EU&MS Comments on the Habitat III Issue Papers

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Habitat III Secretariat for the opportunity to comment on the Issue Papers, and whilst recognising that this technical exercise should not be politicised, we would like to make the following comments after having carried out a general assessment of the different Issue Papers (specific technical comments on each issue paper follow in the annex). We hope these comments feed further drafting work carried out for the final drafting of the issue papers once the policy expert groups are established by the Habitat III secretariat and in preparation for the PrepCom3 meeting (June 2016).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Globally speaking, the issue papers are in line with global EU development policy and few, if any points could be qualified as going against EU policy perspectives. However, in order to deliver sustainable urban development, a major effort is needed to define the priorities among the large number of policy options presented.

The majority of the urban challenges described in the issue papers are often viewed from the point of view of the developing world, and much less from that of the developed world.

A number of policy issues which are highly relevant for the EUMS could appear more prominently in the Issue Papers.

All the papers could benefit from having the same structure and one checking author for narrative consistency purposes.

Addressing the main problems should be done at the beginning of each Issue Paper, indicating the necessary changes that are needed for different types of cities to solve these problems (the idea of transition pathways to sustainability).

The papers should highlight the variations of global city types and link examples to these types. Examples could be presented in boxes outside the main text to support the points made, rather than being incorporated into the text.

1) Important missing issues and suggested areas for improvement

The topics described below merit more in depth reflection across the existing documents and, for some, it would have been helpful to consider the opportunity of addressing these issues in a dedicated issue paper. In general, in all the issue papers, the urban challenges are often viewed from the point of view of the developing world where more challenges exist in relation to equity in cities.

However, these issues also require attention across the EUMS. Despite the absence of slums, an increasing unequal income distribution is manifesting itself in cities along with increasing spatial segregation between different ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Living conditions are relatively good, however, spatially concentrated poverty may limit the opportunities available to residents and has a detrimental effect on social cohesion.

a) Gender equality and the empowerment of women

Urban development has a role to play in assisting women achieve their rights in political, economic, social and educational fields and can help achieve international commitments on gender equality and empowerment of women.

The European Commission's President Jean-Claude Junker made gender equality a priority for the 2014-2020 period, particularly in the context of development and cooperation.

Existing issue papers will certainly gain more interest with a stronger and more detailed focus on gender equality issues. The need to better integrate gender equality policies when designing urban development actions and, vice versa, the relevance of taking active gender equality measures for improving impact of urban development policies need to be further underlined.

b) Ecology and Environment

The key to progress in Area 5 is to develop benchmarking mechanisms, (that are broad enough to capture all types and conditions of urban setting) to enable cities to assess and track their progress towards sustainability goals, while learning from other similar types of cities, in terms of size, history, physical location etc.

c) Migration

The future Urban Agenda should fully acknowledge the key role cities play in translating national and regional policy objectives into concrete action. It should also support cities in addressing society's challenges, such as demographic change, urban poverty or migration.

Migration is also increasingly reflected as a priority in the EU's broader development cooperation. It has an increasing weight in the economy of developing countries' cities and impacts significantly on their development. However, many such countries either do not have a structured migration policy in place or lack an awareness of the synergies and interdependencies between migration and other public policies. A structured migration policy at urban level may become an enabling instrument to promote a more sustainable and inclusive development.

d) Basic services

The issue of access to basic services, could be better reflected in a horizontal manner, and not only in general terms in issue paper 18 ("Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services") and in issue paper 1 ("Resilient Cities"). It could have been the subject of a dedicated issue paper and also mainstreamed throughout the other issue papers.

e) Water-energy-food nexus

We would welcome the inclusion of and the underlined importance of the water-energy-food nexus in the issue papers given its major relevance to integrated planning of basic services,

particularly in the context of the sanitation and energy infrastructure challenges for growing urban settlements.

