



NATIONAL URBAN POLICY COMMISSIONS (NUPC)

WFC Position Paper

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Climate, Energy and Cities Commission

World Future Council

Forming National Urban Policy Commissions

Background

Population living in cities tripled in the past 50 years [1]. Projections forecast that by 2030, almost 60 % of the world's population will live in urban areas. By 2050, this figure is expected to rise up to 70% [2]. By 2050, there will be an additional 2.5 billion people living in cities [3]. As urbanization becomes an increasingly critical global phenomenon, it is in the hands of local, regional and national governments to ensure that the right policy frameworks are in place to effectively harness the benefits of urbanization and mitigate its harms.

Proposal

Given the increasing importance of cities and urbanization worldwide, The World Future Council (WFC) proposes the creation of National Urban Policy Commissions. These commissions would be national bodies in charge of the design, implementation and monitoring of National Urban Policies. The creation of National Urban Policies has been recommended by the [Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3](#) which will feed directly into the draft of the New Urban Agenda to be agreed by the UN General Assembly at the Habitat III Conference in Quito in October 2016. However, in the [Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3](#) it was not specifically indicated that a commission or a specific institutionalized governmental body should be established to supervise the design and implementation of National Urban Policies.

The WFC supports the creation of a cross ministerial Commission at the national level that can formally assume this specific role and recommends that this is explicitly included in the New Urban Agenda emerging from Habitat III in Quito, Ecuador.

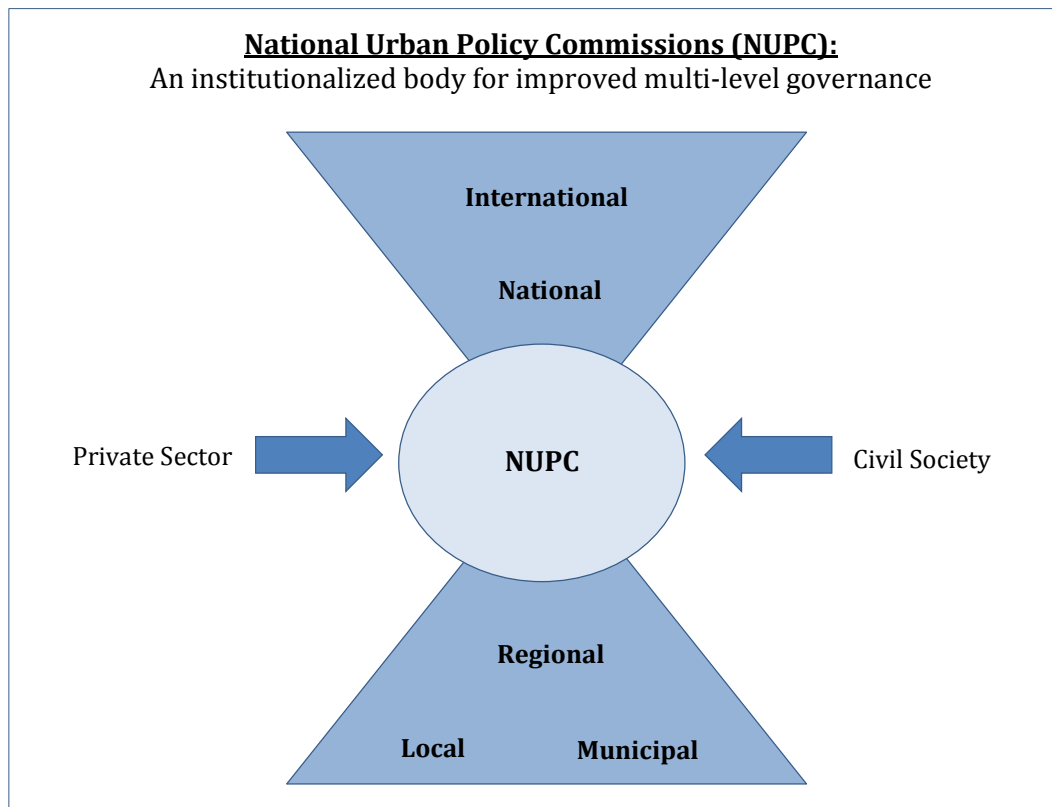
The Commission will be composed of members from different levels of government (from the city to the national level) which will ensure representation of all government levels and that these can work cohesively and constructively on establishing and implementing a sustainability roadmap for cities

Tasks

More specifically, the main tasks of the Commission include:

- **Design National Urban Policies.** The Commission is in charge of the design, implementation and monitoring of National Urban Policies.

