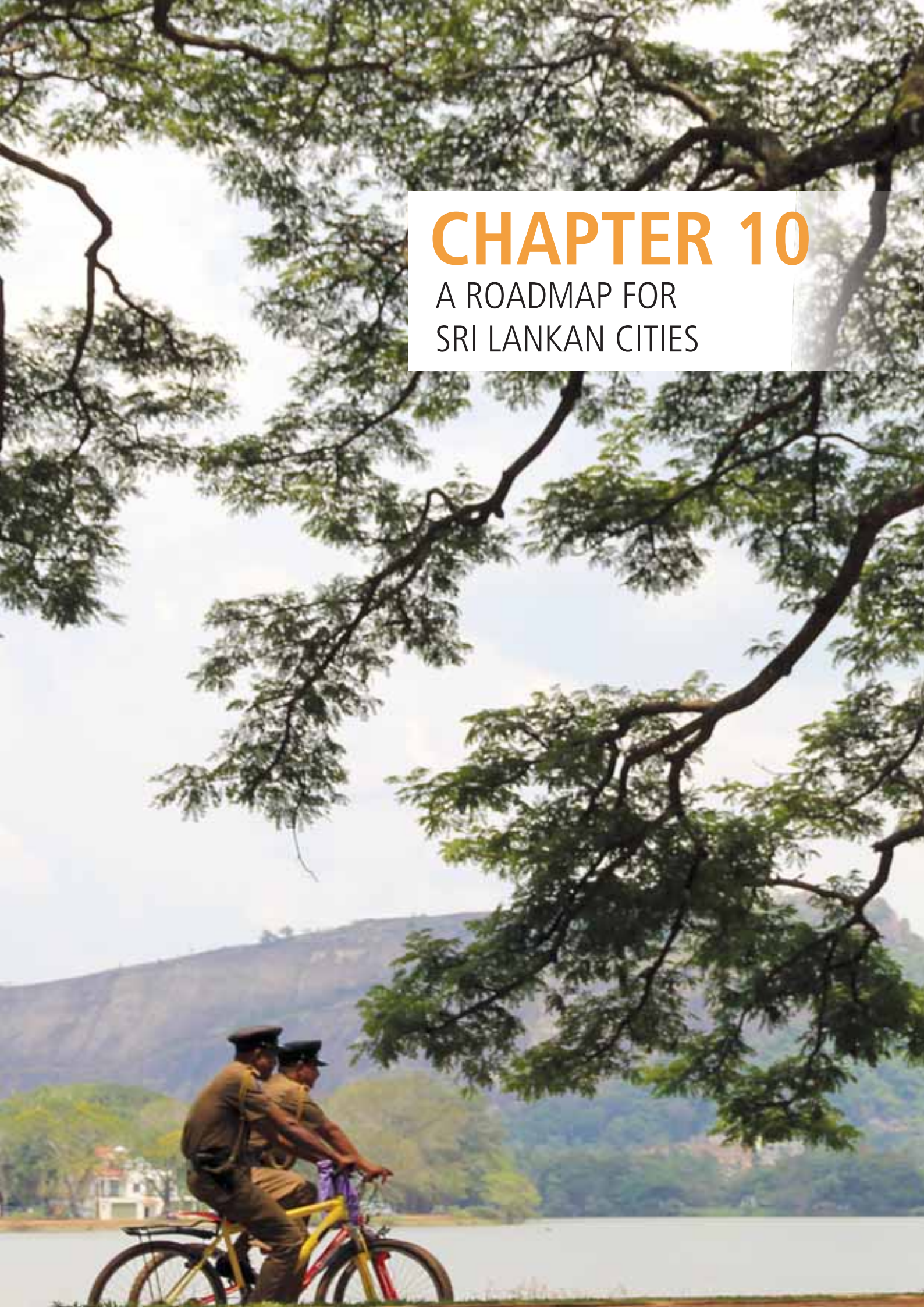


CHAPTER 10

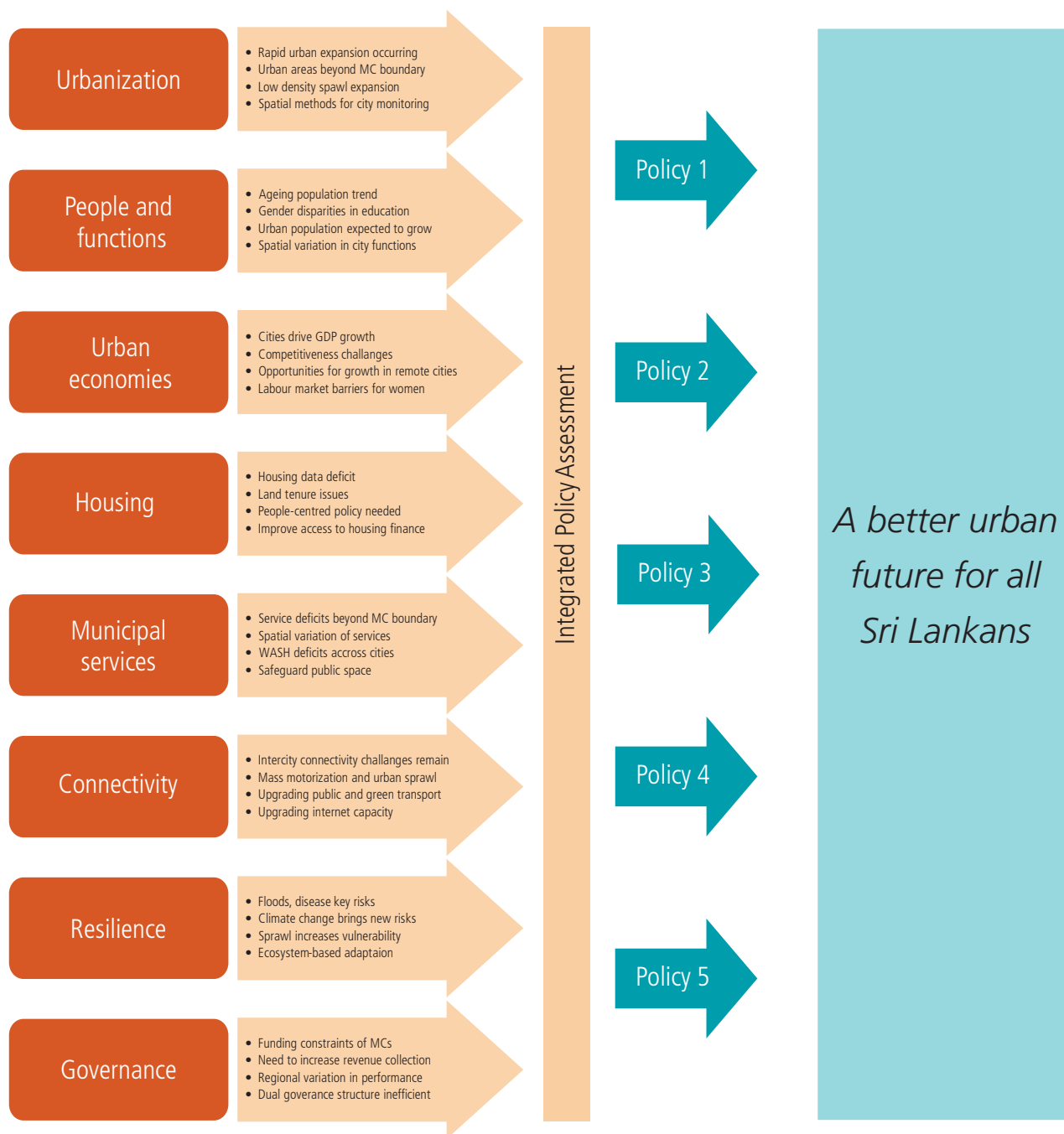
A ROADMAP FOR
SRI LANKAN CITIES



10.1 Key findings

This Roadmap for Sri Lankan cities details possible future policy and programme directions to promote social and economic development in the country's urban centres. The SoSLC analysis has identified key messages across the range of urban sectors, which will aid policy makers to achieve *a better urban future for all Sri Lankans* (Fig 10.1). Building on these messages, the Roadmap offers an integrated policy assessment, to identify integrated interventions that work across urban sectors. In this sense, the SoSLC report's analysis recognises the integrated nature of urban systems: to centre policy making on cities as holistic entities, rather than on individual urban sectors in silos. This model of policy making is rooted in the United Nations New Urban Agenda, which highlights cross-sectoral policies as a crucial component to improving interrelated urban systems (United Nations, 2016).

Fig 10.1: Key messages of the *State of Sri Lankan Cities* report



10.2 A vision of a better urban future for all Sri Lankans

To aid in the identification of integrated policies, the analysis included in the report has been linked to 5 key tenets that define a *better urban future for all Sri Lankans*. These themes draw on the United Nations SDGs and New Urban Agenda, and also incorporate GoSL priorities extracted from analysis of key GoSL strategic documents, including *Vision 2025*, and the *Public Investment Programme 2017-2020* (GoSL, 2017a, 2017b; see Chapter 1, Introduction, for details). These themes have centred the analysis throughout the report, and are linked to each sectoral analysis in a matrix at the end of each chapter.

