



UN Major Group for Children and Youth

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Intervention at the Open-Ended Informal Consultative Meeting for Habitat III
The Transformative Commitments for a Sustainable Urban Development
Urban Ecology and Resilience
27th April 2016

Thank you for giving us the floor.

The UN Major Group for Children and Youth, on behalf of the Children and Youth Partner Constituent Group of the General Assembly of Partners, would like to share some views and concerns about the discourse and deliverables in regard to these thematic areas.

As raised by us on the first day, the New Urban Agenda has to broaden its focus and work not only on urban development, but *sustainable* urban development. Although easy to say, this terminology calls for a significant realignment of our approach and constitutes the paradigm shift necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda and ensure sustainable urbanization.

In the context of this discussion on ecology, using yet another term could be the first step. The New Urban Agenda must be “people centered **and planet sensitive**”

In terms of concrete steps, we would like to explicitly qualify several concepts, create cohesion, and incorporate them into the formal implementation and review process.

We urge the conversation to shift beyond the use of GDP as a qualifier of a city’s contributions to development. This buzz concept does not capture the destructive nature of resource extraction from the planet, especially around rural and peri-urban areas.

Therefore, productivities, income, inequality, etc. should be looked at in an enhanced purview and not just by through the lens of GDP.

The concept of beyond GDP is not a radical thought, and has already been inter governmentally agreed in the outcome of Rio+20, the Future We Want, the 2030 Agenda, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Cohesive implementation of the New Urban Agenda in regards to the topic of this panel, involves assessments of the respective trajectories of the environmental, social, and economic variables, and how they affect each other, and in turn the indicators of the New Urban Agenda.

Cohesive Measurement and assessment of progress of the SDGs in an urban context and the the New Urban Agenda, requires a comprehensive assessment of national and city level ecological footprints as a ratio discounted against progress on SDG indicators. Then in turn integrated into new measures of progress beyond GDP.

This is critical to ascertain the genuine, holistic national progress towards sustainable development.

This analogy should also be extended to incorporate extra-territorial contributions to ecological footprints.

In addition, taking stock of a city's ecological footprint (through a natural capital accountability system) compared to environmental thresholds, planetary boundaries and biocapacity, should be included as a mandatory guideline in reviews at the global and national levels.

Such an analysis should also track input oriented proactive measures like regulatory steps imposing biophysical caps on the extraction of virgin resources for consumption in cities, and measures being taken to replenish the depleted resources in the communities where the depletion took place. We stress that distance and hypothetical replenishments through credits and offsets do not account for real replenishments.

The structure of such an analysis can be borrowed from the work of the Secretary General's scientific advisory board, whose terms of reference includes actions points on creating global assessments of critical environmental thresholds.

Thank you.