

RDD

Regional Development Dialogue

Vol. 36, 2016

Regional Development in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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Integrated Regional Development Planning (IRDP)

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the Housing Earthquake Safety Initiative (HESI) Projects

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Shaping an Intermediate Social Space

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Japan's PPP Show-case Model of a Successful Expressway Business



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RDD

Regional Development Dialogue
Vol. 36, 2016, Special Issue*

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* This *RDD* is published as a Special Issue on the occasion of UNCRD's 45th Anniversary Commemorative Event, held in August 2016. The articles are selected from contributions to the "Expert Group Meeting on Regional Development in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" which constituted an important part of the commemorative event.

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Editorial Introduction

Regional Development in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. T. M. Nurul Amin

The theme and contents of this issue of *Regional Development Dialogue* (RDD) indicate a meeting of minds among academics, researchers, and professionals who work in the field of regional development and see it as a tool for pursuing the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs). In this regard, it is worth recalling that despite the populist nature of the “people-centered development” motto, regional scientists point out that “people live in space” hence “space matters”; this is an undeniable fact. The “space matters” viewpoint is important because people¹ live in varying spaces in terms of their geophysical characteristics, climatic conditions, and remoteness or accessibility. This understanding led to the emergence in the academic field of regional development in the mid-1960s, thanks to the pioneering work of John Friedmann and William Alonso.² Since then the regional development planning (RDP) paradigm³ emerged as an area of education, initially at the graduate level, and professional practice with the normative goal of pursuing a path of development that would touch people located in differing geographical locations.

To trace UNCRD’s role in the 2030 Agenda, a historical look into, first the circumstances surrounding the establishment of UNCRD⁴ in 1971 and, secondly, the emergence of the sustainable development concept in 1987⁵ seem to be in order. In fact, Chikako Takase does this well in her article in this issue, by linking the social and economic circumstances of the 1960s to the United Nations call for enhancing the capacity-building – both in terms of institutional capacity and individual capability – to do what needed to be done. In this instance, the capacity-building was needed for RDP.⁶

Capacity-building for Regional Development Planning (RDP)

Capacity deficits, in the sense of both institutional capacity and human capability, have been particularly huge for the developing countries – variously described as “colonized countries”, “backward countries”, “underdeveloped countries”, “third world countries”, and “developing countries”, depending on the political-economic history of nation-states and their stage of development. Widespread capacity deficits in these countries had their origins in most cases in their historical roots as colonies of colonial powers from the sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Many of these

countries were under colonial rule for two hundred to three hundred years. Even after decolonization, which in Asia and Africa mostly started only after the end of the Second World War in 1945, these countries faced the adverse effects of neo-colonial links in not being able to benefit adequately from international trade and related educational and cultural exchanges because of their dependency relationship with industrially-advanced countries. The dependency has been characterized by an all-encompassing – educational, cultural, political, economic, and military - hierarchical order. The colonial legacy has made age-old accumulated indigenous knowledge, know-how, self-sufficiency or coping mechanisms with problems encountered largely irrelevant to these countries in their post-colonial development processes. Decolonized countries had to relearn not only their post-industrial revolution technology but even the language and adapt with the culture arising from the new world order.

Instead of realizing the need for the huge resource transfers required to offset historical injustices and inherited disadvantage, the developing countries have been left to rely upon development aid, technical assistance, and trade to catch up. The UN Development Decades were undertaken to help to close the development gap with these countries. The First Development Decade (1960-70) of necessity had to focus on the basic “Freedom from Hunger”. But this decade witnessed a nuclear stand-off between two superpowers, especially in October 1962. The Second UN Development Decade (1971-80) to an extent was over-shadowed, for compelling reasons, by the launch of the First Disarmament Decade, 1970-1979. The Third UN Development Decade, 1981-1990, appears to have been dedicated as the (First) Industrial Development Decade for Africa. The 1980-90 decade was observed as the Second Disarmament Decade. The Fourth decade (1991-99) was accompanied by a substantive change in direction in that a new measure for development, the Human Development Index (HDI)⁷ was launched to replace the sole reliance on gross national product (GNP) per capita as a measure of economic development. It is to be noted that GNP per capita denotes the combined effect of economic growth and population growth.⁸

