

NASEM Workshop on Mitigating Arboviral Threats and Strengthening Public Health Preparedness

Public health in urban environments

12–13 December 2023
NASEM, Washington DC

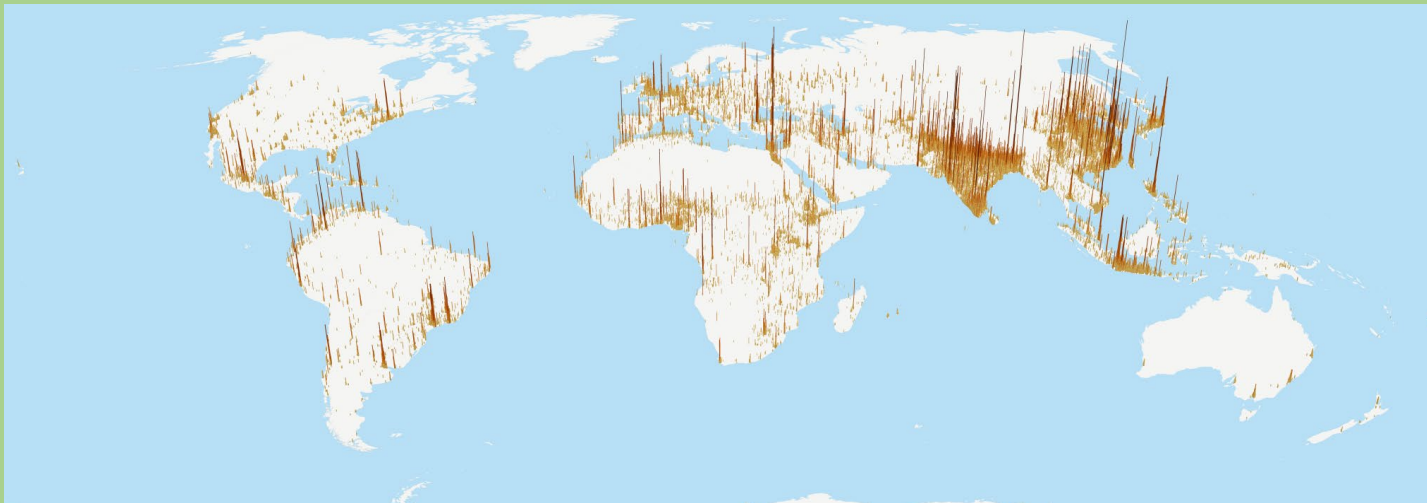
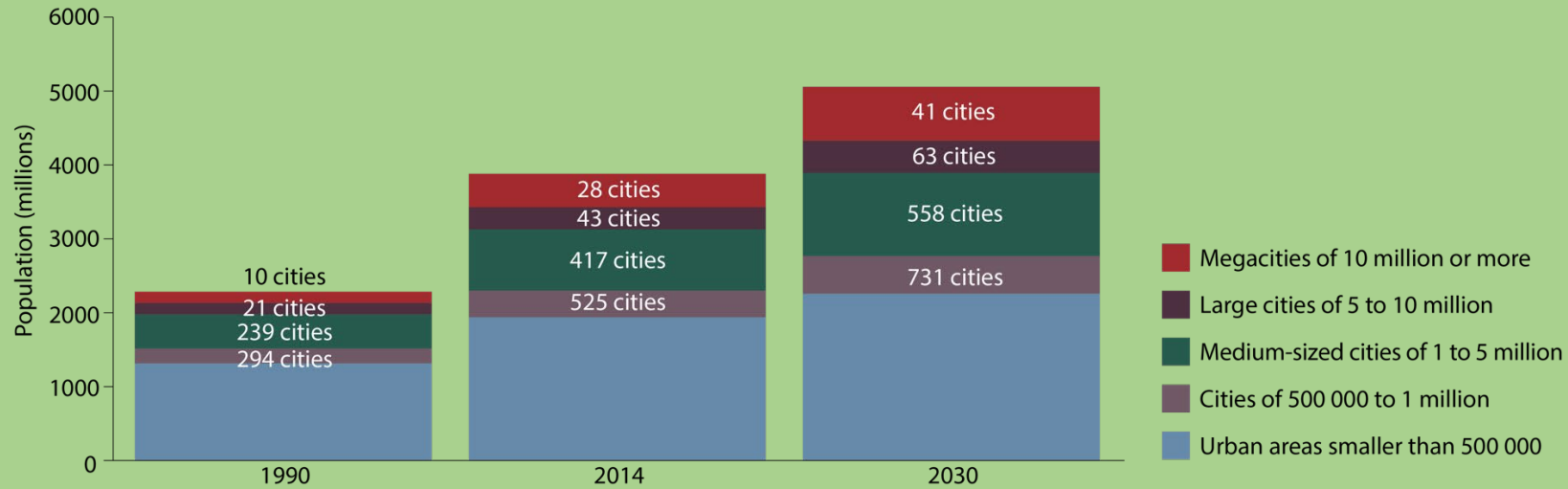
Dr Graham Alabaster, Chief Geneva Office UN-Habitat,
Office of The Executive Director



