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# UN CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

## BACKGROUND GUIDE 2016

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# NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



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# THE 2016 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2016 National Model United Nations Conference in New York (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). This year's staff is: Directors Camille Le Baron (Conference A) and Sarah Walter (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Adrian Hassler (Conference A) and Michael Valdivieso (Conference B). Camille recently completed her Masters degree in international relations and political economy at Sciences Po Lille and currently works as an economist for the French Agency for Development in Niamey, Niger. She is excited to return to NMUN•NY for her fourth year on staff. Sarah holds a M.A. in Political Science from the University of Potsdam. She is a press officer for the Association of German Private Healthcare Insurers in Berlin, Germany, and is looking forward to her fourth year on staff. Adrian holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Munich, and is now pursuing an M.Sc. in Global Development at the University of Copenhagen. He is currently interning at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and this is his second year on NMUN•NY staff. Michael is an International Relations student at Universidad San Francisco de Quito in Ecuador. He currently works as the President of the Student Body at his university, and is looking forward to his second year on staff.

The topics under discussion for Habitat III are:

- I. Building Resilient Cities to Promote Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
- II. Realizing the Right to Adequate Shelter through the New Urban Agenda
- III. Inclusive Urbanization for the Promotion of Equality and Social Cohesion

Habitat III is a unique global summit which will convene in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016. It will discuss the cross-cutting themes of cities, urbanization, and urban development, inviting policymakers, urban experts, and civil society members to discuss these issues in the post-2015 context. Habitat III plays a critical role in assessing, reviewing, and defining development strategies regarding urbanization, in combination with social, economic, and environmental goals. The conference is an essential forum to address sustainable growth, social prosperity, and resilience within an urban context, as well as rethink the interwoven issues of climate change and urban development. Habitat III will be key in developing the normative standards of the New Urban Agenda, a global roadmap that will determine urban development for the next two decades. The standards set at the conference will also define the operational and programmatic work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

We hope you will find this Background Guide useful as an introduction to the committee's topics and your own research. We highly encourage you to further your research by exploring your country's policies in-depth and using the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to expand your knowledge of these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will submit a [position paper](#). Please take note of the [NMUN policies](#) on the website and in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) regarding plagiarism, codes of conduct, dress code, sexual harassment, and the awards philosophy and evaluation method. Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory.

The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) are available to download from the NMUN website. This document includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. It is thus an essential instrument in preparing for the conference, and a reference during committee.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the conference itself, feel free to contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the General Assembly Department, Sabrina Grover (Conference A) and Patrick Parsons (Conference B). You can reach either USG by contacting them at: [usg.ga@nmun.org](mailto:usg.ga@nmun.org).

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference in March!

Sincerely,

**Conference A**

Camille Le Baron, *Director*  
Adrian Hassler, *Assistant Director*

**Conference B**

Sarah Walter, *Director*  
Michael Valdivieso, *Assistant Director*

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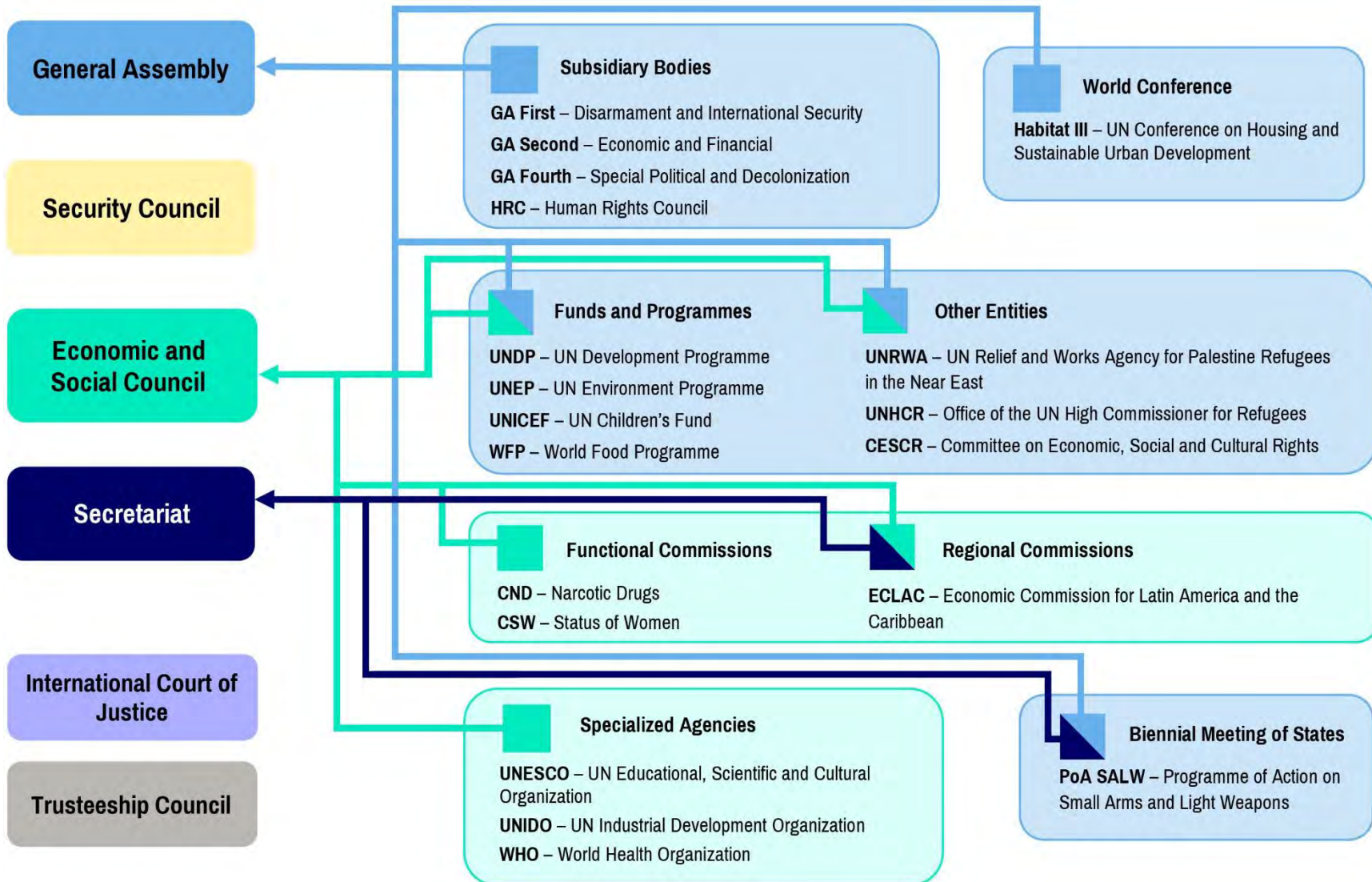


## Abbreviations

<b>100RC</b>	100 Resilient Cities
<b>AGGI</b>	Advisory Group on Gender Issues
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil society organizations
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>Eco-DRR</b>	Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GFDRR</b>	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
<b>Green</b>	Green, low-emission, and climate-resilient development strategies
<b>LECRDS</b>	
<b>GROOTS</b>	Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood
<b>GTF</b>	Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Development Agenda towards Habitat III
<b>Habitat I</b>	United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (1976)
<b>Habitat II</b>	United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (1996)
<b>Habitat III</b>	United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (2016)
<b>HFA</b>	Hyogo Framework for Action
<b>ICERD</b>	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>K4C</b>	Knowledge Centre on Cities and Climate Change
<b>LDCs</b>	Least developed countries
<b>LED</b>	Local Economic Development
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MMFRMP</b>	Metro Manila Flood Risk Management Master Plan
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>NUP</b>	National Urban Policies
<b>Rio+20</b>	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDI</b>	Shack/Slum Dwellers International
<b>UCLG</b>	United Cities and Local Governments
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNHRP</b>	United Nations Housing Rights Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNISDR</b>	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>WCDRR</b>	World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>WUC</b>	World Urban Campaign
<b>WUF</b>	World Urban Forum

## United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the UN System simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system, to help understand the reportage and relationships between the entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN System.





## Committee Overview

*“The Conference is a unique opportunity for rethinking the Urban Agenda in which governments can respond by promoting a new model of urban development able to integrate all facets of sustainable development to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) will take place in Quito, Ecuador, in 2016. It will be the third global summit organized by the UN to discuss urbanization.<sup>2</sup> Over the past 40 years, the international community has highlighted urbanization as a cross-cutting issue and has discussed urbanization in combination with other social, economic, and environmental goals.<sup>3</sup> During the debate on the post-2015 development agenda over the last several years, stakeholders advocated to make urban development a stand-alone goal among the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>4</sup> As cities are the engine of economic growth, urbanization plays a key role for the social and economic development of Member States.<sup>5</sup> As the international community has reached an agreement on the SDGs and specifically Goal 11 to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,” Habitat III marks a unique opportunity to develop strategies to best implement this goal over the following decades.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, with efforts continuing to reach a new climate change agreement by the end of 2015, Habitat III may also have the opportunity to discuss new climate change goals within the context of urbanization.<sup>7</sup>

**The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)** is a global summit that will discuss issues related to urbanization and development.

At Habitat III, the international community will establish the New Urban Agenda, an outcome document that outlines guidelines on urbanization and development for the next 20 years. For the purposes of NMUN·NY 2016, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee will discuss topics related to the work of Habitat III and aspects of the New Urban Agenda, rather than creating a single outcome document establishing the New Urban Agenda.

### Historic Overview

The first UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) convened in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976 to “exchange information about solutions to problems of human settlements.”<sup>8</sup> At this time, governments realized that population growth had led to economic, social, and ecological challenges that would need to be addressed by the international community.<sup>9</sup> The conference adopted the *Vancouver Declaration* that entailed an Action Plan of 64 recommendations as proposed by the Group of 77 with 89 Member States in favor, 15 against, and 10 abstentions.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, a second outcome was the establishment of the UN Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat), later transformed into the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), which mandated the promotion of sustainable towns and cities within the UN system.<sup>11</sup>

The Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was established by General Assembly (GA) resolution 47/180 of 1992.<sup>12</sup> Member States had realized the need to strengthen international efforts related to the rapid growth of urban areas and to develop further strategies to implement effective plans to address adequate

<sup>1</sup> Habitat III, *About Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> SDSN, *Why the World needs an urban sustainable development goal*, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; Habitat III, *About Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements (A/RES/28/3128)*, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (A/CONF.70/15)*, 1976.

<sup>10</sup> UN DPI, *Yearbook of the United Nations: Chapter IX Questions concerning human settlements*, 1976, p. 442; *Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (A/CONF.70/15)*, 1976.