A *better urban future for all Sri Lankans* includes the following 5 tenets:

- **Competitive Cities**

Urban competitiveness refers to the capacity of cities to attract flows of trade and investment, which in turn drives growth, creates job opportunities, raises incomes and enables cities to move up the value chain into higher-value goods and services. The competitiveness of a city is related to numerous attributes, including the skills of its workforce, its connectivity to national, regional and international markets and supply chains, and the diversification of its economic activity. A competitive city attracts high levels of investment, from both foreign and domestic sources, and is a hub of national, regional and international trade.

The economic arguments for promoting competitive cities in Sri Lanka are compelling because of the importance of cities to economic development. From a global perspective, UN-Habitat's *World Cities Report 2016*, reported that cities account for 80 per cent of global GDP despite comprising only 54 per cent of the world's population (UN-Habitat, 2016). A recent report by the World Bank (2015) found that 75 per cent of cities enjoyed GDP growth that was higher than their national average. The SoSLC report confirms the importance of cities to Sri Lanka's economic development and identifies strategies to increase their competitiveness in the future.

- **Inclusive cities**

Inclusive cities extend the opportunities of urban life across urban population subgroups. They provide equitable access to economic opportunities, such as jobs or affordable credit for business investments. They also provide equitable access to urban services and infrastructure, such as adequate housing, public transport, water, drainage and sewerage infrastructure, hospitals and education facilities, parks and public spaces. In inclusive cities residents enjoy equal access to opportunities and services regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender and other differentiating factors.

In Sri Lanka, promoting inclusive cities can redress gendered, ethnic and other forms of inequality. In the context of the three-decade conflict, promoting equitable access to urban opportunities and services is important for national reconciliation, which is an important aim of government as articulated in *Vision 2025*. In this regard, the *State of Sri Lanka Cities 2018* report has assessed inclusivity within individual cities, but also between cities: cities in the conflict afflicted north and east of Sri Lanka, and the remote central areas, offer less economic opportunities and services than more prosperous urban centres, particularly in the western part of the country. Correspondingly, extending urban opportunities to these regions is a policy priority.

- **Resilient cities**

Urban resilience refers to the capacity of cities to adapt, recover and overcome shocks and stresses. Shocks refer to sudden-onset events that significantly disrupt urban processes, including natural disasters or economic crises. Stresses refer to slow on-set processes, such as those related to long-term changes in climate or unplanned urban development.

Sri Lanka's cities are exposed to variety of shocks and stresses. Notable shocks in recent history include the 2004 Tsunami as well as more frequent urban flood events, such as the 2017 floods in the Western Province. A striking example of a long-term stressor in Sri Lanka is rapid urban sprawl expansion, which has contributed to waterlogging during rains and increased riverine flood risk through land use changes, and is linked to disease – particularly dengue fever – in waterlogged areas.

Urban resilience is an imperative issue in Sri Lanka – as it is globally – because exposure to shocks and stressors is increasingly distributed towards urban areas. This changing risk profile is related to the dynamics of urbanization: a natural disaster affecting a major city will have far larger impacts than a disaster of similar scale located in a rural area. Similarly, urban growth creates the conditions for chronic stressors – such as urban sprawl expansion – to negatively impact substantial populations because of the scale of cities.

- **Safe cities**

Safe cities refer primarily to personal safety and the health of urban residents. Personal safety can refer to issues that arise from living in cities, such as crime, sexual harassment and death or injury from traffic. A safe city also limits health risks for its citizens, such as those related to pollution, contaminated water and other urban-related hazards.

Urban residents in Sri Lanka are vulnerable to a range of threats to their safety, which can be disaggregated by population subgroup. For instance, low-income residents

suffer health dangers linked to sanitation infrastructure deficits. The safety of women is a key issue, particularly in public spaces and public transport where harassment is a threat, or in the home, where gender-based domestic violence is a risk.

- Sustainable cities

Sustainability in the urban context is a broad concept that encompasses all the above city characteristics. A sustainable urban system is one that can sustain and/or develop over time without causing adverse effects to other urban processes and systems.

In Sri Lanka sustainability is often talked about in relation to the urban environment. In this regard, a key issue has been the rapid urban growth in the absence of sewerage infrastructure, which has resulted in polluted urban ecosystems and is, therefore, not environmentally sustainable. Sustainability also refers to a range of urban processes and need not necessarily be related directly to the environment. Sustainable sources of municipal revenue, for example, underpin predictable delivery of public services that are crucial to urban life.

10.3 Policy directions for a better urban future for all Sri Lankans

To achieve a better urban future for all Sri Lankans embodying the above 5 key tenets, the following integrated policy and programmatic responses are proposed. These are not an exhaustive set of urban policy recommendations. Rather, they recognise resource constraints and will provide maximum impact across urban sectors.