Although HDI is a more robust indicator of development than GNP per capita, this in itself is not helpful for addressing people’s needs. Even people-focused public policies may not reach all the people because they live in, as noted above, variously endowed spaces or regions. As a result, not everyone may have access to, or benefit from, public policies. Also, people are comprised of different socioeconomic groups (e.g., peasants, workers, students, teachers, professionals, technocrats, and bureaucrats) with widely varied capability and technical know-how. In their seminal contribution on regional development planning, Friedmann and Alonso noted that social justice calls for distribution of the fruits of economic development “...in terms of regions and in terms of social classes”⁹ UNCRD constituted an institutional innovation for addressing the problem of development that arises from people’s living in spaces with varied regional resource endowments. However, the responsibility of addressing the capacity deficits arising from the class or socioeconomic origin of individuals remains too dissipated, both in the UN system and in nation-states’ governance systems. Limited results¹⁰ from the observance and pursuance of the UN development decades embracing various problem themes together with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may have resulted from a failure to recognize the variability of people in terms of: (a) the spaces in which they live; and (b) their socioeconomic status or composition.

In brief, the unsatisfactory results of the UN development decades, combined with the progress in academic discourse in urban planning, regional sciences, and regional development and their professional practices culminated in the establishment of UNCRD in 1971. Chikako Takase's article suggests, from the beginning, that UNCRD's *raison d'être* has been capacity-building for RDP. She alerts all concerned to the fact that continued problems in developing countries are general capacity deficits in doing what needs to be done. Indeed, the issue of capacity-building arises in this *RDD* in each article to varying degrees of emphasis.

Capacity-building for RDP in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Coincidentally, similar to the people-centered development versus space matters debate of the 1960s and 1970s that led to the emergence of the RDP paradigm, "the new environmental movement that emerged in the 1960s was sparked off by Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*,¹¹ which was further emphasized by the 1972 warning on the environment emanating from *The Limits to Growth*¹² published in the early 1970s.¹³ Meanwhile, evidence mounted that was contrary to the deterministic economic notion that economic growth leads not only to economic development but also leads to overall development – social, cultural, political, institutional, and technological. Instead, what is being widely experienced is that economic growth-spurred development has been leading to widespread migration, unsustainable human settlements patterns, extreme income inequalities, and unsustainable production, consumption and waste generation, excessive emissions, and pollution. All this has created social disharmony and irreversible damage to life-supporting natural resources such air, water, and land.¹⁴

By recognizing three integral components of sustainability, i.e., social, economic, and environmental, the sustainable development (SD) concept has become central to providing a development path that has the potential to overcome the above-mentioned problems arising from inequality which originated from social conditions and unequal gains from the economic growth process. Thus, social sustainability concerns make it clear that economic growth and development have to be socially sustainable. Social sustainability would thus require that the sources or origins of poverty and inequality be fully addressed. Similarly, economic growth leads not only to natural resource exploitation but also to the dumping of the worst toxic material in the natural environment. Thus, a twofold destruction takes place resulting from all production processes. On the other hand, without economic growth and development numerous benefits to human well-being could not have occurred. It is against this background, that the *RDD* 2006 Spring issue highlighted both the "indispensability" of sustainable development and "inseparability" of sustainable development. It is now crystal clear that gains from economic growth and development can only be sustained if environmental and social costs are avoided. Whereas this consensus was already reached in 1987 and disseminated through *Our Common Future*, with the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the concept has led now to a collective responsibility for action at the national and local levels. *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development* incorporating the SDGs, comprising 17 goals and 169 targets, signifies the complexity of the tasks and a realization that efforts must be made to avoid potential trade-offs between the social, environmental, and economic growth-spurred development process.¹⁵

Taking stock of UNCRD's past, present, and future roles from the perspective of the above changes in the development paradigm which have culminated in today's agenda for implementing the SDGs, has thus been a timely undertaking to put SDGs in the regional context. This is essential for renewing UNCRD's commitment to infuse the regional dimension into the global development agenda. Takase's article has done this succinctly. Other articles indicate, with appropriate case studies, how SDGs can be pursued regionally.

Before examining each article's contribution in this respect, a word on *RDD* itself is in order. *RDD* has been UNCRD's flagship publication since its inception and has remained engaged in exploring ways to implement the globally-agreed development agenda regionally and, more importantly, to contextualize these agenda regionally on the understanding that development must touch the people and their living spaces because of the wide range of endowments in terms of both socioeconomic characteristics and the varying geophysical characteristics of their settlements. At the geographical-climatic scale, an obvious example is that of the huge difference between people living in the tropics vis-à-vis the temperate zones. At the smaller regional or spatial level, the case of Bangladesh is instructive. This small country has huge differences in development challenges among people living on river erosion-prone floodplains and those living in the hilly region. Additionally, there is the issue of how regions change with the processes of economic growth, economic development, and urbanization.

