



Urbanization and Global Environmental Change

AN IHDP CORE PROJECT

September 2009

E-Newsletter

Issue 11

WELCOME NOTE

Dear readers of the UGEC e-Newsletter, we hope that this issue finds you well! We are already through much of 2009 and have quite a bit to share with you. First, as you can see, this newsletter has been re-designed in a new format that we believe is more user-friendly and will as easily provide you with information. Here forward, you will be receiving issues more regularly, on a bi-monthly basis. We welcome any comments or suggestions on how to improve this format and our communications with you in general.

Furthermore, as we had hoped, many opportunities have presented themselves this year for promoting, coordinating and sharing urbanization and global environmental change research. UGEC has taken a dynamic approach to better understand urban responses to climate change and in the design and implementation of those responses. UGEC participated recently in several major international efforts developed to strengthen urban responses to climate change.

In this issue we provide you with past UGEC and UGEC-related events (such as our involvement with the IHDP Open Meeting, and the Climate Change Congress) as well as some forthcoming (i.e. next year's 5th World Urban Forum). Please click on the links for summaries and updates from past events and to get more details on the upcoming events.

You will also find information

EVENTS

Past/Recent

[START, "Cities at Risk: Building Adaptive Capacity for Climate Change in Asia's Coastal Megacities"](#)

Bangkok, Thailand, February 26-28, 2009

The *Cities at Risk* workshop brought together scientists, urban planners and officials, and representatives of disaster management and development agencies to review scientific findings and projections regarding climate-related risks (e.g., sea level rise, extreme climate events, intensification of storms and storm surges) for Asia's coastal megacities. Karen Seto, co-chair of the UGEC project participated in the workshop, offering perspectives from the IHDP Urbanization and Global Environmental Change project.



[Climate Change Congress, "Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions"](#)

Copenhagen, Denmark, March 10-12, 2009

The session on adapting urban areas to climate change was organized and chaired by professor Roberto Sánchez-Rodríguez, co-chair of UGEC. The session attracted a large number of submissions; 11 abstracts were selected for oral presentations and 25 for poster presentations. The conclusions of the session are included in the [Synthesis Report](#) that the Congress presented to the decision makers in the COP 15 and will be included in a book to be published next year.

[GECHS Synthesis Conference: Human Security in an Era of Global Change](#)

Oslo, Norway, June 22-24, 2009

Over 150 researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders came together during this conference to reflect on ten years of research on the relationship between human security and global environmental change. The synthesis conference engaged the participants in very interesting discussions, many of which centered on connecting research findings with policy and practice. The conference also provided a forum for engaging young researchers in the discussion of future possibilities and a new research agenda. The most recent issue of the IHDP Update newsletter entitled "[GECHS Synthesis: Human Security in an Era of Global Change](#)" dedicates itself to this decade of research.

[Fifth Urban Research Symposium, "Cities and Climate Change: Responding to an Urgent Agenda"](#)

Marseille, France, June 28-30, 2009

Several SSC members and project associates were present at the exciting symposium focusing very timely on the theme of Cities and Climate Change. As a highlight of our project's involvement, under the direction of Dirk Heinrichs of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research -UFZ, a group of UGEC members engaged in a collaborative interdisciplinary research effort with a paper titled "Adapting Cities to Climate Change: Opportunities and Constraints (Findings from Eight Cities)". Drawing on the experience from eight case cities, i.e. Bogotá, Cape Town, Delhi, Pearl River Delta, Pune, Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo and Singapore, this contribution presented a comparative account of the current state of progress on adaptation to climate change in cities. This research will be available soon as a working paper on our website.

[International Conference on Megacities: Risk, Vulnerability and Sustainable Development](#)

Leipzig, Germany

September 7-9, 2009

Megacities are unquestionably a complex interweaving of a variety of economic, social, political, and environmental processes. They are confronted with enormous challenges but

below on call for papers and job announcements, as well as UGEC specific information regarding our two new project associates and 2009 publications.

Lastly, as we have just entered into the second phase of our ten-year project, we are working to build and expand our network of scholars and encourage you to get in touch with us for a discussion over ideas on how you can get more involved with the project and its activities. We also invite you to contact us with announcements and updates from your own projects.

Enjoy the read!

Corrie Griffith and Michail Fragkias, UGEC Project Office

ANNOUNCEMENT

**1st International UGEC
Science & Practice
Conference
15-17 October 2010
Arizona State University**

The UGEC project has been leading the way towards a stronger collaboration between academics, decision-makers, and practitioners in order to capture the benefits of urbanization and develop and conceptualize strategies to mitigate and adapt to global environmental change. Researchers and practitioners in the UGEC network continue to explore new themes within the framework of Global Environmental Change (GEC) science, focusing on the impacts of GEC on urban areas and the responses of urban areas to those impacts.

