



Open-ended Informal Consultative Meeting on Habitat III New Urban Agenda

**Statement by Jane Katz, Director, Habitat for Humanity International
On behalf of the Civil Society Organization Partner Constituent Group of GAP
Friday, 29 April, 2016**

Madame Co-Chair, Dr. Clos, Distinguished Members, and Partners:

I am Jane Katz, co-chair, speaking on behalf of the Civil Society Organization Partner Constituent Group (GAP), representing Habitat for Humanity and as co-lead for the Housing Policy Unit 10. We appreciate this opportunity to express the views of our very diverse constituency.

The CSO Group is composed of organizations and networks representing multiple sectors (including housing, land, transit, environment, sustainability, and resilience, among others) and stakeholders advocating for the right to the city, refugees, special needs and marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, children, older persons, and gender. Despite the variety of opinions on challenges and priorities, we have all come together to make a positive contribution to current and future population growth in cities and our vision for the future well-being of inhabitants.

Contributing the experience and strength of our civil society organizations, the General Assembly of Partners calls for participatory processes with stakeholders to regularly monitor and evaluate urban and housing policies and related SDG metrics. The GAP calls for a Partners' Lab for Urban Sustainability, which would serve as a neutral test bed for the creation, implementation, evaluation, and scaling of pilot programs sponsored by multiple partners. It might work in such areas as: inequalities in access to land, housing, decent work, adequate income, transport, public space, and basic services; integrated urban and territorial planning (including adjustments to the regulatory and administrative frameworks); the regenerative and the circular economy; livability: health, safety and well-being; innovative technologies; and new sustainable financial mechanisms.

Many of our GAP members seek to build upon the Habitat Agenda and reaffirm commitments to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as provided for in international instruments and to recognize that the expansion of adequate, affordable housing is central to achieving inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities in a world where rapid urbanization has exacerbated housing shortages.

Housing contributes to the vibrancy and economic prosperity of our cities and is central to the strength, stability, and well-being among residents and their communities and serves as a productive asset by providing a place for home-based small businesses – especially for women. Well located housing combats spatial and socio-economic segregation. We call for housing to be elevated as one of the highest priorities for national governments and the development of comprehensive urban plans and policies that integrate housing in all levels of governments.

Cities must redefine their relationships with informal settlements and slums in ways that leave no one behind. Many of these communities are home to essential service workers; teachers, police and fire fighters, entry level



government employees and critical informal sector entrepreneurs. We support the development of policy environments that harness and enhance public, private and civil society participation.

We endorse the integration of housing policies and approaches across all sectors, adjacent municipalities and at all levels of government, to ensure equitable access to transportation, jobs, basic services, healthcare and education across the surrounding urban to rural continuum. This integration must be built on an inclusive process, fostering engagement with communities and stakeholders to support fair housing; promote gender equality; prohibit discrimination and forced evictions; and address housing for the homeless, vulnerable and groups with special needs.

To implement this vision and reach scale, we must:

1. expand the permanent affordable housing stock through a full range of rental and homeownership options, and to improve housing conditions by increasing access to basic services and upgrading existing structures to improve resilience;
2. endorse a continuum of land rights to increase household stability, investment and security of tenure;
3. engage with new market-based adaptive technologies;
4. promote people-centered neighborhood upgrading that fosters long-term community self-managed solutions which can create a pathway to permanence over time, improving health, disaster resilience, climate change adaptation and energy efficiency;
5. encourage participatory management of the territory (including territorial planning; implementation and monitoring of public policies and public budgets), as well access to safe, inclusive, accessible public spaces, multimodal transportation, etc.);
6. support a participatory production of the city and a diverse and inclusive economy;
7. plan for a responsible and sustainable management of the commons (including natural and cultural resources); and,
8. foster the full enjoyment of the city inclusive for all, and particularly for women and the omitted social subjects (ethnicity, elderly, handicapped, sexual oriented, refugees, migrants, youth in all those categories).

Accomplishing these goals will require renewed commitment to expand resources and subsidies; create new and innovative finance approaches that engage the private sector in housing, urban infrastructure, and transit, to name a few; as well as promote effective people-centered, public, private partnerships. The implementation of this vision requires governmental budget transparency, equal access to information and mutual accountability and responsibility between all of the city stakeholders.

Thank you for your attention.