The European Union's role in the New Urban Agenda

Policy discussion brief for the Habitat III global summit

A. Executive summary

The purpose of this paper is to address the EU regarding its role in the Habitat III conference and New Urban Agenda (NUA), and its future role in support of this NUA, especially in its external action. The paper analyses the EU participation and the implications for EU external action. It summarizes a few key principles for the EU to ensure in the NUA and in its future action (some are transformative commitments, and others key elements for the framework of implementation, follow-up and review. The paper is a working discussion document, which was adapted as the process evolved. We welcome feedback and input in response to this paper.

The EU has been a global leader, playing a key role in the development of the New Urban Agenda. The EU has already started a comprehensive process for the European implementation of the New Urban Agenda, with the European Urban Agenda, which will be made coherent. Now the EU needs to devote considerable attention and show strong bold ambition for its own external action; in order to take into account the implications of urbanization, particularly in regards to funding and clear prioritization in programming. The EU must continue its leadership role, push further for bold ambition and promote the key principles of this paper. In the coming months, the EU must take further steps to formalise the action commitments for its own EU external funding and coherence, to fully take into account the New Urban Agenda.

The NUA currently includes necessary key areas in its transformative commitments, in particular the attention to a human rights-based approach, multi-stakeholder partnerships and good governance. These must be retained and strengthened. The NUA is not yet sufficiently result-oriented. It does not yet have sufficient concrete actions to guide implementation. It is hoped that the process of developing the NUA lead to time-bound measurable action commitments to ensure full effective and sustainable implementation and impact. In particular, the Follow-up and Review system still is lacking many elements, although it already has a few steps defined. It is critical to ensure a participatory, coordinated and well-funded mechanism and timely review and accountability.

B. The New Urban Agenda (Habitat III)

The challenge of urbanization world-wide

The urban population has grown at an unprecedented rate in the past fifty years (by 20 percent). The fast rate of growth is expected to continue, with urbanisation to cover 66 percent of the global population by 2050 (or the equivalent of over 2 billion more people in cities).[1] People are drawn to cities for a range of reasons, but ultimately in search of a better life.

As recognized in the past Habitat summits[2], urbanisation creates opportunities. Cities are engines of growth and development. Urbanization transforms the social and economic fabric of entire nations, societies and economies. Megacities are growing fast and require creativity for the challenges inherent to their size. But the most significant urban growth has been found in secondary cities (such as those around 1 million inhabitants), where decisions today will have strong repercussions on conditions in the future.

It is clear that cities world-wide differ in their size and key characteristics. However, some cities face the most challenges and opportunities, which must now be addressed globally and by the EU. Cities within the European Union (EU) have their own particularities and challenges. They also benefit from some strong experiences, particularly investing in social cohesion and housing. In a new global commitment to universality, each region and sub-region of the world will have to understand and respond to the characteristics of its own cities, including the EU.

However, it is important to focus on the biggest global trends and needs. 95 percent of all the urban population growth occurred in developing countries and was concentrated in the lowest income groups.[3]

These international urban areas have a plethora of critical challenges. Inequalities are frequent in cities around the world, and have caused an "urbanization of poverty", particularly affecting women and youth. Urban social and spatial segregation often leads to a concentration of inequalities, exacerbated by large differentials in public services (exemplified in slums by a near total lack of water, sanitation, waste management, transport and security, but evident to a lesser extent in other segregated areas of cities). In addition, urban sprawl often results in less effective services and increased urban vulnerabilities and ecological footprint. Because of the sheer scale of urbanisation and the associated land and housing crisis, governments are often unable to keep pace with the housing, services, education, health and transport needs of ever larger communities crystalizing in and on the borders of cities. Urbanisation is linked to other vulnerabilities and gaps. In many poor countries, cities are in hazard prone areas. In all countries, population concentration increases the risk of human and material loss in disasters. Cities are often the destination for migration and displacement due to conflict or humanitarian crises. The size and nature of urban areas is associated with increased insecurity, higher security threats, and sometimes more organised crime. To overcome all these prevalent challenges, and to ensure that all cities are able to harness and multiply the urban opportunities for all of their citizens, there is now an urgent need for global attention, political will, and concrete, forceful and coherent commitments.

This discussion paper will focus on the areas of the world where the biggest urbanization trends have occurred, outside of the EU, among its "partner countries" for development cooperation or transition support. The overwhelming pace and proportion of urbanization there raises the urgency of focus, not only on what the global agreements should be, but also on what the EU and its Member States could or should do "externally" in regards to these cities in partner countries and for the benefit of their low income groups and most vulnerable populations, who are most affected.

The need for a New Urban Agenda

The millennium development goals (MDG) of the year 2000 included a vague promise of "significantly improving" the lives of slum dwellers (MDG 7 target D), whilst other MDGs did not separate or highlight urban issues or targets. While much was accomplished for the MDG, the absolute number of people living in slums continues to grow (at 830 million today), with the vast majority being under 24 years old. In some countries with large MDG strides, inequality remains high and the most vulnerable were left out. Many countries continue to be unprepared and unable to meet the growing needs of urban residents. In the new Global agreements of 2015, setting the Agenda 2030 with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), a broader and stronger urban focus is found. In particular, SDG 11: "To make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", includes 10 targets covering a range of social, economic, environmental, resilience, governance and global support issues.[5] In addition, many other SDG are relevant and important for urban areas. Most of the SDG targets must be implemented in cities in order to be achieved.

