

Children and Youth Constituent Group

Response to Habitat III Zero Draft

3 mins statement: By Joyati Das, co- chair representing Children and youth constituency of the General Assembly of Partners

I represent the young citizens of today, future leaders of our cities and the planet in this urban century.

We welcome the Zero draft and overall commend the depth of content and vision for this document. The Children and Youth PCG represents and facilitates Children and Youth led and serving agencies, organisations, networks, and groups that bring the voices and concerns of children and youth, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, to national, regional, and global processes. It is a shared platform for citizens of today and the future leaders of our cities to advocate for their genuine inclusion and meaningful participation in addressing urban sustainability. We are actively contributing to decision making mechanisms at all level that shape the city we need.

On the children's behalf, members include global, national to local child focused entities, including the large international players such as Plan International and Save the Children.

- Plan International works across 70 countries
- Save the Children works across 30 countries
- World Vision works across 90 countries

On the youth's behalf, UN Major Group for Children and Youth are an official and self-organised space for children and youth. They include over 240 youth individuals, organisations, groups, networks globally who are mobilising around the New Urban Agenda.

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One minute statement about what the PCG favors in the NUA

We endorse and commend the **rights based and people-centred approach** applied throughout the New Urban Agenda to include the most vulnerable and marginalised in all the opportunities and benefits that urbanisation can offer. This particularly highlights the principle of mutuality for common good. The emphasis on stakeholder engagement and partnerships celebrates the idea that intelligence can be gathered from diverse sources and promotes the notion of generating shared value in the city.

Re the point, **Leaving no-one behind, focusing on urban equity and poverty reduction**

We welcome the New Urban Agenda's support to practices such as **participatory planning and budgeting, citizen-based monitoring** that are rooted in new forms of direct partnership between state organisations and civil society.

We reaffirm the need for **periodic, effective, inclusive and transparent follow-up and review framework** at all levels.

We endorse **capacity building to support stakeholders and institutions for sustainable urbanisation**. We endorse call for **inclusive economic growth, decent work and jobs** for all as a key priority. We welcome the commitment to recognise the working poor especially youth in the informal economy as contributors and legitimate actors in the economic development process of cities.

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What NUA should consider

We suggest strengthening the following basic services for children and youth under transformative commitments.

The recognition of children's rights, the inclusion of child and youth voices in key decision making processes and the provision of safe spaces to learn, develop and grow in a healthy and stable environment are essential to promote safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities.

However we know that children in urban environments face heightened vulnerabilities and are often in danger of being abused and exploited. They face enormous challenges to their well-being through displacement during crisis.

Health

Our call is for food for all, nutrition for all groups specially all boys and girls as well as water as the basic right for health well being of children.

Education:

The document requires a much stronger articulation regarding education, and youth job training. Children from poor families are often forced into hazardous work. The New Urban Agenda does not adequately address the issue of child labour in informal economy. The link between access to quality education and opportunities for decent livelihoods must be considered and strategies should be in place to ensure that urban poor and youth transition from informal economy and are able to participate in the formal sector through transferable skills and global entrepreneurship.

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Protection

Children become the first casualty of urban poverty falling victims to crime and violence.

We call for more emphasis on safer environments for children to be protected from abuse and exploitation. The right to child friendly safe spaces, accessible and walkable spaces: Many children and youth are living in overcrowded spaces and often live in streets are contaminated with hazardous waste, leading to inadequate safe spaces to play. **Wasted space is wasted asset of the city.** Clean, green, liveable space is critical for health and well-being of children and youth. Municipalities must consider at least 40% of public space is designated to public parks, safe community space, schools, and area for basic services for the poor.

Urban Governance: Genuine, participatory democracy

It is concerning to see that children and youth are still identified throughout the Agenda as mere beneficiaries. Whereas, they should be identified as a **key resource and agents of change** to drive social, political, technological and economic transformation in the city.

Children and youth are the local knowledge bearers of the city. They must be given access to platforms where they are able to contribute their local knowledge to public debate and discussions. Schools need to ensure such platforms are created and accessible.

The New Urban Agenda should harness the full potential of technologies where all urban dwellers can participate in and interact with data collection and analysis leading to 'smarter' cities that are people-centred and reflect the collective intelligence of communities. The technology-savvy young generation has an important role to play in shaping sustainable urbanisation. Their involvement is key to creating smarter communities and fostering a sustainable future for this urban century.

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What will our PCG do

The New Urban Agenda will lack legitimacy and remain a celebratory and aspirational document if concrete actions are not proposed for a roadmap moving forward.

This will require principles of complementarity and a multi-disciplinary approach to cooperation.

Our PCG group will propose a global alliance of child focused agencies to become partners to implement and monitor the success of the New Urban Agenda. It will become a knowledge network to promote the urban Goal no 11 amongst city dwellers, especially the most vulnerable and support in empowering the poor, including children and youth to contribute to sustainable urban development.