2) <u>Sharing a common global vision. Aiming at well managed, sustainable and liveable future cities.</u>

We believe that it would be useful in the preparation of the Habitat III conference, to start reflecting at this early stage on producing **an over–arching document** proposing a common global vision on the future city we want. This work should be perceived through the choice and content of issue papers. Sharing a common vision would help to frame all subsequent different elements to define the global urban agenda. As part of the drive to secure a global Urban Agenda in Quito (2016), the EU vision on this matter centres around promoting future **well managed sustainable and liveable cities** via four strands of action:

(1) Promoting <u>innovative and productive cities</u>. Increasing cities' attractiveness with a focus on innovation, inclusiveness, improvement of youth and gender perspectives and job creation through entrepreneurial-friendly conditions, while respecting the environment.

(2) Promoting <u>green and compact and resilient cities</u>[1]. i.e. increasing resource-efficiency (energy, water, waste, land use). Improving air quality and taking care of wastewater in cities together with making cities resilient to flood, heat waves and natural hazards are major challenges, as well as ensuring transition towards sustainable urban mobility, clean urban transport and improved access to transport services for all.

(3) Promoting <u>inclusive cities.</u> Addressing the multiple aspects of gender and youth issues, <u>urban poverty and exclusion</u>. Ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and affordable services by 2030 is one of the goals defined in the proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals post 2015.

(4) Promoting <u>good urban governance</u>. Improving urban governance by supporting and building the capacity of local authorities.

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[1] The proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals for post-2015 includes a separate goal on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Issue Paper N° 1 – Inclusive cities

There would be scope for a more thorough analysis of social polarisation and spatial segregation in the presentation of the issue.

Much is said about the fact that urbanisation can represent enormous opportunities for inclusive and sustainable development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women. More could be said from the start about the risks represented by urbanisation.

There is a European Platform against poverty and social exclusion which could be referred to in the section on existing platforms. More information at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=961

From developed countries' perspective, more challenges exist related to, for example, equity in cities. Even if slums are not an issue in most developed countries, there is an increasingly unequal income distribution that manifests itself in cities, also an increasing spatial segregation between different ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Living conditions in average in all neighbourhoods are relatively good, but relative, spatially concentrated poverty may limit the opportunities available to residents and have a detrimental effect on social cohesion

In the developed world, effective practices or at least useful tools to achieve more inclusive cities could be developed, such as the promotion and setting of targets for issues related to Social Cohesion and Equity, for example on the prevention of spatial segregation or homelessness, social mixing policies that can, in the long-term, improve the well-being of the disadvantaged when achieved by voluntary, housing-option enhancing strategies.

Socially mixed areas is used as a preventive measure against segregation, and mixed residential settings and housing option-enhancing strategies should be considered in growing cities when planning new neighbourhoods. Also, to prevent spatial segregation, the allocation of extra public resources e.g. for school and health care services situated in the more deprived neighbourhoods, can be useful. Finally, we can develop the use of GIS-methods in gathering information on neighbourhood safety or satisfaction, also from more vulnerable groups such as children or minorities.

Issue paper N° 2 - Migration and refugees in urban areas

The following messages could be inserted in the issue paper.

1- Create the conditions for "mainstreaming" integration across general policy areas such as housing, education, employment and access to welfare in order to guarantee spatial and social cohesion (**coordination** among different stakeholders) (possibly on page 3 third paragraph when referring to coordination with local authorities' administration).
2- Foresee the development of methodologies as to facilitate the transfer and exchange of best practices in different local and urban contexts (**importance of the local/social/political context** for the successful implementation of policies and practices).
3- Development of indicators that can be used for comparisons (**benchmarking**).
4- When looking into issues related to migration and refugees, it is important to highlight the link between global migration and urban resilience, as well as, managing climate change and disaster risks.

Issue paper N° 3 - Safer cities

In many developed countries, accessibility, in addition to crime prevention, is seen as an integral part of urban safety. In this issue paper, women are highlighted as the most affected and vulnerable group. However, elderly and ethnic minorities have also proven to be strongly affected by perceptions of safety. Fear of crime or harassment alters the behaviour of these minorities and their access to the city. Even in societies with low crime rates, certain minority groups have a considerably higher risk of becoming victims of violence.

