Department for International Development

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Our ref: NV_Habitat III

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NV: United Kingdom Comments on Habitat III Issue Papers

The Department for International Development presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the Secretary General's Letter of 1st June 2015 inviting member states to provide comments on the Habitat III Issue Papers by 30th June 2015.

Please find enclosed the UK comments on the Habitat III Issue Papers.

The Department for International Development avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary General for Habitat III the assurances of its highest consideration.

UK Department for International Development
30th June 2015

Issue Papers:

Paper 1 – Inclusive Cities

- Under Key drivers under spatial planning (p6) it is worth looking into ways to connect city outskirts. Those living in city peripheries can feel excluded and find it hard to avail jobs unless there is transportation linking them to the centre. Revitalising/ regenerating areas just outside city and town boundaries are crucial to accelerate inclusion.
- Leveraging large investments to support inclusion: Under accountability (p7) look into ways city governments can evaluate and run projects with inclusion lens in mind. That's means actively looking to include inclusion criteria (e.g.job creation, access to services) while assessing return on investment on large projects.
- Fostering social skills among staff: Understanding inclusion does not come naturally, mainly because cost and benefit often dominate prevailing thinking. A diverse team is needed at the central and municipal government level that brings skills and perspectives from the public, private and social sectors. This will help municipal governments to understand, communicate and work with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Using Digital Technology to foster inclusion: Digital technology has the potential to make communities and cities inclusive by providing access and safety related information collected by users and by trained auditors. It can encourage more people to be involved in inclusion of women and marginalised communities and providers to use the data to improve services.
- There is no mention of LGBTT anywhere in the paper, despite the fact that cities are generally considered more progressive and welcoming to this community. And so there's also no mention of them in the paper's discussion of discrimination and inequality.
- The paper makes reference to the fact that inequalities within cities are often masked by national or city-wide statistics, so it would be useful if the paper can propose ideas on the collection of data on health, education, infant mortality, access to basic services at municipal level or below.

Paper 2 – Migration and Refugees in Urban Areas

- This paper needs to separate out urban migrants, refugees and IDPs as they aren't the same. Forced migration shouldn't be bundled into the same category as economic migration.
- The three different migration statuses require quite specific policy responses. For example humanitarian actors will respond to refugees in setting up parallel structures (which is referenced in the paper) but not in response to economic migrants moving to cities.
- We question the validity of the following statement on page 2 in the paper - 'Many migrants and refugees are compelled by law or circumstance to live in segregated, hazard-prone and poorly maintained residential

areas'. What is the evidence for this? Some migrants may be forced to live in camps miles from anywhere but we aren't aware of laws that compel migrants to live in certain camps.

Paper 3 – Safer Cities

- **Needs of Women and Girls:** Urbanisation offers new opportunities, particularly in terms of employment for women, but it also brings risks, particularly for women. This needs to come out clearly in the paper. Women and girls need to be made aware of their right to live free from violence. Increased access to protection from police and legal aid services is needed to empower survivors to seek support and legal redress. Participation of women and girls in decision making processes and their capacity to hold duty bearers accountable is therefore crucial**.**
- **Zoning regime to address urban safety**: Spatial planning for urban safety holds particular potential for cities with rapid urban growth. Slum Upgrade & innovative financing is mentioned but in addition zoning laws should also be looked into.
- **Involving Men and boys to challenge attitudes and behaviour towards women and girls**: Men and boys need to know how to take measures to prevent and respond to violence especially those against women and girls. Their knowledge and attitude needs to change in terms of their capacity to engage in activities to challenge traditions, systems and cultures that promote violence in public and work places. They need to be empowered to report and participate in influencing decision around prevention, protection and reporting of violence specially those against women and girls.

Paper 6 - Urban Governance

- Enhanced role of local governments in the developing countries needs to be in tandem with enhanced capacity and enhanced revenue mobilisation. This will enable them to face the 21st century urban challenges.
- The need of the moment is to have an optimum combination of locally generated revenue and scientific formula based demand driven devolution from the higher levels of governments rather than ad-hoc devolution.
- 'In many parts of the world, the informal provision of basic services and the tax evasion produced by the informal economy keep being one of the major threats to good governance.' This statement is open to question as it could easily be the case that good governance is lacking and therefore has led to the informal economy not paying taxes. Also the use of the word evasion indicates that the entire informal sector is intentionally avoiding paying taxes which isn't the case.
- The legend on the graph on page 4 needs to be corrected - It should be 'local government expenditure/revenue as a percentage of total national expenditure/revenue'

Paper 7 - Municipal Finance

- Need to look at identifying local revenue sources that have the potentiality to grow with the cities' income. Local resources lack buoyancy and suffer from low elasticity to cities' income- moving away from traditional residual approach of fund devolution to the municipalities.
- Need to look for land based resources at the disposal of the municipalities.
- Enabling policy, regulatory and institutional framework for municipal borrowing through prudent financial management.

