

# Concepts, Definitions and Data sources for the Urban World.

## The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Eduardo López Moreno  
Head Research and Capacity Development

The **urban transformation** has positioned cities at the core of the development agenda.

**Urbanization** is indeed one of the most significant trends of the past and present century, providing the foundation and momentum for global change.

Cities have become a positive and potent force for addressing sustainable economic growth, development and prosperity.

- What is exactly a city or an urban area?
- Which size is required to qualify as a city?
- What type of particular administrative, legal or historical status is needed?
- How do we distinguish an urban area from a town or a village?

NEED to have ..... **City as a unit of analysis** to overcome future monitoring and reporting challenges.

**NO NEED** to change existing administrative and statistical definitions in countries

A definition as a **'SUPRA-NATIONAL' GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

- Guidance on definitions
- Measurements
- Unified standards
- Mutually agreed concepts

## **BENEFITS**

- Data consistency
- Global and Regional Comparability
- Pragmatic, Cost-effective, Simple and accurate

There are multiple definitions of what constitutes and urban area

**+50%**

More than **half** of countries apply **2** or more criteria

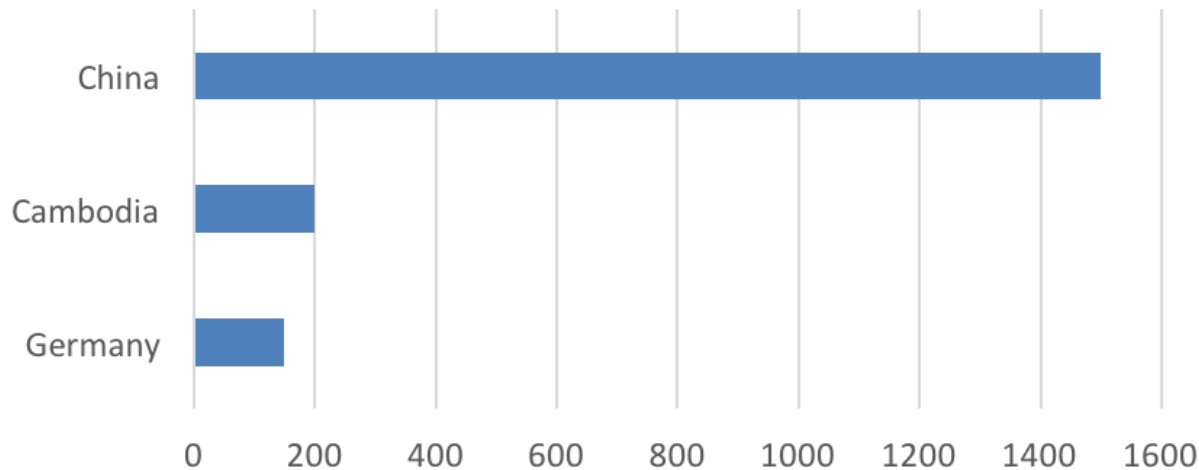
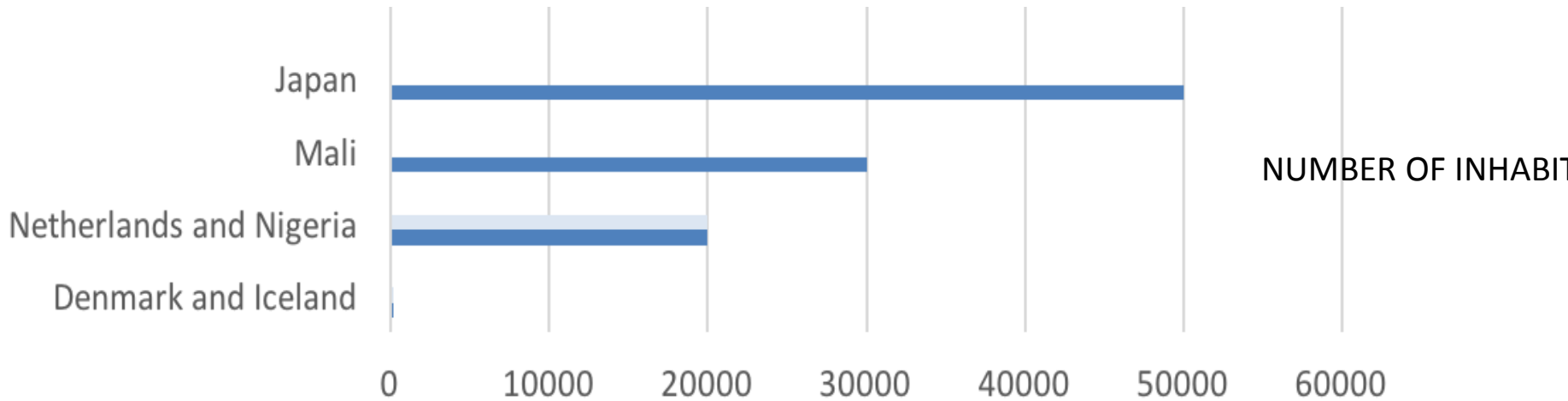
**2/3**

