CARIBBEAN URBAN FORUM 2024

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Rethinking Caribbean cities management: Supporting a resilient Blue Economy

Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

June 26th-28th, 2024

About CUF 2024

The Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF) is an international conference on urban planning and development, land management and other spatial planning related topics relevant to the Caribbean context. It is hosted annually since 2011 in various Caribbean countries. It is the main opportunity for practitioners, policy makers and researchers to share experience and knowledge on ongoing activities in the Caribbean and/or relevant to the Caribbean, to build capacity through training programmes, workshops, scientific paper presentations, and panel discussions and advance policy positions through dialogues.

More importantly, the event is a key activity which builds comradery between practitioners and strengthening networking with organizations and institutions to allow for the translations of ideas into plans and plans into action. The **Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM)** is the country host of CUF 2024 and will be held on June 26th -28th 2024 at PUCMM, Campus Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

CUF 2024 will be organized in close partnership with the government of Dominican Republic, represented by the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Development, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Tourism, and the Ayuntamiento del Distrito Nacional (ADN) and with the support of other national, regional, and international organizations. Other major co-hosts are The University of the West Indies (The UWI) through the HIT RESET Caribbean project (Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Support Resilient Settlements on the Coastal Zones of the Caribbean) and the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (the blueSpace Network).

The theme of this year's conference is: **Rethinking Caribbean City Management: Supporting a resilient Blue Economy.** The Caribbean region is emerging from the COVID 19 pandemic and thus there has been a greater appreciation of the need for cyclical systems that can support effective prediction, planning, implementation, and evaluation, leading to continuous improvement, which are the cornerstones of Resilience and Sustainability. The conference recognizes the risks the Caribbean faces from natural disasters, including those exacerbated by Climate Change, as well as political, economic, environmental, and social challenges such as inequality, limited economic growth, fragile ecosystems, ineffective systems, and poor urban strategies.

The region must address these issues while embracing new strategies and technologies. This will require a culture of innovation, new technologies and reforms in policies and practices, to set regional and national goals, to share information, and inclusively find solutions. The emergence of new regional players in the energy sector and stronger commitments to sustainability by some regional leaders are positive developments. How can planners take advantage of the opportunities? In this context, CUF 2024 is an inclusive and diverse event.

The Blue Economy comprises economic activities that take place in directly the oceans and seas or utilize outputs from oceans and seas as a source of income or consumption and emphasizes sustainable use. Main activities include fisheries, marine transport, offshore wind energy, shipbuilding and, particularly relevant to the Caribbean, marine and coastal tourism. Marine and coastal tourism is a sector sensitive to the climate and capacity and resources to manage risk are limited. The World Travel and Tourism Council informed that eight out of the ten most tourism-dependent countries globally in 2019 were in the Caribbean region. For some Caribbean destinations, tourism is the single most important contributor of employments. Travel & Tourism supported 15.2% of all jobs in 2019 and 13.4% in 2021. The Caribbean relies on international visitors more than any other region in the world. In that context, as the sea is a major value for the Caribbean, the blue waters and coral reefs are important sources of attraction and provides a source of income to the residents. However, the Caribbean's coral population has declined by around 50% with the primary causes are marine pollution and climate change. The marine ecosystem is in grave danger of further degradation.

The current growth trajectory can only be achieved if governments, in collaboration with the private sector, implement initiatives and policies to invest in sustainable development related projects. The high dependence of Caribbean states on tourism as a key economic driver means sustainable tourism practice must be constantly improved, since the region's resources (human, physical, natural) are fundamental to its long-term viability. They also need to focus on enhancing sustainability, hiring, and holding the workforce, diversifying product offers, and increasing preparedness for future crises.

We are inviting planning practitioners, policy makers, researchers, municipal managers, and allied professionals to submit abstracts of proposed presentations. There is no restriction on the academic or professional background of authors and student presentations are welcomed if their topic complements the CUF 2024 theme. Presentations can showcase projects, report research findings, examine policy issues, or recommend new ways of working.

Conference Objectives

Through presentations, workshops, and discussions the Forum will:

1. Draft a Roadmap for the development of the region based on the new opportunities for growth through sound planning practices presented at the Conference.