The event will be open to scientists, policymakers and the general public and will provide a comprehensive perspective of current knowledge of the dynamic and complex interactions between urbanization and global environmental change.

can also be viewed as opportunities for achieving urban sustainability. In this light, the conference sessions addressed topics under the themes of risk, vulnerability, and sustainable development. SSC member Frauke Kraas, whose research includes the "Megacities-Megachallenge - Informal Dynamics of Global Change" and members of the UGEC community took part in the event. Please check the website for any upcoming conference follow-up information.

Forthcoming

2009

[Low Carbon Cities 45th ISOCARP International Congress](#)

Porto, Portugal

October 18-22, 2009

[SENSE-Research School for Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment Symposium, "Climate Proofing Cities"/ Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change](#)

Amsterdam/Volendam, Netherlands

December 1-4, 2009

2010

[Chatham House International Conference: The Future of Cities](#)

London, UK

February 8-9, 2010

[World Urban Forum 5, The Right to the City – Bridging the Urban Divide](#)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

March 22-26, 2010



[ICLEI Resilient Cities 2010, 1st World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change](#)

Bonn, Germany

May 28-30, 2010

[The International Society for Ecological Economics 11th Biennial Conference, "Advancing Sustainability in a Time of Crises"](#)

Bremen/Oldenburger, Germany

August 22-25, 2010

[1st International UGEC Science & Practice Conference](#)

Tempe, Arizona, USA

October 15-17, 2010

[Global Land Project \(GLP\) Open Science Meeting](#)

Tempe, Arizona, USA

October 17-19, 2010

[PLUREL: Peri-urban Land Use Relationships – Strategies and Sustainability Assessment Tools for Urban – Rural Linkages](#)

Copenhagen, Denmark

October 18-21, 2010

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Papers

The second issue of the UGEC Viewpoints Newsletter entitled "Urbanization: A Critical Human Dimension of Global Environmental Change" is near completion and will be available soon in a printed format and an electronic version will be available on our website. Thank you to all who contributed!

Now that this process is nearly complete, the UGEC project is once again in the beginning stages of putting together the next issue. We've decided that the theme for this

The 1st International UGEC Science & Practice Conference will work back to back with the [Global Land Project \(GLP\)](#) Open Science Meeting. GLP is a joint research project for land systems for the [International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme \(IGBP\)](#) and the [International Human Dimensions Programme \(IHDP\)](#).

More details are to come!

ABOUT US

The Urbanization and Global Environmental Change (UGEC) project is a science project that targets the generation of new knowledge on the bi-directional interactions and feedback loops between urban areas and global environmental change at local, regional and global levels. It follows a multi-disciplinary approach and utilizes an innovative framework for the comprehensive understanding of the driving and resulting economic, political, cultural, social and physical processes.

An important feature of this core project is the explicit commitment to translate abstract knowledge about GEC into local decision-making contexts. The project is expected to provide a platform for close interaction between practitioners, political decision-makers and researchers and targets a stronger coordination and collaboration between academics, political decision-makers and practitioners working on urban and environmental issues.

The UGEC project is currently engaged in ongoing efforts to expand its regional and thematic networks. Our website provides links to the UGEC Science Plan, information on how researchers can join our network as project associates, and how research projects and agencies can get their projects endorsed by UGEC

newsletter should pay particular attention to arid environments and the challenges that face them in light of urbanization and global environmental change. Despite the fact that many of the fastest growing regions in the world are in urban areas, they remain understudied. Urban areas are particularly sensitive to climactic changes and are confronted with a unique set of problems such as water availability, land degradation and desertification. Therefore, we would like to make these specific issues more visible by highlighting and synthesizing the research that is being undertaken within these regions.

In this beginning stage, we ask that those interested send us a 300 word summary/abstract of your envisioned contribution and from those submitted, we will make a selection of six or seven contributions. Those that are chosen will then be asked to send an approximate 1800 word article for final publication in the newsletter. We would like to have those contributions by mid-November at the latest.

Both abstracts and final texts should be written in English and we will provide editorial assistance for everyone. We are asking for the 300 word abstract submittals no later than Friday October 2nd. If interested, please email your contribution to Corrie.Griffith@asu.edu. We will get back to you when we choose the final list of articles to be included in the publication - a choice that will be based on the criterion of wide regional and thematic coverage of these emerging issues.

The [SENSE Research School for Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment](#) is calling for papers for their upcoming Symposium "Climate Proofing Cities". Session themes include: balancing adaptation and mitigation, future city design, greening the city, and public health and urbanization. The deadline for abstract submissions has been extended through September 15th. The one-day event will take place in December 2009 in conjunction with the Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change. More information about the SENSE Symposium and how to submit you abstract is available [here](#).

The [International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development](#) is a medium for research that seeks to understand the complex challenges facing urban areas. This journal is fully peer reviewed, publishing original research and review papers, also think pieces and position papers from scholars of various disciplines and practitioners. The goal is to connect and learn from the views and experiences of developed, developing and transition countries. Authors from developing and transition countries are strongly encouraged to submit their work. Click on the link above to find out more.