Utilize an **administrative definition** to classify urban areas

**49**

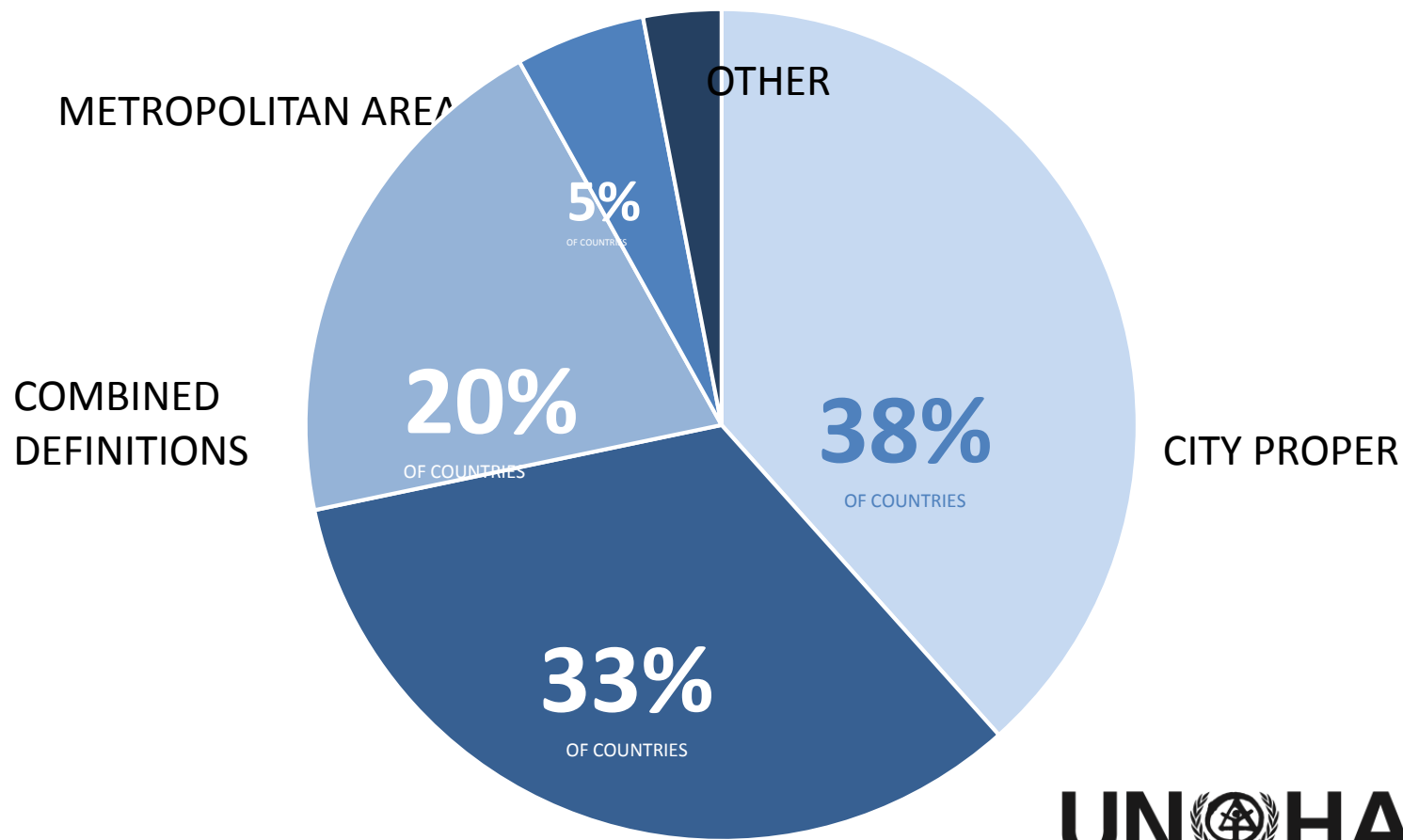
Utilize only **population size and density**