2. Create a revised baseline of the Region's status as it relates to climate risks and opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

3. Document the new technologies and practices which can lead to impacts on lives and livelihoods.

4. Assessment of gender mainstreaming into the physical planning aspects of national development plans.

5. Document/Assess opportunities and survival mechanisms in poor communities to enhance the quality of life.

6. Review professional planning practice and education across the Caribbean.

7. Convene a general meeting of the Caribbean Planning Association (CPA).

Thematic Areas

During the Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF) six thematic areas are selected: Sustainable Tourism and Application of Digitally Driven Coastal Resilience and Adaptability Strategies in Caribbean SIDS; City management; Climate Change: New and emergent risk scenarios in Caribbean cities; Innovation, technology, and energy; and Changing landscape.

1. **Sustainable tourism**

The Caribbean region, renowned for its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and warm hospitality, faces the imperative of balancing tourism's economic benefits with the preservation of its unique ecosystems and cultures. As the region heavily relies on tourism as a primary source of income and employment, understanding how to harness sustainable tourism practices is paramount. This issue recognizes that sustainable tourism can offer not only economic benefits but also protect and celebrate the diverse cultural traditions and fragile ecosystems that make the Caribbean unique. By investigating this balance, researchers can contribute to strategies that ensure the long-term viability of the tourism industry while safeguarding the region's cultural identity and environmental treasures.

On the other hand, analysis of climate change and its impact on the sustainability of tourism in the Caribbean is critical especially because Caribbean region is particularly vulnerable to climate-related risks such as sea-level rise, hurricanes, and coral bleaching, which can disrupt tourism activities and damage infrastructure. Understanding the specific challenges posed by climate change and developing strategies to enhance the resilience of the tourism industry and local communities is essential. By exploring this question, researchers can provide insights into how adaptation and mitigation measures can be integrated into tourism planning and operations, ultimately safeguarding the industry's future and the livelihoods of those dependent on it.

The following questions are posited:

- How can Caribbean nations leverage sustainable tourism practices to simultaneously enhance economic growth and preserve their unique cultural heritage and natural ecosystems?
- What innovative approaches and best practices in sustainable tourism can be identified from case studies in the Caribbean, and how can these be scaled or adapted to benefit other regions facing similar challenges?
- How does climate change impact the sustainability of tourism in the Caribbean, and what strategies can be developed to enhance the resilience of the tourism industry and local communities in the face of these challenges?
- What role can technology and digital solutions play in promoting sustainable tourism in the Caribbean, and how can these technologies be harnessed to improve the visitor experience while minimizing environmental and cultural impacts?
- In what ways can policies and regulations be reformed or implemented to encourage sustainable tourism development in the Caribbean, and what are the key barriers to effective policy implementation in the region?

2. Application of Digitally Driven Coastal Resilience and Adaptability Strategies in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Caribbean countries are not major contributors of greenhouse gases but are on the forefront of the impacts of Climate Change. This is expected to be exacerbated by sea level rise and increases in hydro-meteorological events such as storm surges and hurricanes. This impacts the wellbeing of the populations of the Caribbean, as the majority of people live in coastal cities and informal settlements, and most major infrastructure is also located along the coastal zone. Although some capital cities have well-planned areas with sturdy structures, the sprawled communities on the outskirts of the city and those in proximity to the coastline often have non-resilient buildings, informal and haphazard development and are located in highly vulnerable areas putting them at high risk.

Sound urban planning and management is hampered by an uncoordinated approach to strategic decision-making, limited stakeholder engagement, ineffective resource allocation and policies that are ill-equipped to support innovation. ‘’*Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Support Resilient Settlements on the Coastal Zones of the Caribbean* aims to strengthen planning and management and more aggressively encourage successful uptake of innovations on technology(ies) to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance resilience in coastal communities. It does so by providing grants to innovative projects that developing the capacity to identify vulnerabilities, anticipate climate change influences, plan and implement innovative mitigation and adaptation measures is key to this programme. It is being managed by The University of the West Indies through the Saint Augustine Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (STACIE), in partnership with Anton de Kom University of Suriname (AdeKUS) and the Caribbean Disaster

and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). It is funded by the ACP Innovation Fund, OACPS Research and Innovation programme -a programme implemented by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, with the financial contribution of the European Union.