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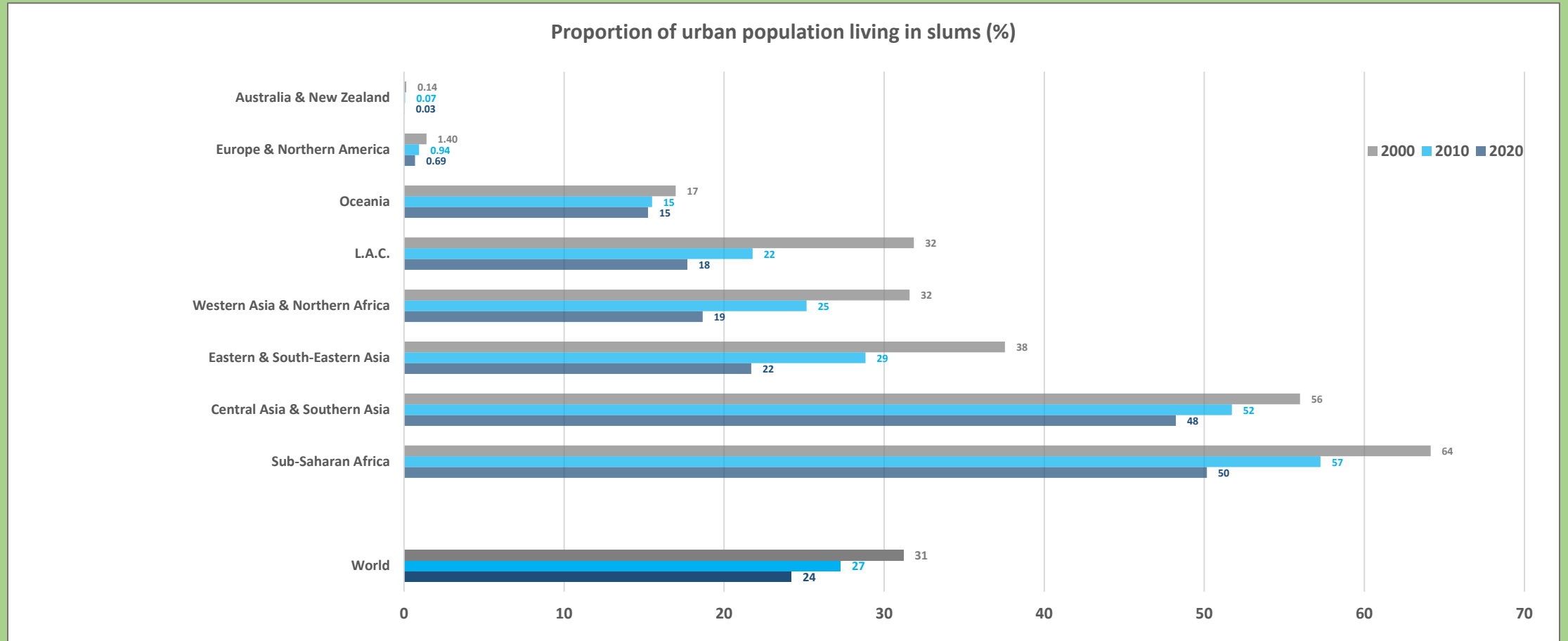
An urbanizing world & growth of cities

More Cities of All Scales & Population Density (1km² grid cell)



Many of the Cities of 2050 have yet to be built!