Paper 8 – Urban and Spatial Planning and Design

- A useful link noted between urban compactness and Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Useful link between economic benefits (land values, productivity, mixed uses etc) and planning
- Very important point made about understanding cities as ecosystems (complex adaptive systems)
- The issue of design is hardly mentioned and only in the context of urban design. The issue of design (more generally) is something that is not prominent enough in our city/climate narrative. It is absolutely fundamental

to tackling climate and many of the ecological challenges we face. It is important that it is flagged appropriately so that we can focus on it.

Paper 9 – Urban Land

- It would be good if the definition of land tenure can be expanded to include reference to - Land tenure as a set of rules, whether legally or customarily defined, that determines how land is used, possessed, leveraged, sold, or in other ways disposed of among people, as individuals or groups. Therefore tenure security is about much more than being safe from eviction but covers all control functions of property rights over land.
- There could be more discussion about linking to land issues in rural areas and learning lessons from the challenges there and the work by the likes of FAO and IFID.

Paper 12 – Local Economic Development

- The paper makes a good case for local economic development and city competitiveness, looking at the comparative advantage of a region. However linkages between cities both as competitors and traders could be considered.
- Stronger discussion of spatial economic geography of a country and how planning for where cities are going to grow and therefore what their comparative advantage in terms of industry, productive employment could be drawn out more.
- Economic growth corridors isn't mentioned but can be supported as local economic development takes place, this also links to the discussions in the paper on rural-urban linkages.

Paper 13 – Jobs & Livelihoods

- This paper covers all the key issues with jobs and livelihoods in cities.
- On page 4 under point 2 it would be good to reflect in the paragraph on infrastructure that infrastructure hinders job creation but that at present there is a significant financing gap for infrastructure
- There could be reference to potential sectors for job creation related to value chain development and links between urban and rural such as commercial agriculture. This could be flagged under key drivers for action as at present the paper is perhaps suggesting that housing and infrastructure are the main labour intensive industries for job creation.

Paper 15 – Urban resilience

- Important points about resilience at city level which recognises the urban area as a dynamic and complex system that must continually adapt to challenges in an integrated and holistic manner.
- Useful points made about resource scarcity and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. It is important to note the dependence on depleting resources, particularly fossil fuels and the high-levels of lock-in and hence vulnerability this has created.
- Useful points about a "whole-of-society" approach needed to build urban resilience.
- It would be good if this paper could reference the role of crisis response in cities and providing a resilient response. After a crisis there are opportunities to improve building codes and standards and upgrade informal settlements, but there are also considerable risks of people building back their homes in ways that increases their exposure to hazards even further

Paper 16 – Urban ecosystems and resource management

- The paper needs a discussion on the types of **dependencies** that cities create on the resources provided by ecosystems. This points to where the **vulnerabilities** lie and helps identify areas to mitigate these.

- Important too to understand the resource flows through cities and how resources are converted, both into "products" and waste and how there are dealt with. We should be aiming for zero emissions, zero waste and create our cities as cyclical systems.

Paper 17 – Cities and climate change and disaster risk management

- It is important to frame cities as the primary site for our efforts to mitigate climate change. This is so because cities consume most two thirds of the world's energy and are responsible for some 70-80% of emissions.
- With reference to this statement on page 6:
- 'Coherence and integration of disaster responses, disaster risk management and climate change plans and institutional mechanisms should be continuously monitored and assessed in the context of sustainable development' – it would be good to have some reference here to coherence and integration between humanitarian actors, development actors and city authorities, so it's clear to readers there are issues with coherence and coordination amongst these actors.
- Section B on page 9 on Urban Governance should make explicit reference to the role that city authorities have in disaster response, particularly in terms of coordinating interventions and ensuring emergency assistance is informed by existing local data, local knowledge and expertise, and contributes to restoring and strengthening city systems. City authorities also have a role to play in ensuring that recovery incorporates measures to improve disaster resilience.
- When disaggregated buildings are responsible for most of the urban emissions and need to be identified and focussed upon. Tackling the emissions that emanate from buildings has the following dimensions:
  - Most buildings use high carbon materials (cement, bricks, steel, glass, aluminium etc). Most of the current building stock is poorly designed from a climate perspective
  - All new buildings need to be built to passive design principles to reduce their energy consumption.

Paper 18 – Urban infrastructure and basic services, including energy

- The issue of design needs to come through more strongly. It is important that we understand how design works, who designs, how the professions and their practices work, who teaches design, what building regulations there are and how and who enforces them.
- Buildings and infrastructure fail, not only due to poor construction, maintenance, but also due to poor design to start off with.
- While energy is mentioned in the title it is hardly mentioned in the paper. It is important that the dependencies created by the energy choices that cities have made are well understood as it highlights the vulnerabilities that cities face. It is important that cities have a long-term understanding of the energy supply dynamics so that they can plan appropriately if they are highly reliant on depleting energy resources.

Paper 19 – Transport and mobility

- Good points on compact cities, non-motorised transport, walkable neighbourhoods
- Again, it is important to understand where the energy for transport systems comes from and to analyse dependencies on fossil fuels. The global transport system is 95% dependent on oil. The transport system moves goods and people. It is the backbone of the global trading system upon which urban economies and urban residents are dependent.