Furthermore, SDG 1, to reduce poverty, 10 to reduce inequality, and 16 to ensure peace, justice and effective, accountable, inclusive institutions at all levels, include targets with direct implications for global urban priorities.[6] Other recent global agreements have critical implications for future change in urban areas, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the COP21 agreements in Paris. Now, urban commitments will have to take all these agreements into account coherently.

Building on the Habitat II conference 20 years ago, the upcoming Habitat III UN Summit is meant to reinvigorate the global political commitment to sustainable urbanisation, with the focus on producing and implementing a "New Urban Agenda" (NUA). It offers a unique opportunity to identify emerging challenges of cities, and discuss how they should be managed to fulfil their role as drivers of sustainable development, defining the urban priorities for the next 20 years. Following closely on the adoption of the SDGs it can provide more clarity and specific details in relation to concrete urban priorities and targets, to clarify responsibilities and motivate successful achievement. It is hoped that this would lead to measurable time bound result targets needed for the urban context, ensure support, address barriers to the SDGs, and shape their future implementation in the urban contexts.

The preparations of the Habitat III global conference and negotiations are moving forward, gradually reaching focus, clarity and some positive consensus with regional and thematic meetings that have enabled further depth on important dimensions, followed by negotiations, submissions of key stakeholders and two versions of the NUA have enabled emerging consensus and focus. Later in this paper, some of the key requests for the NUA will be outlined, regarding its content and follow-up processes, taking into account the ongoing developments of the preparation process, when pertinent to the points discussed.[7]

C. The role of the EU

1. The EU plays a ambitious global leadership role

The European Commission (EC) and key EU Member States (MS) have a track record of playing lead roles in the global arena, to ensure strong and forward looking agreements, as was the case recently for the Agenda 2030 and COP21. This year again, the EU has been visible at the forefront, adding value to the process of Habitat III, negotiating, facilitating consensus with other partners, and influencing the specific global commitments of the New Urban Agenda. A strong positive aspect of the EU involvement was that the process was developed jointly by the EC's DG REGIO and DG DEVCO, and in close coordination with MS, to create a Common EU position to negotiate and play an active role for Habitat III, leading to Council Conclusions[8] which provide a clear mandate and outlines the explicit EU principles.

First there were EC and MS responses to the UN Policy Unit Framework documents.[9] Then, the EU participation in the Prague Declaration of the Europe Regional Meeting[10] helped ensure critical cross-cutting issues were included. From Prague, 4 key areas of vision for change for cities emerged: innovative and productive cities; green, compact, resource efficient and resilient cities; inclusive and safe cities, and good urban governance. In further negotiations of the process of preparation towards Habitat III, the EU has argued for an ambitious vision. It has pushed for the clear inclusion of a rights-based approach, gender equality, a territorial approach, participatory planning and management with partnerships, including Local Authorities especially (with the necessary role definition, resources and capacity building necessary for their role), and also the Private Sector, CSO and citizens, even the most marginalized. The EU has also argued repeatedly for the prioritization of urban governance, an enabling, effective and innovative financing framework, especially locally, and an effective follow-up and review system with disaggregated data collection.

The EU Discussion Paper[11] reflected on the integrated nature of the SDGs and implications for urbanization throughout the whole Agenda 2030, thus grounding the NUA and giving impetus to the Agenda 2030, providing a shared vision for the EU and its MS. It provides concrete suggestions on how to tackle the challenges raised, whist promoting that the NUA should also be better focussed and results-oriented. It calls on the NUA to have a concrete, coherent, efficient, inclusive, monitoring and review mechanisms.

The EU Council Conclusions are appreciated, overall. They are detailed and point to the importance of the NUA, stating that the NUA should be the "cornerstone" in the implementation of new frameworks to all current agreements (Agenda 2030 and also Paris Agreements, Sendai, Addis, etc.) and the basis for a renewed global urban development framework. The Council Conclusions closely mirror the EC Discussion Paper, calling for an action oriented and forward looking agreement. They emphasize territorial approaches, governance (with particular attention to effectiveness and responsiveness, transparency, inclusivity and accountability with participatory decision-making processes), promoting multi-stakeholder approaches (with particular attention to the inclusion and enabling of LA). Most of the key issues highlighted later in the paper, as content to be ensured in the NUA, have been mentioned by the EU in its contribution to Habitat III negotiations. This is highly appreciated. The EU should continue this promotion, further strengthening the calls and ensuring all the elements presented.

The main gap in the Council Conclusions is the lack of any mention of implications for the EU external agenda (responsibilities, funding, or EU Policy Coherence for Development --PCD). This raises the need for next steps from the EU. The level of ambition for the EU and EC policy and political leadership could still be stronger as well. The EU must have its own results-oriented and time-bound commitments that clearly show that it is time to make radical changes given the trends. The EU must continue the process of engagement in Habitat III, the NUA and SDG11, with clear and explicit commitments about its own implementation of those global agreements, not only in regards to EU cities, but also for EU external action, Policy Coherence, prioritization and funding, as will be described in the next section.

The EU has played a strong and useful role towards Habitat III so far, which is appreciated. The EU must continue to play this role, strengthening the promotion of several key areas and increasing yet the level of ambition. It is critical to promote good governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and means of implementation such as financing and capacity building. In global processes, the EU has often encouraged stakeholders to reach agreements that are concise, focussed, action-oriented and easy to measure. These are valuable objectives, but should not be at the expense of seeking boldness and the highest ambition for the NUA. Habitat III must go beyond a simple recognition of actors, issues and best practices for cities around the world.