Global Slum Populations



As we plan for future
pandemics, why is
understanding urban form and
function so important?

Covid-19 impacts on cities & their response

- The Covid-19 pandemic was like an X-ray. It has shown the many EXISTING inequities and divisions in urban settings
- The impacts have been governed by:
 - Overcrowding NOT density
 - Co-morbidities (Global South= communicable diseases Global North= non-communicable disease)
 - Treatment-seeking behaviour
 - Demographics (age profile, mobility)
 - Cities' ability to respond (triage, isolating the vulnerable)
 - Socio-economic situation of the most vulnerable (slums in the global south, Migrant communities in global north)
- The “nimble” performance of city-governments in managing the pandemic is critical in support of national governments plans (earlier engagement??)
- Many of the interventions NEED spatially disaggregated local-level data, only available at city level

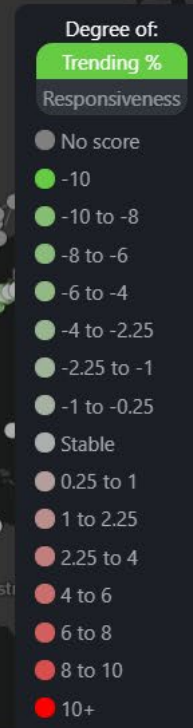
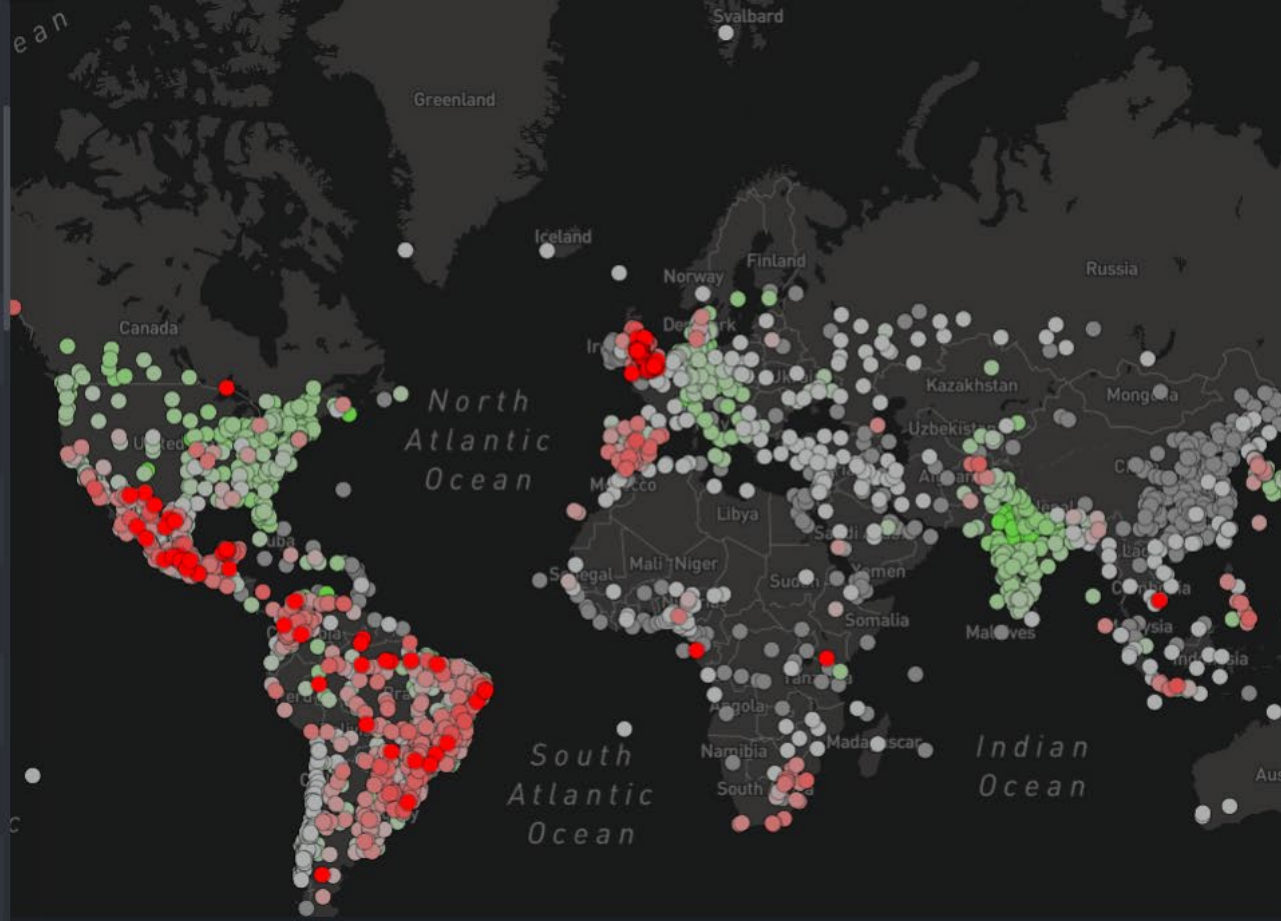