<sup>11</sup> UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN system*, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) (A/RES/47/180)*, 1993.

shelter for all and utilize urban settlements as engines for human development collectively.<sup>13</sup> In 1996, more than 45% of the world's population was living in urban areas.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the conference's mandate was to find strategies to manage urbanization "in the light of new developments and trends in international economic relations and population and migration patterns, as well as the recurrence of natural disasters."<sup>15</sup> At the end of the summit, 171 Member States adopted the *Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda*, the main outcome document of Habitat II, which summarized principles, objectives, and recommendations for further global action.<sup>16</sup> Whereas the *Istanbul Declaration* reaffirmed Member States' commitment to resolving the challenges related to urbanization, it was the Habitat Agenda that built a comprehensive roadmap for future actions.<sup>17</sup> The Habitat Agenda identified ten goals to manage urbanization as an opportunity for new developmental initiatives and recognized strategies to promote and implement commitments made towards these goals.<sup>18</sup> The Habitat Agenda is also recognized as the first international agreement that specifically pointed out the role of local and regional governments in implementing strategies to improve human settlements, particularly in developing countries, and asked for increased efforts to strengthen the involvement of these stakeholders.<sup>19</sup> Following the conference, the *Istanbul Declaration* was unanimously endorsed by GA resolution 51/177 on the *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*.<sup>20</sup>

During the Istanbul+ 5 review process, Member States were asked to submit reports in 2001 assessing the progress made by governments in implementing the Habitat Agenda.<sup>21</sup> Though the Agenda has had positive impacts on urbanization, it is become clear that emerging challenges such as basic services, urban governance, housing rights, civil conflict, urban violence, and the urban environment needed further attention.<sup>22</sup> The review process also called for increased cooperation between Member States, the UN system, and regional stakeholders to address these challenges.<sup>23</sup>

Deliberations on a third Habitat conference began in 2010 when GA resolution 64/207 requested the Secretary-General to elaborate, in collaboration with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, on the need and possibility of convening a third conference on human settlements.<sup>24</sup> The Secretary-General presented his report on a *Third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III)* at the 66<sup>th</sup> session of the GA in 2011.<sup>25</sup> Based on the report, GA resolution 66/207 decided to convene a third conference on housing and sustainable urban development "to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization."<sup>26</sup>

### ***Governance, Structure and Membership***

Habitat III is defined by its broadly encompassing membership; it invites all UN Member States, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), programs and funds of the UN, stakeholders from the private sector, and local authorities to participate in the preparatory process and the conference itself.<sup>27</sup> While these groups are granted active participation in the preparatory process and the main conference, they will not be

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<sup>13</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) (A/RES/47/180)*, 1993.

<sup>14</sup> Habitat III, *About Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations conference on human settlements (Habitat II) (A/RES/47/180)*, 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Habitat II, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/Conf./165/14)*, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III, *Local and Regional Governments*, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> UN DPI, *Yearbook of the United Nations: Chapter VIII Population and human settlements*, 1996, p. 1002.

<sup>21</sup> UNCHS-Habitat, *Brochure on Istanbul +5*, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/64/207)*, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> UN General Assembly, *Third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III): Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/282)*, 2011.

<sup>26</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

given the right to vote on substantive matters; each Member State at the conference will have a vote.<sup>28</sup> The conference is being prepared by Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, who has been appointed as Secretary-General of Habitat III by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the recommendation of GA resolution 66/207.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, a Preparatory Committee was established by GA resolution 67/216 on the *Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and Strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)*.<sup>30</sup> The Preparatory Committee was assigned to hold three preparatory sessions to organize procedural matters, formulate the agenda of the conference, and to develop recommendations that will lead to the final outcome document.<sup>31</sup> Two of these sessions were held in 2014 and 2015 and identified six policy units that will be further elaborated on throughout the following months.<sup>32</sup> Organizing these preparatory sessions lies within the responsibility of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, which consists of representatives from 10 UN Member States.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the World Urban Campaign set up a General Assembly of Partners that assists the Secretary-General of the conference during preparations and works to foster consensus for the outcome document of Habitat III.<sup>34</sup>

In order to finance Habitat III and the preparatory process, GA resolution 67/216 set up a trust fund based on voluntary contributions of Member States and other willing stakeholders.<sup>35</sup> In a note to the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III on *Financing of the preparatory process and the Conference*, the Secretary-General of Habitat III explained that an estimated \$14 million would be needed to carry out the preparatory process.<sup>36</sup> The fund is partially financed by mandatory contributions of Member States hosting a regional or thematic meeting in advance of the main summit.<sup>37</sup> Hosting a meeting requires a cash contribution between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 that is partially used to finance the participation of representatives from least developed countries (LDCs), NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Mandate, Functions and Powers***

According to GA resolution 66/207, Habitat III shall renew the international commitment to sustainable urbanization and formulate a follow-up document to the Habitat Agenda, a “New Urban Agenda,” which will serve as a global framework for the development of strategies and policies to manage human settlements and urban development.<sup>39</sup> The mandate was clarified at the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the GA in March 2013 by resolution 67/216.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the main objectives of Habitat III are “secur[ing] renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assessing accomplishments to date, addressing poverty and identifying and addressing new and emerging challenges.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, the outcome document of the conference will provide concise proposals for actions to be undertaken by Member States and the international community to implement the goals set within the New Urban Agenda.<sup>42</sup> In order to facilitate the process, Member States agreed on a preparatory process to monitor results of international negotiations such as the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21*, the Habitat Agenda, the *Declaration on*

<sup>28</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Draft provisional rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) (A/CONF.226/PC.2/2)*, 2015, pp. 10-11.

<sup>29</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/67/216)*, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*; *What is the New Urban Agenda?* Citiscope, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015; United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, *Roadmap towards Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Habitat III, *The Process, Preparatory Committee*, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> World Urban Campaign, *Habitat III General Assembly of Partners Constitution and By-Laws*, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> UN General Assembly, Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), *Financing of the preparatory process and the Conference (A/CONF.226/PC.1/INF.3)*, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Habitat III, *Habitat III Preparations*, 2015.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/67/216)*, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



*Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium*, as well as the relevant development goals, including those contained in the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development*, and the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled *The future we want*.<sup>43</sup>

Habitat III will be one of the first global summits held after the adoption of the SDGs and an anticipated new climate change agreement.<sup>44</sup> According to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, SDG 11 seeks to improve the quality of cities and human settlements and specifically asks for the establishment of guidelines that take population trends and movements into account.<sup>45</sup> The Secretary-General of Habitat III pointed out that the conference must discuss urbanization in the context of the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the climate change negotiations.<sup>46</sup> Since Habitat III will be attended by Member States, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, local governments, stakeholders from the private sector, and CSOs, the summit has the convening power to develop a collective strategy and adopt a comprehensive, action-oriented framework that helps to transform international norms into national legislation.<sup>47</sup>

The outcomes of Habitat III will also affect the work of the UN system. As mentioned before, UN-Habitat is responsible for promoting all matters related to urbanization and human settlements within the UN system.<sup>48</sup> Since the establishment of its forerunner by the first Habitat conference, the mandate of UN-Habitat has been revised and expanded several times.<sup>49</sup> Thus, UN-Habitat will play a crucial role in carrying out guidelines set by Habitat III within the UN system.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the preparatory process, UN-Habitat provides recommendations on how to include UN programs and funds in the deliberations, identifies special areas of focus through its strategic plan for 2014–2019, and submits reports to the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Preparatory Committee.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Recent Sessions and Current Priorities***

While urbanization has led to significant progress regarding growth and development, a full strategy for sustainable urbanization has not been found.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the international community must find policies to address remaining challenges like uncontrolled urban sprawl, overcrowded cities, environmental degradation, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, poverty segregation, and increasing inequalities.<sup>53</sup>

The preparatory process of Habitat III is responsible for identifying main challenges related to these issues and developing strategies to manage urbanization in the coming decades.<sup>54</sup> The first Preparatory Committee session sought to identify which issues the New Urban Agenda should highlight and came to the conclusion that the outcome document would need to be a comprehensive framework that includes a variety of questions related to urbanization.<sup>55</sup> Thus, participants highlighted the political, social, economic, and ecological perspectives of the summit.<sup>56</sup> Respectively, the preparatory process has identified six areas the New Urban Agenda should focus on:<sup>57</sup>

#### 1. Social Cohesion and Equity – Livable Cities;

<sup>43</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/67/216)*, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Sustainable Development Policy & Practice, *Habitat III PrepCom Recognizes Urbanization as Key to Sustainable Development*, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Habitat III, *Summary Compilation*, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> UN-Habitat, *Habitat III, UN-Habitat Urban Visions No. 3*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN system*, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>51</sup> UN-Habitat, *Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.3)*, 2015; UN-Habitat, *Inputs for and support to the preparatory process of the third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) (HSP/GC/24/14)*, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> UN-Habitat, *Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.3)*, 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Habitat III, *Summary Compilation*, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

2. Urban Frameworks;
3. Spatial Development;
4. Urban Economy;
5. Urban Ecology and Environment; and
6. Urban Housing and Basic Services.<sup>58</sup>

Within these areas, the preparatory sessions have elaborated on 10 policy units that provide more insights on each of the issues.<sup>59</sup> These policy units, consisting of 200 experts in total, have already begun to formulate recommendations to be incorporated into the final outcome document of Habitat III.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the substantive work on the New Urban Agenda will be mostly completed by April 2016 when the policy units present their results to the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee.<sup>61</sup> The Bureau itself is authorized to use the outcomes of the policy units to prepare a zero draft, which will be the document discussed and agreed upon by Member States at the main event in October 2016.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to preparations within the UN system, regional and thematic meetings have also been called to prepare for Habitat III.<sup>63</sup> During the upcoming months, meetings will be held to discuss issues such as smart cities, financing the New Urban Agenda, renewable energy, and slums by committees in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, local and regional government leaders have gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Development Agenda towards Habitat III (GTF).<sup>65</sup> The GTF wants to make sure regional and local authorities are fully involved in the deliberations on the New Urban Agenda and strengthened to implement the necessary policies to achieve sustainable urban development.<sup>66</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Forty years after the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, the international community still faces many challenges related to urbanization.<sup>67</sup> Today, over 50% of global citizens are in urban centers.<sup>68</sup> By 2030, there will be more urban residents than people living in rural areas, and by 2050, the urban population will represent two-thirds of the global population.<sup>69</sup> For the first time in history, the majority of urban residents are found in developing countries, and the number continues to grow; out of the 187,066 new city dwellers that add to urban populations every day, 91% are born in developing countries.<sup>70</sup>

Strategies developed at Habitat I and II had positive impacts on human settlements including economic growth and poverty reduction.<sup>71</sup> They helped to build capacities to manage the interdependence between rural and urban areas as a means to enhance equitable development.<sup>72</sup> However, as the urban population grows, the need for more efficient strategies towards sustainable urban development has never been greater.<sup>73</sup> As the international community prepares for Habitat III, it is confronted with the opportunity to develop strategies to implement SDG 11 and to discuss urban development by taking into account all aspects of sustainable development in order to promote equity, welfare, and shared prosperity for all.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> *What is the New Urban Agenda?* Citiscope, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Habitat III, *Roadmap towards Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> UN-Habitat, *Regional and thematic meetings for the preparatory process of Habitat III*, 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III, *Home*, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III, *Why; Habitat II, Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/Conf./165/14)*, 1996.

<sup>67</sup> UN-Habitat, *Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.3)*, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> UN-Habitat, *Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3)*, 2013.

<sup>69</sup> SDSK, *Why the World needs an urban sustainable development goal*, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> UN-Habitat, *Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3)*, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> UN-Habitat, *Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.3)*, 2015.

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<sup>73</sup> SDSK, *Why the World needs an urban sustainable development goal*, 2013.