- **Facilitate coordination and help cross-departmental collaboration.** The Commission is in charge of encouraging projects and collaboration across governmental departments and national ministries to find integrated and cross-silos policy solutions for cities. Many times departments both at the national level (e.g. ministries) and at the municipal level (e.g. city councils) struggle to work jointly and cohesively. The Commission therefore facilitates collaboration across governmental departments to ensure coherence across sectorial policies at the national as well as at the municipal level.
- **Establish Cooperation Projects Across Levels of Government.** The Commission ensures enhanced coordination and collaboration across the different levels of government. Coordination between the national and municipal governments is essential in ensuring improved effectiveness of policy implementation, greater efficiency in the administrative procedures as well as ensure consistency and coherence between national and local policies. It is also important to ensure a balance between top-down and bottom up approaches.
- **Supervise the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda.** The Commission is in charge of ensuring that the agreements of the New Urban Agenda are considered when designing and implementing National Urban Policies. This Commission will be adapting the international targets and objectives agreed in the New Urban Agenda to the national and local contexts and explore concrete action-oriented solutions to achieve those targets. The Commission therefore facilitates the enactment of the New Urban Agenda and ensure consistency of national and local policies with international agreements.



- **Coordinate Multi-Stakeholder Engagement.** The commission engages different experts and stakeholders from a variety of sectors (government, private sector, civil society, etc.) when drafting National Urban Policies. This ensures that all voices are heard and all interests considered in an open, fair and transparent way.
- **Coordinate City-to-City Collaboration.** The Commission also facilitates the cooperation of cities across the country and promote exchange of knowledge and best policy solutions among cities from the same country and from abroad.

Members

The Commission comprises of a variety of members ranging from government to the private sector, including:

- Members of the National Government
- Members of Regional Governments
- Members of Municipal Governments
- Civil Society Representatives
- Private Sector Representatives
- Interest Groups Representatives

The appointment and selection of members depend on the particular national context.

Benefits

The Commission contributes to:

- Improved coordination across levels of governments, especially between national and municipal level
- Improved consistency between levels of government to ensure coherence between different policies in particular between national, regional and municipal policies
- Empower local authorities to take action and give them the appropriate political mandate and financial resources to carry out the needed transformations, in line with national and international priorities and guidelines. The decentralization required to give more power to cities can be facilitated by the Commission which ensures the process is fair and does not compromise the cohesive and unifying power of national governments.
- Strengthen the political commitment for sustainable urbanization and promote mobilization of all relevant stakeholders.
- Fostering cooperation among jurisdictions and cities across the country.
- A unified national vision for urban development. This vision will need to have clear objectives, targets, implementation strategies and monitoring mechanisms. More cohesive urban policies across the country would also create a more stable policy environment

throughout different cities which can also incentivize private investments and facilitate business innovation

- Mitigate the short-termism of politics by creating a body that ensures continuity throughout different political mandates and enables a coherent, continual and long-term political commitment for cities.
- Reinforce the understanding of urban matters and necessary national policies interventions particularly with regard to:
 - Environmental Sustainability (especially energy, transport, waste and water)
 - Social Segregation and Inequality
 - Public Space and Urban Planning
- Promote capacity building needed to enable governments and administrative bodies to work across departments and across levels of government.
- Create an enabling institutional force able to effectively harness the benefits of urbanization and ensures that it is not seen as a problem but if well managed as a source of greater opportunities for prosperity and improved well-being of communities.
- Balance the development across urban, peri-urban and rural areas and strengthen linkages between urban and rural areas and coordination between city centres and surrounding metropolitan areas.
- Ensure adequate implementation of national policies at the local level
- Supervise monitoring and ensure appropriate feedback is delivered from cities to the national government in order to carry out necessary improvements and policy changes.

Issues

Some of the key issues related to the establishment of the Commission include:

- **Financial Resources.** Another question concerns the funding of such a Commission and the availability of financial resources for the implementation of National Urban Policies. Most probably the funding would have to be shared between the national, regional and municipal budgets.
- **Authority.** It needs to be ensured that the Commission does not take away power from local authorities and concentrate on a national body. On the contrary, the Commission should facilitate a process of decentralization, appropriate empowerment of cities and balanced allocation of responsibilities and financial resources.

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References

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- [3] DNV GL/Monday Morning Global Institute 2014, „Global Opportunity Network,“ [Online]. Available: http://www.globalopportunitynetwork.org/resources/risks/urban_breakdown.pdf. [Zugriff am October 2015].

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