



UN Major Group for **Children and Youth** the space for children and youth in the United Nations

UNMGCY

Statement for Habitat III Opening Plenary

Wednesday, 19th October, 2016

Thank you for giving us the floor.

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth. As an Ecuadorian medical student, I would like to share our views and vision at this celebratory moment of our collective Habitat III journey.

Although we are excited to join this celebration, it is important to scrutinise stakeholder engagement in the process thus far. Major groups and other stakeholders, the modality mandated by the General Assembly for this process since its inception, a modality that provides designated and self-organised spaces to critical segments of society, has mobilised 16 stakeholders groups that have already been crucial in other sustainable development processes. Notwithstanding this mobilisation, the space for engagement in Habitat III was narrowed. In Habitat II, stakeholders hosted the informal informals. In the Open Working Group on the SDGs, major groups and other stakeholders could intervene in every session and were never barred from the negotiation room. Here are some suggestions for improvement going forward:

Paragraphs 128 and 162 specifically provide a role to major groups and other stakeholders in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the New Urban Agenda. This should be protected, effectively operationalised and expanded, especially around the Secretary-General's independent assessment of UN-Habitat and the progress report of the New Urban Agenda.

On Monday, in partnership with ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and the President of the General Assembly, we launched the QYC - or Quito Youth Commitments, our three-pronged strategy to mobilise global young people to contribute to the implementation, follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda. The QYC has three pillars:

1st, we will use our convening power to provide a legitimate space for youth to engage in follow-up and review, especially around key gatherings like the Governing Council of the UN-Habitat, the World Urban Forum, and the High Level Political Forum.

2nd, we have established the Sustainable Urban Development Youth Initiatives, which brings together young practitioners and scientists to create a coherent science policy interface in service of implementation.

Finally, the 3rd pillar, in direct partnership with ICLEI, we have established the Cities 2030 Young Professionals Programme, which will channel young talent toward the administrations of local and subnational governments as to reinvigorate local authorities and breathe new life and dynamism into their work.

We call on you to call on us. We are here to work with you, partner with you, critique you, and above all hold you accountable. We are determined to drive forces to shape the urban and territorial future we want. Nothing about us without us. Please join us in this journey to ensure no one and no place is left behind.

Thank you.