Recommended actions must be much more than the lowest common denominator or what is already measured. It is time for the world to commit strongly to key changes in actions and also in underlying values, structures, processes and partnerships, in order to significantly address the numerous urban challenges, particularly for the poor and most vulnerable. The EU should push for ambitious, measurable, time-bound, global and specific result targets, building on and expanding the relevant SDGs, providing a framework for monitoring, to ensure that the urban agenda stays on track. Currently, measurable action commitments and the monitoring and accountability system of the NUA still demonstrate gaps and still need the EU promotion. A lack of ambition would not only result in missed opportunities, but would have painful repercussions globally and in Europe.

2. The EU should lead by example, and increase EU policy coherence, priority and funding for the international "New Urban Agenda"

The EU shows global leadership in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). In the future, EU funding proportions should now also demonstrate that the NUA is indeed a high priority.

Between 2006 and 2012, the EC provided between 2 % and 4% of all EuropeAid and EDF budgets for urban related sectors (1.3 billion Euros by rough calculations[12]) in addition to technical assistance (for example in broader projects to strengthen aspects of public administrations or research). However, in effect, closer to 1% of development budgets (around 450 million) was dedicated globally for long term urban priorities and challenges such as urban development, disaster prevention and preparedness, flood prevention and control, low-cost housing and slum upgrades (38 million), site preservation and cultural heritage. The majority of the other 2/3rds of funding was mainly for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, primarily post disaster, and to a lesser extent for EU Accession funds. In the last available programming report (covering the year 2014)[13], urban projects and issues appear very seldom. Working with Local Authorities is a clear priority, given the EC Communication and Council Conclusions[14], but the funding is still very small. The largest sectors of urban funding were, energy efficiency and renewables (especially in the EU Neighbourhood), followed by urban public transport (and to a lesser extend solid waste management, water and sanitation). A large proportion of support in the past decade, and still recently, used "blended" funding, together with loans or equity from public and private financing.

Going forward, it is clear that the programmatic commitment of the EU does not yet match the importance or urgency of the urban agenda. There is no clear urban development sector, nor definitions, making it difficult to track the funding and its effects. In addition, the proportion of funding is much too small. The Council Conclusions "A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015" (for the SDGs) state that "the EU and its MS recognise the need in particular, to adequately mobilise the flow of ODA and other sources of financing which go to cities and other local and sub-national authorities...".[15] **To ensure this promise, it would help to have clearer tracking of investment, with disaggregated measurement for all instruments**, of funding that directly targets the urban contexts, and of funding for urban related territorial approaches.

The EU should consider increasing the amount of funding available for urban commitments and ensure, first of all, that urban system strengthening and governance receive a significant boost. Then, key long term investments should be made for urban social issues, inequality and resilience, and territorial approaches should more adequately covered (such as for decentralisation, and for the key links between cities and their rural surroundings, where appropriate).

In addition, the EC and MS' external action should demonstrate much stronger **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development** for cities globally, especially for the most vulnerable. This is particularly necessary since Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is legally mandated in the EU.[16] the EC and MS have actively started joint programming for development[17] and EU cities have demonstrated their increased interest in playing a direct role.[18] PCD refers to all other policies of the EU being coherent, consistent and not cause any harm to development, and in this case sustainable urbanization. Therefore, the EC and MS must analyse and monitor specific implications of coherence for urban aspects of development cooperation, humanitarian responses, resilience programming, neighbourhood relations, migrant and refugee policy, trade, agriculture and security programs. The EC paper references PCD in passing, but does not clarify its importance nor the range of EU policies that should be coherent with sustainable development.

Although the EC Discussion paper mentions that the "EU's external action should better integrate the dramatic geographic growth which will entail major global shifts in the coming years", and points to the choice to prioritize aspects of urban governance in the EU's external action, neither the EC paper nor the Council Conclusions add any detail to draw implications for EU's external action from urbanization in funding or coherence.

In addition to funding and PCD, the topic or thematic area should be prioritised in general and with concrete actions for the EU's external remit. It should be distinguished, so that it can clearly be an area of focus and be given due attention by all its DGs in the EC, by the various EU institutions and the MS.

In the upcoming development of the EU Global Development Strategy with the revision of the European Consensus on Development and integration of the SDG, the Cotonou Agreement, the Gender Action Plan and other key moments, urban and territorial development must be named as a defined sector, with also cross-cutting dimensions taken into account. A separate thematic area in DEVCO enables monitoring of funding and results, to see if the attention given is at the height of the trend and to learn from best practices. This "new" sector must be prioritised with appropriate funding and Action Plans to solidify the EU's commitment and provide, in practice, a good example for the rest of the world.

The final words of the recent Council Conclusions for Habitat III leave the door open for future clear commitments in this regard, by vouching to "continue to develop". Recognizing the upcoming Slovak presidency of the Council of the EU with a role in key EU development agenda items, it is hoped that they will continue to assist in raising the urban agenda to the highest level of priority and political visibility with strong EU commitments. It is strongly hoped that the EU will provide another set of Council Conclusions and an Action Plan to guide the implementation of the NUA.