City Index



Trending Percent	Response Score	City	Country
NEW	--	Gastre	Argentina
NEW	38	Sabinas Hidalgo	Mexico
NEW	52	Villa Union	Mexico
>10	47	Oriximina	Brazil
>10	50	Novo Airao	Brazil
>10	36	Alenquer	Brazil
>10	69	Libreville	Gabon
>10	44	Pinheiro	Brazil
>10	37	Porto Alegre	Brazil
>10	42	Olinda	Brazil

1-50 of 2228



Trending
Trend Score Distribution
All Cities

	Today	Yesterday	2 D
Less than -10%	1.39%	2.4%	3.0%
Down to -10%	40.67%	37.91%	40.1%
Stable	22.13%	22.74%	21.6%



Impact

	World	Country	City
Cases	173,999,576	33,245,706	1,24
Lives Lost	3,747,371	595,667	24,4
Mortality Rates	2.15%	1.79%	1.9%
Cases/100k	2235.35	10588.70	1241
Lives Lost/100k	48.14	189.72	243.

CitiIQ COVID-19 City Readiness and Response Tracker

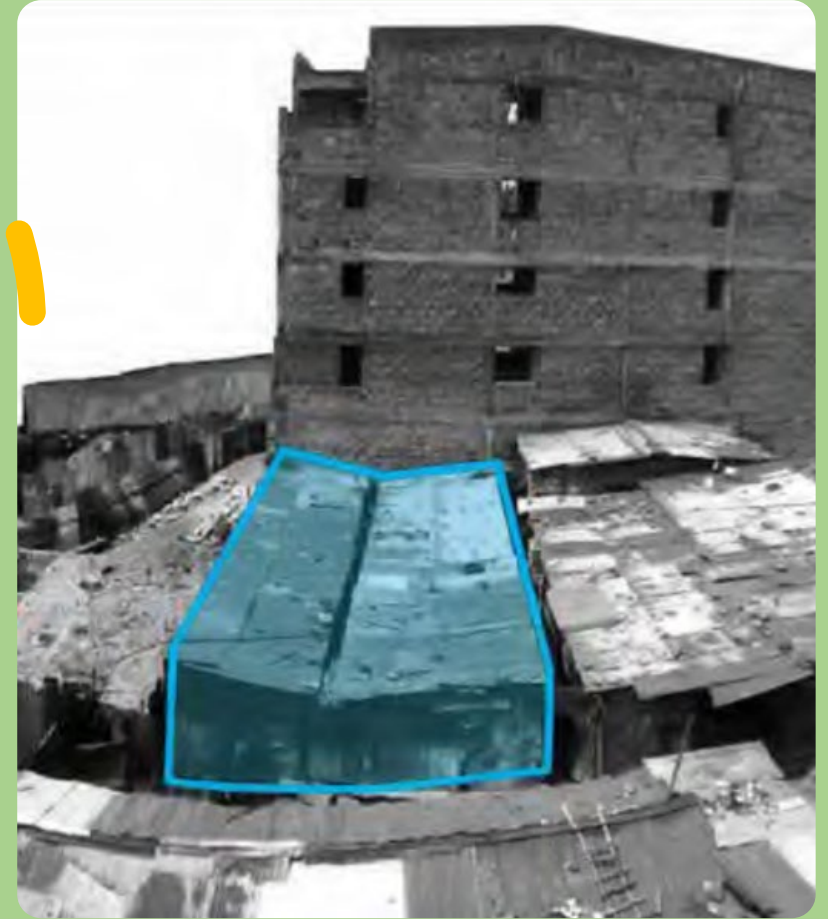
What is Urban? Many factors influence urbanization patterns and their impact on delivering health

- *The Diversity of Urban area*