The paper could better underline the relationship between space and society especially making explicit (in the analysis of security) the perspective of space as a social product and therefore put the accent on the potential (and concrete) consequences of security on the right to the city. Hence the reference to the relation between of some urban forms (and dynamics) and security should be done. Issues such as gentrification, middle-class suburbanization, the challenges of gated communities and of social housing isolated neighborhoods could all be explored further.

Issue paper N° 4 - Urban Culture and Heritage

Themes which we assess as important for European cities are well detailed in the paper. However, we would like to raise the following comments.

Concerning heritage: Explicit mention should be made to the concept of *Urban heritage* in the perspective introduced by Giovannonni and then consolidated by Choay. Then the text could refer to three key questions concerning heritage: the use of works of arts (*oeuvres*) and material objects, the representation (shared values and aesthetics) of a community, the interpretation of the past (hermeneutics and construction of the identity).

From the point of view of culture it is important to ensure that new urban interventions (especially in terms of architecture) should not follow exclusively the logic of city competitiveness but need to be thought in accordance to their context and being representative of the evolving culture of the place where it is issued.

The Management and maintenance of Heritage. On the one hand the Management of Heritage has often been politicized and so decision-making circuits are often defined by political reasons and compromises rather than by cultural and scientific reasons. On the other hand, the economic crisis, especially in Europe, induces a public asset-stripping process and related privatization of public heritage.

Finally, attention could be brought to a new project, funded by the European Commission, called "Culture for cities and regions". For further information: www.cultureforcitiesandregions.eu

Issue paper N° 6 – Urban Governance

More emphasis could be given to the ability of local authorities to manage sustainable urban development in an integrated manner. This does not only mean citizens' involvement, but also working across services, across sectors (avoiding a silo approach to the various services) and in cooperation with other levels of government/governance.

There should also be an additional emphasis on the ability of city managers to cope with current a new environmental challenges linked to urbanization, e.g. disaster risk reduction, resource efficiency, land use management, etc, although this is covered by other issue papers.

The use of smart technologies for citizen participation is mentioned on page 9 in the issue paper. This is a very positive proposal and could be elaborated further, for example, through a reference to the use of open data in urban development.

Participatory city decision-making and active citizenship via platforms engaging youth, women, minorities, communities and all citizens are mentioned in the issue paper. In further development of participatory planning, new approaches are needed to deal with the current power structures and blocs in urban planning as well as with regard to new participatory planning techniques.

The document includes an important effort to include the gender perspective and the approach is correct, but it could be improved by:

- Mentioning gender-specific FACTS AND FIGURES, namely sexual harassment maybe under the para that mentions violence and impunity. Un Women describes sexual harassment in public spaces as an under-recognised global pandemic (http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publicat ions/2013/12/un%20women-evaw-safecities-brief_us-web%20pdf.ashx).

- In the same line, the key facts that summarize the TRENDS OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS must include one specific point on gender, addressing the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence, mainly through:

  1. Combatting Sexual harassment: although violence in the private domain is now widely recognized as a human rights violation, violence against women and girls, especially sexual harassment in public spaces, remains a largely neglected issue, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it.

  2. Comprehensive sexuality education and reproductive rights (CC on Gender in Development wording): the proportion of urban dwellers is expected to rise to 70 per cent by 2050,3 and if governments fail to make effective interventions, the number of slum dwellers will continue to rise rapidly (Source: UN Habitat), in this, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and education are important.

- Addressing systematically the gender gaps in access to resources (income, property, basic services - in page 7 for example) that discriminate women and how urban governance for development should address this challenge.

- When addressing fragility, conflict and post-conflict situations, the draft should refer to the principles of the UN Security Council resolution (S/RES/1325) on women and peace and security, which reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

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Issue paper N° 8 – Urban and spatial planning and design

A good and complete paper. Missing is the need we feel in Europe to have cities exchange best practice to increase their knowledge and capacity to do good urban planning. Another point missing is the crucial link to other policies that might influence the implementation of urban plans, e.g. an urban plan might promote compact urban development, if the national taxation policy is to fully reimburse car travel from home-to-work thought tax credits this undermines urban planning objectives. This is for example the case in Belgium. Another point not mentioned could be effective control. A weakness in many spatial or urban plans is that nothing happens if people/businesses do not respect urban planning. E.g. if the plan foresees a mixture of housing for poor and rich inhabitants, but in practice only villas are build and there are no sanctions for this, this will again undermine the objectives.