.....Things are made more complicated when analyzing **population thresholds** used by countries



**DENSITIES**  
PERSONS PER SQ KM

## Various definitions of the **CITY... its LIMITS.... Its POPULATION**



URBAN AGGLOMERATION

## CITY PROPER

Refers to the area confined within **ORIGINAL CITY LIMITS**

- It is the smallest unit of analysis
- It is the single political jurisdiction which is part of the historical city centre
- It is a very narrow administrative demarcation of the city

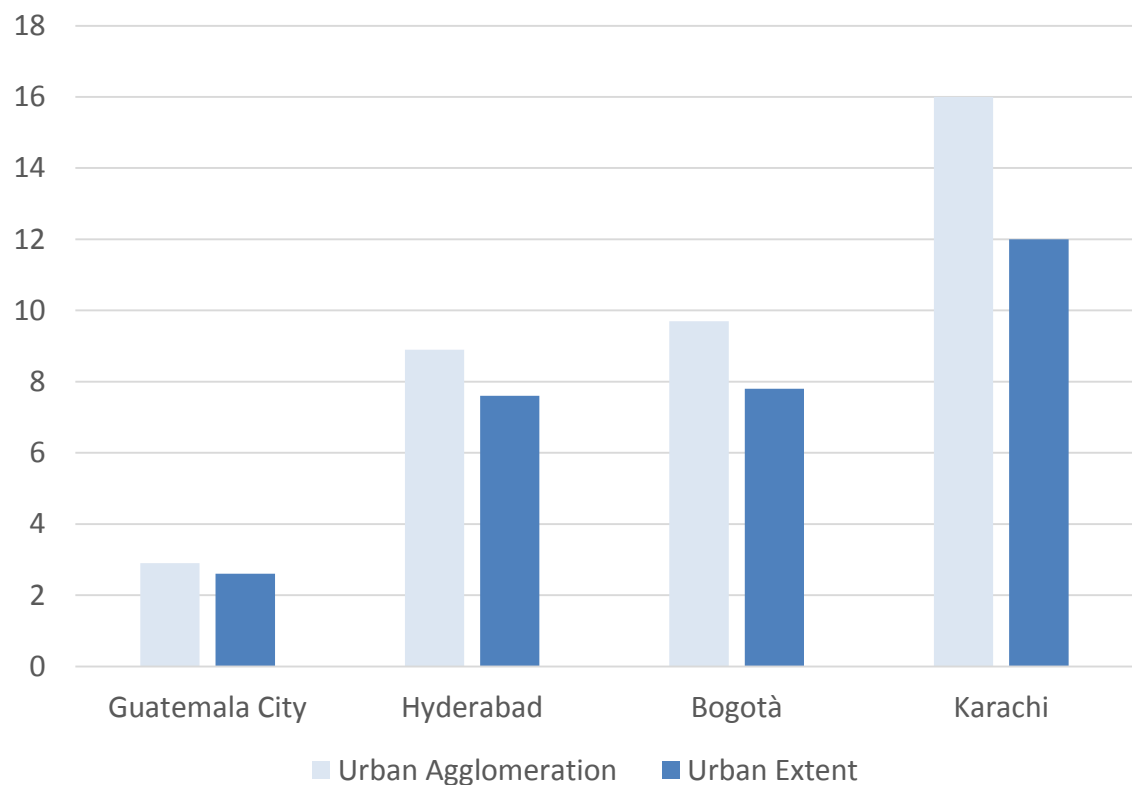
Does not consider adjacent areas of the city and rural areas that are included in the urban extent of the city.