 - *Large urban centres*
 - *Large urban centres resulting from conurbations,*
 - *Smaller urban centres*
 - *Large villages and small towns*
 - *Rural areas*
- In designing Health interventions “one size fits all” doesn’t work
- It is not only large cities that have low-income, vulnerable communities
- **Migration due to Climate and conflict** are exacerbating natural trends of urbanization Socio-economic situation of the most vulnerable (slums in the global south, Migrant communities in global north). **Increased pressure on services**
- Cities & Towns are **complex structures** embracing physical, social and environmental aspects
- Cities have multi-level governance systems: Housing/Neighbourhood/District/City/State/National/International which need to be fully understood



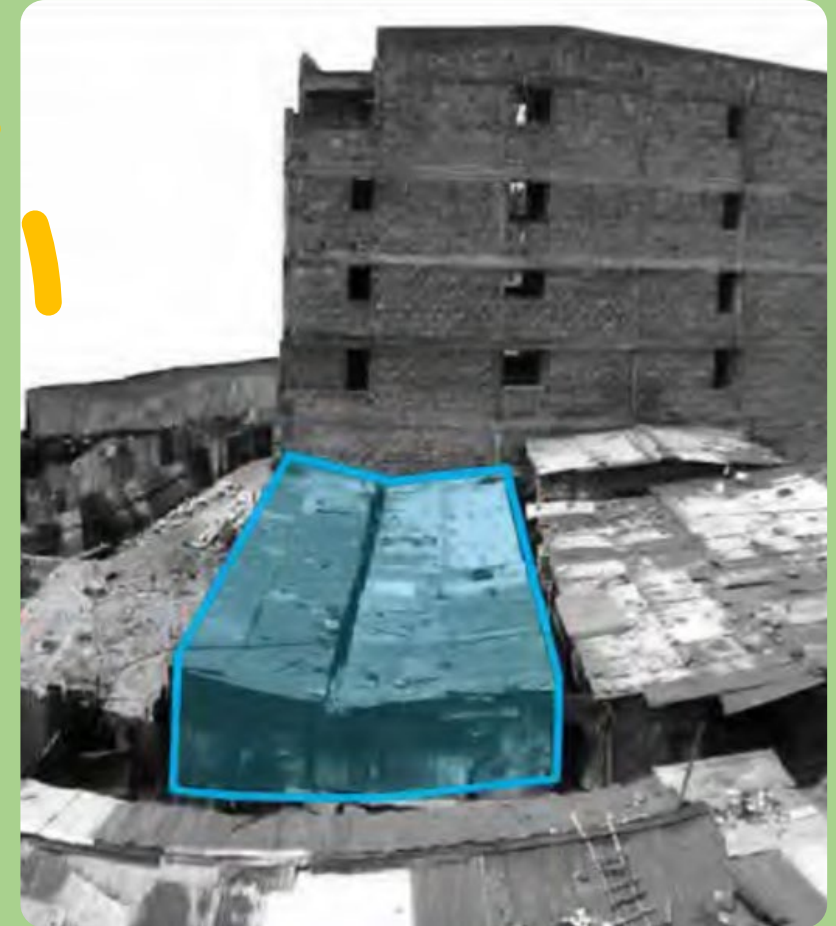
Why focus on urban and peri-urban settings?