While we support the promotion of compact and connected urban forms as the benefits that follow are significant, we would however, like to challenge the feasibility of measuring the quality of this urban form not only by the percentage of land allocated to streets, as more streets do not necessarily correlate with compactness and connectivity, but by the percentage of land allocated to public use such as i.e. open market places, green spaces, public transport, and non-motorised transport.

A more compact city structure should be linked to smart design in which different functions and housing are well connected to nodes of public transport, and where green spaces are located within the urban structure to support well-being, health, and a non-motorised transport. Especially in developing countries, due diligence should be paid to the existence of, and access to, green spaces and smart urban structure, in order to achieve positive health impacts. Nature-based solutions that promote ecosystem service delivery and create jobs are important when striving to solve societal issues in cities.

Issue paper N° 9 – Urban Land

This paper focusses a lot on poverty. This is important of course but limits the issue too much. Good urban land management is also crucial for the quality of life of urban dwellers. Reserve land for green infrastructure can improve air quality, reduce the heat island effect, etc. In Europe we like to stress that soil/land is a limited resource and should be used as few as possible for ecological reasons, e.g. soil used for new buildings is lost forever. Therefore there are other reasons for wanting compact cities that use as little land as possible than only poverty related ones.

Issue paper N° 10 - Urban/rural linkages

The issue paper lacks concrete examples. Attention may be drawn to the OECD report on urban-rural linkages, which contains practical examples. Short food supply chains often come up as a way to mutually benefit each other and limit the ecological footprint. This is not mentioned clearly in the paper. We link this urban-rural discussion always to functional areas. On p5, there is a mention of the insufficient knowledge on small towns. A key driver for action is building trust between urban and rural municipalities and communities

Issue paper N° 11 – Public Space

Very comprehensive and good issue paper. The idea of the 'quality' of public spaces could be more developed. For example, if public space is used for cars, this will be of little benefit for

other city dwellers, and cause nuances and even health problems. Also recommendations should focus on the quality of urban public space/streets.

Issue paper N° 15 – Urban resilience:

The paper would benefit from a simpler introduction to the meaning of urban resilience, and to the problem that needs to be tackled, set out with easy to understand terminology. In the same way, the theoretical/conceptual aspects of urban resilience presented on the first two pages could be moved to the end of the paper, starting with the more tangible points related to the classification of urban hazards on page 3.

The fact that the nature of the problem varies enormously for different types of cities around the world (from those who are at very low risk even in the next 25 years, to those who face risks daily already) needs to be pointed out from the start, explaining how different sizes, geographical locations, levels of wealth etc. can change the levels of risk by many orders of magnitude.

The section on 'Key drivers of action' should set out the approach that cities should take, starting with a risk assessment, followed by preparing and implementing and action plan to reduce risks to acceptable levels through building resilience, using better planning, adaptation of existing policies, screening, better coordination etc. Sharing of best practice between cities facing similar problems being a key supporting action in this regard.

Issue paper N° 16 – Urban ecosystems and resource management

Just as for other issue papers, the 'Overview' should provide a simple introduction to the issue. The idea of inter-linkages with other papers should come later in the paper when the reader knows more about the topic. The paper presents the 'main concepts', then key facts and figures, and only then on page 4 do we find the 'issue summary', but many key issues are actually presented in the facts and figures and there are facts and figures in the issue summary. This could usefully be simplified.

The economic and social case for taking actions could usefully be strengthened. The statement in the section on page 7 at the beginning of 'Key drivers for Action' states "Loss of ecosystems services can significantly increase the costs borne by cities", but little supporting evidence is give. The reference to "...much higher financial costs." in paragraph four of the same section could be expanded for example.