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*This source, issued by an initiative of UN-Habitat, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Cities Alliance, and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), clearly explains the importance of urban development within the post-2015 development agenda. It also summarizes important facts about urban growth and its importance for sustainable development. Delegates will find this source helpful to acquire an initial understanding of urban development in the context of sustainable development and the role of different stakeholders in implementing necessary policies.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *The Process, Preparatory Committee* [Website]. Retrieved 22 August 2015 from: <https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/preparatory-committee>

*This source is a collection of all the important documents of Habitat III and previous conferences on human settlements. The website offers background information on the six policy units as well as outcome documents of the preparatory process. Delegates will find this source helpful as a starting point for their own research, especially to become familiar with the topics discussed in the Background Guide. Additionally, delegates should monitor this website throughout the year to stay informed as more information becomes available.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-sixth session. (2011). *Third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III): Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/282)*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/66/282>

*The report of the Secretary-General summarizes past progress made regarding urban development and identifies remaining challenges. The report delivers a concise explanation of why Habitat III is so important and what the international community expects from the conference in terms of objectives and desired outcomes. Thus, this source makes an excellent starting point for delegates' further research as it briefly reviews key developments but also highlights the core issues and expected outcomes of the conference.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-seventh session. (2013). *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/67/216)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the Report of the Second Committee (A/67/438). Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/67/216>

*The resolution adopted on the report of the Second Committee summarizes the most important resolutions, meetings, and outcome documents related to Habitat II. It clarifies the functions of Habitat II and the UN-Habitat program within the new development agenda and clearly names the objectives for Habitat III in 2016. The resolution is also helpful to become familiar with the structure and mandate of Habitat III including the preparatory process. Delegates will find this source helpful when beginning their research as it clearly describes the roadmap to Habitat III, expectations for the summit, and the functions of key players of the UN system within these preparations.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Governing Council. (2013). *Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development: Report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3)*. Retrieved 21 July 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Report-of-the-Executive-Director-to-the-Governing-Council-HSPGC242Add.3.pdf>

*As the Secretary-General for Habitat III, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat plays a pivotal role in shaping the preparatory process and defining the key objectives of the summit. This report provides insights on the role of UN-Habitat within this process. Besides repeating the objectives of the summit itself, the report also clearly shows the role of national, regional, and international partners in preparing Habitat III. Delegates will find the resource helpful to become familiar with the structure of the conference and to understand the ongoing preparatory process. The latter will be an essential asset for delegates when researching their countries' positions.*



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## I. Building Resilient Cities to Promote Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

*“Urban resilience is a sustainable development priority. All actors need to work together to save lives, protect assets and guarantee services when disasters strike.”<sup>75</sup>*

### **Introduction**

Urban resilience has become an increasingly relevant focus of the global agenda, winning the spotlight during international debates on the topics of climate change, sustainable development, urbanization, and disaster risk reduction (DRR).<sup>76</sup> Events such as the 2015 Nepalese earthquakes and the 2011 Great East Japan earthquake and subsequent tsunami highlight the disastrous impact environmental hazards and natural disasters can have in urban areas.<sup>77</sup> By 2050, cities will hold 66% of the world population, not to mention vital economic resources, which will consequently increase catastrophes’ impact in urban areas.<sup>78</sup> Urban vulnerability and lack of preparedness comes at a cost, both in terms of human lives and future economic prosperity, especially in developing countries or conflict areas where socioeconomic disparities lead to greater risk.<sup>79</sup> The financial costs of disasters as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) has tripled in the past four decades, and is expected to continue rising as cities grow more vulnerable.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, sustained urbanization will increase the frequency and magnitude of catastrophes, as urban expansion is negatively correlated to the degradation of the ecosystem, the emission of greenhouse gases, and pollution, all of which can have disastrous consequences.<sup>81</sup>

As cities face a wide array of stresses, ranging from rising sea levels and floods to food and water insecurities, governments have underlined the need to adapt and learn from these adversities by adopting robust recovery plans.<sup>82</sup> The notion of urban resilience has been at the center of this discussion.<sup>83</sup> Defined as the transformation of urban structures and systems in order to effectively absorb multiple shocks, resilience can be perceived both as a driver of sustainable urban development and as an economic opportunity for local communities.<sup>84</sup> Disaster resilience and preparedness also aim at reducing the high cost of conventional crisis response, by preemptively protecting cities, populations, and economic assets from any risks.<sup>85</sup> Thus, building a resilient city is a necessary response to climate change adaptation, which is the adjustment of natural systems or human structures to reduce the threat caused by the consequences of climatic stimuli.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, urban resilience is by nature linked to DRR, as the latter aims at lowering the damages posed by hazards, by assessing the causal factors of potential adverse events and implementing an ethic of prevention.<sup>87</sup>

Promoting urban resilience is at the core of the mandate of the United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).<sup>88</sup> The Conference aims to establish and implement a New Urban Agenda, which will build upon the previous 1996 Habitat Agenda of Istanbul, while taking under consideration the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>89</sup> The New Urban Agenda will need to take advantage of the cross-cutting nature of urbanization, climate change adaptation, and risk management in order to promote sustainable and resilient urban development.<sup>90</sup> Addressing this critical topic in preparation for the upcoming conference requires a keen understanding of the current work of the international community, the key drivers for actions, the linkages between urban vulnerability and disasters, and the role of urban resilience as a driver of positive change.

<sup>75</sup> UN DPI, *Secretary-General's remarks at World Habitat Day event: “Resilient Design for Sustainable Urbanization,”* 2013.

<sup>76</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Watson, What makes a city resilient?, *The Guardian*, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Brown & Junmookda, How Urban Resilience Can Make Cities Safer from Disasters, *The Rockefeller Foundation*, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> De Ciccio, Risk and Disaster Management: The importance of making cities resilient, *AWID*, 2014.

<sup>86</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2013, p. 4.

### ***International and Regional Framework***

The global phenomenon of urbanization has brought several issues to the forefront of the UN, including lack of adequate shelter, socioeconomic disparities within cities, and uncontrolled urban pollution.<sup>91</sup> In 1976, the UN held in Vancouver the first summit on the topic of cities, Habitat I, followed-up two decades later by Habitat II in Istanbul.<sup>92</sup> Both conferences were an opportunity for experts and urban stakeholders to discuss various contemporary concerns and challenges, such as quality of life within urban spaces, distribution of services, regulatory use of land, and environmental protection.<sup>93</sup> Habitat II unveiled the Habitat Agenda, a core document that contributed to the creation of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and served as a roadmap regarding environmental-friendly and nondiscriminatory urban policies.<sup>94</sup> In order to foster regular debate between policymakers on the issue of human settlements, UN-Habitat established the World Urban Forum (WUF), a summit that takes place every two years.<sup>95</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> WUF, held in Medellín, Colombia, in 2014, was an opportunity to broach the topic of urbanization within the post-2015 development agenda and prepare for Habitat III.<sup>96</sup>

The UN has also streamlined efforts regarding climate change and global warming, underlining the importance of adaptation, particularly within cities that significantly contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>97</sup> The *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) is a 1992 international treaty aimed at preventing further global temperature increase, and as a part of this, the Conference of the Parties (COP) was established as a forum for annual dialogue on the issue.<sup>98</sup> COP16 (2010) established the landmark *Cancun Adaptation Framework*, an agreement that provides the comprehensive tools for climate change adaptation, such as technology, finance, and capacity-building support.<sup>99</sup>

The first international agreement that introduced resilience as a core strategy for climate change adaptation and DRR is the *Future We Want* agenda from the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), specifically clauses 186 to 189.<sup>100</sup> The outcome of this framework calls for the need to bolster resilience to prevent disaster risk, as a proactive measure to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the UN General Assembly (GA) in September 2015, aim to promote sustainable, inclusive, prosperous, and universal socioeconomic development.<sup>102</sup> Amongst the 17 SDGs integrated within this transformative agenda, three pertain directly to the idea of resilience within cities: Goal 9, “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”; Goal 11, “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”; and Goal 13, “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.”<sup>103</sup>

The UN has also set up an international framework regarding DRR through significant milestones, such as GA resolution 54/236, adopted on 23 December 1999, which endorses an international strategy for disaster reduction.<sup>104</sup> In 2005, the UN Second World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) led to the adoption of the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (HFA), a ten-year strategy on risk management and cost-effective investments.<sup>105</sup> While the HFA managed to raise awareness on this issue and gain public commitment, it failed to reduce mortality levels from disasters effectively, nor did it fully encourage sustainable reconstruction in the aftermath of disaster.<sup>106</sup> As a result, in March 2015, the Third WCDRR was held in Sendai, Japan, in order to draft the successor of the HFA 2005-

<sup>91</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

<sup>92</sup> UN-Habitat, *History, Mandate, and Role in the UN System*, 2015.

<sup>93</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

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<sup>95</sup> UN-Habitat, *The World Urban Forum*, 2015.

<sup>96</sup> UN-Habitat, *WUF7 Medellin*, 2015.

<sup>97</sup> UNFCCC, *Adaptation*, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> UNFCCC, *Essential Background*, 2015.

<sup>99</sup> UNFCCC, *Cancun Adaptation Framework*, 2015.

<sup>100</sup> UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> UNISDR, *History*, 2015.

<sup>105</sup> UN WCDR, *Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (A/CONF.206/6)*, 2005.

<sup>106</sup> UN General Assembly, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, p. 3.



2015.<sup>107</sup> The outcome of the conference, GA resolution 69/283, titled the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, was adopted on 23 June 2015 and serves as a blueprint on strategies to reduce the human and economic losses of catastrophes.<sup>108</sup> The *Sendai Framework* introduces four priorities for action, one of which is focused on “investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.”<sup>109</sup>

At a regional level, the Council of Europe adopted resolution 339 in March 2012; titled “Making cities resilient”, this agreement urges States to implement 10 key strategies as a guideline towards increased urban resilience, such as including better urban planning, mainstreaming DRR, and knowledge-sharing.<sup>110</sup> The Annual Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation, which takes place in Bonn, is another example of a more localized effort to rethink resilient cities.<sup>111</sup> Each year, this landmark event publishes a report which takes stock of the discussions held by the 500 invited participants and indicates progress towards a resilient future, while underscoring the challenges that lay ahead, like a lack of financing and difficulty in establishing a viable evaluation system.<sup>112</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

A number of ongoing UN processes are in place to advocate for urban resilience, and to advance climate change adaptation, sustainable development, and DRR. The UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) instituted a biennial forum in 2007, the Global Platform for DRR, in an attempt to encourage stakeholders to better communicate, share, and coordinate their actions regarding risk management and disaster prevention.<sup>113</sup> The Global Platform for DRR also supports the implementation of the former *Hyogo Framework* and current *Sendai Framework*, by putting into practices and monitoring the targets and priorities included within these conventions.<sup>114</sup> In addition, UNISDR established the Making Cities Resilient Campaign in 2011, which encourages local governments to transform cities in order to become more robust and absorb multiple shocks, while providing them with a handbook introducing the necessary tools and practical goals on how to do so.<sup>115</sup>

Similarly, UN-Habitat provides groundwork on these issues with the help of two of its programs: the City Resilience Profiling Programme offers national and local officials with monitoring and follow-up tools to efficiently evaluate urban resilience, while the Cities and Climate Change Initiative reinforces local governments’ capacity to ensure disaster preparedness, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.<sup>116</sup> Another example is the Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR) put in place by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), which seeks to diminish the damages caused by disasters in developing countries by improving ecosystem and resource management.<sup>117</sup> The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has introduced groundbreaking initiatives regarding climate change adaptation by endorsing green, low-emission, and climate-resilient development strategies (Green LECRDS) as an effective means towards sustainable development.<sup>118</sup> UNDP reserves \$1.3 billion of its budget to help developing countries draw-up climate change adaptation programs and coordinate efforts on the ground.<sup>119</sup>

In the lead-up to the Habitat III Conference in October 2016, the UN Task Team on Habitat III has laid the foundation for the drafting of the New Urban Agenda by publishing 22 Issue Papers on the topics that will be addressed in Quito.<sup>120</sup> Three of these Issue Papers fall under the umbrella of this topic: Urban Resilience; Cities and Climate Change and Disaster Risk; and finally, Urban Ecosystems and Resource Management.<sup>121</sup> These Issue Papers draw up an action plan for the upcoming Conference, and identify critical concerns and key drivers for action.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>107</sup> UNISDR, *UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction: 2015 Sendai Japan*, 2015.