Having set the overall context of this issue of *RDD*, it is useful to recall the themes that the journal has addressed over the years – themes which indicate how UNCRD's mission has been pursued over the past four and a-half decades. To date, *RDD* has been published across thirty-six volumes comprising eighty-seven individual journals, each with a different theme. The two most prominent themes have been: (a) urban-regional or rural-regional development planning; and (b) regional development planning in a particular regional context, e.g., specific geographical regions such as the small island nations, Pacific Rim countries, Eastern Africa, and Asia and Latin America. The other recurring themes have been national urban policy, poverty alleviation, the urban informal sector, and local economic development. In recent years, *RDD*'s thematic coverage has been in the arena of human security, disaster mitigation, international migration, climate change, and sustainable development.

The above review has outlined the historical context of regional development and how UNCRD has adopted to paradigm changes in development over time including the current global focus on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the SDGs which have been reflected in the themes of *RDD*. These themes largely correspond to the paradigm changes, and enable us to focus on the nine articles contained in this *RDD* issue. These articles have been chosen as a contribution to the pursuance of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG 11). It is to be noted that targets 11.1 (adequate and affordable housing), 11.2 (sustainable transport), 11.a (support positive economic, social, and environmental links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas by strengthening regional development planning) while SDG 11.b (by 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and develop and implement, in line with the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, holistic disaster risk management at all

levels) have been addressed in one or another article in this volume.

Capacity-building. As described above, Takase’s introductory piece shows succinctly how UNCRD, since its establishment in 1971, has been working for regional development through capacity-building in regional development planning. Of necessity, its focus has been on capacity-building – in terms of both institutional capacity and human capability. The task now is to assist the implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which is embodied in the case of SDG 17 – strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development – in that it directly contributes to capacity development. This is of vital importance for developing countries, particularly at the local and regional level. Prioritizing capacity development is also considered consistent with “the needs of the citizens...for facilitating distribution of the benefits of development more widely”. In this approach the former may be viewed as a means and the latter as an end. Takase cites the ECOSOC resolution which led to the establishment of UNCRD, to make the point that despite changes in development paradigms or global development priorities, UNCRD’s original mission remains to provide support to the developing countries in research and training for capacity-building for regional development planning. Takase’s article shows how UNCRD’s rich experience can now be used to support “positive economic, social, and environmental links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”.

Regional society from the viewpoint of disaster-prevention measures in schools and housing. The article by Shoichi Ando describes an interesting study of how earthquake safety measures contribute to safe, resilient, and sustainable human settlements. More optimistically, the education and awareness of school and housing stakeholders can contribute to the strengthening of regional society. Based on two UNCRD projects, SESI and HESI, Ando suggests that earthquake-reduction measures and activities have the potential for capacity-building in regional societies. In making his observations, he describes two UNCRD earthquake safety projects involving schools and housing. Both projects address the goal of reducing the danger posed to buildings and other assets from earthquakes. Retrofitting is considered essential for safety in school buildings in regions relatively hard-to-reach. Islam, in his comment, refers to multipurpose cyclone shelters in the coastal region of Bangladesh. He suggests the need for extensive capacity-building on the basis of lessons on retrofitting in the HESI project which involves the civil engineering and architecture departments in universities of developed countries as well as developing countries such as Bangladesh which are particularly vulnerable to earthquakes. He also notes that findings on earthquake vulnerability measured by the Richter scale have the potential to address trade-offs between safety and costs. Sujauddin, in the second comment, observes that the two projects’ lessons are relevant for targets associated with SDGs 1, 2, and 11. He credits the school initiative project for its endeavours to reach key stakeholders of any society – schoolchildren, parents, teachers, and other school support groups. Thus, by targeting just one establishment, awareness can be raised and information can be disseminated to key stakeholder groups within the society. He adds that knowledge transfer, through the involvement of children, across the whole society is much faster. Retrofitting of school buildings contributes to long-term capacity-building through investment in utilization of indigenous skills and the experience of local people. He also lauds the author’s emphasis on engineered and non-engineered structures noting the usefulness of his method of anti-seismic building code dissimulation (ABCD).

His comment compliments the article but cautions that the degree to which the project's outcome can be successful depends on the availability of financial and technical aid for its dissemination throughout the respective region.

