This is the fourth WRR Update and the second we are distributing to internal and external audiences. This volume describes progress made on the WRR framing paper and thematic working papers, the ongoing seminar series and WRR related outreach and preparation for the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador.

**About the World Resources Report (WWRR) on Cities**

The World Resources Report (WRR) promotes a more economically prosperous, environmentally sustainable and socially equitable city for all. The WRR examines these three interlocking principles in the context of rapid urbanization in different regions of the world, and takes the needs of the urban underserved as its starting point. In the first year, WRI authors are producing a series of working papers that focus on the highest priority areas for cities:

- Managing Urban Expansion
- Secure and Affordable Shelter for All
- Regional Water Risk
- Household Access to Potable Water
- Access to Clean, Affordable, and Reliable Energy
- Urban Transport and Accessibility

History and experience tell us that transformative urban change must go beyond sector-specific solutions. In the coming months, the WRR Team will initiate a series of city-level case studies to understand how broader transformative urban change happens.

**Progress on Framing and Thematic Papers**

In the last quarter, we focused on collecting comments from internal and external reviewers, which took longer than expected, and now working through that feedback. We asked around fifty people to review the paper and have gotten comments from twenty seven. The list of reviewers includes staff from WRI, the World Bank, OECD, DFID, IIED, ACHR, IIHS, SPARC, several universities and the Mayor of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Most of the comments that we have received were very positive, yet provided us with constructive criticism that allowed us to look at the framing paper from a different angle. Several reviewers focused on our categorization of cities as struggling, emerging, thriving, and stabilizing. Based on their feedback, these typologies are helpful, but we will need to add more qualitative description of the environmental and economic resource
capacities for each categorization. Other reviewers provided feedback on the paper’s structure, suggesting that we move our chapter on key enabling conditions before our chapter on transformative urban change. Finally, based on our reviews, we will clarify our use of Martin Ravallion’s concept of the “urbanization of poverty” in our section describing the nature of urban growth. With these positive and insightful reviews, we plan to finalize the paper and initiate the production process in July.

Regarding the Thematic Working Papers, during this quarter the Water working paper team completed their first draft, and we have also received a rough draft of the working paper on low-carbon electric cities from Dr. Chris Kennedy. The other three papers on Energy, Transportation and Housing are going through a soft review, which will be followed by a formal internal and external review. We are still planning to release these three papers before the UN Habitat III summit in October. The remaining chapters on water risk, water access and urban expansion are expected to be released in early 2017.

**Seminar Series**

During this quarter, we continued our Cities Research Seminar Series as a platform to engage and learn from some of the most accomplished urban thought leaders and practitioners on topics of central importance to the WRR. In the last three months we hosted six speakers from a number of institutions and parts of the world. Dr. Jenna Davis shared her research on innovation for urban water and sanitation services; Dr. Rob McDonald presented on conservation for cities with the focus on water security; Dr. Somik Lall talked about his research on African cities as springboards for economic diversification; Annette Kim presented on informal markets for housing in Asia; Arturo Ardila-Gomez talked about his research on urban transport financing presented in his recent book titled “Sustainable Urban Transport Financing from the Sidewalk to the Subway: Capital, Operation, and Maintenance Financing”; and David Satterthwaite highlighted the scale of how many urban dwellers are unserved, and how this is so often understated in official statistics. All seminar speakers are interviewed and their seminars are video-recorded. These videos are posted on the WRR project page [http://www.wrirosscities.org/worldresourcesreport](http://www.wrirosscities.org/worldresourcesreport) and uploaded to YouTube for wider dissemination.

**Habitat III Engagement**

WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities staff are attending a number of events leading up to the Habitat III conference in Quito.

In May, Anjali Mahendra travelled to New York City to participate in two UN Habitat Expert meetings. The first meeting on Special Needs and Challenges in Developing Countries for Achieving Sustainable Transport by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) addressed sustainable transport under Goal 11 of the SDGs, and how it can be implemented and financed. The UNDESA also presented key points from the Sustainable Transport Global Outlook Report to be launched towards the end of 2016. The second meeting on SDG 11 Indicators by the UN Habitat and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network focused on challenges of monitoring SDGs at the local level, with particular attention to the spatial growth of cities. To direct the Goal 11
(urban SDG) indicators towards implementation and technically refine them, experts discussed definitions and methodologies of the indicators with special focus on target 11.3, which measures land-use efficiency. Both events were excellent opportunities for WRI to contribute to the SDG discussion through our work on cities, transport and the WRR, and also engage with other experts working on transportation and urban expansion issues who can support the overall development of the WRR.

Besides these events, the WRI Cities team also participated in the following major events leading up to Habitat III: Informal Settlements in Pretoria, South Africa; Latin America and Caribbean Regional Meeting in Toluca, Mexico; and the ITF Summit on Green and Inclusive Transport, May 18-20 Leipzig, Germany. Additionally, WRI has also been heavily invested in the elaboration of messages for the New Urban Agenda by participating in a number of intersessional meetings at the United National in New York City. As a result, much of our input has been incorporated into the most resent draft of the document. We are currently preparing our delectations for the last two major Habitat III events: Preparatory Committee 3 on Habitat III, July 25-27, Surabaya, Indonesia; and Habitat III Summit, October 17-20, Quito, Ecuador. Our proposal for the side event in Surabaya has been approved, and we are waiting for an approval of our side event in Quito. Beyond these official events, we are also organizing a half-day meeting on October 16th for a selected group of 100-150 participants, which will serve as an additional opportunity for stakeholder engagement and dissemination of the key messages related to the approach of the WRR.

**Future Activities**

In the next three months we plan to pre-launch the WRR framing paper, which will be officially released in October at the Habitat II event in Quito. We will also complete the revisions to the peer-reviewed, draft of the working papers on Transportation, Housing and Energy. These papers are also to be formally released at the Habitat III summit. The work on additional papers on Urban Expansion, Water Access and Water Risk will continue, and we expect to have them finalized by the end of 2016. We will continue hosting seminars, which are currently planned through September 2016, while also focusing on our engagement with the Habitat III events. Several lead writers of the working papers will travel to the events to highlight their research findings and influence discussions. During this quarter, we also plan to finalize the research methodology and commence data collection for in-depth city level case studies on urban transformation. We will also initiate work on the executive synthesis. Finally, from July 24-28th, WRI staff will be attending the Habitat III Prep-conference in Surabaya Indonesia, and will be leading a panel discussion on the theme of “Towards a More Equitable City: Shifting from Global Narrative to Action on the Ground”.

**Thank you and ask us for further information!**

Thank you for your interest in the progress of the World Resources Report and please reach out to valeria.gelman@wri.org for further information or to be directly added to the WRR update recipient list.