<sup>108</sup> UN General Assembly, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 339: Making Cities Resilient*, 2012.

<sup>111</sup> ICLEI, *Annual Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation*, 2015.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> UNISDR, *Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2015.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient*, 2015.

<sup>116</sup> UN-Habitat, *City Resilience Profiling Programme*, 2015; UN-Habitat, *Cities and Climate Change Initiative*, 2015.

<sup>117</sup> UNEP, *UNEP and Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2015.

<sup>118</sup> UNDP, *Climate Strategies*, 2015.

<sup>119</sup> UNDP, *Climate and Disaster Resilience*, 2015.

<sup>120</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>122</sup> UN Habitat III, *Issue Papers*, 2015.

They reveal how the New Urban Agenda can contribute to climate change adaptation and DRR, while unlocking opportunities for socioeconomic prosperity within a resilient urban structure.<sup>123</sup> Habitat III will be the opportunity to address the challenges brought by modern urbanization, including poverty, social equity, and unsustainable growth.<sup>124</sup> The New Urban Agenda should rethink urban planning, while building upon the success of Habitat II, which underlined the importance of local efforts streamlining global strategies.<sup>125</sup> Habitat III will provide a unique opportunity to further the implementation and mainstreaming of the SDGs, as sustainable urbanization and economic growth are only possible if transformative climate-resilient strategies are integrated within urban planning.<sup>126</sup>

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have significantly contributed to the advancement of resilience, working closely with the UN on this topic.<sup>127</sup> The Medellín Collaboration on Urban Resilience, which was announced at the 7<sup>th</sup> WUF in 2014, is a perfect illustration of the ongoing coordination of UN and CSO efforts.<sup>128</sup> This alliance targets over 2,000 cities with the purpose of strengthening their socioeconomic and environmental structures.<sup>129</sup> CSOs have also played an essential role in preparing for Habitat III, as they provide local and grassroots perspectives.<sup>130</sup> For example, the Knowledge Centre on Cities and Climate Change (K4C) is an online platform and resource that keeps track of shared experiences, best practices, and innovative strategies regarding urban resilience, climate change, and DRR.<sup>131</sup> The output of K4C is a good example of the comprehensive work achieved by CSOs, as it serves both as a monitoring tool regarding cities' vulnerability to climate, and as a source of information for urban practitioners.<sup>132</sup> Another instance is the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), a global partnership pioneered by the World Bank to provide developing countries with the necessary tools to adapt to climate change and reduce the cost of natural disasters, such as grant financing, technical assistance, and capacity building for hazard and climate resilience.<sup>133</sup> A more practical example is the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) program led by the Rockefeller Foundation, which annually offers to over 30 cities the opportunity to strengthen their socioeconomic and physical infrastructures in order to vigorously respond to the different stresses and shock they are subject to.<sup>134</sup> As past achievements have underscored, CSOs are best suited to address climate-resilience and DRR at a local level.<sup>135</sup> Thus, they often remain marginalized from policymaking at the national level, despite their unique and creative input.<sup>136</sup>

### ***The Relationship Between Urban Resilience, Climate Change Adaptation, and Disaster Risk Reduction***

In order to address this topic efficiently, it is essential to comprehend how urban resilience, climate change adaptation, DRR, and sustainable development are interwoven and impact one another. Between 2001 and 2010, disasters affected over 232 million people annually, counted for 106 million deaths, and caused over \$108 billion in economic damage.<sup>137</sup> While it has been accepted that disasters are unpredictable and come at a high cost, the perception has shifted so that anthropogenic and natural hazards are now considered unmanaged risks.<sup>138</sup> These risks are multiple and varied, ranging from natural disasters such as earthquakes, droughts, and floods, to human-made accidents like pollution, and failed food or water management leading to shortages.<sup>139</sup> The greatest impact of these risks is in urban areas, where the conglomeration of economic resources increases vulnerability and exposure.<sup>140</sup> In addition, cities have historically been built around areas that present major potential geological and meteorological

<sup>123</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

<sup>124</sup> UN Habitat III, *The Conference*, 2015.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> UN-Habitat, *Post-2015 Agenda*, 2012.

<sup>127</sup> UN-Habitat, *Habitat III Expectations: Civil Society's expectations and needs for the Habitat III process*, 2014.

<sup>128</sup> UN-Habitat, et al., *Medellín Collaboration on Urban Resilience*, 2014.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> UN-Habitat, *Habitat III Expectations: Civil Society's expectations and needs for the Habitat III process*, 2014.

<sup>131</sup> UNEP, *Knowledge Center on Cities and Climate Change*, 2015.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> GFDRR, *GFDRR*, 2015.

<sup>134</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation, *100 Resilient Cities*, 2015.

<sup>135</sup> UN-Habitat, *Habitat III Expectations: Civil Society's expectations and needs for the Habitat III process*, 2014.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>139</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 4.

concerns, or near coastal or floodplain areas.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, urban sprawl is correlated with pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, loss of grassland, and the reduction of cropland.<sup>142</sup> A clear pattern can be drawn between urban growth and the increase of disaster risks by means of ecosystem degradation and population growth, two major stresses that lead to a cascade of smaller or indirect hazards.<sup>143</sup>

Urban vulnerability to disaster is also shaped by socio-economic variables, including access to urban services like transportation, economic livelihoods, or basic rights such as safe housing and healthcare.<sup>144</sup> A lack of urban planning, a hurried urbanization process, or an ineffective local government can threaten the foundations of the urban structure by failing to prevent risk zones such as slums.<sup>145</sup> In those situations, the most vulnerable communities are often the most marginalized, as they lack access to social security, basic safety and services, and legal recourse.<sup>146</sup> A study following the 2010 Haiti earthquake highlighted that wealthier households were able to recover quicker than their poorer counterparts, as they were less dependent on temporary jobs and less likely to pull out their children of school or reduce consumption.<sup>147</sup> These factors need to be taken into account, seeing as over 1.5 billion people are expected to live in slums by 2020, and over 15% of the global population lives today in fragile or war-torn countries.<sup>148</sup> Due to the fact that disaster risks are dependent on environmental, economic, and social factors, no urban area is affected in the same way.<sup>149</sup>

Whereas a lack of attention to urban resiliency and preparedness allows for the multiplication of potential shocks, integrating resiliency as a core objective within urban planning and recovery prevents these issues.<sup>150</sup> For instance, urban areas tend to rely on the well-being of the surrounding ecosystems that provide cities with a variety of services, such as good air quality, or the supply of water and food.<sup>151</sup> Without resilient urban planning, urbanization can have a negative impact on these ecosystems.<sup>152</sup> Resilience holds a central role within the urban planning process, as a driver of positive change, leading to inclusive sustainable development and helping mitigate the effects mentioned above through stronger risk management.<sup>153</sup> Habitat III's New Urban Agenda aims at transforming the role of urbanization to a more constructive one by underscoring resiliency, in order to further economic prosperity, sustainable development, and social and physical robustness.<sup>154</sup>

### ***Best Practices and Emerging Solutions to Build Resilient Cities***

As each city has different characteristics and dependencies, strategies to absorb shocks and stresses vary widely.<sup>155</sup> As a result, the international community has struggled to define a global response to this localized issue.<sup>156</sup> Habitat III provides urban actors with the perfect platform to discuss current challenges, share best practices, and generate global solutions that will guide national and local governments worldwide.<sup>157</sup> While framing these comprehensive solutions, global policymakers should take example of the following innovative responses, strategies, and best practices.

#### *Urban Governance, Community Mobilization, and Financing*

Promoting urban resiliency is a collective responsibility, which requires an integrated approach of all levels of decision-making, from government to citizen groups and civil society.<sup>158</sup> The appropriate legislative, policy, and

<sup>141</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 113.

<sup>142</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 16: Urban Ecosystem and Resource Management* 2015, p. 3.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>144</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 26.

<sup>145</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 10.

<sup>146</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 26.

<sup>147</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*, 2015, p. 5.

<sup>148</sup> USAID & MIT, *A Toolkit for Urban Resilience in Situations of Chronic Violence*, 2012, p. 18.

<sup>149</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>150</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 16.

<sup>151</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 16: Urban Ecosystem and Resource Management* 2015, p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> De Cicco, *Risk and Disaster Management: The importance of making cities resilient*, *AWID*, 2014.

<sup>154</sup> UN Habitat III *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

<sup>155</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>156</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*, 2015, p. 5.

<sup>157</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

<sup>158</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 28.

regulatory framework is only possible if local policymakers are willing to fund, endorse, and adopt resilient initiatives.<sup>159</sup> A key strategy is to assign accountability for resilient policymaking and DRR to a specific office within the administration, or to form cluster groups with similar roles, in order to disseminate responsibilities between actors and encourage community-based involvement.<sup>160</sup> Mobilizing the community in urban programming is an effective tool that allows for social and physical resilience, and fosters a sense of ownership.<sup>161</sup> In particular, marginalized populations should be significant actors within this process, given the diverse range of factors that enhance their vulnerability and their unique perspective on the socioeconomic effects of disasters.<sup>162</sup> To help raise public awareness on the diversity of risks that exist, several initiatives have proven particularly efficient, including: sharing risk-assessment data, integrating DRR into education curricula, establishing campaigns targeting vulnerable communities, implementing safety initiatives, encouraging risk-reduction training and capacity building at all levels, and creating an annual day to commemorate national disasters.<sup>163</sup>

The counterpart to governance and mobilization is funding; a city should ensure that it has sufficient means to advance infrastructure resilience in its urban planning.<sup>164</sup> While financing for resilient cities often has an initial high cost, this price is comparatively lower when examining the hypothetical cost of dealing with the economic consequences of disasters.<sup>165</sup> Thus, budgets need to account for strategic urban planning and initiatives, as well as increased preparedness in the aftermath of hazards.<sup>166</sup> These financial resources can come from a variety of venues: for example, city funds, national allocations, public-private sponsorship, international aid, civil society, and catastrophic bonds.<sup>167</sup> In order to boost these revenues, local governments can launch awareness campaigns, encourage public-private and technical sector partnerships, and arrange incentives or penalties for risk reduction.<sup>168</sup> For instance, in 1996, Mexico implemented the Fund for Natural Disasters, which has evolved into a federal mechanism that supports disaster prevention by funding any activities that implement risk preparedness and risk monitoring, as well as capacity-building.<sup>169</sup> Through the Fund, Mexico was the first government in the world to issue a catastrophic bond, and since then the Fund has consistently innovated.<sup>170</sup>

#### *Risk Assessment, Urban Planning, and Ecosystem Management*

One of the first key steps in achieving resiliency in urban spaces is risk assessment, a quantitative measure of the possible impacts due to natural or human-made disasters.<sup>171</sup> This tool can also quantify the economic consequences of specific risks and responses, and the exposure of people to such risks.<sup>172</sup> This data allows for better urban planning and increased threat management and preparedness.<sup>173</sup> Additionally, it allows policymakers to continuously determine the vulnerability of the city, within new variables and changing contexts.<sup>174</sup>

Urban planning allows for transformative change; it makes it possible for policymakers to reorganize city grids, while taking into account risk-assessment and socio-economic patterns to avoid disruption caused by hazards, such as service incapacitation.<sup>175</sup> By focusing on ensuring infrastructure complies with high standards and safety minimums, developers can promote modern and safe cities that are less prone to damage.<sup>176</sup> The protection of vital infrastructures is essential to guarantee full operation in the aftermath of a disaster and allow survivors to return to their routine.<sup>177</sup> These critical service grids include hospitals, housing, schools, roads, bridges, airports, and water

<sup>159</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 91.