CUF2024 aims to highlight the progress of the nine third party innovation projects after once year of implementation. This theme is not open for submissions.

3. City Management (transportation, public services, security)

All cities around the world have diverse needs when it comes to providing solutions to their problems. At present, most cities are using new technologies to offer safe and efficient services to their population, adopting intelligent management solutions and tools.

In the Caribbean, some cities are experiencing rapid population growth and increased tourism, resulting in urban sprawl, congested roads, poor infrastructure, and insecurity, which has given rise to new challenges with significant environmental repercussions. Large shares of the region's population live in high-risk areas with weak infrastructure. The following questions are posited:

- How new technologies can be used in city management?
- What actions can be implemented to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transportation and to reduce dependence on private automobiles?
- What kind of solutions do Caribbean cities need to address for raising insecurity problems?
- How can city planning guarantee the safe and equitable use of the territory?

4. Climate Change: New and emergent risk scenarios

Caribbean countries have many things in common, including vulnerability to climate change that impacts ecosystems and vulnerability to natural disasters that are becoming more frequent and powerful, generating new risks and scenarios, and enormous economic and human costs. The Caribbean also faces the challenge of Sargassum and its proliferation. Is also a key factor, the impact of the Climate Change in Agriculture and the consequences that production imbalances resulting from this will have on human life. Understanding and addressing these challenges helps to adopt policies to reduce risks, generate significant changes in adaptation and mitigation processes, and increase resilience to future crises through better preparedness and more effective response. Climate change is expected to compound the problem by making such disasters more frequent and severe. The following questions are posited:

- How do climate and environmental drivers shape the distribution and vitality of Sargassum?
- How is regional climate change likely to impact Caribbean cities in the coming decades?
- How climate change influences public policies on agriculture and food security

- How climate change is re shaping the Caribbean cities?

5. Innovation, technology, and energy

The Caribbean is rich in terms of biodiversity, vibrant cultures, and unique ecosystems; but it faces numerous challenges in the context of climate change, because this situation increases energy demands and the need for innovative solutions for the region. Therefore, the Caribbean region is highly susceptible to climate change impacts, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and coastal erosion. Technological innovations have the potential to revolutionize how these challenges are managed. By delving into this question, researchers can uncover cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches that can bolster the region's ability to adapt to climate change. This research can contribute to the development and implementation of sustainable technologies that protect coastal communities and preserve the unique biodiversity of the Caribbean, thus ensuring the long-term well-being of both human and natural systems.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the critical role of policy and regulatory frameworks in facilitating or hindering the adoption of innovative climate change mitigation technologies in the Caribbean. Effective policy measures are essential to incentivize private and public sector investment in sustainable innovations. Through this research, scholars can analyze existing policies, identify gaps, and propose reforms that align with the region's sustainable development goals. By addressing this question, researchers can contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for innovation, fostering a transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources while supporting economic growth and climate resilience in Caribbean coastal zones.

The following questions are posited:

- How can technological innovation contribute to enhancing the climate resilience of Caribbean communities and ecosystems?
- What innovative technologies and approaches are most effective in mitigating the impact of climate change on Caribbean region, and how can they be adapted and adopted in the region?
- How can policy and regulatory frameworks be adapted to incentivize the adoption of renewable energy technologies and sustainable innovation in Caribbean, and what changes are needed to facilitate their implementation?
- What role does community engagement and local knowledge play in driving innovation for climate change adaptation and implementation of energy-efficient technologies in Caribbean communities?
- In what ways can technology-driven monitoring and data collection systems enhance our understanding of climate change impacts on Caribbean ecosystems, and how can this information inform innovative strategies for conservation and adaptation?

- How can innovative solutions be optimized to support the reliable and resilient Caribbean region, particularly during extreme weather events and natural disasters?

6. Changing landscape (urban planning and housing)

Urban planning and housing in the Caribbean represent fundamental challenges in shaping the sustainable development of this unique and diverse island region. The Caribbean, characterized by its breathtaking natural beauty, varied cultures, and strategic geographic position, faces several crucial issues related to urban expansion, access to adequate housing and preservation of the environmental setting. The key aspects of urban planning and housing in the Caribbean, highlighting the complexities and opportunities facing Caribbean nations in the quest for sustainable urban development and improved living conditions for their inhabitants.