Space-based strategy for coping with disparities accompanying globalization. Shigeru Fukushima's article explores space-based development strategy to cope with the socio-economic disparities arising from the free market capitalist system, particularly in its current phase of "neo-liberal globalization". Although inequality has been inherent in the capitalistic market system, it has emerged with considerable force in the ongoing neo-liberal phase marked by the unregulated capitalistic market system. This is not altogether unchallenged as can be seen from protest marches on Wall Street, New York with slogans such as "We are the 99 per cent" or the emergence in political leadership positions of Bernie Sanders in the US or Jeremy Corbyn in the UK. Analytically, the nature and sources of inequality, associated with twenty-first century capitalism, as illustrated by T. Piketty in his monumental work, *Capital*.¹⁶ One of the most prominent figures in today's world is Bill Gates, the Microsoft founder, who appears illogically optimistic about the role of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility (CSR).¹⁷

But instead of any grandiose problem-solving approach, Fukushima explores mechanisms for coping with disparity by examining the "learning region" concept which he considers essential in this "new age of global, knowledge-intensive capitalism". Learning regions are considered as "...repositories of knowledge and ideas" built or organized to provide an environment and infrastructure which can facilitate the flow of the sort of knowledge required to cope with changes. "Equity and sustainability" seem to be the guiding principles in the concept of a learning city. Territorial as well as social innovations are the functional hallmarks of a learning city. As a backdrop, the author analyses the community hall (CH) system functioning in the Japanese city of Iida. The CH governance system combines the local community with the city authority. This collaborative governance system has facilitated innovations in the sense of combining new things with the old, thereby avoiding the sense of being overwhelmed with new phenomenon or remaining stuck with redundant ideas. CH-based exchange of information and knowledge has facilitated a harmonization of relations between individual self-fulfillment – not "self-interest" or even "enlightened self-interest" – and the achievement of a community's vision. Although the author has not been explicit, one wonders if such an outcome has been possible as a result of the CH system being a relatively small-scale unit of collaborative governance.

Issues of scale arise in Rubana Ahmed's comment in that she detects that throughout the article the author seems to promote a need for a family-like atmosphere to prevail that would foster a sense of belonging within the community. In view of the limited applicability of the family-like CH model, Ahmed suggests that for an optimal scale of governance, i.e., city, region, country, etc., collaborative mechanisms at the CH level should be made operational at larger units of governance which makes collaboration among public management, private institutions, and the beneficiaries of public policy essential. Unsurprisingly, Ahmed, an economist, does not explicitly address the issue of which specific spatial unit is suitable for collaboration among the stakeholders she specifies for the purpose at hand.

Vilas Nitivattananon, in his comment, analyses the CH functioning in Iida City against the framework of urban governance in general and collaborative governance (CG) in particular. Noting that the author has comprehensively covered related concepts

in the context of the Japanese experience of “a learning city” he maintains that the article’s value lies in the fact that the CH system functioning in Iida has served to educate the city government as to local residents’ feelings, needs, and concerns. This process leads to the enhancement of community empowerment. To Nitivattananon, the CH system denotes a desirable place-based approach to governance to effectively reach citizens and facilitate access to local or central government resources as well as generating and managing such resources. Such governance is essential for a community life which sustains equity and continuity.

Intermediate social space for inclusive development. Mitsuhiro Hosaka’s article is another useful contribution in this issue of *RDD*. Against the background of his involvement in the development field in general and regional development in particular, he reviews the paradigm shifts in development strategies. His joining UNCRD in 1977 coincided with promotion of the “basic needs” strategy by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Readers may recall that adoption of this strategy was the culmination of experimenting with development strategies such as “growth” (whereby the expectation was that gains from economic growth would trickle down for other higher-order societal goals to follow). “Growth with equity”, “appropriate” or “intermediate technology” for increasing employment, and basic needs production packages are other examples which this series of experimentation to find a suitable development course produced. By referring to Amartya Sen’s “Development as Freedom”, Hosaka reveals his skepticism about “material reductionism”. He cites Sri Lanka’s famous Million Houses Programme (MHP) to strengthen his view. In a way, he alludes to the dilemma with regard to MHP on the one hand and John Turner’s “freedom to build” on the other. Turner’s euphemistic phrasing, says Hosaka, of the urban poor’s make-shift arrangements in economizing on housing costs, seems to have doomed the poor’s housing to be informal and, hence, officially unrecognized.