- **Urbanisation opportunities not challenges** : From 2020 to 2030 the world's urban population is expected to increase from 2.7 billion to 5.1 billion people – i.e. 60% of global population 60% of urban areas that will exist in 2050 have not yet been built
- **Strong local civic leaders**
 - can be dynamic and help shape the growth and development of their cities
 - are the critical “missing middle” who are well placed to work with national government and are the ones with the best knowledge of their communities
 - can make multisectoral activities work
- **Urban vs rural**: Different transmission dynamics & treatment seeking behaviour
- **Multiple benefits of action**: Multi-sector response required to tackle VB diseases in cities will also help tackle other CD & NCDs
- Urban Centre's **Drive Economies!**



Why focus on urban and peri-urban settings?

- The **most vulnerable in urban settlements** (slum-dwellers) are often below the radar, but the symbiosis of these communities with workplaces and juxtaposition with higher-income settlements is critical
- High population densities have **economies of scale** when it comes to disease control & can be flexible and innovative
- **huge co-benefits** of Building out VB diseases by providing reliable piped water, effective solid waste removal and improved drainage as **Overcrowding NOT Density** is critical
- **Different Demographics & treatment seeking behaviours**
- Building resilience against environmental threats is a **concept understood** by many cities, as is working across sectors.



How do we sell this to cities?

- Emphasise the **city leader-led** approach mainstreaming multi-sectoral approaches USE EXISTING TOOLS
- Show how preventing VBs and other NTDs will **save money** & could boost economic development
 - **Emphasise** the huge importance of **environmental modifications** (piped water, solid waste removal, sanitation and drainage etc) to reduce the source of mosquitoes
 - **Ensure** city-planners and those responsible for infrastructure design adopt these “**new approaches**” for the future expansion of urban settings
 - In tandem, **targeted vector control & wide-scale vaccination** is required used proactively, not reactively
 - Disease & Vector **surveillance** needed to inform & target control
- City-led approach **working with the larger community**, particularly rapidly growing impoverished communities - recognising that amongst such communities, innovative solutions can be developed and promoted

So how do we do it in practise ?

- Work with a group of cities to develop a framework for **spatial data collection** on the precise layout & juxtaposition of informal/ formal settlements
- Develop selected pilots in carefully chosen neighbourhoods to demonstrate
 - (i) short-term “**quick-wins**” on VC, infrastructure provision focussing on tackling transmission and improving quality of life
 - (ii) **longer –term planning** guidelines for future urban expansion (both informal and formal)
- Work with City planning departments to replicate good practices slum/city-wide
- Institutionalisation through local bylaws & ordinances
- Share experience both within countries and internationally
- Use the multi-stakeholder partnership platforms to address “elephants”

Healthy Cities, Healthy People Launch, 23 November 2021

"Building healthy cities is not a job for one sector. It takes a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach, led by local governments."

- Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO.