The Caribbean region, which encompasses a wide range of islands and coastal countries in the Caribbean Sea, is characterized by its geographic and cultural diversity. From big cities to small rural communities on remote islands, the region is home to a unique mix of lifestyles, economies, and challenges. However, despite this diversity, many Caribbean nations share common problems when it comes to urban planning and housing.

Population growth, rapid urbanization and pressure on natural resources are key challenges in Caribbean urban planning. Cities and urban areas in the region face the need to balance economic development and infrastructure with the protection of their natural environment, including beaches, coral reefs, and tropical forests. In addition, the Caribbean's vulnerability to extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and sea level rise, adds a critical dimension to urban planning, with the need to design more resilient and sustainable communities.

In terms of housing, many Caribbean nations struggle to provide decent and affordable housing for their citizens. The high cost of housing, lack of access to financing and the growing demand for quality housing are central issues. Lack of available land, informality in construction and shortage of adequate housing to cope with climate impacts are additional problems that require creative and effective solutions. As a diverse region, is needed to explore the approaches and strategies that various Caribbean nations are adopting to address these challenges in urban planning and housing. From promoting climate resilience to revitalizing degraded urban areas and promoting affordable housing, the Caribbean is at a crucial crossroads in its quest for a more sustainable and livable urban future for all its residents.

The following questions are posited:

- What are the main challenges facing Caribbean cities in terms of urban planning to address population growth and sustainable development?
- How do extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and sea level rise, affect urban planning and housing in the Caribbean, and what strategies are being implemented to address these risks?

- What are the socio-economic disparities in housing in the Caribbean region, and how do they impact urban planning and access to adequate housing for all citizens?
- What measures are being taken to preserve cultural and architectural heritage in Caribbean cities while promoting sustainable urban development?
- What is the role of citizen participation in urban planning in the Caribbean and how is collaboration between local governments, communities and experts being fostered to address housing and urban challenges in the region?

Submission Criteria

Submissions are invited under the following criteria:

Presentations: For acceptance to present at the conference, an abstract must be submitted.

These should (a) state the problem being addressed; (b) describe the activities in the work that have addressed the problem and (c) the relevance of the paper to the theme and/or sub-theme.

Abstracts should be submitted in UK English using MS Word or equivalent format using Arial font size 10" and 1" margins, single spacing and not exceed more than 300 words.

Abstracts submitted to other conferences or publications are allowed.

Architectural/Urban Design/Urban Planning Projects: A description and sample image of an architectural/urban design/ urban planning project. The description should outline the following: (a) location, (b) client or commissioning agency (c) whether built or unbuilt (d) relevance to the conference themes. Projects from architectural, urban design and urban planning students are welcomed and student projects should be clearly indicated. Combined text and images of submissions should be forwarded in single page pdf format

Presentation and Project submissions should include: 1. Title of the proposed presentation; 2. The sub-theme to which it relates; 3. Name(s) of author(s); (no more than 3) 4. Position or title of author(s); 5. Author(s) employer or affiliated institution; 6. Contact details including - email address, telephone/fax numbers and postal address.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically to: Presentations Sub-Committee Email: CUF2024@pucmm.edu.do and conference web page.

1st call: Deadline January 15th, 2024

2nd call: Deadline: March 11th, 2024.

Feedback on acceptance of abstracts will be provided by April 22nd, 2024.

Conference presentation. Persons whose Abstracts have been approved will be asked to submit a PowerPoint presentation.

Authors will be allowed a 15-minute slot for delivering their presentation and are expected to

prepare a sound PowerPoint presentation. Presentations should be sent to the Presentations

Sub-Committee as a backup as early as possible, but by May 27th, 2024, at the latest.

Abstract must be original and not submitted to other conferences or publications. Papers should be submitted in English using MS Word or equivalent format using Calibri font size 11" and 1" margins and must not exceed 8 pages including illustrations, bibliography, and appendices. Abstract should be submitted electronically to the Papers and Presentations Sub-Committee, via email CUF2024@pucmm.edu.do by May 27th, 2023.