3. The EU links the "EU Urban Agenda" to the "New Urban Agenda" in a perspective of universality

In the EU, there have been great strides towards the vision of cities. Some MS have very strong urban policies and a lot of experience and engagements. Over the past ten years, many initiatives of the Informal Ministerial Meetings of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, EC communications and Council Conclusions have moved the urban agenda forward. The EU also has a significant acquis of solutions and strong funding for social cohesion, social protection, and institution strengthening in urban contexts.

The EU is now engaging in a broad process to further develop, consolidate and implement the "EU Urban Agenda" to improve the urban dimension of EU policy, ensure stronger policy coherence and coordination in the implementation of policy affecting cities. National governments, the EC, European institutions and other stakeholders will be working together for

a sustainable, innovative and economically powerful Europe that offers a good quality of life in urban contexts. On May 30, 2016, the European Ministers responsible for urban development held a Ministerial meeting in Amsterdam, under the Netherlands' Presidency of the Council of the EU. They reached an agreement about the launch of the EU Urban Agenda (with the "Pact of Amsterdam"). Partnerships will be set up around 12 priority themes already identified.

EU internal Policy coherence and coordination are important. Agreeing to a EU Urban Agenda, ensuring coherence of policies in the EU, and furthermore ensuring their implementation in the urban context are all appreciated.

The Council Conclusions rightfully emphasize the links between the NUA and the EU Urban Agenda, stating that the EUA must be influenced by the NUA, and be its "key delivery instrument".

Due to the universal nature of the Agenda 2030, the SDGs apply also to EU cities. In the EU, there are still pockets of great poverty in urban areas. There are still strides to be made to make cities innovative, productive, green, compact, resource efficient, resilient, inclusive, safe, and with good governance (as promoted in the Prague Declaration as input for Habitat III). Making explicit links between the NUA and the EU Urban Agenda, will ensure the universality of the SDG in the arena of urban contexts, as work will be done to align them and to ensure they are applied in Europe and to measure progress.

The initial processes of the EU Urban Agenda this year can also inform the global New Urban Agenda. The EU's active presence in the global New Urban Agenda will likely and rightfully promote the best practices in the EU cities, and the potential for exchange and learning from the EU's long and varied experience in urban improvement. Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda should also be a way for EU cities to learn from the best practices and successes in other parts of the world, including in least developed countries, for example in poverty alleviation, participatory governance, multi-stakeholder processes, and people-centred innovation.

4. The EU promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships for success

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are crucial for the success of the New Urban Agenda, in part because of the complexity and multiple dimensions of urban poverty and challenges. The EU is well placed to be a champion for multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The EU joint position for the SDGs[19], emphasizes the need to "go beyond traditional channels of cooperation, ... to promote more effective and inclusive forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships, operating at all levels", involving the range of local authorities, civil society organisations of all types, International Organisations and the private sector. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda has a similar call.[20] The Council conclusions on Local Authorities emphasize the importance of partnerships for the Urban Agenda: "The Council recognises the added value of local authorities in the territorial approach to development, which can reinforce local political processes and coherent local development planning and enhance democratic ownership of development at local level including through local elections, through the definition of multi-sector policies, the establishment of strategic multi-actor partnerships, the use and management of local natural resources and the mobilisation of other local private and community based assets."[21]

Multi-sector and actor partnerships add value in several important ways. They are useful for the consultations to prepare agreements, ensuring more ownership, as was demonstrated in the run-up of the SDG and Habitat III processes. The EU has been helpful to promote this inclusion. All stakeholders and sectors should also have a place in the final decision-making of the commitments and targets, and in the Coordinating Committee for the implementation and monitoring, as the EU helped promote for the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. These partnerships increase the potential for financial and capacity building support, increase involvement in implementation, and better coordination, thereby raising the effectiveness, as the EU has successfully demonstrated in its programming for the Sahel resilience, and its participation in the New Deal for Fragile Contexts, and the Scale Up Nutrition initiative. For healthy governance and policy coherence, there should also be multi-stakeholder participation in ongoing NUA related policy dialog and accountability processes going forward. It is most effective and preferable is participation is structured and predictable, especially between national governments, regional bodies, Local Authorities, CSO of different types and donors, such as the EU has demonstrated with the Structured Dialog and EU Policy Forum for Development. The active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders is also important in order to monitor effectively the implementation of NUA commitments, and the effective use of resources, such as was demonstrated by the Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, with "country-led multi-stakeholder dialog, data gathering and monitoring, which demonstrates the transformational potential of an inclusive monitoring process on behaviour and levels of ambition".[22] More recently participatory social audits and monitoring of services (often with strong CSO participation) have also proven to be useful tools to ensure the effective and sustainable use of all resources and financing, as well as to track progress on commitments. Finally, multi-stakeholder partnerships are important for capacity building, networks and systems for knowledge exchange, to which the EU is strongly committed, in all its forms (such as North/South, South/South and triangular, public/private and through International Organisations), "...particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and in fragile states, where it is essential to prepare conditions for transition and build the resilience of the most vulnerable populations".[23]

The EU should continue to encourage all other Habitat III stakeholders and push for stronger content in the NUA, to ensure useful multi-stakeholder partnerships to play all these critical roles.

D. Priorities of the New Urban Agenda

The following discussion points refer directly to the content of the New Urban Agenda. The sections **address first the commitments for urban development and second the nature of the commitments and the enabling factors for their implementation and monitoring,** supporting the EU in its promotion of these specific issues.

