



United Nations

— HABITAT III —

URBAN FUTURE REPORT

Submitted by Lead Organization	
Name of lead organization	University College London
City and country where organization is based	London, UK
Title of Urban Future event	Shaping Informed Cities: Platforms for Knowledge Generation and Use In Urban Decision-Making
Date of Urban Future event	10/19/2016
Partner organizations for the event, including city and country where these organizations are based	Gauteng City-Region Observatory
Number of participants at the event	100
Percentage of women participants	60%
Background information on Urban Future event (themes, issues, context).	<p>Urban observatories can play critical roles in decision-making, providing research and analysis relevant to the successful implementation of New Urban Agenda. The event seeks to showcase, explore and promote discussion around the functions of existing institutions involved in the generation and analysis of data to support urban decision-making. These institutions can inform specific policy decisions, implementation and monitoring, and promote inclusive approaches to governance. The event is designed to strengthen the existing network of shared interest in evidence-based governance, and deepen effective practices within this space. The focus of the session was illustrated by a case study profiling the work of the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO), a research agency that exists as a collaboration between two local universities and the Gauteng provincial government, South Africa. Themes: Urban governance, urban ecosystems, decision-making, adaptive governance, knowledge systems, science advice, green infrastructure</p>



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Concise summary of the event proceedings, including key points discussed

The event was facilitated by Dr Carla-Leanne Washbourne (UCL) who established the context of the role of urban observatories (as an example of knowledge generation platforms) in decision-making to inform specific policy decisions, implementation and monitoring. The role of urban observatories has been highlighted at Habitat III and in the New Urban Agenda, because of the need for reliable, high resolution urban datasets, specific to cities and the immediate city-regions within which they operate and effective knowledge exchange. She further emphasised how urban observatories are able to develop and innovate in methodologies for creating, processing and disseminating this knowledge, and develop effective partnerships to achieve and sustain these objectives. Christina Culwick (GCRO) presented the case study of the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO), which is a research institute partnership between the Gauteng Provincial Government and two universities in Johannesburg (University of Johannesburg and University of the Witwatersrand). She provided a brief context of the Gauteng City-Region and the organisational structure of the GCRO, along with its primary objectives. Rashid Seedat (Head of the Gauteng Planning Division, Gauteng Provincial Government), then discussed the institutional arrangement and function of the GCRO partnership. He reflected on some of the challenges of negotiating the boundary space between government and academia, as well as GCRO's success in influencing policy and planning in Gauteng and building datasets and research that empower more informed decision-making. Christina Culwick then explored some detail into GCRO's research, methodologies and outputs. She presented the Green Assets and Infrastructure project as a case study for transdisciplinary research which actively co-produces knowledge with government, academia and other actors. A key focus here is the Green Infrastructure (GI) CityLab which is the platform of engagement between these various stakeholders. She further presented some of the research that has recently been published in a GCRO research report, 'A framework for a green infrastructure approach in the Gauteng City-Region'. After the formal presentations there were a number of questions from the event attendees. These questions focused on how the GCRO manages the relationship between academia and government, and in particular how it maintains objectivity and independence from government in particular.



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Concise summary of the app or technology promoted during the event	<p>A framework for a green infrastructure approach in the Gauteng City-Region, GCRO's fourth research report, assembles expert inputs and reflections from collaborative stakeholder discussions, to reveal important considerations for the development of a GI planning approach in the Gauteng City-Region (GCR). This report extends the conceptual foundations laid by GCRO's Green assets and infrastructure project, which argues that the traditional understanding of infrastructure and service provision needs to shift towards the inclusion of GI into urban planning. This requires that information and guidance on what GI is be developed, along with how a GI approach can be applied in the GCR, and how municipal planning and budgeting need to adapt to incorporate a GI approach. This is likely to be achieved most effectively through considering the benefits and services that GI renders to society, and how investing in and maintaining green assets can provide communities with more liveable cities. The report finds that building an evidence base that demonstrates the potential and value of GI is a critical part of building support for the approach and enhancing investment in GI.</p>
Full name, title, and organization of the 1st speaker at event.	Carla-Leanne Washbourne, Lecturer, University College London
Full name, title, and organization of the 2nd speaker at event.	Christina Culwick, Researcher, Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO)
Full name, title, and organization of the 3rd speaker at event.	Rashid Seedat, South Africa, Head of the Gauteng Planning Division, Gauteng Provincial Government, Rashid.Seedat@gauteng.gov.za