<sup>160</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 28.

<sup>161</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 104.

<sup>162</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 91.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>167</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 31.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>169</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 121.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient: Report 2012*, 2012, p. 49.

<sup>172</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 34.

<sup>173</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 48.

<sup>174</sup> Brown & Junmookda, *How Urban Resilience can make Cities Safer from Disasters*, *The Rockefeller Foundation*, 2014.

<sup>175</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 79.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

and energy supplies.<sup>178</sup> Finally, a holistic urban design must take into account ecosystem management as an efficient strategy to promote DRR.<sup>179</sup> A robust ecosystem serves as the best buffer against natural hazards, since it provides vital services like water and food supplies.<sup>180</sup> Projects aimed at resource efficiency include watershed supervision, urban landscape design, green infrastructures, and coastal zone management.<sup>181</sup> In order to foster proper ecosystem management, urban planners should form alliances with environmental practitioners, and raise awareness and act on ecological approaches.<sup>182</sup>

#### *Emergency Response and Recovery Plans*

While increased resiliency aims at reducing the incidence of shocks and stresses, it is ultimately impossible to avoid natural disasters.<sup>183</sup> Once the disaster has occurred, it is important that local governments and communities react quickly with an emergency preparedness and response plan.<sup>184</sup> Thus, urban resiliency initiatives should enhance reaction capabilities of the administration and of citizens by implementing early warning systems, consenting to multilateral emergency relief, developing exercises and periodic drills, protecting critical infrastructures, raising public-awareness of the importance of preparedness, and upgrading urgent response services.<sup>185</sup>

In the aftermath of a disaster, local communities struggle to strike a balance between the need to restore urban space as quickly as possible to reestablish a routine, or rebuild cautiously, robustly, and sustainably for the future.<sup>186</sup> A rebuilding plan should foster urban renewal, community commitment, as well as socio-economic resiliency; citizens must feel empowered and involved, while leadership must handle the financial burden of urban planning.<sup>187</sup> Recovery efforts should be planned out in advance, ideally before incidences and within emergency responses, so as to be operational as quickly and effectively as possible.<sup>188</sup> Recovery strategies tend to differ between developed countries and least developed countries (LDCs), as the latter face more drastic economic and social setbacks in the long-term aftermath of a natural disaster, not to mention increased casualties due to a lack of resources for early warning systems and resilient preparedness.<sup>189</sup> The international community holds an essential role in helping LDCs rebuild and recover, so as to avoid them diverting essential development funds to emergency relief.<sup>190</sup>

#### ***Case Study: Metropolitan Manila and Building Urban Resiliency and Flood Management***

One successful example of urban resilience is Manila, Philippines, which suffers recurrently from diverse natural disasters, in particular typhoons and storms, as well as related floods and landslides.<sup>191</sup> These damages have had a profound impact in Manila, causing on average per year 650 casualties, affecting over 3.4 million people, damaging over 71,000 houses, and costing the local economy \$160 million.<sup>192</sup> The country's vulnerability to typhoons has caught the attention of the global community, in particular due to the issues of urban poverty, environmental destruction, and food security, compounded with the fact that the poorest populations are more likely to live within flood zones or have a livelihood dependent on agriculture, an at-risk sector.<sup>193</sup> While more than \$843 million in international aid geared towards disaster risk reduction poured in between 1991 and 2010, over \$500 million was ultimately spent on emergency relief rather than resiliency efforts.<sup>194</sup> As underlined by the World Bank, the government of Philippines has struggled enforcing infrastructure codes and laws locally.<sup>195</sup> Following the 2009 Tropical Storm Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng, as well as the ensuing flooding and rainfall, the national government

<sup>178</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient: Report 2012*, 2012, p. 55.

<sup>179</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 70.

<sup>180</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 16: Urban Ecosystem and Resource Management* 2015, p. 6.

<sup>181</sup> Jha, et al., *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*, 2013, p. 70.

<sup>182</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 50.

<sup>183</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient: Report 2012*, 2012, p. 63.

<sup>184</sup> UNISDR, *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders*, 2012, p. 52.

<sup>185</sup> Turnbull, et al., *Toward Resilience: A guide to DRR and climate change adaptation*, 2013, p. 98.

<sup>186</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient: Report 2012*, 2012, p. 65.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*, 2015, p. 7.

<sup>189</sup> UNISDR, *Making Cities Resilient: Report 2012*, 2012, p. 65.

<sup>190</sup> UN DPI, *Nepal: two months on, UN agency shifts post-quake focus from emergency response to recovery*, 2015.

<sup>191</sup> Shaw, Metro Manila City Profile: Climate and Disaster Resilience, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>192</sup> The Republic of the Philippines, *Metro Manila Integrated Flood Risk Management Master Plan*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>193</sup> Shaw, Metro Manila City Profile: Climate and Disaster Resilience, 2010, p. 3.

<sup>194</sup> The World Bank, *Third Flood Risk Management and Urban Resilience Workshop*, 2014, p. 16-21.

<sup>195</sup> The World Bank & GFDRR, *Towards Integrated Flood Risk Management*, 2009, p. 1.

launched the Metro Manila Flood Risk Management Master Plan (MMFRMMP).<sup>196</sup> This 25-year roadmap is the result of coordination efforts between the government of the Philippines, the World Bank, the private sector, and civil societies such as GFDRR.<sup>197</sup> The Master Plan aims at reducing Metropolitan Manila’s vulnerability to floods by fostering urban resiliency, flood management, and emergency preparedness.<sup>198</sup> Several guidelines have been adopted to do so, including: enhancing flood forecasting and warning systems, fortifying institutional coordination and community-based involvement, improving infrastructures to mitigate the effects of floods, enforcing land use regulations, prioritizing budget for rehabilitation of marginalized settlements, and encouraging proper watershed and ecosystem management.<sup>199</sup> The MMFRMMP officially debuted in 2013 and has not yet yielded significant progress, but the ongoing process is encouraging.<sup>200</sup> Philippines has taken this opportunity to lead the archipelago region regarding urban resiliency and DRR, hosting in 2014 the World Bank’s for East Asia and the Pacific Third Flood Risk Management and Urban Resilience Workshop.<sup>201</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Promoting resilience within urban spaces in order to bolster DRR and climate change adaptation is central to Habitat III’s mandate.<sup>202</sup> While policies geared towards urban resilience are often applied in practice at a local level, the Conference serves as a unique opportunity for Member States to shape the debate for the next two decades and contribute to the New Urban Agenda by sharing best practices, innovative solutions, monitoring strategies, and financial responses.<sup>203</sup> The outcome document of the Conference will provide national and local governments with forward-looking and action-oriented guidelines regarding poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction within a resilient urban context.<sup>204</sup>

### **Further Research**

It is important to consider the boundaries set by the post-2015 framework and the SDGs when discussing urban resilience within the New Urban Agenda. While researching this topic, delegates should also consider the following questions: How can resilience be reinforced within urban spaces to prevent socioeconomic inequities and unsustainable practices? What are the key lessons learned – either best practices or shortcomings – from current policies? In what ways and in which direction can the Habitat III Conference influence local and national governments to address urban challenges such as climate change and disaster risk? What are the priority areas linked to urban space that have been addressed or overlooked by the SDGs that should be included within the New Urban Agenda? How can Habitat III raise awareness regarding the role of urban resilience as an impetus towards sustainable development and economic prosperity? Why are urban resilience and disaster risk reduction important strategies for the international community to implement, rather than simply responding once disasters occur? How can the United Nations and the international system make urban resilience a universal reality?

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<sup>196</sup> The World Bank & GFDRR, *Towards Integrated Flood Risk Management*, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> The Republic of the Philippines, *Metro Manila Integrated Flood Risk Management Master Plan*, 2013, p. 4-5.

<sup>199</sup> The Republic of the Philippines, *Flood Management Master Plan for Metro Manila and Surrounding Areas*, 2014.

<sup>200</sup> The World Bank & GFDRR, *Towards Integrated Flood Risk Management*, 2009, p. 2.

<sup>201</sup> GFDRR, *Policy-Makers Convene to Manila to Discuss Urban Resilience*, 2014.

<sup>202</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> UN Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2015.

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*The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) is an initiative led by multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs). GFDRR aims at providing local and national governments with the necessary capacities to better understand their exposure to natural hazards and climate change, in order to adapt and mitigate its effects. GFDRR works within the spirit of the Hyogo Framework for Action, offering technical capacities and funds to governments wishing to adopt the five pillars of actions that they recommend: risk identification, risk reduction, preparedness, financial protection, and resilient recovery. As a global platform, GFDRR serves as a useful online resources for delegates wishing to inform themselves on capacity-building for disaster and climate resilience.*

Jha, A., et al. (2013). *Building Urban Resilience: Principles, Tools, and Practice*. Washington DC, USA: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/03/08/000356161\\_20130308155433/Rendored/PDF/758450PUB0EPI0001300PUBDATE02028013.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2013/03/08/000356161_20130308155433/Rendored/PDF/758450PUB0EPI0001300PUBDATE02028013.pdf)

*How can we build urban resilience, and what are the strategies and the actions local governments and multilateral organizations can adopt in order to foster positive change in cities, allowing for sustainable growth, climate change adaptation, and risk reduction? These are the main questions this report published by the World Bank in partnership with Australian Aid aims at answering. Several initiatives that should be considered in detail by delegates are mentioned, including social resilience, urban ecosystems, and risk assessment. In addition, this document identifies urban resilience principles and key concepts, providing us with a definition of each, in order to foster a better understanding of this theoretical topic. This report will offer delegates the necessary tools and practices for their research, including a checklist on how to make a city resilient, as well as several concrete examples of successful case studies.*

Turnbull, M., et al. (2013). *Toward Resilience: A guide to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation*. Warwickshire, UK: Practical Action Publishing Ltd. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ECB-toward-resilience-Disaster-risk-reduction-Climate-Change-Adaptation-guide-english.pdf>

*Urban resilience is by nature a very theoretical concept. Within this book, the authors try to convey a more practical sense of the term urban resiliency by bridging the gap between concepts and practical cases. Addressed to urban practitioners and emergency response teams, this book provides delegates with case studies and effective strategies on building urban resilience. Interestingly, the perspective taken within this document is focused on the socio-economic impact of climate change and disaster risk, highlighting the potential discrepancies in consequences according to group (women, children, low-income communities), and setting (conflict, humanitarian crisis, urban context, slow-onset disasters). Delegates can obtain an in-depth understanding on urban resilience and the intersectional nature of disaster risk, socio-economic prosperity, and sustainability from this source.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Preparatory Committee for Habitat III. (2015). *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*. Retrieved 13 August 2015 from: [http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Papers-and-Policy-Units\\_11-April.pdf](http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Papers-and-Policy-Units_11-April.pdf)

*In April 2015, the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III held its second session in the lead-up to the Conference, in order to organize the logistics needs of the event and introduce topics for discussion. This outcome document explains the role of Habitat III, its UN Task Team, as well as the Issue Papers published and the policy units chosen. More importantly, this document will help delegates understand the modus operandi of the Conference and how the New Urban Agenda will fit within the larger scope of the United Nations system. Initially made available to the public to enhance transparency of UN processes, this document is an essential read for delegates wishing to better understand the role of the Conference and its impact at the international level.*

United Nations Environmental Programme. (2015). *Knowledge Center on Cities and Climate Change* [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: <http://www.citiesandclimatechange.org/>