I. Preamble

The NUA is grounded in the principles of equal rights, opportunities and fundamental freedoms, making explicit reference to the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and treaties (including the Right to Development), and International Law. This is an important common ground and reminder of previous strong commitments that have relevance and are critical for the future of urbanization. The EU has played a useful role in promoting a Human Rights Based Approach to the NUA. This foundation also implies the imperative of participatory multi-stakeholder processes of decision-making and accountability both in the development and monitoring of the NUA, and in the management of cities. Both of these must still continuously be promoted. There appears not to have been consensus on the concept of the "Right to the City", although it was recognized for some countries. However, the NUA included the underlying principle of "Cities for All", defined as equal use of cities, inclusivity, no discrimination and the understanding of the city as a common public good. Going forward, the concept of "Cities for All" must be operationalized, providing concrete actions and agreements that explicitly defend and enable the inclusivity and equal use principles. The actions related to governance will be one important dimension. In the future, it is hoped that further discussion can continue around the "Right to the City" at a global level, with the support of the EU, to enshrine it and ensure its full implementation.

Overall, the NUA lacks action oriented priorities and the formalization of commitments to ensure that they will be ambitious and carry political weight. At the moment, still a few months from the final consensus on the NUA, the call to action of the NUA is still quite weak, lacking the bold ambition or passion commensurate with the urbanization population trend, "making it one of the 21st Century's most transformative trends"[24] as the NUA states. It is hoped that the global Habitat III conference will gather the highest level of political participation, and ensure in the agreement, in statements, in monitoring processes and in actions, that the NUA be given the highest political priority.

II. Transformative commitments for a Sustainable Urban development

1. Leave no one behind, social inclusion, urban equity and poverty eradication

Quality urban life requires inclusive and safe cities, in line with most of the SDGs and in particular 1: to reduce poverty, and 10: to reduce inequality. The EU has already rightfully outlined its priorities for international urban development in the EC Communication and Council conclusions on Local Authorities of 2013: "sustainable strategies to promote non-discrimination and break down the barriers that exclude various groups from access to resources and opportunities offered by urban development, with the view to promote social inclusion, territorial cohesion…", with as "prerequisites for sustainable development", giving "special attention" to land access and registration, slum upgrading, services and citizenship for slum dwellers, affordable housing, tenure and safety.[25] Again in the latest Council Conclusions for Habitat III, this principle is central and very appreciated. These various elements should be promoted as priorities for the NUA, with an overall focus on inequality, ensuring "the just distribution of access to resources and power in order to close the gap between the rich and the poor".[26] The EU has affirmed at the highest level its "commitment to promote all human rights, whether civil and political, or economic, social and cultural, in all areas of its external action without exception" and commits to promote the integration of Human Right issues in EU policy and global agendas.[27] This Human Rights based approach (HRBA) requires an emphasis on equality, inclusiveness and non-discrimination, as was promoted for the SDGs. This guiding commitment implies giving prominence to women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, also priorities of the current EC. It also implies access to services, primary health, education, social protection, housing and land rights, safety, right of assembly, security and economic rights in the urban environment. The EU must now continue to promote all these priorities.

A key element of the HRBA is also to develop cooperation, coherent political and policy dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. Local Authorities have front line responsibilities, and need improved legal frameworks, administration, capacity and financing to respond to the rights. Partnerships with development partners and relevant multilateral stakeholders can "further strengthen efforts to promote a rights-based approach to development cooperation".

The role of all local actors and the most vulnerable citizens themselves (as the Habitat III Council Conclusions rightly state) is critical. The need for ongoing dialog, is important to "safeguard the needs of vulnerable communities" and is "particularly important in fragile conflict and crisis prone situations",[28] as stated in earlier Council Conclusions. The EU should strengthen the attention and concrete actions for the most vulnerable, in particular those at risk or in fragile contexts.

2. Sustainable and inclusive prosperity and opportunities for all

Taking a HRBA as mandated by the EU, the goal of the NUA can be to have innovative, creative and productive cities. But objectives must also go much further, to ensure prosperity and economic opportunities for all. Significant progress on equity, inclusion, rights and poverty eradication (as outlined in the SDGs and the previous section) all have positive repercussions on the economic potential of urban areas. Therefore, cities need to take the lead in fostering economic growth through the establishment of permanent local platforms to increase the creation of decent jobs, protection of livelihoods and sustainable consumption. This should be done, also in line with the HRBA, with a priority focus on women's job perspectives and the opportunities for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged or marginalised. It will require responsibilities of the private sector, "to engage in responsible investment, sustainable trade, inclusive business models and other strategies as part of its core business to enhance economic opportunities for the poor and thereby achieve development aims".[29] It will require addressing issues of transparency, labour conditions, health and safety at work, access to social protection, environment, efficiency" and upholding the rule of law.[30]

Ensuring economic opportunity for all will again require the reinforcement of Local Authorities, so that they can play a catalytic role and ensure the healthy balance between growth and inclusion and rights. A territorial approach is important for adequate links between the urban and rural areas, and attention to value chains and mutual market opportunities. Local Authorities must be supported so that they ensure fair public resource generation, access to relevant services (including markets, support for the informal economy and entrepreneurship, safety, equitable transport, transparent and efficient land use, housing and tenure rights and a sound financial system accessible to all), all of which stimulate employment and the economy.[31]