He identifies institutional gaps in the community suggesting that a community can be made of “old residents, alone, and poor” and cites the example whereby “...running down of inner-city settlements and weakening of community functions represent urban problems in present day Japan”. It can be said that this situation is no more unique in Japanese society than in many other similarly developed countries. Having prepared readers for the need for institutional innovation (readers may recall that this is the reason that institutional economists, starting from Thorstein Veblen, have been emphatic in their view to reject reliance on the market alone and the need to create appropriate institutions as required to make work or deliver), Hosaka takes readers through issues of “community space” and “communitarian thinkers” and finally proposes the need to create new institutions of “intermediate social space”. He shows the limitations of both government and the market in catering to the specific needs of different social groups. The example of Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh is cited and his creation of the Grameen Bank to deliver the needs of rural women-headed households, many of whom are widowed. The establishment of the Grameen Bank has been a key institutional innovation serving the identified group’s need to have access to credit and thereby participate in market opportunities. This article’s significance lies in the fact that the author shows how the dominant development strategies have remained devoid of the “...real territorial world where human beings live in relationship with others rooted in a life space”.

After another round of the discussion on the limitation of on-going service delivery mechanisms through government and market mediation, illustrated in figure 1 of the

article, the author presents his conceptualization of “intermediate social space” in which government and the market work through the community for “mutually caring development” (illustrated in figure 2).

Mokbul Ahmed’s comment however expresses skepticism as to whether governments in some countries will not be watchful, if not fearful, of such an institution’s political implications. He also raises the issue of the non-governmental organization (NGO) phenomenon and its fostering by donor agencies and charities to address the needs of people who are unable to thrive in the market or gain access to public-sector services. However, he seems to have missed the potential significance of the “territorial” dimension of ‘intermediate social space’ as an institution. To Hosaka, government and the market, two major providers of services, respectively, view people or individuals as “objects of institutional interventions” or a “consumer or a labour force worker who is able to demonstrate a market value” thereby allowing him/her to participate in the market; otherwise not. In Hosaka’s conception of “intermediate social space”, people or individuals are not alienated from the “real territorial world where human beings live in relationship with others rooted in a life space”.

However persuasive Hosaka’s point is nevertheless, Ahmed raises a practical question: Why have such spaces not emerged? One can even point out that historically such spaces in one form or another existed but have disappeared through the historical process of socioeconomic evolution. Without necessarily disagreeing, Hosaka may suggest that the current concept of intermediate social space denotes a post-modernist response in the sense of combining old and new or traditional and modern institutions. Rehan Dastgir, in a further comment, formulates an optimistic scenario for “intermediate social space” to denote a means of “collective effort” to finding freedom, evolving a way out of poverty, isolation, and even the burden of old age.

To Sarwar Jahan, the “intermediate social space” denotes a means to restore “social capital”. He interprets Hosaka’s article through the theoretical framework of social capital. He does this so as to infuse the missing “theoretical underpinning” in the article. As an urban and regional planner, Jahan however might agree that the territorial dimension – space – in the concept of intermediate social space will not be well-served if its analysis is limited only to a social capital interpretation. Maybe the article’s proximity to social capital is more in terms of its outcome. Its formative and functional configurations are much more than what would be denoted by social capital.

Local knowledge, know-how, and culture vital for resilience and sustainability. Each article pursues ideas, presents models or cases that are geared to contributing to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. By analysing ancient Andean societies, and comparing them with field study findings from Mongolian society, Tetsuya Inamura defines sustainability as the long-term continuity of a stable society and cultural adaptation to environments, while resilience can be seen as the flexibility and capacity necessary to prevent or mitigate disasters and provide resistance against social disruption. In Andean societies, he cites factors such as strong community ties, biodiversity, and a dispersed pattern of residence as intrinsic to resilience against natural disasters. While stating that vulnerability to the latter is reduced in small-scale settlements, and greatly increased in large cities, he concludes that sustainability has been eroded due to social or class conflict as well as local people’s distrust of government. Mongolian society, meanwhile, has evolved resilience due to people’s seasonal mobility (pastoral nomadism) and sociocultural adaptation to the environment. The

author suggests that transdisciplinary studies are important in further analysing resilience.

From a critical perspective, S. M. Alam, in his comment, observes that for studies of resilience in Peru and Mongolia, the appropriate mode of analysis would be from a cultural perspective, not a cultural anthropology perspective. Samia Huq contends that preserving and promoting local knowledge constitute one of anthropology's primary concerns. She points out that at the heart of resilience lie diversity, inter-community bonds and ties, local understanding, and ties to nature and products of nature. In her comment, she also points out that much of the resources have been lost through processes of colonization and modernization. Sirajum Munira's commentary begins by referring to a twofold approach to understanding resilience. One being its evolution as a combined effect of interdependence between the natural environment and technological intervention. The other has to do with understanding resilience as the "capacity to persist" in the face of change. She also distinguishes adaptation and transformation and suggests that a cultural anthropology perspective to resilience is a less explored area of research. By referring to the case studies presented in the article, Munira applauds the author's reference to "reconstructing" resilience and suggests that the author could go further in this regard by examining more deeply the presented case studies.

