



United Nations

HABITAT III **POLICY DIALOGUES**

Urban Economic Development Strategies Policy

Wednesday, 19 October 2016

3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Room 15-Teatro Demetrio Aguilera, Casa de la Cultura

1. Summary of the Dialogue and key messages of the Discussion

The Dialogue comprised two panels, respectively entitled “Building Productive, Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Economies” and “Exploring Synergies in Pursuing Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability”. The first panel had 6 panelists and one moderator, whereas the second panel had 7 panelists and one moderator. There are also significant amount of interaction with the audience.

A key point of contention in the first panel is whether the existing capitalist system has the capacity to meet the needs of people as committed by the New Urban Agenda. Some speakers emphasised the potential of the existing system by pointing to what it has been able to deliver either in terms of poverty reduction and structural adjustment, whereas another speaker highlighted the lack of capacity of the existing system to create one billion additional jobs and called for social capitalism.

The second panel looked at different challenges that developing countries face in implementing sustainable development and available options for realising sustainable development. The identified challenges included: the lack of investment; aging society; regulation destroying livelihoods; informal sector causing environmental problems, etc. The options that were explored included: socially effective transport solutions such as cable cars; exploitation of value chains through localised production and reverse learning (e.g. developed countries learning from developing countries in terms of green development); decentralisation; refugees as economic resource; new business models exploiting under-utilised resources by making use of new technologies; the emergence of a ‘total impact’ paradigm in business development, which takes into account social, economic, environmental and fiscal impact, and gradual formalisation.

The overall message is that despite numerous challenges, there exist a wide range of options that can help address these challenges if the political will and resources can be mobilised.

2. Action-oriented Recommendations/ way forward within the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

The Dialogue was not focused on making these recommendations. However, the overall message was that:

Global: Developed countries and developing countries need to work together and learn from each other.

Regional: regional solidarity and learning can be powerful tools.

National: Nation-states need to devolve more power to local authorities and help strengthen the latter's capacity.

Local: there is great scope for local partnerships.