3. Environmental sustainability and Resilient Cities and Human settlements

As it has effectively begun, the EU should continue to be at the forefront linking the urban commitments to those of the Agenda 2030, COP21, the EU's internal commitments and priorities for climate change and Council Conclusions ahead of the SDG ("A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015"). Thus, the EU should promote ecological and resilient cities, territorial cohesion, urban-rural links and also improvements in human settlements including slums. Cities should work to become green, compact, resource efficient and innovative, protecting the environment, minimizing environmental impact, and providing green spaces for its population. In addition, strong emphasis should be put on the comprehensive management of risks, including assessment, preparation, mitigation and plans for adequate response for disasters or crises. This is most urgent for least developed and fragile contexts. The EU can encourage resilience building to ensure that negative coping mechanisms do not thwart these efforts, and that policy coherence at all levels decreases, prevents or mitigates the risks of all types and increases the potential for "building back better".[32] This implies particular attention to economic development, including foreign investment and procurement in vulnerable cities in partner countries. Such priorities will require the strong capacity of Local Authorities, and their work within partnerships, particularly with CSO. This will also require "coherence between rural and urban development policies"[33] as their development is interdependent and there are particularly strong mutually reinforcing effects between the environment, ecology and resilience (such as pollution, water use, waste and urban sanitation).

III. Enhancing the effectiveness: Means of implementation, Effective implementation and Enabling Policy Framework

1. Effective cities and Good urban governance

Good urban governance is at its most basic level the ability to function, including the legal framework, roles, institutions, administration and financing. It is also much more, in line with the broad EU policy acquis and the EU commitments to the Busan Partnership on Development Effectiveness and the HRBA.[34] Both of these levels are closely intertwined. Good urban governance is critical for all other objectives of the New Urban Agenda and Agenda 2030 to be accomplished, and should therefore be prioritised and most adequately supported by all key stakeholders and donors.

a. Legal Framework, Roles, Administration and Financing of Cities[35]

For at least the minimum effectiveness, and even more for the full benefits of urbanisation to be harnessed, the necessary prerequisite is that urbanisation is pro-actively planned and managed. Local Authorities are the legitimate and relevant actors for this, and should have institutional, regulatory, technical and financial capacities and means to assume this function and to guarantee the public policy, action and services. This requires an overarching legal framework, providing a relevant secured frame of reference for the distribution of competences between the various institutional levels. It should be based on subsidiarity, allowing the State to entrust the fields of responsibilities and competence to the most appropriate levels. It is important to have clear roles and responsibilities for each level of government. Inclusive Urban Policies and strategies, at the National and Local level, should be promoted, formulated, implemented and monitored. In policies and practice, three cross-cutting elements are critical. First, decentralisation can be an important approach, but needs the accompanying legal framework and means to be effective. Second, an integrated approach is critical, ensuring that there are no silos and reduced fragmentation and that there is full coordination among sectors, institutions and levels of authority. And third, a territorial approach is most useful, recognising the mutual influence and strengthening economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

b. Good governance, Development Effectiveness and HRBA of cities

This aspect of urban governance will influence how governance is carried out, the implementation of the legal framework and investment, the underlying values and rights and the characteristics that make it most effective. These key targets for good governance are mentioned briefly in the Council Conclusions for Habitat III (although not sufficiently) and have also been mandated by the EU policy and the EU's participation in previous global agreements (such as the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation), as well as confirmed in the Agenda 2030.

First, accountability and the respect for the rule of law are primordial, and require transparency as non-negotiable and cross-cutting. This requires effective systems for budgeting, financial allocation and monitoring of expenditure. Public procurement has crucial repercussions on all urban sectors. All public institutions must function in line with the rule of law. The legislative and regulatory framework, its practice and public human resources, must all enable justice, equal access, rights, and safety. Tax administration, audit and oversight organisations must be effective, transparent, just, with sufficient capacities and means. Overall, fraud (including in tax and procurement), corruption, and money laundering must be forcefully prevented and addressed. Finally, all institutions and processes must be improved to increase the inclusion and equality in urban settings, effectively serving the most vulnerable or those currently left out.

Second, participatory processes are critical, with the necessary inclusion of a variety of stakeholders, most importantly CSO and the citizens, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged who traditionally have had no voice. This cross-cutting participatory approach must enable various roles, most importantly in the actual decision-making, oversight, local accountability and follow-up and review of global agreements. It will result in a wide variety of positive urban impacts. Citizen and CSO participation in planning, under the leadership of local authorities, increases ownership, inclusivity, the voice and understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, accountability, and the willingness to commit additional resources and energies. Multi-stakeholder participation in implementation of urban strategies (including local actors and institutions and international donors and organisations), provides innovations and solutions for urban challenges, lessons learned, capacity, additional resources, and thus broader effect. Ongoing dialog with a range of actors and partners enhances coordination, ownership and accountability, improves the policy framework and improves results, especially when it is a structured and inclusive dialog mechanism. Participation in monitoring, oversight and accountability, especially of citizens and CSO, alongside local authorities, public servants and government at all levels, has been shown internationally to ensure rights, improve accountability, ownership and inclusion, reduce corruption, generate creative solutions for difficult urban challenges or resource constraints, and increase impact.

The EU has played a strong role in promoting this area of governance. We hope this will continue and be strengthened, particularly in regards to a broad range of concrete actions and their implementation in the future. In particular, the EU must ensure that governance commitments are concrete and time-bound and explicitly incorporate all the various elements. For example, it should be immediate, based on the global Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, that all international investment in cities (from EU external action and its MS) should be fully transparent.