Local resource-based industry with participatory approach contributing to sustainable regional development. K. K. U. Ananda Kumara, in his article, focuses on the changes in the high-potential tourism industry of Sri Lanka, highlighting social, cultural, and environmental contexts. He attributes the rapid growth of tourism after 2009 to the end of civil unrest, attributing the five-fold increase in tourists and nine-fold rise in income from tourism to the end of widespread violence. Following the civil war, Sri Lanka's tourism industry became the third largest foreign exchange earner contributing 12.4 per cent to the national economy by 2015. According to the author, tourism has been identified by Sri Lanka as a new type of major economic activity that may impact not only the overall economy, but also contribute to enhancing regional development. Historically, Sri Lanka's tourism industry focused principally on historical ruins or archaeological sites, but more recent policies have focused on the identification of new types of activities. Kumara suggests focusing on the diversity among provinces as a key element in the development of new tourism-related activities. Basically he makes the case that, within this framework of interregional competition on the one hand and sustainable regional development on the other, the tourism sector has the potential to play a unique growth and development role that could promote community and regional development and could lead to long-term sustainability of a regional system.

Both Afsana Haque and Michael Romanos, in their extensive comments, have highlighted the processes that convert sustainable landscape to unsustainable landscape through unregulated tourism. To Craig Meisner the positive process and outcomes include involving a selection of community leaders from the local committees to address the needs of "ecotourists" in terms of safety and satisfaction. He also considers that the process is contributing to capacity-building in terms of institutional capacity and human capability. Afsana and Romanos however do not appear to be so optimistic, particularly about sustainability either of the process or its positive outcomes. The former begins by pointing out that the issues are more complex than Kumara assumes. Sustainable regional development (SRD) calls for community-level planning of tourism activities with an understanding of each region's regional characteristics including "regional economic structure". Having made this cautionary observation, she then expresses

satisfaction at the tourism approach described by Kumara for its departure from a reliance solely on serving foreign tourists. To her, in the “new approach”, positive features include making remote villages accessible to educational and ecological tourists. She believes this direction in tourism will contribute to the development of a sound economic base at the village level which will contribute to reduction of regional disparity. Romanos’ commentary, which brings to bear his previous experience revealed to *RDD* readers¹⁸ shows that optimism in tourism, however it is packaged, is likely to be unsustainable due to the fundamental limit of a locality’s carrying capacity defined by its share in the ecological resources of the whole earth’s crust. He also appears to be in agreement with Afsana’s point regarding SRD but goes further to the issue of trade-offs in benefits and losses among districts and localities within a specific region. To make it worse, he goes on to observe that public and private resource allocation in the early stages of regional development can enhance the competitive advantage of a region leading to rivalry among regions. One can however point out that public policy, precisely because of such a possibility, is crucial for reversing unsustainable trends in regional and intraregional inequities. Romanos lauds the author’s tourism development models for Sri Lanka having “potential to address the regional development dilemma”. He however cautions that profit-seeking tourism enterprises may nullify the efforts of local and central governments to protect local cultures, norms, and heritage. Regulation and community vigilance as always are therefore essential for pursuing development that is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

Overcoming institutional gaps for sustainable urban development. Lin Jiabin’s article is illuminating in highlighting not only China’s urban problems but also of most developing countries. For example, a 1987 World Bank publication on inter-governmental fiscal relations in developing countries identified how local governments or city authorities are left with the responsibility of providing urban services but are not given the legal authority to raise revenue to ever-increasing expenditure pressures arising from population increases and widening urban service needs. Despite widening of opportunities to raise revenue by: (a) taxation (not just traditional property taxes but expanded taxation to include, e.g., incremental land values); (b) levying charges or user fees on a wide variety of urban services; and (c) accessing external sources of funding nationally as well as by tapping the international capital markets including attracting foreign direct investment, all these possibilities remain untapped and unexplored because local governments or city authorities’ do not have the jurisdiction or legislative power to institute such revenue-raising schemes. Jiabin states this in the first section of his article. Inelastic urban land supply due to the complexity in land buying and selling is another issue that constrains not just urban land development but also urban housing, road networks, and open or green space provision that are vital for urban mobility, productivity, and liveability. The urban planning and management system is marked by the duplicating responsibility of several authorities. Since the article is fairly comprehensive in depicting urban ills, it is not essential to bring up so many key issues plaguing the cities of developing countries. The article is not limited only to analysing problems. It also provides thoughtful directions for the institutional reforms essential for moving cities in China and other populous developing countries towards improved sustainability. Issues of ecological resources or carrying capacity that set fundamental limits to sustainability are not addressed in this article. Its value lies in showing that a great deal can be done by reforming the archaic institutional arrangements that adversely affect mobilizing the

financial resources required to invest for urban infrastructure and service provisioning, and for effective urban planning and management.

