

Habitat III – Intergovernmental negotiations in New York – Second session
On the Preamble and the Declaration

Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States – Wednesday 18 May 2016

Madam Chair, Distinguished delegates,

We are glad to be able to share preliminary comments on the preambular section and the Declaration.

We consider that the **preamble and the Declaration could be streamlined**, giving a clearer vision on how to achieve sustainable urban development, guiding the urbanization process.

We appreciate the link with the **2030 agenda**. Nevertheless it should be more clearly highlighted that the New Urban Agenda carries the 2030 Agenda forward towards implementation in an integrated manner, and the draft should refer explicitly to various goals and targets where cities will make the difference. The primary **responsibility of each country** for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be recalled.

The NUA should be seen as an integral part, not as a separate process from the 2030 ASD. Referring to the commitment to sustainable urbanization as “Reinforcing” the 2030 Agenda gives the impression that the NUA is a separate process (OP 2). We should in turn affirm that the NUA builds upon the **2030 Agenda**.

Furthermore, urbanization is a process: a process that needs to achieve Sustainable Urban Development. Hence the NUA needs to fully support the **transformative power of cities** in order to unlock their potential for sustainable development as defined in the **2030 Agenda** (PP3), and for tackling global challenges (OP 5).

In this respect, we would also highly welcome a reference to the **Global Partnership** of the 2030 Agenda, which we firmly believe could serve as a useful concept also for the realization of the NUA.

We welcome the call for a **paradigm shift** in how urban development is approached at all levels of governance. However, the NUA also needs to recognize that there are already a number of **best practices** that can be built upon (OP 7). Furthermore, we think it is useful to recognize the role of **local government associations** in a renewed local-national partnership, between national, sub-national and local governments.

Having in mind the ongoing development of a European Urban Agenda, and mindful of similar initiatives in other regions, we would welcome language encouraging further efforts to promote stronger **regional cooperation** on urban governance.

While we are strongly supportive of the three **guiding principles** of the transformative commitments, we would recommend stressing the necessary interlinkages between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the new urban agenda. The integration of these three dimensions is the great potential of cities. Anchoring this potential firmly in the document would be one of the added values of the NUA.

We also welcome the recognition of the importance of promoting territorial functions beyond administrative boundaries, including **rural-urban linkages**.

Horizontal substantive issues that should be reinforced in the preamble (*even if they are reflected in the Vision*) are: **resilience** to natural and man-made disasters, **food security**, nutrition, water and air quality, efficient use of natural resources, (PP 3,4), good urban governance (PP6) as well as **polycentric** integrated territorial development and cohesion, while approaching the spatial dimension of urban development (PP 6).

Another aspect worth mentioning is the need for good quality **urban design** in order to achieve compact, integrated, inclusive and well-connected cities. To

ensure encompassing views, to minimize trade-offs and respective gains the New Urban Agenda should promote an integrated spatial, social and sectorial approach.

Furthermore, a more explicit reference should be made to the **competences and tools** needed for urban governance. In that regard we would like to see the role of capacity development anchored more prominently and coherently.

As regards the “**right to the city**” (OP 4): in the absence of a common understanding of such a notion, we have a strong preference for emphasising a human rights-based approach. Therefore, the text here should rather underline commitment to the realisation of **human rights for all**, without discrimination of any kind, while acknowledging the ongoing efforts of cities to reflect in their policies, statements and programs the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the **International Covenants** on Civil and Political and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as other human rights treaties.

In this respect, we should not refer to the systematization of rights. It is also important to underline that human rights, such as **non-discrimination**, are not being granted but are being enjoyed (OP 5).

We strongly support strong progressive language on **gender equality and women's empowerment**, in order to harness the potential of women as actors of change .We urge not to refer to women as vulnerable groups.

However, the language on **inequalities** should be strengthened, with references to identifying, tackling and preventing their root causes and effects.

Finally, we consider that some concepts introduced do not have a commonly shared **definition**. We should ensure that we are clear when we speak of **cohesion**. It can be social, economic but cohesion can also be territorial.

We are ready to share with you more concrete drafting proposals.

Thanks a lot for your attention.