*CSOs and the UN system have started to work together to better coordinate climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts at the local level. The Knowledge Center on Cities and Climate Change (K4C) is the embodiment of these initiatives led by UNEP, UN-Habitat, the World Bank, and Cities Alliance. K4C is an online resource available to all that sheds light on climate change events, effective case studies and examples to follow, and monitoring performances in relation to risk managements. The initial role of K4C is to raise awareness on climate change adaptation at an international and local level, by starting a conversation on best strategies and emerging responses. It has evolved into a database with useful tools and instruments, as well as detailed resources on each Member State's strategies. It is a perfect starting point for delegates as they research for their position papers and the work of the committee.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 22 October 2015 from: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1)

*The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been established to move forward with international development goals after the completion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to foster an inclusive and sustainable post-2015 development agenda. discussed during the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, the UN General Assembly adopted the final set of goals in its most recent session in September 2015. This transformative agenda sets the groundwork for the work of Habitat III. Indeed, amongst the 17 goals contained in the proposals that address a variety of sustainable development issues, three directly pertain to our topic (Goals 9, 11, and 13). Delegates will need to incorporate the work of the SDGs and the overall principles of sustainable development into their own work with the New Urban Agenda.*

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2012). *How to make cities more resilient: a handbook for local government leaders* [Report]. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: [http://www.unisdr.org/files/26462\\_handbookfinalonlineversion.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/26462_handbookfinalonlineversion.pdf)

*Written by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction as a complement to its Making Cities Resilient Campaign, this handbook provides local governments and urban actors with the primary information on how to build and establish a resilient city. This document strives to provide a concise and practical overview of the best strategies and initiatives that contribute to making a city disaster resilient. In this perspective, it outlines ten essentials, including institutional and administrative framework, financing and resources, multi-hazard risk assessment, and infrastructure protection. The handbook also addresses the importance of investing in disaster risk reduction. This document allows delegates to gain a realistic outlook on the topic, and will provide them with practical solutions for implementation during the conference.*

United Nations Task Team on Habitat III. (2015). *Issue Paper 15: Urban Resilience*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: [http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-15\\_Urban-Resilience-2.0.pdf](http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-15_Urban-Resilience-2.0.pdf)

*Habitat III's issue papers provide a wide range of information on specific research areas, as well as underline key findings and know-hows. Habitat III issue papers aim to help experts and diplomats prepare for the Habitat III, and should not be neglected by delegates during their research. This issue paper is one of the most important within the "Urban Ecology and Environment" research area. It is by far the most important issue paper of the three regarding this topic, as it introduces key concepts that will be the basis of topical discussion, including urban resilience, vulnerability, and disaster risk reduction. Moreover, this document underlines the preexisting connections between the city, disaster and hazard risks, and resilience. Furthermore, it stresses the need to achieve resilience as a core goal within the new urban agenda, and proposes several strategies to do so. This issue paper is a very interesting first read for delegates wishing to gain a more fundamental grasp of the key concepts at hand.*

United Nations Task Team on Habitat III. (2015). *Issue Paper 16: Urban Ecosystem and Resource Management*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: [http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-16\\_Urban-Ecosystem-and-Resource-Management-2.0.pdf](http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-16_Urban-Ecosystem-and-Resource-Management-2.0.pdf)



*Habitat III issue papers are an essential component to any delegate's research on the conference and its activities. This issue paper belongs to the "Urban Ecology and Environment" research area, discussing the urban ecosystem and efficient resource management. Delegates will find information on the role a healthy ecosystem plays on the reduction of natural disasters and hazards, and on climate change. This document also emphasizes the need to guarantee efficient resource management in order to apply cost-effective climate change adaptation and DRR strategies. Issue paper 16 is important for delegates wishing to gain a more thorough understanding of a city's nature and characteristics, the role of its ecosystem, and how to benefit from the connection between them.*

United Nations Task Team on Habitat III. (2015). *Issue Paper 17: Cities and climate change and disaster management*. Retrieved 20 July 2015 from: [http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-17\\_Cities-and-Climate-Change-and-Disaster-Risk-Management-2.0.pdf](http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Habitat-III-Issue-Paper-17_Cities-and-Climate-Change-and-Disaster-Risk-Management-2.0.pdf)

*Also part of the "Urban Ecology and Environment" research area, this issue paper connects the concepts of cities, climate change, and disaster risk, in order to better understand the impact of climate mitigation, resource efficiency, and disaster risk management on sustainable urbanization. In addition to the research provided, this issue paper introduces potential road maps for further debate, outlining the importance of urban planning and design, urban governance, and information and knowledge management. For delegates trying to get a better understanding of the links between urban resilience, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, this paper is a good place to start their research.*

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## II. Realizing the Right to Adequate Shelter through the New Urban Agenda

“Realizing the right to adequate shelter is of utmost importance given the fact that by 2050 it is estimated that 70% of the world’s population will live in an urban area.”<sup>205</sup>

### Introduction

In recent decades, cities throughout the world have faced the burden of large migration influxes.<sup>206</sup> The process of urbanization has resulted in various challenges to achieving adequate shelter for all, such as increased demands for food; access to services like education, healthcare, and sanitation; and availability of housing.<sup>207</sup> Adequate housing is considered within the right to an adequate standard of living by the United Nations (UN) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966).<sup>208</sup> The right to adequate housing and shelter encompasses the right to live in dignity, security, and peace.<sup>209</sup> This right also includes freedoms such as the protection against forced evictions, the right to choose one’s residence, and the freedom of movement.<sup>210</sup> Additionally, adequate shelter and housing go beyond four walls and a roof; the principles include availability of water, adequate sanitation, habitability, accessibility, and they must take into account cultural adequacy.<sup>211</sup> In this sense, adequate shelter must be socially and environmentally responsible to ensure not only proper access to shelter but to also work towards having cities be “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”<sup>212</sup>

This principle of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities is stated in Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the first indicator seeking to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums” by 2030.<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, fulfilling the right to adequate shelter is considered an enabler for the achievement of other human rights and social development in general.<sup>214</sup> It has been observed that access to adequate shelter can facilitate the process of access to basic services.<sup>215</sup> Moreover, certain social groups are more vulnerable to experience inadequate shelter.<sup>216</sup> This particularly affects women and children who, in some societies, are not allowed to own or inherit a property.<sup>217</sup>

As a result of the first and second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I & II), Member States of the UN have put special emphasis on the right to adequate shelter, especially in the *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*, which was adopted at Habitat II in 1996.<sup>218</sup> Two decades after the adoption of the *Istanbul Declaration*, the right to adequate shelter still represents an important priority of the upcoming UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and a key component to be included in the New Urban Agenda that will be adopted at the Conference.<sup>219</sup> Furthermore, adequate shelter and housing should be regarded as the main focuses of urbanization, as they are the means to improve the standard of living of all citizens and assure

<sup>205</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Progress to date in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development (A/CONF.226/PC.1/5)*, 2014.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> UN Habitat II, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*, 1996, Ann. I.

<sup>208</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urbanization for Prosperity (HS/031/15E)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>213</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>214</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009.

<sup>215</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015*, 2015.

<sup>216</sup> UN DESA Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/366)*, 2015.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> UN Habitat II, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*, 1996, Ann. I; UN General Assembly, *The Habitat Agenda: Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*, 2001; UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Summary report of the Habitat III PrepCom1*, 2014.

<sup>219</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

sustainability.<sup>220</sup> Thus, realizing the right to adequate shelter within the New Urban Agenda is connected to the achievement and implementation of SDG 11.<sup>221</sup>

### ***International and Regional Framework***

There are two international documents that underlay the foundation for the right to adequate shelter. In 1948, the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted the UDHR, which included the right to a standard of living that is adequate for an individual's health and well-being in Article 25(1).<sup>222</sup> In addition to this, in 1966, Article 11(1) of the ICESCR recognized the right to adequate housing and called it the obligation of Member States to achieve this right.<sup>223</sup> Although adequate housing cannot be achieved immediately, the ICESCR affirmed that Member States must make all efforts within their means to progressively achieve it, considering the respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights.<sup>224</sup>

In addition to these first references, the right to adequate shelter has been discussed in various settings and has been regarded as a multi-dimensional issue resulting in many instruments addressing it.<sup>225</sup> Article 27(3) of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (1989) places special emphasis on the importance adequate housing has while introducing measures to be undertaken in case parents need assistance with the fulfillment of this right.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979) emphasizes women's rights "to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications."<sup>227</sup> Finally, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) (1965), in Article 5(e)(iii), highlights that Member States shall prohibit and eliminate racial discriminations to guarantee the right to housing.<sup>228</sup> These three international instruments therefore stress the importance of realizing the right to adequate shelter in relation to a broad range of other individual rights.

The *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements*, adopted at Habitat I in 1976, was the first international agreement to fully focus on human settlements and the means needed to safeguard human rights, achieve sustainable development, and reduce the negative effects of urbanization.<sup>229</sup> Although it was not adopted unanimously but voted against by a group of 15 Member States, it captured the principles of human settlements.<sup>230</sup> The *Vancouver Declaration* recognized that human settlements determine, to a certain extent, the quality of life and that its improvement would have a direct impact on basic needs such as housing, education, employment, health, and recreation.<sup>231</sup>

The second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) occurred in 1996, and its main results were the Habitat Agenda and the *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*.<sup>232</sup> The Declaration focused on the importance of providing universal adequate shelter, as well as the need to ensure sustainable human settlements.<sup>233</sup> The Habitat Agenda focused on addressing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and committed Member States to make their patterns of consumption and production more efficient in addition to making their settlements more sustainable.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>220</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009.

<sup>221</sup> UN Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, *Realizing the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General*, 2012.

<sup>222</sup> UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

<sup>223</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200(XXI))*, 1966.

<sup>224</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1989.

<sup>227</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

<sup>228</sup> UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/2106(XX))*, 1965.

<sup>229</sup> Habitat I, *The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements*, 1976.

<sup>230</sup> UN DPI, *Yearbook of the United Nations Volume 30*, 1976, p. 442; Habitat I, *Report of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (A/CONF.70/15)*, 1976.

<sup>231</sup> Habitat I, *The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements*, 1976.

<sup>232</sup> Habitat II, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)*, 1996, Ann. I.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

In 2001, the GA held a special session to evaluate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.<sup>235</sup> This resulted in the adoption of the *UN Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium*, which highlights the will and commitment of Member States at that moment to fully implement the Habitat Agenda.<sup>236</sup> The Declaration also recognized obstacles some Member States face when implementing the Habitat Agenda. Among them are the “limited economic, technological and institutional capacities at all levels of government” as well as market constraints.<sup>237</sup> Finally, the Declaration reaffirmed Member States’ commitment to overcome obstacles, like poverty and access to basic services, in order to achieve the full implementation of the Habitat Agenda.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, closing the gap between the awareness raised and the public information possessed was considered a priority.<sup>239</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

The GA has an active role in addressing and realizing the right to adequate shelter, as demonstrated by the adoption of GA resolution 56/206 (2002), which transformed the Commission on Human Settlements and its secretariat into the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).<sup>240</sup> This strengthened UN-Habitat’s mandate and made it a “focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda,” and increased the funding that it received.<sup>241</sup> The GA has also adopted numerous resolutions regarding the implementation of Habitat II and the reinforcement of UN-Habitat, such as resolutions 65/165 (2010), 66/207 (2011), and 67/216 (2012).<sup>242</sup> In this sense, the GA has been monitoring the progress and outcomes of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, as well as the effectiveness of UN-Habitat.<sup>243</sup> To further improve the latter, GA resolution 66/207 noted the need for a shift in priorities, according to which UN-Habitat had to “strengthen its normative approaches to urban economy.”<sup>244</sup> GA resolution 66/207 also decided to convene a third Habitat conference.<sup>245</sup>

Habitat III will bring together all Member States and relevant stakeholders to ensure political commitment to achieve sustainable urban development, to evaluate the achievements of previous conferences and international commitments, and to recognize and address new challenges that have emerged from rapid urbanization.<sup>246</sup> In preparation to the summit, a Task Team has been arranged in order to elaborate Issue Papers that focus on six specific areas of concern.<sup>247</sup> These papers identify the main elements of challenges faced by urban development.<sup>248</sup> Based on these papers, policy units have been set up to further elaborate on issues that must be integrated into the New Urban Agenda.<sup>249</sup> These issues highlight the need for planned urbanization, which is characterized by a process of planning followed by implementation that would be more efficient and sustainable.<sup>250</sup> Planned urbanization also takes into account the risks of inadequate shelter and poor infrastructure, the link between urban planning and

<sup>235</sup> UN DPI, *Outcomes on Human Settlements*.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*; UN General Assembly, *Declaration of Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium (A/RES/S-25/2)*, 2001.

