pull factors in migration (urbanization), consumption patterns, and issues of governance, such as transparency, power balances and how to relate to the decision-making structure.

Establishing a Guiding Set of Principles

In order to organize and direct our thinking, the group focused on defining a set of principles (or 'values'). Insofar as our values help govern our behaviour, it was thought that defining (or reminding ourselves of) a set of values that would encourage sustainable development

“Early in the next century East Asia will be home to most of the world's largest cities, possessing all the characteristics of the world's current megacities: pollution, crime, and strained public infrastructure systems.”

