

**HABITAT III URBAN DIALOGUES
PrepCom3, Surabaya**

25 – 27 July, 2016

Draft New Urban Agenda

DRAFT Online Discussion Summary

Moderators: Claudio Acioly (UN-Habitat), Joseph D’Cruz (UNDP), Lydia Gény (UN OHCHR) and David Martineau (IOM)

Dialogue Structure:

The Habitat III Urban Dialogue on the Draft New Urban Agenda took place from 20 – 28 July 2016 in advance of and throughout the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Habitat III Conference (PrepCom3) in Surabaya, Indonesia.

The discussion was overseen by four substantive experts (“moderators”) from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Habitat and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), who solicited and responded to comments on the Draft New Urban Agenda.

The moderators responded to participants’ comments, engaging them through a discussion around the proposed ‘Transformative Commitments’ for sustainable urban development and how to implement them. Questions sought to encourage the exchange of experience, as well as get to the heart of practical difficulties and challenges faced by cities in providing shelter, employment and urban services and ensuring that no one is “left behind,” while protecting the environment and adapting cities to be resilient to the impact of current and future challenges over the next two decades, including climate change and increasing urbanization.

Participation:

During the one-week discussion period, more than 1,950 individuals visited the Urban Dialogue on the Draft declaration at: <https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/draft>, from 92 countries, with the largest number of visitors in descending order from Indonesia, the United States, the UK, Ecuador, Germany, Uruguay, Brazil, Austria, Spain and France. In total 78 posts were received from countries worldwide, including Bangladesh, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Serbia, Switzerland, the UK, the United States and beyond. The majority of contributions were received in English, however the platform featured the ability for participants to translate the discussion into several dozen languages, which provided greater accessibility for participants to post and comment on the discussion in their native language.

Discussion topics:

- **A:** Transformative commitments for sustainable urban development – *48 replies*
- **B:** Effective implementation – *30 replies*

Key Recommendations from the Dialogue:

Summary of the Dialogue:

A. Transformative commitments for sustainable urban development

The co-moderator, UNDP's Joseph D'Cruz, called for participants to focus on how the Transformative Commitments for sustainable urban development outlined in the draft New Urban Agenda (NUA) can be achieved following the upcoming Habitat 3 Conference in Quito in October 2016 and requested participants to suggest concrete actions that can be taken by national and municipal governments, civil society, the private sector and the global community acting together, asking in particular how the ideas in the draft document can be strengthened and refined to make them more relevant and achievable in the coming decades?

Topics covered in the online discussion ranged from jobs, affordable housing and basic services to urban food security, health and nutrition, migration, the importance of community, the arts and culture, the role of the military in implementing the NUA and the challenge of balancing urban economic growth and human rights with environmental protection. Participants strongly supported the NUA's people-centred approach and shared examples of how to implement this in practice, including by enabling participatory decision-making and data transparency.

Sub-topic 1: Leave no one behind, urban equity and poverty eradication

“Urbanisation can only have a positive transformative force if it respects and promotes human rights.”

– Lydia Gény, Discussion Moderator, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

migrants, minorities, indigenous people and others.

Participants supported the NUA's promotion of adequate housing as a right to be protected by States, but the European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing recommended the insertion of the word ‘affordable’, defined as, “*the capacity for households, for which the free market fails to provide an accommodation,*

Lydia Gény, Discussion Moderator, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) argued that the goals of the Transformative Commitments can only be achieved if they are implemented using a human-rights based approach. She requested examples of how the commitments can help ensure the full and meaningful participation of vulnerable groups including women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced persons,

“If people do not have a degree of certainty about their future, of having a roof over their head, an income, assurance of safety in their neighbourhood

there is no confidence and no sustainable growth.”

– Julien Dijol – Deputy Secretary General, European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing, Belgium

to find a decent home.” The Moderator, Lydia Gény, noted that the right to housing encompasses affordability, together with location, accessibility, availability of services, habitability, security of tenure and cultural adequacy. She further highlighted the importance of the **right to non-discrimination** in the implementation of the NUA.