New Project Associates

UGEC welcomes two new project associates [Shuaib Lwasa](#) and [Shu-Li Huang](#). Dr. Huang is a professor at the Graduate Institute of Urban Planning at the National Taipei University. He researches global environmental change and urban land-use change in peri-urban areas, using the city of Taipei, Taiwan as a case study. Dr. Lwasa is a Regional Research Scientist at the Urban Harvest International Potato Center and Part-time Lecturer for the Department of Geography at Makerere University, Uganda. His research focus lies in sustainable development and modeling urban sprawl in Kampala, Uganda. Both will be huge assets to the project. Welcome gentlemen!

IHDP NEWS & EVENTS

UGEC participated in the [IHDP Open Meeting](#) with several sessions resulting in a general understanding of the importance of the theme of urbanization for the human dimensions community. A collection and synthesis of papers presented will appear towards the end of this summer in our newsletter series, *UGEC Viewpoints*. If you want to make sure you receive a copy of this issue, please contact us. Ideas arising from the themes of "Ecology and environmental justice in urban areas" and "Magnitude, location, and form of urban growth and global environmental change" are currently being discussed with publishers for the publication of two edited volumes.



(<http://www.ugec.org>).

MEMBERS OF THE UGEC (SSC)

Karen Seto, Ph.D.
(Co-Chair)

Yale University

Roberto Sánchez-Rodríguez, Ph.D. (Co-Chair)

University of California, Riverside

Frauke Kraas, Ph.D.

University of Cologne

David Simon, Ph.D.

Royal Holloway

University of London

William Solecki, Ph.D.

Hunter College of the City

University of New York

Xue Desheng, Ph.D.

Sun Yat-sen (Zhongshan)

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Ooi Giok Ling, Ph.D.

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OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

The [Urban Transitions and Climate Change Project](#), sponsored by the UK Economic and Social Research Council and led by Dr. Harriet Bulkeley at Durham University, researches the ways in which cities are responding to climate change. The "project analyses how cities are addressing climate change through their energy and housing systems, and the social and technical factors that are shaping the possibilities for urban transitions in the face of a changing climate." The project's objectives are to:

- advance theoretical understanding of urban socio-technical systems and their response to climate change;
- generate new empirical knowledge about socio-technical transitions for climate change mitigation and adaptation in global cities; and
- analyze how issues of socio-environmental justice enable and constrain rapid transformations of urban socio-technical systems in response to climate change.

Download the project's first [newsletter](#) issue for more information.

Project Associates & Endorsements

We are continually looking for projects to endorse and interested members of the community to become UGEC project associates in order to enhance and expand our network of scholars and practitioners. Please click [here](#) to learn more about these opportunities.

UGEC Publications

Fragkias, M., Seto, K.C. (2009). Evolving Rank-Size Distributions of Intra-Metropolitan Urban Clusters in South China. *Computers, Environment and Urban Systems*, 33(3), 189-199.

Huang, S.-L., & C.-W., Chen. (2009). Urbanization and Socioeconomic Metabolism in Taipei. *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 13(1), 75-93.

Huang, S.-L., Wang, S.-H., and Budd, W.W. (2009). Sprawl in Taipei's Peri-Urban Zone: Responses to Spatial Planning and Implications for Adapting Global Environmental Change. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 90(1-2), 20-32.

Kern, K. and Bulkeley, H. (2009). Cities, Europeanization and Multi-level Governance: Governing Climate Change Through Transnational Municipal Networks. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 47(2), 309-332.

Kraas, F., Sterly, H. (2009). Megastädte von Morgen: Laboratorien der Zukunft? *Politische Ökologie*, 114, 50-52.

Reilly, M.K., O'Mara, M.P., and Seto, K.C. (2009). From Bangalore to the Bay Area: Comparing Transportation Accessibility as a Driver of Urban Growth. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 92(1), 24-33.

Sanchez, R. (2009). Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in Urban Areas: A Role for Urban Planning. In U. Fra Paleo, (Ed.) *Building Safer Communities. Risk Governance, Spatial Planning and Responses to Natural Hazards*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: IOS Press.

Seto, K.C., Shepherd, J.M. (2009). Global Urban Land-Use Trends and Climate Impacts. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 1(1), 89-95.

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[Tenure Track Position in Environmental Studies, Oberlin College – Oberlin, Ohio](#)

[Post-Doctoral Fellowship: Modeling of Human and Natural Systems, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Department of Natural Resources Conservation - Amherst, Massachusetts](#)

[Three Postdoctoral Openings, Sustainability Consortium – Tempe, Arizona](#)

[Tier II Canada Research Chair in Transportation-land Use Linkages for Regional Sustainability, Department of Geography Planning and the Environment, Concordia University - Montreal, Quebec, Canada](#)