Tazrin Ahmed comments on the issue of urban-rural landownership and agrees with author's reform proposals particularly for overcoming institutional gaps by streamlining the existing institutions or creating new ones, as required. She seems to agree with the author that one reason for widespread urban problems in the cities of developing countries is the decentralization of service delivery responsibility in the face of continued centralization of fiscal power. Wasiquir Rahman Khan, in his comment, compliments Lin for his comprehensive article which provides a useful analytical framework for studying urban problems in other populous Asian countries. He also tends to agree with Lin in that economic reform and growth warrants political reform and individual freedom. Nobody perhaps has been more eloquent in this regard than Milton Friedman to whom free market and democracy or individual freedom are inseparable. He has been eloquent in his observation that curtailing individual freedom and controlled democracy do not go with classic ideals of the free market system.

Sustainable financing of urban transportation – lesson from Japan's PPP-based projects. For good reason both industry and infrastructure used to be considered synonymous with development.¹⁹ In this era of a global pursuit for sustainable development it is not any single industry or infrastructure that a country should invest in. For example, industry such as brick manufacturing or tanneries in developing countries such as Bangladesh have caused severe pollution of air, water, and soil. Similarly, private automobiles are the single most environmentally-damaging mode of transport. Such examples however should not obscure the vital role of infrastructure, particularly that of urban environmental infrastructure and services (UEI&S), in sustainable urban development. For example, without construction of pedestrian walk ways, wastewater treatment facilities, drainage and sewerage systems, effluent treatment plants, 3R-promoting infrastructure, and mass transit systems, it would be impossible to conduct a big push towards sustainable development. Unfortunately, extreme shortages of such infrastructure severely hamper the development process regarding its sustainability, particularly in the developing countries. One reason for the shortages UEI&S is the huge initial capital investment required for such infrastructure. Although a major built-in advantage in constructing UEI&S is scale and agglomeration-economy benefits, the initial huge investment required is a barrier which prevents any benefits from being derived from potential economies of scale. Setting aside the merit of expressways for promoting environmentally-sustainable transport (EST), Yasushi Taniguchi article's merit lies in its illustration of the use of the PPP model for financing essential UEI&S – vital for sustainable development, particularly in developing countries lacking technology and financial resources. It is to be noted that these countries, thanks to the adoption of the market mechanism principle of promoting "...correspondence between a services rendered and a payment received" approach, the cost recovery from such PPP based infrastructure projects should not be a problem. The article is also useful in that it contrasts with other contributions in this *RDD* issue, which largely focus on the "software" (training, awareness, management, planning, etc.) component in the pursuit of sustainable development. A focus on UEI&S, the "hardware" component of the requirements for pursuing SDGs, is a useful addition to this *RDD*. The necessary and sufficient analogy can also be drawn here that UEI&S requirement is a necessary condition for pursuing the course of sustainable development whereas the other articles are largely about meeting sufficient conditions for making

progress in the achievement of sustainable development. The article's commentary by Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty rightly points out that PPP's value in infrastructure projects lies in its scope to combine the private sector's dynamism, access to financial resources, latest technologies, managerial efficiency, and entrepreneurial spirit with the social concerns and responsibilities of the public sector for health, life quality, environmental awareness, local knowledge, and job creation. He implies that this has indeed been the case in the instance of Japan's PPP in Expressway Business. The issue remains however if the outcome of such projects will be similar in developing countries where the public and private sector attributes ascribed by Mohanty maybe lacking. Also "expressway business" may not be a priority for developing countries which lack adequate mass transit, drainage and sewerage systems, wastewater treatment facilities or 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and EST infrastructure.