David Martineau, Discussion Moderator and Associate Policy Officer at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), led a discussion on **Migration** in the NUA. Gina Starfield, Graduate Student from the United States, highlighted that while the number of migrants living in cities will almost double in the next decades, migrants are not included in the city planning processes of many cities and local governments. She emphasized the importance of addressing the needs of migrant populations in the NUA as vital to the political, social and economic wellbeing of cities, both in normal times - when migrants’ needs should be addressed in plans related to housing, access to justice, integration, education, health, community participation, economic development, etc. - and in non-normal times, for example in the event of acute shock.

“Mobility is an opportunity.

Local actors can play a significant role in enhancing the developmental impacts of international migration through good policies.”

– Gina Starfield, Graduate Student, United States of America

There was disagreement regarding the environmental impact of international migration, with one participant from the Birmingham Resilience Network, UK, arguing for the NUA to promote controls on international capital and migration flows in order to mitigate negative social, economic and environmental impacts on local urban infrastructure and ensure sustainable, resilient cities, while the Discussion Moderator, David Martineau, described the positive benefits migrants have been shown to bring to cities, including urban diversity, contributing to the labour force, spurring economic growth, counteracting population

decline and contributing to development in their towns and cities of origin through international remittances. He noted that there is little evidence to suggest that migration drives up urban poverty and highlighted that the central aim of the NUA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to address current gaps and challenges in order to facilitate well-managed urbanisation, including safe and regular migration.

Several contributors appreciated the NUA’s recognition of **culture** as crucial to sustainable cities of the future. Prof. R. B. Singh, University of Delhi, India, supported the use of **art** as a tool for heritage renewal and urban sustainability, arguing, *“Art has the ability to connect and amplify the attachment of people to cultural heritage by enhancing the visibility of existing culture, traditions and monuments in urban spaces.”* Similarly, S. K. Das, Architect and Urbanist from India, urged that cities foster and be driven by **local creativity**, providing space for arts and creativity, in order to limit the homogenization of cities through globalization and “gated communities” built at the expense of basic services. Arguing that, *“we are getting global cities but not our unique urbanisms”*, he called for the NUA to promote a

“when well-managed, migration can play a significant role in boosting development while reducing inequalities...

... migrants can be key actors in this regard ... safe and regular migration is key to achieving sustainable development.”

– David Martineau, Discussion Moderator, IOM Geneva

“We need to work towards a shared city.

Especially in the developing world, there is a greater need than ever before for every city to reflect its own unique multiplicities.”

– S. K. Das, Architect and Urbanist, India

serious exploration of place-specific urbanisms that have a deeper link with people at the social, economic and livelihood level, for increased equity and sustainability.

Continuing the discussion of **cultural rights and heritage** as a key tool for building sustainable cities, Blue Drum Agency, Ireland, called for the NUA to include *“truly operational references to culture ... the wide application of cultural rights and its specificity to communities and to new forms of participation in cultural governance.”* They shared two concrete recommendations of more robust participatory processes to ensure cultural rights,

“Culture can deliver transformative change for human good.”

– Blue Drum Agency, Ireland

from Lithuania and Ireland respectively. The former involved artists and activists working with the local community at a land reclamation project to strengthen the community’s capacity in decision and “place-making”, promote values and cultural rights, and foster inclusion and social justice, and was

selected by the 2016 UCLG Mexico City Culture 21 jury as an exemplar initiative. The latter initiative in Galway, Ireland, sought to bring active participation that is community-led back into local agendas, particularly arts and cultural initiatives, and led to the development of a fledgling Charter for Cultural Rights.

Blue Drum recommended that the NUA supports making the role of “citizen-artists” more secure, recognizing their contribution to development and sustainable cities as ‘public value jobs’ and change the language of top-down engagement to make participation a core value, identifying **new forms of participation** that work with the ‘demand side’ through community mobilization, capacity building, and empowerment because *“the cultural rights of excluded groups thrive best when freed from institutions.”*

Several participants argued for the importance of **communities**, both in terms of involving communities in decision-making, but also in data collection to ensure implementation of the NUA effectively meets its goals. Ziming Li, PhD Student of Urban Planning, United States and S. K. Das, India both advocated increased **transparency in data collection**, with S. K. Das recommending diverse community collaboration to prevent manipulation of statistics and opening up the interpretation of new urban data to public debate.