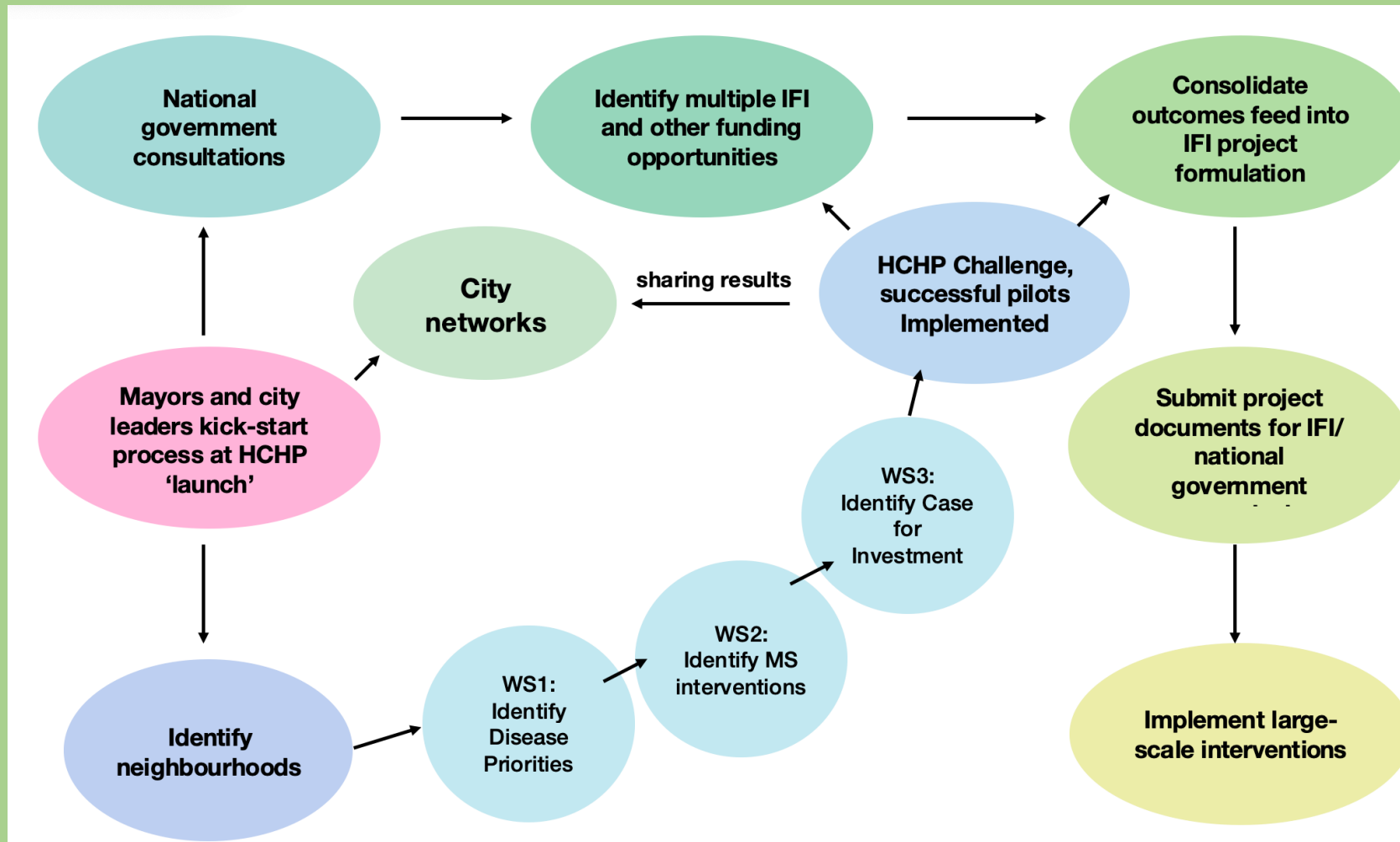
"Housing, access to clean water and sanitation and waste management are as important as access to a doctor. These are matters being handled by local government, outside the conventional remit of the health sector."

- Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat.

See HCHP Launch video [here](#)



The Process:



Conclusions

- **Understand the urban landscape (all aspects)**
- **Mayors and City leaders need to lead with a 2-track approach Short-term “response” long term, progressive re-think of urban design principles**
- **Unlock community potential for: surveillance, innovation, education & advocacy, implementation, “nudge” national governments**
- **Sell the concept based on multiple co-benefits**
- **Use catalytic funding to kick-start long-term change**

Thank you for your attention !

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