



SESSION SUMMARY

Session Title: Urban Reconstruction in Post-Conflict settings

Session Type: Thematic session

Date: TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

Key Speakers and Agencies:

Moderator:

- **Joe Leitmann**, Lead Disaster Risk Management Specialist, GFDRR

Speakers:

- **Sameh Wahba**, Global Director of Urban and Territorial Development, DRM and Resilience, World Bank
- **Erfan Ali**, Director of Regional Office for Arab States, UN-Habitat
- **Tahir Akbar**, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, World Bank
- **Matina Halkia**, Scientific Officer, European Commission Joint Research Centre

Discussants:

- **Chiara Mellucci**, Resilience Advisor, European Commission
- **Maitreyi Das**, Manager Urban Rural & Social Development, World Bank



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The session focused on practical tools and examples on engagement in post-conflict urban reconstruction. **Sameh Wahba** opened the session presenting the case of Lebanon where restoration of historic sites, buildings and markets promoted urban recovery and cohesion between various factions of the society. Culture and heritage could be one common denominator to bring together warring groups. Following this, **Erfan Ali** reflected on the drivers of urban conflict, such as unmanaged population movement and growth, and an increase in poverty and overall fragility, and provided an overview of the Urban Recovery Framework (URF) that supports resilient urban recovery at scale, and the renewal of the social contract. The framework starts with the establishment of a common urban information baseline regarding damages and needs. Building on this baseline, a common vision and strategic objectives guide the development of urban recovery plans from the national to the household level. The Framework calls for these plans to be complemented by an enabling institutional framework and a sustainable financing strategy.

Matina Halkia presented insights into remote-sensing-based methods for assessing damages and reconstruction and recovery needs in Syria. High-resolution satellite images can be used to get a detailed picture of the dynamic situation on the ground. The data is not only able to support the mapping and evaluation of damaged infrastructure but can also give insights into current conflict-dynamics by showing the establishment of frontlines. Such data and analyses can support future reconstruction planning.

Tahir Akbar concluded the session with insights into the Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project implemented in Yemen. The objective is to restore access to critical urban services in selected cities while the conflict is still ongoing and lay the foundation for long-term reconstruction in the future. The project applied an area-based multi-sectoral approach that aims at coordinated reconstruction activities in different sectors such as water, health, transport, and education. To be successful in the challenging environment of a conflict-torn country, the project applied a flexible implementation approach that relied heavily on local institutions.

Two discussants, **Chiara Mellucci** and **Maitreyi Das**, stressed the importance of culture as an important tool for inclusion and Building Back Better as an



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opportunity to build back the souls of cities and create shared narratives on what this soul consists of.

Key Takeaways:

Urban areas are frequently at the center of modern conflicts and therefore face a unique set of challenges in post-conflict settings. Urban reconstruction in post-conflict settings needs to be spatially coherent, inclusive of the different social groups and vulnerable populations, and attentive to cultural heritage. Collaborative post-conflict urban planning tools can ensure that reconstruction efforts are people-centered and accessible to all.

Photograph from the event:

