

Technocracy At Work: UN-Habitat's Strategic Urban Plan for 2020-2025

The United Nations met in Nairobi to give teeth to the New Urban Agenda adopted in December 2016. The new strategy lends full ideological support to the global Green New Deal movement. Every city on the planet will be inundated with the new propaganda. □ TN Editor

Sustainable urbanization is central to the realization of the global development goals as set out in the suite of global agreements signed in 2015-16, including, most importantly, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Strategic Plan 2020-2025 focuses on the Agency's commitment and contribution to the implementation of these global development agendas. Through its normative and operational work, the Agency's objective is to: ***“advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace to improve living conditions for all”***.

UN-Habitat's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan creates a strong narrative of change, clearly articulating the relationship of sustainable urbanization with the overall notion of sustainable development. It is only with a clear transformative strategy, partnerships, and a fresh and innovative vision of development that it is possible to respond to persistent and new development problems, including extreme poverty, socioeconomic inequalities, slums, social exclusion and marginalization, gender-based discrimination, humanitarian crises, conflicts, climate change, and high unemployment, which are increasingly concentrated in urban areas. A holistic approach towards an urbanizing world, connecting cities and other human settlements, can help advance sustainable solutions for the benefit of all.

The Strategic Plan lays out a recalibrated vision and mission, and a sharpened focus. UN-Habitat proposes to serve Member States, sub-national and local governments, and other key urban actors in the pursuit of four mutually reinforcing and integrated domains of change or goals:

1. Reduced poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities;
2. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment;
and
4. Effective urban crisis prevention and response

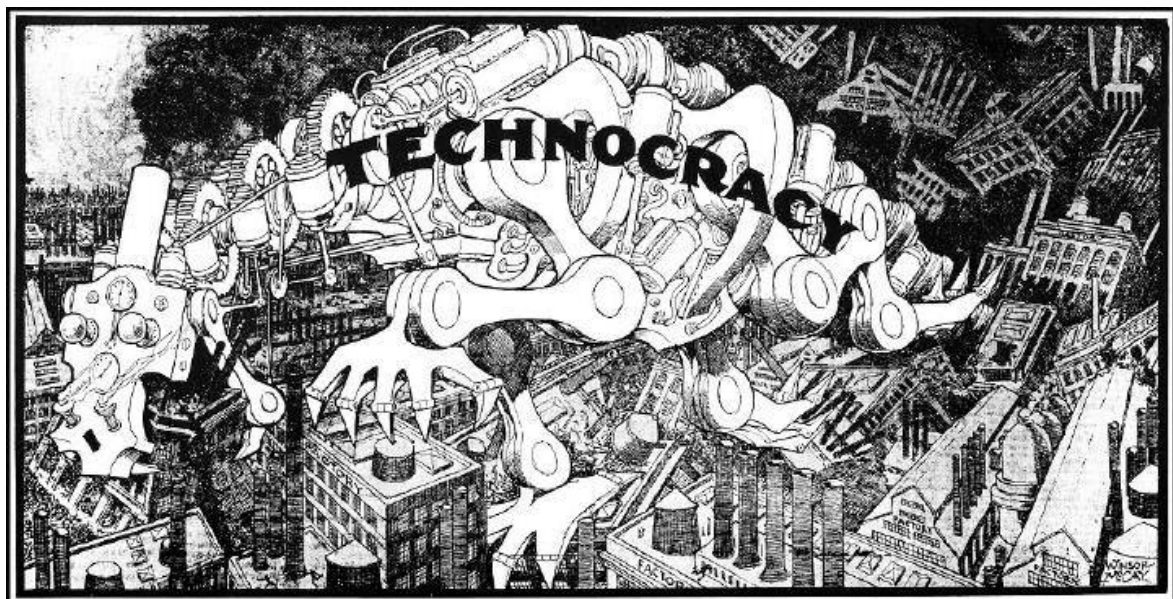
The realization of these outcomes is supported by a certain number of specific 'drivers of change' and 'organizational enablers.' Transformative change can only take place through a paradigm shift. UN-Habitat is cognizant of this, and proposes a clear framework that takes into account global trends and focuses on (i) customized solutions taking into account countries in different situations, aligning all efforts focused on the change we want to see; (ii) leveraging partnerships with sister United Nations entities, the private sector, and other development actors and stakeholders; and (iii) significantly enhancing integrated delivery through more effective collaboration across its country offices, regional

offices, liaison offices, and the headquarters.

However, implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 equally requires organizational changes and a new model for financial sustainability to ensure that UN-Habitat resources are commensurate with its mandates and roles.

Once translated into action, this Strategic Plan will reinforce UN-Habitat's place as the global centre of excellence on sustainable urban development, offering solutions that help seize the opportunities presented by urbanization, while bringing about transformational change for the benefit of millions of people, ensuring that no one and no place is left behind.

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Technocracy Operates Outside Of Left Or Right

Technocracy cannot be rejected until it is recognized for what it is, and that is a problem. Right-wing republicans and Green New Deal leftists

are all “useful idiots” of Technocrats, and have no clue they are being manipulated. □ TN Editor

In 1969, when Theodore Roszak wrote *The Making of a Counter Culture*, it was at least as difficult to be an optimist as it is half a century later. The United States had spent most of the Sixties locked in a bloody, pointless war. At home, its cities had suffered the biggest spike in violent crime since the Great Depression.

In the face of all this, Roszak, then aged 37, conducted a survey of populism among younger generations that was critical in places but recklessly hopeful at its core. “It is the young”, he wrote, “arriving with eyes that can see the obvious, who must remake the lethal culture of their elders, and who must remake it in desperate haste”.

Today, inured to a very different set of stereotypes about the young, one reads passages like this with envy for Roszak’s optimism. In hindsight, few prominent public intellectuals of his generation were so wrong about so many things. Even fewer were so right on the main points.

Rozzak is hardly remembered as a great thinker. When he died in 2011, obituaries described him as the wonk whose greatest achievement was to coin the term “counter culture” to describe the liberal anti-institutionalism of Sixties radicals.

In 1969, there were hundreds of radical or quasi-radical groups with vaguely overlapping sensibilities: Krishnas, Black Panthers, doves, stoners, acidheads, hippies, Yippies, Weathermen. Recognising, as many did, that these groups had something in common was much simpler than spelling out where their commonality lay.

By Roszak’s reckoning, the one thing these groups shared was an enemy. What hippies called the Man or the System or the Establishment, he called “technocracy”: the scientific managerial approach that sustained a hyper-organised industrial society. For many of Roszak’s generation, the consummate technocrat was Lyndon Johnson’s defense secretary Robert McNamara, former president of the Ford Motor Company. McNamara had tried to run the Vietnam War effort in much the same bloodless manner he’d brought to the factory lines at Ford,

with disastrous results.

Technocracy was not left wing (McNamara himself was a Republican), but it wasn't right wing, either. It was, to be sure, a political ideology—the elevation of bureaucracy above freedom and dignity—but voting Democratic or Republican wouldn't defeat it. Nor, Roszak argued, would the tactics that the left had been using for the last few decades:

“If the melancholy history of revolution over the past half-century teaches us anything, it is the futility of a politics which concentrates itself single-mindedly on the overthrowing of governments, or ruling classes, or economic systems. This brand of politics finishes with merely redesigning the turrets and towers of the technocratic citadel.”

...

Yet despite its flaws, Roszak's analysis of technocracy is still illuminating. The 50 years since the publication of *The Making of a Counter Culture* have been good for technocrats and bad for everyone else, particularly the young. The major hardships people under 40 now face are nightmarish versions of those Roszak identified: wandering aimlessly in a technocratic economy, subjected to algorithmic surveillance and dependent for food, recreation and pretty much everything else on corporations that view people as data points.

And yet nobody on the left seems to be talking about technocracy enough. In the US., the radical left is divided, instead, between Sanders-style socialists and single-issue politicians who can't decide whether capitalism, race, gender, or some intersectional combination of them all is the proper lens for analysing society. If any public discourse about technocracy exists today, it is the bigoted version proffered by right-wing pitchmen — from Steve Bannon, with his rants about the Deep State, to Michael Gove, smugly confident that Brexiteers are sick of McNamara-ish experts.

Surely one key reason for the left's sheepishness about technocracy is that, by and large, it was left-wing people working in places like Silicon

Valley who reshaped technocracy into the enormous, charming monster it is today. Thanks to Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and others, today's technocrats have mounds of digitally-reaped data at their disposal, which they use to guide their subjects' thoughts and behaviours more precisely than ever.

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The Atlantic: The Green New Deal Has Already Won

The Green New Deal propaganda bomb has significantly moved the entire Democrat field to the far left, and forcing many Republicans into a compromise position to adopt elements of it. The Ocasio-Cortez and the Justice Democrats have achieved more than they could have hoped

for. □ TN Editor

It's remarkable: A [number of polls](#) suggest that Democratic voters now consider climate change [to be a top-tier issue](#), as important as health care. Perhaps even more remarkably, the party's presidential candidates seem to be taking that interest seriously. Jay Inslee has [staked his candidacy](#) on the issue; Beto O'Rourke has [used a climate proposal](#) to revive his flagging campaign; and Elizabeth Warren has cited the warming planet across a wide set of her famous plans.

This week, Joe Biden joined their ranks, [releasing a lengthy climate plan](#) on his website. Though Reuters [teased his policy last month](#) as a "middle ground" approach more moderate than the Green New Deal, the proposal looks pretty aggressive and sounds almost Bernie Sanders-esque in its ambition. What the United States needs, Biden says, is a "clean energy revolution."

That revolution's main objective: achieving a "100% clean energy economy" in the United States by the year 2050. It's an ambitious goal, both more stringent and longer-sighted than what the previous Democratic White House—which Biden unfailingly calls the "Obama-Biden administration"—pledged under the Paris Agreement on climate change. To meet its old Paris target, the United States had to cut its annual carbon emissions by 1.3 percentage points every year from 2016 to 2025. To meet the 2050 goal, it must cut at more than double that rate—2.9 percentage points—for each of the next 31 years.

Of course, pending both a revision to [the Twenty-Second Amendment](#) and a surge of investment in brain-in-a-jar technology, Biden will not be president 31 years from now. He does not propose a specific binding mandate, such as a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade regime, to carry the country all the way to that mid-century goal.

Instead, Biden says he will work hard to point the federal ship of state toward climate action. He promises to implement a muscular set of executive orders on his first day in the White House. He will require public companies to disclose climate-incurred costs, deploy the federal government's purchasing power on the side of clean energy, and restrict the release of the superpowerful greenhouse gas methane from oil and

gas wells. He will also “require any federal permitting decision to consider the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change”—a policy that could have led to a different outcome in the Keystone XL and [Dakota Access pipeline battles](#).

Biden also promises to wring \$1.7 trillion in investment from Congress, “the largest-ever investment in clean energy research and innovation.” This money will fund a new technology-development program modeled on the Pentagon’s R&D agency, DARPA. This new “ARPA-C” will focus on the big and mostly unsolved challenges of decarbonization, such as electricity storage, advanced nuclear power, carbon capture, aviation emissions, and zero-carbon cement and steel manufacturing. [The longtime Amtrak commuter](#) would also push Congress to “spark the second great railroad revolution,” catching up to high-speed rail in Europe and China. He says he will halve rail-travel times from New York to Washington and extend his old train line—the Northeast Corridor—into the “fast-growing South.”

Finally, Biden says he will use the various instruments of global governance, including the International Monetary Fund, to pressure China and India to reduce their carbon emissions.

I have not glossed all the details here; the full proposal exceeds 10,000 words—although, as [Business Insider](#) and [The Daily Caller](#) have reported, the plan appears to have lifted language directly from climate-advocacy groups in at least five different places. (Biden’s campaign says the error was inadvertent and that the proper citations have now been added.) [As the political scientist Leah Stokes has remarked](#), those lapses suggest that the policy was compiled hastily, almost in reaction to other candidates’ work.

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