

Sustainable measures to combat environmental damages caused by rapid urbanization

Issue Background

Rapid urbanization is a fast process where the population from more rural areas moves to urban areas. This growth in the number of people living in cities are usually influenced since “cities and towns have achieved better economic, political, and social mileages compared to rural areas” (What is Urbanization), creating an opportunity for people to have benefits from these resources or services. These resources or services can be an improved education, health care, job opportunities, housing, transportation, and sanitation. However, these improvements on people’s life in the more densely populated places emerges serious issues. By 2050, it is expected that a total of two-thirds of the world population is living in urbanized cities (Urban Threats). These statistics reveal that more populated places will confront global issues, such as poverty and environmental degradation, once “Poor air and water quality, insufficient water availability, waste-disposal problems, and high energy consumption are exacerbated by the increasing population density and demands of urban environments.” (Urban Threats). Due to this reason, governments will need to have the capacity to manage carefully these growing urbanized cities. Even if there are economic or social benefits on the rapid growing rate of population in the cities, there will be more worrying consequences for the world’s population in general, such as spreading of diseases, social instability, lack of water sources and critical infrastructures that are not possible to achieve an improvement at a fast rate as the population growth (The risks of rapid urbanization in developing countries). Infrastructures are a key factor in the quality of life of the citizens of a certain urbanized area. Nevertheless, when a rapid urbanization happens, a city is not able to keep involving at the same and fast rate as the population growth, increasing the “(...) risks to have catastrophic cascading effects (...)” (The risks of rapid urbanization in developing countries). Moreover, many governments

cannot financially afford the improvement of infrastructures at the same rate as the rapid urbanization. In terms of health, with poverty, the not possible improvement of infrastructures due the rate of growth of population in the cities and many other factors, diseases are more likely to flourish. “While moving to a city offers individuals more opportunities to improve their living conditions, the high cost of living and competition for livelihoods can also trap people in poverty.” (The risks of rapid urbanization in developing countries). This quote represents social instability, since a rapid urbanization can lead to social unrest, being this expressed through violence or other ways.

Delegation's position

The rapid urbanization leads to environmental degradation and poverty since governments do not have the infrastructures to progress at the same rate as the process of the movement of people from rural to urbanized areas. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, these consequences of a rapid urbanization have increased its magnitude and impact on the population. Also, the rapid spread of the disease could have been aid with the rapid urbanization of the capitals and cities around the world. Greenpeace, which is an international organization which is dedicated to “preventing environmental abuses and heightening environmental awareness through direct confrontations with polluting corporations and governmental authorities.” (Greenpeace, Britannica), explored sustainable measures to combat environmental damages caused by rapid urbanization. Firstly, developing on the idea of resources available for everyone avoiding poverty, Greenpeace focuses in healthy and sustainable cities. When there is a rapid urbanization, the demand for food increases, making supermarkets not able to keep up with this increase. To avoid poverty and lack of needed resources in urbanized cities, cities must be able to produce a certain percentage of food that will cover its whole population. As well, towns and small producers should receive an incentive to produce more, therefore have a sustainable measure to combat the environmental damages, once big companies will not be

the ones being incentivized. Furthermore, with the pandemic, the usage of polluting substances, like gasoline in cars, has been not incentivized. This is due to the need and want to preserve the environment, preventing damages in our air quality, that usually decreases due to a rapid urbanization. Public transport has been emphasized as a way of contributing to less air pollution in urban areas. The subway, buses and trains are the ways of transportation that are considered public. However, with the pandemic, people feel insecure using these resources provided by the government. Nevertheless, Greenpeace has proposed the solution of increasing “(...) the number of public transport vehicles to decrease their passenger capacity.” (Cities in a post- COVID world). Adding on the sustainable measures to avoid environmental damage in urban areas, ideas like expand pedestrian areas, bike lanes, new bus lanes, intelligent transport systems and gender impact analysis are ways to obtain this ultimate goal.

Works Cited

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