1. Redefining urban areas

Redefine 'urban' in terms of spatial characteristics, and revise municipal boundaries to incorporate fringe urban areas, to:

- a. Improve the planning, management and development of the Provincial Capital cities and fringe urban areas.
- b. Provide more equitable access to urban utilities and services for fringe urban dwellers.

2. Sustainable development of cities

Develop a national and sub-national sustainable urban strategy and investment plan for Sri Lankan cities:

- a. Prepare a strategy that views cities as integrated systems rather than sectors in silos, and which promotes ecosystem-based adaptation and compact city development as key programmatic approaches.
- b. Prepare priority action and investment plans to address the key challenges of urban sprawl,

vulnerability to climate change and urban management.

- c. Prepare integrated development plans (land use, economic and social) for the Provincial Capitals and other cities to include fringe urban areas.
- d. Develop an infrastructure grants and loans programme for cities, which builds on the Strategic Cities Development Programme (SCDP).

3. Urban research and information systems

Establish and fund national collaborative hubs and networked Research and Development Institutes located in universities and linked to government, business and civil society, for:

- a. Housing and Urban Research to guide national and local physical and social urban development planning, and conduct spatial analysis of urban expansion.
- b. Local Economic Development to foster the formation of industry and research clusters, innovation hubs and creative industries.
- c. Urban Ecosystem Services to research and model impacts of climate change, ecosystem services and Disaster Risk Reduction.
- d. Smart Infrastructure for Cities to develop smart systems for WASH, energy, renewables, recycling, telecommunications, information, transport and logistics.
- e. Municipal Governance and Finance incorporating SLILG and other stakeholders to improve urban governance, enhance municipal financial management and planning, urban information systems and monitor the localisation of the SDGs.
- f. Development of an integrated and open-access national database on cities.
- g. A national bi-annual urban research forum that links into 2a, 2b and 2c and 2d.

4. Urban governance reform

Reform the dual governance structures that exist in urban areas to enhance local enabling environments, inclusiveness and gender mainstreaming; streamline, integrate and optimise the delivery of essential urban services to support the development of competitive urban and rural economies.

- a. Evidence-based policies to enable appropriate and feasible collaborative governance initiatives.
- b. Progressive policies for citizen engagement through Council Committee systems and participatory approaches to ensure inclusion in planning and budgeting, and strengthened accountability.
- c. An investment programme to support the development of local and networked industry clusters in cities, and the promotion of Public Private Partnerships to fund improved delivery of basic urban services.

A street scene in Galle



Source: UN-Habitat/Charmalee Jayasinghe

5. City connectedness

Programmes to improve connectedness between cities, and their hinterlands, through the building of hard and soft infrastructure, logistics, knowledge networks, enhanced access to supply and value-chains, alliances, and inter-government arrangements.

- a. A national integrated network of highways, rail and airline connections between Provincial Capital cities.
- b. A national and local broadband/Wi-Fi network to support e-governance, e-education, e-information, e-health, e-safety and security (especially for women) and e-commerce.
- c. Promote better accessibility to urban services, incorporating the needs of women, disabled, marginal and vulnerable groups.
- d. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of supply chains and logistics centres between the national systems of cities.

10.4 An integrated policy matrix

Finally, the SoSLC project has developed an integrated policy matrix as a tool to aid policy makers identify policies that work across sectors (Table 10.1). The integrated policy matrix links the 32 Key Messages identified through the sectoral assessments in Chapters 2-9 (referred to as Sectoral Constraints) to the 5 key tenets of a *better urban future for all Sri Lankans* (referred to as City Outcomes). According to this matrix, a successful integrated urban policy intervention will address multiple Sectoral Constraints and contribute to multiple City Outcomes. In this way, the matrix provides a tool for identifying high-impact, cross-sectoral policy that addresses key constraints and contributes to the 5 tenets of a *better urban future for all Sri Lankans*.

Table 10.1: Integrated policy matrix

Integrated Policy Intervention	Sectoral Constraints (Key messages)																City Outcomes																				
	Urbanization				People and functions				Economy				Housing				Municipal services				Connectivity				Climate Resilience				Governance				Competitive	Inclusive	Resilient	Safe	Sustainable
Key Message No	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4					
POLICY 1 REDEFINING URBAN AREAS	•	•	•	•	•				•																												
POLICY 2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					
POLICY 3 URBAN RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					
POLICY 4 URBAN GOVERNANCE REFORM									•	•							•				•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					
POLICY 5 CITY CONNECTEDNES			•						•	•																											

Source: SoS/IC Project

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