

WWF comments on Habitat III Policy Paper Framework on Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development

Concerning point 2 in the Preamble on 'An Agenda Mindful of Diversity'.

Although it is commendable that the policy paper framework includes diversity as an important principle for the framework document, it needs also to cover the principle of inclusiveness. This is particularly significant in the urban context, where marginalized groups, especially for example informal settlement dwellers, whose voice has for long been neglected by policymakers, both at the national and international levels. A key case in point is the millennium development goals which have been criticized for failing to sufficiently address the needs and livelihoods of residents of informal settlements.

Under section 1. 'Challenges: Identify challenges, including structural and policy constraints'

a. Review of all the Habitat III issue papers

In the 'Participation and Equity' sub-section, the fourth point '*Lack of inclusion and participation of women, youth and minorities in local government decision-making processes remains a persistent challenge*' should again be expanded to include migrants and the urban poor, especially slum dwellers for the reasons mentioned above.

a.2 disagreements and controversies

In the 'multi-level governance' sub-section, it could be worth including a paragraph on the need to focus on sustainable development at the local government level where there is a need to recognize cities as sources of environmental problems and opportunities.

On the one hand, rapid urbanization is increasing the environmental load of cities. Cities account for some 75 per cent of the world's energy use, and over 70 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. Urban infrastructure is largely built without giving much thought to ecological sustainability. A resource-intensive consumer society drives urban lifestyles, contributing significantly to the pressure on the planet's ecosystems. Humanity's ecological footprint already exceeds the planet's carrying capacity by 50 per cent, while biodiversity is on a gravely negative trend. The ecosystem services we depend on for survival and human welfare are at risk of critical levels of degradation.

At the same time, cities have a huge potential to act as hubs for the development of smart, sustainable solutions that can help meet human needs within minimal footprints while still improving quality of life. In parallel with international processes on climate and sustainability, there is a need for an urban agenda that takes a strong, visionary leadership at all levels of governance, where international and national policy frameworks are strengthened to ensure that strong actions are taken at the local level to meet the sustainability challenge.

In the 'participation and equity' sub-section, under the fifth point 'How to ensure that local decisionmakers perceive participatory processes add value to decisionmaking, planning and implementation processes' it would also be relevant to include citizens here where it would be important that they also perceive that participatory processes add value to decision making, planning and implementation processes.

Under metropolitan governance: 'what does metropolitan governance do?'

The point on financial resources at the metropolitan level should be expanded upon to include how best to increase the flow of financing to local-level sustainable development projects with the emphasis on ensuring that financing delivers on key sustainable development metrics. For more information please see WWF's publication *Financing the Transition: Sustainable Infrastructure in Cities, WWF, 2015* (http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/footprint/cities/financing_for_sustainable_infrastructure_in_cities/) which sets out current possibilities for how the transition to sustainable cities can be financed.

Under 2. Priorities: identify the policy priorities & critical issues for implementation of a new urban agenda

The a-1. List of criteria should be more specific and mention inclusiveness as a key criteria. See the explanation above under point 2 in the Preamble on 'An Agenda Mindful of Diversity'.

Under B. 1. List of key transformations

In the 'participation and equity' sub-section, the point concerning: '*Current participation practices do not guarantee fairness and equality. Participation has to foster or create a mechanism through which the poor and other disadvantaged groups are empowered and must prevent manipulation by local elites and/or vested interests*' is commendable but at the same time the need for urban governance that empowers the poor and other disadvantaged groups should be highlighted elsewhere in the text, for example, in the Preamble as a principle of the framework.

The last point in this section notes that: '*Inequalities are embedded in the current urban development model. We need a change of paradigm where social development, not just economic development, becomes the driving factor.*' While it is commendable that the framework seeks to address inequalities in current urban development, it would be better if the paradigm shift referred to would be of one of a shift to *sustainable* development which would incorporate a more holistic and thus more equitable development covering social, economic and ecological issues.

3. Implementation: Develop action-oriented recommendations

Under the 'Identify Key Actions at All Levels of Implementation' section in the 'participation and equity' sub-section, in the final point there is a reference to the need to implement: *'a shift in the current urban development paradigm towards an emphasis on social development'*.

Again it would be worth emphasizing a shift to sustainable development as mentioned above, while this paragraph should address the need to promote and implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in particular as a means of taking action and measuring progress across all spheres (ie economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development.

'Under c. Establish indicators of successful implementation, monitoring and Evaluation' section , 'c1. Indicators of Success', in the 'Participation and Equity' sub-section, the suggested indicators should be harmonized with those being developed under the SDGs indicator process, especially those that have already been designated as 'green' indicators and thus would be easiest to measure.