



**Communitas Coalition Side Event**  
***Crafting Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for Urban Sustainability  
and Balanced Territorial Development at All Geographical Scales***  
Christopher Dekki

There is no doubt that the overall success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda hinges on the sustainable development of our cities and human settlements, of our communities. This was made clear by the speakers at a side event hosted by the Communitas Coalition (of which MGCY is part) and their partners that revolved around the formation of an indicator framework for measuring development progress in the urban context. Speakers from a number of organizations like the University of Pennsylvania, UN-HABITAT, IFAD, the Government of Catalonia, and the Mission of Singapore, reminded those in attendance that cities and human settlements are where much of our success rests, where great dangers to the environment are created, and also where great opportunity lies dormant.

Sustainable urban development must be measured in relation to rural development. The inter-linkages between these two realities are not only an important policy discussion, but also a palpable reality. Cities cannot function without rural areas and rural areas depend on cities for a number of their needs. Indicators for SDG 11 must not only be quantitative, but qualitative in the sense that there is a need to see how to best link real sustainable urban development to that of rural areas. It must be understood that urban indicators can help serve the overall framework and act as a catalyst for development for a wider population, not only for those living in urban environments. Geospatial and satellite data can help us better understand territorial development at all geographical scales and provide us with the means to actually pinpoint how best to deliver services and to whom. With proper capacity building at all levels of government and national ownership, geospatial data can be a critical means through which urban and rural sustainable development is achieved.

A number of success stories from cities around the world show us that urban development need not occur in a vacuum. By relying on the expertise and knowledge of subnational and local authorities, national governments can utilize best practices to ensure the delivery of services as per global sustainable development policy. Partnerships between different levels of government are a key to the success of our sustainable development agenda as so many cities and regions have already been able to implement policies that have served their populations. Moreover, these cities and regions are using indicators that have helped them track their success. From Catalonia to Singapore, there is much that can be learned from local implementation of development policy.

Sustainable urban development is the cornerstone of the entire Post-2015 Development Agenda. The majority of the world's population depends on policies that can usher in an era where cities are recognized as the core of development. As centers of governance, trade, finance, opportunity, and population growth, cities can and should be more than simply a single development goal and a few targets. Indicators for urban development are also indicators for general sustainable development and, as the Communitas Coalition side event has reminded us, the time has come to act on this pressing reality.