The current version of the NUA rightfully emphasizes the enabling policy framework required for the effective implementation of transformative commitments for cities. It points to the need for decentralization, National Urban Policy and legal frameworks, and improved planning and management of urban development. The NUA explicitly calls for participatory approaches, including all levels of CS, local authorities, and other key actors, calling for broad well financed, permanent mechanisms and platforms for participatory cooperation, consultation and decision-making, open for all.[36] In the section on Means of Implementation, the current version of the NUA also promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships and improved citizen governance tools, with women and the socially marginalized to participate in decision-making.[37] This should also be the case for the NUA Follow-up and Review system. All these mechanisms are critical and should therefore be the subject of time-bound and verifiable commitments in the NUA.

2. Means of Implementation Financing Urban Development, Partnerships and Capacity building

Various sections of this brief have outlined the need for adequate financing for cities and Local Authorities. Additional resources are necessary to ensure the multi-stakeholder partnerships, participatory processes and accountability systems recommended of the New Urban Agenda. International funding can still be greatly increased to become more proportional with the global influence of urbanisation. Currently, in many EU partner countries, funding directly channelled through Local Authorities still represents a marginal part of national public sector expenditure and of allocated international development aid. As already agreed by the EU previously, systems must be in place to monitor the extent to which donor funding is properly transferred through government treasuries to local authorities, to the most appropriate level of local administration, "for their specific competences and service provision, in order to drive the local political process and deliver results that better target citizens' needs.", especially for EU Budget Support and Sector Budget Support.[38] The call to scale up support for cities and Local Authorities, as well as support to their efforts to mobilise revenue, was also agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.[39]

As described in each previous section, effective partnerships and coordination are prerequisite enabling means for the New Urban Agenda. These require adequate legislative frameworks to be effective. Stakeholders also need increased capacity to implement the urban agenda's upcoming commitments. All stakeholders will need to dedicate energy, set up mechanisms and exchange best practices to increase their capacity of partnering. Most importantly, national governments and public institutions will need increased capacity and resources to manage effective change in good governance, such as through a National Urban Policy, accountability, and effective partnership collaboration, as well as for innovations and system changes including decentralization, subsidiarity, and territorial approaches.

The New Urban Agenda should pay particular attention to the capacity needs of cities, to deliver integrated and inclusive urban planning, implementation and accountability. This capacity is currently lacking, in critical areas, particularly in many developing and emerging economies. The main capacity gaps are: (1) lacking human, institutional and technical capacity, including skilled urban planners and lacking relevant advanced training programmes; (2) lacking abilities for sectoral, cross-departmental coordination and stakeholder involvement; (3) lacking robust data, data gathering mechanisms, statistical capabilities, transparency and evidence-based decision-making; and (4) lacking abilities to unlock endogenous financial resources, to ensure fair and legal domestic taxation, and to access, mobilize and manage exogenous sources of financing (requiring trainings in areas such as municipal finance and tax systems, as well as donor reporting, appropriate sustainable debt management and creative resource generation). Moreover, as cities are rapidly growing in size and population, capacity-building and the development of respective policies and institutions (e.g. regional associations) are needed to foster cooperation and coordination across jurisdictions. Many cities have grown beyond their administrative boundaries and require effective governance at the metropolitan scale (e.g. inter-municipal cooperation) to use synergies and implement cost-effective solutions.[40]

It is encouraging to see steps emerging in the Habitat III preparation process, such as the promise to have UN Habitat generate evidence-based and practical guidance for the means of implementation, and a trust fund for capacity development. The current version of the NUA also emphasizes both the mobilization of endogenous resources and ODA and other sources. It will be important to balance these sources, and to ensure that there is not an expectation of full dependency on local resources in the most vulnerable cities with extreme poverty and marginalization. The NUA currently promotes transparency, both in resource allocation and spending, including open and fair procurement, budget execution processes and anti-corruption. The EU has played a role in encouraging some of these steps, which must continue and be strengthened. ensure related specific time-bound, measurable and accountable action commitments.

The NUA must go further: to clarify and ensure the funding for these implementation measures, and to ensure related specific time-bound, measurable and accountable action commitments This is necessary to prove the strength of these principles and the will behind them, and to ensure their full and effective implementation. Without these measures, the NUA will only be a list of principles, or its promises could remain empty and short lived.

IV. Follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda: Clear indicators, measurable time bound result targets, strong participative monitoring and good accountability

The New Urban Agenda must include concrete result targets and clear, transparent monitoring mechanisms. They enable accountability and the best, fair, ethical and most effective use of resources. They also spur ownership and participation of all stakeholders. They enable learning from action, the refinement of strategies, capacity development and knowledge sharing. Finally, they help increase urgency and political will, and enable focus on the most necessary actions and policies. As a whole, these effects ensure more rapid and sustainable change and impact.

Given the pervasive influence of urbanisation, its continued astonishing pace of growth, and its many challenges, such monitoring is crucial and urgent. It requires several prerequisites, in line with EU political and policy acquis. First, the Habitat III agreements must include measurable time-bound result targets and indicators, using common international standards to ensure the compatibility between countries, and a transparent global mechanism of accountability for those indicators. Second, there must be investment and technical support for data collection and for effective monitoring mechanisms to support the policy-making and accountability processes. Global and regional data repositories should be further developed. Finally, multi-stakeholder participation is key, based on transparency and information sharing, underlining the importance of strong monitoring, accountability and review, feedback and learning at all levels. This participation should include citizens and CSO, Local Authorities, parliaments, knowledge institutions and audit or oversight institutions, and donors and other international players.