<sup>237</sup> UN General Assembly, *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium (A/RES/S-25/2)*, 2001.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/65/165)*, 2010; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/67/216)*, 2013; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2011.

<sup>243</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/65/165)*, 2010.

<sup>244</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2011.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

economic growth, as well as the link between social development and environmental sustainability.<sup>251</sup> Thus, addressing these issues will lead to a reevaluation of the concept of infrastructures towards a more comprehensive one that includes not only the material goods, but also the institutions that enable and facilitate proper shelter for all.<sup>252</sup> Accordingly, the policy units have recognized key players such as Member States, civil society, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to tackle the issues at hand.<sup>253</sup> This broad involvement realizes that the right to adequate housing requires the combined effort from the private and the public sector, as well as the international community.<sup>254</sup>

In September 2000, the *Millennium Declaration* was adopted at the largest gathering of world leaders, the Millennium Summit.<sup>255</sup> The Declaration contained eight goals to be accomplished by 2015, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>256</sup> MDG 7 aimed to ensure environmental sustainability but also addressed issues related to uncontrolled urbanization by looking at making better the situations of slum dwellers.<sup>257</sup> Target D of this goal characterized slum dwellers as people affected by one or more of the following: “(a) lack of access to improved water supply; (b) lack of access to improved sanitation; (c) overcrowding (three or more persons per room); and (d) dwellings made of nondurable material.”<sup>258</sup> Although MDG 7 has significantly improved the living conditions of slum dwellers, Target D could not be fully met.<sup>259</sup> Thus, efforts towards urban development have been reiterated by the SDGs, which were adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.<sup>260</sup> Over the next fifteen years, SDG 11 seeks to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,” emphasizing the focal point for the fulfillment of adequate shelter and housing.<sup>261</sup> Objects related to meeting this right are specifically addressed in SDG 11 targets 1-3, which focus on achieving accessible adequate housing for all through urban planning in order to sustainably develop settlements.<sup>262</sup>

Specialized agencies have also addressed the issue of adequate shelter from different fronts. For example, UN-Habitat has focused its efforts on realizing the right to adequate housing, and to this end has implemented projects in diverse parts of the world.<sup>263</sup> In Kenya, a program called Support of the Urban Development Sector concentrates on improving the coordination of the urban sector and in urban development by applying human rights-based approaches and poverty reduction measures.<sup>264</sup> It further aims to strengthen the role of key actors in urban development in order to further subsequent management of urbanization in different areas like waste management.<sup>265</sup> In Medellín, Colombia, UN-Habitat has provided technical assistance and policy advice to support the Mayor’s Office during the implementation of their plan “Let’s Build a Home for Life,” which concentrated on strategic interventions that would support the consolidation of ongoing institutional reform.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) advises Member States on causes of emerging waves of poverty around urban areas, where it is increasing more rapidly and is accompanied by growing inequality.<sup>267</sup> Additionally, UNFPA has pointed out that one of the most critical areas of urbanization is shelter due to overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and insecurity of tenure.<sup>268</sup> Thus, UNFPA has determined that “decent shelter provides people a home; security for their belongings; safety for their families; a place to strengthen their social relations and networks...and means to access basic services.”<sup>269</sup>

<sup>251</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>252</sup> UN-Habitat, *Infrastructure for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa*, 2011.

<sup>253</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>254</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urbanization for Prosperity (HS/031/15E)*, 2015.

<sup>255</sup> UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2)*, 2000.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> UN Statistics Division, *Official List of MDG Indicators*, 2008.

<sup>259</sup> UN DESA Population Division, *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015*, 2015.

<sup>260</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009; UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>264</sup> UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> UNFPA, *State of the World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*, 2007.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.



## *The New Urban Agenda*

The New Urban Agenda, the outcome of Habitat III that will determine upcoming international urbanization and housing goals for the next 20 years, is expected to renew the political commitment of governments towards achieving sustainable urban development and to evaluate the results achieved from previous efforts on this matter.<sup>270</sup> The Agenda will focus on providing Member States with policy guidelines and strategies to handle urban development and human settlements.<sup>271</sup> Considering that by 2050, more than 70% of people will be living in urban areas, the New Urban Agenda is expected to provide governments with the tools needed to provide adequate shelter and housing for all.<sup>272</sup> In this regard, the New Urban Agenda should become the international document of reference offering concrete recommendations to make urbanization more efficient and sustainable.<sup>273</sup> According to the Task Team, the most important subjects related to realizing the right to adequate shelter through the New Urban Agenda are urban and spatial planning and design, urban infrastructure and basic services, and housing.<sup>274</sup>

### *Urban and Spatial Planning and Design*

Urban planning is fundamental to achieve sustainable social development.<sup>275</sup> Urbanization has been identified as the cause of many challenges to achieve adequate shelter, especially since uncontrolled human settlements, established without the allocation of the necessary resources, often lack access to basic services such as water, electricity or sanitation.<sup>276</sup> However, planned urbanization provides opportunities to make cities more inclusive, efficient in delivering public services, and thus sustainable.<sup>277</sup> Among urban planning strategies are the National Urban Policies (NUP), which are generic plans established by different Member States that contemplate the prevention of slums and the possibility of access to land, infrastructure, and basic services.<sup>278</sup> Anticipating urbanization in national development plans can diminish the negative effects of urbanization and promote positive outcomes such as cities that are economically and environmentally sustainable.<sup>279</sup> Simultaneously, spatial planning helps to reduce the effects of urban growth and development by ensuring access to land and slum prevention.<sup>280</sup> However, this does not occur in many Member States due to the lack of institutional strength.<sup>281</sup>

### *Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services*

Infrastructure should be regarded as more than just physical structures.<sup>282</sup> It should include assets, knowledge, and institutions related to shelter and housing.<sup>283</sup> Thus, institutions such as government offices are essential for facilitating access to land or providing basic services.<sup>284</sup> Clarification of the concept of infrastructure will potentially enhance and improve the way urbanization and human settlements occur and evolve.<sup>285</sup> Additionally, enhanced infrastructures help to strengthen the resilience of urban areas and human settlements against impacts related to urban growth or climate change.<sup>286</sup>

<sup>270</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015; Citiscope, *What is the New Urban Agenda?*.

<sup>271</sup> UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/66/207)*, 2012.

<sup>272</sup> UN Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, *Progress to date in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development (A/CONF.226/PC.1/5)*, 2014.

<sup>273</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> UNFPA, et al., *Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Report of the global thematic consultation on population Dynamics*, 2013.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>279</sup> UNFPA et al., *Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Report of the global thematic consultation on population Dynamics*, 2013.

<sup>280</sup> UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>281</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> UN-Habitat, *Infrastructure for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa*, 2011.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

## ***The Right to Adequate Shelter and Social Development***

Adequate shelter is closely related to social development, and for this reason vulnerable groups should be regarded with special attention.<sup>287</sup> Among them, women and children are two of the most vulnerable groups regarding access to adequate shelter and basic services, as well as to employment and education.<sup>288</sup> Additionally, other groups such as migrants, displaced persons, and refugees also face obstacles to accessing adequate shelter and housing.<sup>289</sup> To improve access of vulnerable groups to adequate shelter, resources must be allocated and efforts increased to achieve the full realization of this right.<sup>290</sup> As a result of all these issues, several actions have been carried out in different stages; assuring adequate shelter to a displaced person or refugee requires efforts from the country of residence or the host country, within its territory or abroad, as most of migrants and displaced populations move to urban areas.<sup>291</sup> Consequently, improved rights of refugees and migrants as well as the availability of adequate services, opportunities, and enabling regulations are needed to provide a proper environment to this group.<sup>292</sup> This requires legal frameworks that produce favorable results for these vulnerable groups as a means to foster social development.<sup>293</sup> Regarding women and children, the case of social reintegration of favelas in Brazil is an example of good practices.<sup>294</sup> Through policies that sought to provide management guidelines and support activities, more than 30 slums were “pacified” and re-integrated into communities.<sup>295</sup>

Participatory mechanisms that include pro-poor approaches, aim to reduce inequalities, and provide equal opportunities should also be considered as a means to achieve adequate shelter for all.<sup>296</sup> An example of such mechanisms can be observed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the program Support to Land Governance for Peace, Stability and Reconstruction in DR Congo Post Conflict aims to peacefully resolve land disputes, which otherwise are often the source of violence.<sup>297</sup> This inclusive program assists people affected by land disputes through mediation initiatives and alternative land resolution dispute mechanisms.<sup>298</sup> This project is of utmost importance given the fact that there is a constant displacement due to conflict, and it is estimated that at least 75% of the urban population of DR Congo lives in slums.<sup>299</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Realizing the right to adequate shelter through the New Urban Agenda is a challenge that has to be addressed in a multi-dimensional manner.<sup>300</sup> First, existing frameworks should be fully implemented even if at a progressive rate, so that human rights are accomplished and respected.<sup>301</sup> Secondly, Member States should not only renew their political commitments to international legal frameworks but should also implement policies that foster better planning for urbanization.<sup>302</sup> Member States should also reinforce sustainability by making their production and consumption patterns more efficient.<sup>303</sup> Additionally, one of the most important factors to consider is the lack of implementation of existing international frameworks addressing adequate shelter and housing.<sup>304</sup> Up to this day, the

<sup>287</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>288</sup> UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child (A/RES/44/25)*, 1990; UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1978.

<sup>289</sup> OHCHR et al., *Handbook on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons*, 2007.

<sup>290</sup> OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*, 2009.

<sup>291</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>296</sup> UN General Assembly, *Progress to date in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development (A/CONF.226/PC.1/5)*, 2014.

<sup>297</sup> UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Global Activities Report 2015: Increasing synergy for greater national ownership*, 2015.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> UNEP, *The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Post Conflict Environmental Assessment Synthesis for Policy Makers*, 2011.

<sup>300</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)*, (A/RES/56/206), 2002, p. 5.

<sup>303</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*



gap between international standards and indicators on the fulfillment of this right remains large.<sup>305</sup> Habitat III represents the unique opportunity for stakeholders to ensure that the right to adequate shelter is finally realized and to strengthen political commitment for sustainable urban development by mainstreaming these issues within a New Urban Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>306</sup>

### ***Further Research***

Delegates should consider the importance of achieving adequate shelter for all and the status of the issue at the moment, especially through the lens of a human rights-based approach that considers inequality reduction. Delegates should reflect on questions such as: What is the relationship between urbanization and the realization of the right to adequate shelter? How can infrastructures be strengthened to achieve adequate shelter for all? What happens with human settlements outside urban areas? How should the New Urban Agenda tackle the right to adequate shelter? How can drafting and implementing a New Urban Agenda work to meet the targets and indicators of SDG 11? Additionally, delegates should pay close attention to the upcoming meetings that will lead up to the Habitat III conference to remain fully abreast of evolving issues and solutions.