“We need to think more critically about measurement and take it out of the hands of sectarian interests.”

– S. K. Das, Architect and Urbanist, India

Sub-topic 2: Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all

Focusing on the specific needs of **children and young people**, Dr. Sophie Hadfield-Hill, University of Birmingham, UK, called for the NUA to promote **rural-urban connections** as

“There needs to be a specific reference to nature in the city,

more than just green spaces, for promoting social development and wellbeing.”

– Dr. Sophie Hadfield-Hill, University of Birmingham, UK

“vital pathways of social and economic prosperity”, based on her research with children and young people in India, which found that being geographically and materially disconnected with urban infrastructures had a significant impact on belonging, isolation and inequality.

Her research also highlighted the importance of enabling a **connection with nature** in urban planning as vital to residents’ wellbeing and belonging to place; the importance of **places of interaction** and allowing people to shape their own places of

interaction as key sites of belonging and community, e.g. accessible, safe play spaces for young people. In terms of planning cities of the future, she also emphasized that it is vital that any new urban development has a **diverse education strategy** at its core, arguing that, *“For families to commit to new urban spaces, educational opportunities need to be at the core of urban planning.”*

The majority of participants, including the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), appreciated the NUA’s emphasis on participatory approaches and Dr. Sophie Hadfield Hill, UK, underlined the importance of providing multiple avenues **for public participation in decisions** about urban development and their environment. Similarly, S. K. Das, India, called on cities to broaden the scope of inclusivity and foster the public domain by giving a legitimate and rightful place for mass organisations and communities to participate through strong local democracies that ensure the safety and protection needed for people to participate.

Sub-topic 3: Environmentally sound and resilient urban development

The European Federation of Public, Cooperative and Social Housing recommended including in the NUA the role of housing providers and tenants’ organisations in **providing renewable energy and energy efficient solutions** for their tenants, giving concrete examples such as using roofs for photovoltaic production and creating a tenant-owned energy cooperative to create energy using local-level wind farms.

Sunniva Bloem, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the Netherlands, shared GAIN’s new joint position paper with the City of Milan, on how to achieve urban food nutritional security through the NUA, praising the NUA’s inclusion of multiple food and nutrition and security goals and sharing a number of recommendations for policy makers to achieve these goals, including:

- Promote municipal food policies;
- Incorporate a nutrition-sensitive lens in the development of urban infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities, etc.
- Incorporate within the spatial development framework a strategy to improve access to food and good nutrition with urban landscapes, reduce urban food deserts, and create public spaces that encourage exercise and movement;
- Facilitate effective trade links, across the rural-urban continuum, ensuring that farmers and fishers, including small scale, are linked to cities in more efficient and sustainable ways, to improve access to nutritious food;
- Recognize that the urban poor in low and middle-income countries source a majority of their food from small and medium-scale enterprises (both formal and informal) and that these need to be strengthened.

In terms of environmental sustainability and enhancing resiliency, Carl Emerson-Dam of the Climate Change Centre, UK, highlighted the role of local governments in developing urban climate emergency evacuation plans and together with other contributors suggested the involvement of the **military** as a potential resource to support adaptation to climate change and meet urban challenges in the near future. He also proposed addressing light pollution in cities as vital to human and ecological wellbeing.

B. Effective implementation

Sub-topic 1: Building the urban governance structure

The Moderator, Claudio Acioly, UN-Habitat, Kenya, asked participants to focus on how the transformative agenda laid out in the NUA can be implemented in practice by national, regional and local governments, and the mechanisms to ensure implementation, monitoring and reporting. His co-moderator, Lydia Gény, UN OHCHR, sought recommendations on how to ensure States and other stakeholders adopt a human rights-based approach to effectively implement the NUA.

“The success of the NUA and its implementation at the local level of cities and neighbourhoods depends by large on the ability of local governments, city leaders ... to interact and empower the local population and its institutions in the participatory and decision-making process.”