The case for the aesthetic value of better urban ecosystems, and the improvements in quality of life and the health benefits should be strengthened.

Issue paper N° 17 – Cities and climate change and disaster risk management

The issue should be presented in simple terms at the beginning of the paper along with the explanation of the links with paper 15. As with paper 15, the fact that the nature of the problem varies enormously for different types of city around the world needs to be pointed out from the start. The approach to considering climate change risk should begin with a risk analysis. Some cities have very low risk, others are already suffering terrible problems from climate change.

The link between actions on to adapt to climate change and actions to promote environmental sustainability including climate-friendliness should be made more clearly in the paper.

When discussing multi-hazards (page 4) caused by climate change, a point that has been missed is that, in the long run, climate change causes migration. This can take place domestically, as in the case of New Orleans, or internationally through increasing migration from the third world to more developed countries.

Green procurement could be added to the issue paper as an important component for promoting climate-friendly solutions and technologies.

This section could be simplified as it contains some very important and useful concepts, yet sometimes in a manner that is quite academic and sometimes very difficult to follow.

Issue paper N° 18 – Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services, including Energy

The paper rightly points out that basic services are linked to the realization of human rights and that it is therefore crucial to ensure that basic services are available, physically accessible, affordable, and culturally adapted to all.

In the section on "fostering and applying technological innovation" (page 7-8) we are happy to note that reference is made to "green infrastructure" which is defined as a network of multifunctional green spaces that can provide a multitude of "ecosystem service benefits" such as improving resident's health and well-being, providing food, reducing storm-water run-off, and reducing energy use.

Issue paper N° 19 – Transport and mobility

In line with our general comments in the first part of the contribution, here are specific comments on the gender perspective:

- As a general comment, figures should be sex-disaggregated when data is available.

- Under the KEY FACTS AND FIGURES point it would be important to mention that, at present, no protocols are in place and no sanctions are applied to those who fail to consider the transport needs of over half of the world's population. This is something that UN Habitat should urgently address.

- The DRIVERS FOR ACTION point should mention (perhaps under the point "Focus on demand") how transport can also make a big difference in promoting gender equality and increasing women's productivity.

- Making transport policy more responsive to the needs of women requires not only understanding their specific needs (already mentioned in the draft) but also promoting women's representation and participation at each step of the transport investment planning and design process. Government agencies and NGOs, community-based organisations and women's groups are very important in order to assist planning and implementation.

What is said for Financing in Paper 6 is globally applicable here: gender budgeting.

With regard to "semi-motorised" transport, we would like to stress the significant role that electric bicycles (E-bikes) can play as a solution in striving towards sustainable transport in cities.

Issue paper N° 20 - Housing

On the page 4 of the issue paper it is stated that: "Government interference in the housing sector has been minimal…Housing has had a low priority in the allocation of national resources and almost all public and corporation houses have been sold. Subsidies have been reduced and, where they remain, they are usually poorly targeted and unsustainable."

The aforementioned is probably true in many countries, but not that significantly in all of them. For example in many countries, the state-subsidized housing constitutes a rather large share of the total housing stock. The social housing stock can also kept in relatively good condition, and when building new social housing estates, the issues of quality and social and ecological sustainability are thoroughly considered

Issue paper N° 21 - Smart cities

There is a lack of critical analysis of the subject matter. Do we have evidence and proof that "smart cities" solutions – which are still largely experimental – are effective in all urban areas, whatever is their size and territorial context?

The paper seems to be more influenced by the vision of technology/software suppliers rather than the preferences, expectations and concerns of local authorities. In this respect, is not the definition of the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) too restrictive? What could be added to the definition is a citizens' ability to use the smart city. This is a crucial element in developing smart cities.

We would question the recommendation to apply "internationally approved KPIs" (Knowledge Performance Indicators) to measure the city's progress (Figure 3). There is a risk that such performance Indicators be technology-driven and do not necessarily match the expectations and concerns of local authorities. The reference to the ITU focus group on smart cities which takes into account the whole life cycle impact of smart devices which is very important in order to find the optimal solution based on sustainable principles.