NOTES

- ¹ It is also to be noted that the term "people" in itself is not very meaningful unless the people are recognized in terms of their class or socioeconomic status.
- ² John Friedmann and William Alonso, eds., *Regional Planning and Development: A Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).
- ³ Paradigm includes concept as well as practice.
- ⁴ Chikako Takase's article in this issue provides some details on this.
- ⁵ World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). This publication is the single most important contribution not only in articulating the concept and reaching a global consensus by defining sustainable development in terms of both intra-generational and inter-generational equity as well as by making it clear sustainable development is that kind of development which is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. The profoundness of this concept lies in its inclusiveness of all concerns. Researchers in this field may turn to the Editorial Introduction of *RDD Vol 27, No 1* (Spring 2006), pp.v-xx to illustrate this point.
- ⁶ Arguably, capacity-building ought to be the cross-cutting concept, similar to SDG 17 (Global Partnership), for SDGs too.
- ⁷ This is a composite index of (a) purchasing power parity, an adjustment of per capita income by local purchasing power of US\$; (b) literacy rate; and (c) life expectancy. The HDI has been devised to overcome the limitations of per capita income as a measure of development.
- ⁸ It is to be noted that an increase in GNP through higher economic growth rate can be offset by an increase in population, the denominator in the calculation of GNP per capita, arising from population growth rate.
- ⁹ Friedmann and Alonso, eds., *Regional Planning and Development*, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ Despite all that has happened for more than fifty years' of development efforts, the outlook remains bleak: global poverty remains intractable with more than four billion people living on less than the equivalent of US\$5 a day. In a mid-July 2018 statement, fifteen leading economists, including three Nobel prize winners, argued that, "many billions of US dollars spent on aid can do little to alleviate poverty while we fail to tackle its root causes", reprinted in the *Daily Star*, a Dhaka English daily newspaper. There is of course no agreement on root causes. Yet, it is notable that introduction and enforcement of effective labour legislation has proved to be instrumental in helping millions of people to escape poverty. The laureates suggest consolidation of regulations across borders in order to mitigate globalization's race to the bottom for "exploitable poor". Here we notice a recognition of the importance of people's socioeconomic composition/class or the work they do and the place in which they live as alluded to, in the above.
- ¹¹ Simon Dresner, *The Principles of Sustainability* (London: Earthscan, 2005).
- ¹² Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth: A Report to the Club of Rome* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ A.T.M. Nurul Amin, "Economics of Rural-Urban Relations Reexamined in the Light of Growing

Environmental Concerns,” *Regional Development Studies* 1 (1994/95):27-54.

- ¹⁵ The SDGs have 17 goals and 169 accompanying targets – way too many. For example, soon after the announcement of SDGs, President of the Copenhagen Consensus Centre, Bjorn Lomborg, expressed his skepticism in the following way:

The United Nations’ process has...created an unmanageable long list of 169 very broad global development targets....The chief problem with trying to do everything at once is that we end up doing very little at all.

This is an easy line of critique that ignores the necessity of the list being long. Arriving at a consensus on numerous complex social, economic, and environmental issues by 193 countries is bound to make goals and targets expansive. There is no simple solution to complex problems. It is worth recalling here what H. L. Mencken wrote in 1927: “To every complex problem, there is a simple solution, and it is wrong.”

- ¹⁶ T. Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2014). The dominant problem-solving approaches however remain limited, i.e., the Keynesian fiscal measure of progressive taxation or the capitalist philanthropic approach whereby giant business corporations fulfil their corporate social responsibility (CSR).

- ¹⁷ In this regard, the wealthiest man in the world (2018), Bill Gates, in a critique of Piketty’s book, *Capital* agreed that “capitalism does not self-correct (Gates, p. 1). Although Gates has been criticized (see Baker, 2014) for his defense of inequality to some extent though, it is relevant to add that to Gates’ three pillars of reducing inequality include “philanthropy”, the other two being consumption tax and inheritance tax (Gates, 2014). But the fact is, despite the long-lasting practice of philanthropy on the part of the wealthy and the modern-day practice of taxing, inequality is well and alive all over the world. This part is excerpted from A.T.M. Nurul Amin, “Corporate Social Responsibility in the Era of Sustainable Development Goals,” *BUFT Journal* 3 (2016):1-12.

- ¹⁸ See Carla Chifos and Michael Romanos, “Natural Landscapes, Cultivated Landscapes, and Built Landscapes from Environmentally Balanced Systems to Unsustainable Development Paths,” *Regional Development Dialogue* 27 (2006):51-76.

- ¹⁹ For a graduate course in development economics one of the key readings, if not as a textbook, for this author during his graduate study (1975-1982) in Canada was: *Industry for Development*. Literature on infrastructure and development is numerous. The change however is that no longer is simply a focus on any industry or any infrastructure acceptable. It is cleaner industry and infrastructure that contributes to truly sustainable development.