– Claudio Acioly, Discussion Moderator, UN-Habitat

Sub-topic 2: Planning and managing urban spatial development

Participants were in agreement that effective implementation of the NUA requires the democratisation of the planning and development process, in order to empower communities through effective consultation and choice over the development of their own environments. Stephen Gwynne, Birmingham Resilience Network, UK, suggested that to achieve this the NUA must first seek to create a new, shared global culture where communities can discuss and thereby reshape their identities and values towards the goal of a sustainable future for all.

Jose Gonzalez-Colon, Community Activist/Clergy, Puerto Rico recommended the inclusion of specific approaches to enable the active involvement and support of members of local communities and local leaders as actors in urban planning and implementation. Several participants highlighted the importance of identifying the unique ecosystem of local communities in different cities and adapting participatory approaches accordingly. There was agreement that achieving the NUA's Transformative Commitments will require an entire transformation in the training and education of urban planners and other stakeholders.

In terms of housing, the International Working Group for the Promotion of Market Regulation and Market Alternatives at Habitat III praised the NUA for its stronger focus on “ending poverty in all its forms”, the prominent position of the human right to adequate housing, the focus on housing policies and the shift from private homeowner policies to rental housing and market alternatives. However, they argued that in order to have a real impact, the NUA should also address the **global housing market crisis**, its impact on cities and people's wellbeing and provide some responses.

Sub-topic 3: Means of implementation

Several participants noted the critical role for **training and capacity building** in enabling the implementation of the NUA and appreciated the support for capacity building included in the NUA. Eveline Kokx, Vice President, Stadswerk, the Dutch association of local governments for professionals in public space, recommended the inclusion in the NUA of

organisations networking professionals working at the local level, such as Stadswerk, who could play an important role in spreading knowledge of the NUA within communities and make a difference for vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, women and others. The moderator added providers of education, training and capacity building as all having a role to play in order to enable cities and local and national government agencies to implement the NUA's transformative agenda. In addition to conventional types of training and capacity building, city-to-city exchange, knowledge and practice exchange and peer-to-peer learning were recommended as tools to advance the implementation of the NUA.

Julien Dijol, Housing Europe, Belgium, recommended including support for not-for-profit organisations and responsible social enterprises whose mission is to provide affordable social infrastructure, such as housing. The moderator concurred, adding that various types of housing providers from public to private, charities and NGOs will have an important role to play in the implementation of the NUA, *"Housing shortage has reached politically explosive levels which needs to be addressed in the years to come."*

Pushpa Pathak, Visiting Faculty, School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, proposed the inclusion of an **implementation deadline** for the NUA, such as 2030 to coincide with the SDGs or 2036, as the date for Habitat IV, in order to ensure implementation. Other imperatives were also proposed to ensure full implementation at the local level, including the commitment of member states, financial means, monitoring and feedback mechanisms to measure progress and identify accountability.

Examples and references shared:

Housing and renewable energy: Local level rooftop solar PV renewable energy solutions [www.pv-financing.eu/project-results/#Good Practice](http://www.pv-financing.eu/project-results/#Good_Practice)

Adequate and affordable housing: Report A/70/270 of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and on the right to non-discrimination www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx

Urban food and nutrition security: Joint position paper on achieving urban food and nutrition security - Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the City of Milan, 20 July 2016 www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/achieving-urban-food-nutrition-security-new-urban-agenda

Culture and community participation: Blue Drum Agency, Ireland initiatives to demonstrate how cultural rights and equality can be realised at policy, systems and practice level:

- **Kaunas, Lithuania** - artists and activists worked with the local community at a land reclamation project to strengthen the community's capacity in decision and place-making, promote values and cultural rights, and foster inclusion and social justice; selected by the 2016 UCLG Mexico City Culture 21 jury as an exemplar initiative.
- **Galway, Ireland** – initiative seeking to bring active participation that is community-led back into local agendas, and led to the development of a fledgling Charter for Cultural Rights.

Capacity Building: Capacity-building and knowledge form the foundation of the New Urban Agenda: A position paper

<http://uni.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2015/06/Capacity-Building-in-New-Urban-Agenda-HABITAT-III.pdf>

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