This call for clear monitoring is in line with the EU Council Conclusions for the post 2015 agenda (SDGs), the lessons learned from the MDGs, and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. It has also been a focus of the EU negotiations towards Habitat III. In the EC discussion paper there are recommendations for a NUA that is results oriented, disaggregated data measurement,

and a "concrete, coherent, efficient, inclusive monitoring and review mechanism" complementary to that of the Agenda 2030. The recent Council Conclusions call for an efficient and inclusive follow-up and review mechanism. We commend the recognition that data collection and indicators are essential. But whist calling for the NUA to have in place a mechanism, there is a lack of clarity on the indicators (using only those of the SDG, which would then be narrow). It clearly calls for the use of existing platforms, with no duplication and flexibility. Whilst it is important to ensure practicality and coherence, and to use the systems that exist, the lack of ambition in the monitoring system can be the downfall of the entire agreement.

It is noteworthy that some steps are being made towards a clear and effective Follow-Up and Review system in the NUA, with the mention of biennial comprehensive progress reports, and the request of UN Habitat to implement a multi-stakeholder panel on Sustainable Urbanization in collaboration with the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to consolidate knowledge. There is a recognition that the Follow-Up and Review must be multi-level. Nevertheless, all these aspects can and should be further reinforced.

This is not sufficient. For an ambitious and useful NUA, that is at the level of the importance of the urbanization trend and of the challenges of cities that affect all development globally, it is of utmost importance that the commitments carry political weight and enable comparison, tracking and peer encouragement between countries and cities. The NUA must provide clear benchmarks, measurable and time-bound commitments. There must be a renewed global governance mechanism post Habitat III, including non-UN-MS partners, CSO, Local Authorities, and International Organisations, for coordination, to ensure financing and for monitoring. This must be operationalized with a well-financed and well defined inclusive participatory accountability mechanism. Finally, to delay the next global review of progress and face to face accountability on the NUA to 2036 would be a lost opportunity for momentum and possibly for impact, given such rapid changes in cities, and such pervasive effects and challenges, and after the review of the Agenda 2030. A new global conference, taking stock, documenting advance and ensuring to fill the gaps should occur at the latest in 2026, and preferably sooner.

Habitat for Humanity International

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity began in 1976 as a grassroots effort. The Christian housing organization has since grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in nearly 70 countries. Families and individuals in need of a hand up partner with Habitat for Humanity to build or improve a place they can call home. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. In Europe, Habitat works in Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and United Kingdom. Through shelter, we empower.

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Cities Allience

Cities Alliance is the global partnership for poverty reduction and promoting the role of cities in sustainable development. Partnerships are critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We bring together organisations with different perspectives and expertise on city issues around common goals: well run, productive cities that provide opportunities for all residents. Our members include multilateral development organisations, national governments, local government associations, International NGOs, foundations, private sector and foundations, and academia. The Cities Alliance Secretariat is based in Brussels, and is hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme Habitat III

The Joint Work Programme of the Cities Alliance Partnership has been established to prepare inputs to the Habitat III Conference, while discussing priorities and messages that are key to the Post-2015 Agenda. It consists of UN-Habitat, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MFA), Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Ford Foundation, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, Sustainable Development Solutions network, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and Ministry of Cities, Federal Government of Brazil.

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[3] EC Communication: "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries, for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes", Brussels, 15.5.2013, COM(2013) 280 final,
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0280&from=EN

[4] This target was subsumed under MDG 7 on "environmental sustainability". The commitment was for at least 100 million persons, a very low target. It was surpassed, largely because of actions in China, and mainly through water and sanitation.

[5] The Agenda 2030 with all SDGs: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld, includes SDG 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11   which has 10 targets; (11.1) By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums. (11.2) By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. (11.3) By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries. (11.4) Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. (11.5) By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. (11.6) By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management. (11.7) By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities. (11.a) Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning. (11.b) By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels. (11.c) Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

[6] This is also explicit and well documented in the recent EC Discussion paper, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/commission-discussion-paper-habitat-iii-prep-common-postion-eu-3rd-un-conference-housing-and_en

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[10] "The Prague Declaration" for Habitat III, Europe Regional Meeting. Prague, 16-18 March 2016. https://www.habitat3.org/prague

[11] See EC Discussion paper note 7

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[13] Commission Staff working document, accompanying the document "Report from the EC to the EP and the Council, Annual Report on the EU's development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2014", {COM(2015) 578 final}; Brussels, 24.11.2015, SWD(2015) 248 final.

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15 "Council conclusions on a transformative post 2015 Agenda" and on "A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015" (for the SDGs and Agenda 2030), (p.15), Council of the European Union, Brussels 26 May 2015, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/26-fac-dev-council-conclusions-global-partnership/

16 Article 208 of the Lisbon Treaty; and more recently in Council Conclusions. EU joint response for SDG (see note 15 above) p 6; "Policy Coherence for Development is a legal commitment to take development cooperation objectives into account in policies that the EU implements which are likely to affect developing countries. This means both addressing possible negative impacts of domestic policies on third countries and fostering synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas."

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18 See for example the EC Communication on Local Authorities (see note 14 above), and Annual Programming Report 2015 (see note 13 above).

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