EXAMPLE: Chongqing in China



## URBAN AGGLOMERATION

“The population contained within the contours of a contiguous territory inhabited at urban density levels without regard to administrative boundaries”



Countries tend to include populations that are not inhabited at 'urban density levels'



## METROPOLITAN AREA



‘Geographical region with a relatively high population density that is considered as a statistical area’

- It has an statistical, technical, administrative and political definition
- Usually comprises multiple jurisdictions and municipalities, as well as satellite cities,

Metropolitan data, associated to governance mechanisms, matters a great deal, since it impedes or facilitates the sustainable development of regions.

- In many countries the demarcation of the metropolitan area does not coincide with the urban extent of the city
- This statistical concept **is less useful for global statistics** and for the purpose of monitoring and reporting

□ ***Clear city boundaries*** to provide *‘the right information on the right things and at the right time’*

**Goal 11** indicators present major challenges that other SDGs indicators do not necessarily confront.

## 7 Indicators with a spatial component

- NEW FORM OF COLLECTION - Urban and Intra-city Level
- NEW FORM OF ANALYSIS – Spatial Analysis
- DATA DISAGGREGATION – Sex, Age, Race, Ethnicity, Migration Status, Disability



❑ Need of a consistent set of **cities to produce national aggregates**

Countries will be challenged by the difficulties to report on national (urban) progress in a systematic manner over time.

All indicators collected at city level, such as public transport, solid waste, air quality, public space, etc., will require to be aggregated at national level.

Impossible to generate national values in a systematic manner without an appropriate method of aggregation of city data

- Problematic to produce national reports
- Compromise the production of regional and global aggregates

# RECOMENDATIONS

# 1

Adopt as a statistical concept the **'urban extent'** for the delimitation and measurement of cities and urban agglomerations

- To prevent inconsistencies arising from the use of different urban definitions, when collecting and analyzing information at city and sub-city levels
- To resolve the methodological problem of the city boundaries

## 2.

Create a **National Sample of Cities** enabling National Governments to monitor and report on Goal 11 indicators and to produce national aggregates in a consistent and systematic manner.

- **Integrate** cities of all sizes, functions and types as part of a national system of cities
- Assists in the **aggregation** of locally produced city indicators for national monitoring and reporting;
- Provide a **platform** for collecting different layers of data with a unified methodology, facilitating a systematic disaggregation of information at national, sub-national and city levels
- Creates **baseline data** and establishes benchmarks and national targets allowing comparisons of indicators

### 3..

Adopt a monitoring platform that promotes integration of the different SDGs indicators to address, in a structured manner, the environmental, social and economic components of sustainability – **City Prosperity Initiative**

- Provides a single value of the state of the city;
- Establishes **benchmarks** for local, national and global monitoring;
- Creates city **baseline** and information;
- Generates a local **monitoring** mechanism.
- Identifies **priorities** and transformative actions to achieve sustainable urban development



Thank you

Eduardo López Moreno  
Head Research and Capacity Development