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<sup>305</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Issue Papers and Policy Units of the Habitat III Conference*, 2015.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

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*The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements is the outcome document Habitat II, which took place in 1996. This document traces a road map and provides guidelines of the priorities to achieve and ensure adequate shelter for all. Among its objectives was to improve the standard of living at enlarging human settlements. Its importance rests on the foundations that this Declaration provides for the elaboration of the New Urban Agenda. It is an important source to consider because its implementation status will be the starting point for the New Urban Agenda.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Twenty-fifth special session. (2001). *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the twenty-fifth special session of the General Assembly (A/S-25/7/Rev/1)*. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/ga/Istanbul+5/as257rev1eng.pdf>

*This resolution, adopted at a special session of the General Assembly, is important because it led to the drafting of the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium. The report occurred five years after the adoption of the Istanbul Declaration, and in many ways serves as a review of the progress made in implementing existing agreements. It is therefore important because this evaluation of the progress achieved by the Habitat Agenda can serve as a lesson in best practices or implementation gaps for future agreements to consider.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-seventh session. (2013). *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (A/RES/67/216)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the Report of the Second Committee (A/67/438). Retrieved 17 July 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Resolution-adopted-by-the-General-Assembly-ARES67216.pdf>

*General Assembly resolution 67/216 established that the upcoming Habitat III will focus on sustainable urban development, evaluating the goals achieved, and identifying current challenges. Additionally, this resolution establishes the theme of the conference to be “Sustainable urban development: the future of urbanization.” This resolution is important because it establishes the goal of Habitat III, which is the development and implementation of a New Urban Agenda, and therefore serves as the overall roadmap for the work of the Conference.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2011). *Infrastructure for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa* [Report]. Retrieved 19 August 2015 from: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/UN-HabitatReport.pdf>

*This document from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme focuses on the importance of infrastructure on economic development. It regards infrastructure as not only a form of physical material, but also as knowledge and institutions. It is relevant for realizing the right to adequate shelter because it depicts that infrastructure goes beyond a material definition; accordingly, it will be helpful for delegates in their research.*

United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights & United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2009). *Human Rights Fact Sheet: The Right to adequate Housing No. 21 (Rev. 1)*. Retrieved 17 July 2015 from: [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21\\_rev\\_1\\_Housing\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf)

*This fact sheet is the second of a series of fact sheets published by the OHCHR that focus on economic, social, and cultural rights. It addresses the right to adequate housing and its importance for different groups. It also drafts the obligations held by governments and international organizations, as well as the private sector, in making adequate shelter possible. It will be helpful for delegates in understanding important elements of the right to adequate housing.*

United Nations Population Fund. (2007). *State of the World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth* [Report]. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from: [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/695\\_filename\\_sowp2007\\_eng.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/695_filename_sowp2007_eng.pdf)

*This document from the United Nations Population Fund addresses current issues faced by Member States with imminent urban population growth. It also grasps the implications of this growth by analyzing the conditions in which people live, urbanization processes, and obstacles*

*faced. It also provides significant data that shows the positive side of urbanization. This document is relevant to realizing the right to adequate shelter because it reviews the inefficiencies of urbanization practices.*

United Nations Population Fund, et al. (2013). *Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics*. Retrieved 19 August 2015 from:

<http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population%20Dynamics%20in%20Post-2015%20FINAL.pdf>

*The relevance of this document is connected to the insight it provides regarding the dynamics of urban populations. It also provides an overview of the state of achieving the MDGs at their conclusion and it contextualizes the information from an urban perspective, including development. This report is important because it collects information from a vast range of sources and gives an outline of the status of the development agenda at that time.*

United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2014). *Progress to date in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development (A/CONF.226/PC.1/5): Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference*. Retrieved 17 July 2015 from: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.226/PC.1/5](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.226/PC.1/5)

*This report reviews the implementation of the Habitat Agenda pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/216. It centers on emerging urban challenges and pays attention to possible solutions that urbanization can provide. This report also concludes that a renewed political commitment would be positive for sustainable urban development and also would be a mechanism to approach challenges. This resource is important for delegates in understanding discussions leading up to Habitat III in relation to the topic at hand.*

United Nations, Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2014). *Summary report of the Habitat III PrepCom I*. Retrieved 20 August 2015 from:

<http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PrepCom-Brochure-final.pdf>

*This document is important for the realization of the right of adequate shelter because it provides a brief overview of what the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III discussed at its first session. Additionally, it provides an overview of the priority topics in the process leading up to the conference and the elaboration of the New Urban Agenda. It is paramount for delegates to follow the most recent work of the Preparatory Committee to understand key areas and issues that must be addressed in the New Urban Agenda.*

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*Issue papers provide an in-depth analysis of different issues that are relevant for the Conference, and are the starting point for the policy units. The issue papers that are more relevant for this topic are those in the area of Urban Housing and Basic Services. The issue paper on Housing provides a comprehensive analysis of the current challenges to achieve adequate housing. The issue paper on Urban Infrastructure and Basic Services, including energy, reevaluates the concept of infrastructure, pointing out its importance as an enabler for development and adequate housing.*

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### III. Inclusive Urbanization for the Promotion of Equality and Social Cohesion

*“The urban divide is the face of injustice and a symptom of systemic dysfunction. A society cannot claim to be harmonious or united if large numbers of people cannot meet their basic needs while others live in opulence. A city cannot be harmonious if some groups concentrate resources and opportunities while others remain impoverished and deprived.”<sup>307</sup>*

#### **Introduction**

Cities have been lauded as places of opportunity and innovation, generating more than 70% of the world’s current gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>308</sup> Consequently, the share of urban residents continues to be on the rise, and is thought to have surpassed the share of rural dwellers globally at this date.<sup>309</sup> This trend of urbanization, which is defined as a rising share of urban residents among the total population in a country, has three underlying reasons: natural growth of urban populations, re-classification of rural areas as urban, and rural-urban migration.<sup>310</sup> Yet, although cities continue to perform well economically, their impressive wealth conceals inequalities among their residents.<sup>311</sup> Many cities show greater inequality than the overall Member States they are situated in, and two-thirds of urban dwellers worldwide have experienced rising inequality since the 1980s.<sup>312</sup> Material inequality thereby intersects with various forms of discrimination based on predetermined attributes such as gender, ethnicity, or location of residence, resulting in unequal access to basic services and economic opportunities.<sup>313</sup> The ensuing fragmentation between different parts of the city has become very tangible in many cities, illustrating the intangible inequalities that residents experience.<sup>314</sup>

Making cities more inclusive is emerging as a pivotal issue in debates on urban development, and a challenge for policymakers and urban planners.<sup>315</sup> An inclusive city is one where all citizens can develop to their full potential in order to gain their fair share of the “urban advantage,” and have the means and possibility to make their voices heard as stakeholders in urban development.<sup>316</sup> The key steps towards inclusivity consist in reducing inequality and enhancing equity.<sup>317</sup> Removing social and material barriers strengthens social cohesion, leading towards a society “where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy.”<sup>318</sup> As the primary global summit on urban affairs, the United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, provides a forum for Member States to deliberate on new approaches towards inclusive urban development, and set out the path for their implementation at all levels through the New Urban Agenda.<sup>319</sup> This includes the revision and renewal of the UN Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) mandate, so that it can effectively assist in implementing the Agenda.<sup>320</sup> By making inclusiveness a priority in urban development, Habitat III will be an important milestone to create a vision of urban prosperity that benefits all members of society equally, and strengthens urban communities around the world.

#### **International and Regional Framework**

As part of the UN system, UN-Habitat’s efforts to realize inclusive and sustainable urban development are guided by its mandate to respect, promote, and protect human rights.<sup>321</sup> The most important frameworks in this regard are the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) and the *International Covenant on Economic,*

<sup>307</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. ix.

<sup>308</sup> UN-Habitat, *Economy*, 2015.

<sup>309</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*, 2012, p. 25.

<sup>310</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 22.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>312</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 1 – Inclusive Cities*, 2015.

<sup>313</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 53.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. viii.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

<sup>317</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014.

<sup>318</sup> UN DESA, *Social Integration: Definition*, 2015.

<sup>319</sup> UN-Habitat, *Vision for Habitat III*, 2013.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>321</sup> UN-Habitat, *Human rights*, 2012.

*Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966), which enshrine the right to adequate housing.<sup>322</sup> Furthermore, these documents prescribe principles such as the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, the prohibition of discrimination, and the duty of Member States to dedicate available resources to the fulfillment of human rights obligations.<sup>323</sup> However, an ongoing lack of adequate shelter and access to basic services continues to hinder millions of urban residents from enjoying the full range of human rights, including the right to education and health, thereby undermining the principles of equality and equity of opportunity.<sup>324</sup> Beyond these general provisions on human rights, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) (1965), the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (1979), the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) (2006), and related treaties, contain provisions requiring Member States to proactively promote the equal development of specific marginalized groups, feeding into the call for inclusive urban development.<sup>325</sup> Finally, another relevant set of human rights provisions is enshrined in regional charters such as the *American Convention on Human Rights* (1969) and the *European Charter for Safeguarding Human Rights in the City* (2000), signed by over 350 local cities.<sup>326</sup>

Inclusive urban development intersects with a variety of ongoing debates within and beyond the UN including the call to complement a growth-oriented perspective on development with a strengthened focus on inequality.<sup>327</sup> Within the UN system, several organizations have cited a negligence of equality, arguing that the focus on national and global averages in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) incentivized officials to divert resources from the poorest to those who were better off.<sup>328</sup> Conversely, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now explicitly call for reducing inequality within and among countries, through SDG 10.<sup>329</sup> Furthermore, the “urban goal,” SDG 11, names inclusivity as a primary target of future urban development, along with safety, resilience, and sustainability.<sup>330</sup> To this end, it calls not only for universal access to adequate housing and basic services, but also encompasses access to public transport, green and public spaces, and public participation, especially for marginalized groups.<sup>331</sup> Important aspects of inclusive urban development are echoed in Goal 3 (access to healthcare), Goal 4 (inclusive and equitable education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 6 (universal access to water and sanitation), and Goal 8 (inclusive economic growth).<sup>332</sup>

### ***Role of the International System***

Habitat III represents a decisive moment for the future, as the Conference will define the guiding framework of UN-Habitat for the next two decades within its New Urban Agenda, as a follow up to the 1976 *Vancouver Declaration* from Habitat I, and the 1996 *Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda* from Habitat II.<sup>333</sup> The biennial World Urban Forum (WUF) has been an important landmark on the path to Habitat III with regard to the issue of inclusive urban development.<sup>334</sup> Established in 2001 through GA resolution 56/206, WUF has been convened by UN-Habitat seven times since the initial conference in Nairobi in 2002, as a technical discussion forum where stakeholders debate issues of urban development and share best practices.<sup>335</sup> WUF7 on “Urban Equity in Development: Cities for Life” was hosted by the city of Medellín, Colombia, in 2014.<sup>336</sup> The *Medellín Declaration* reaffirmed the commitment to incorporate urban equity into development efforts, and called for a New Agenda that should “[a]dvance greater cohesion and break down social divides.”<sup>337</sup>

<sup>322</sup> UN-Habitat, *Human rights*, 2012.

<sup>323</sup> UN OHCHR, *Frequently Asked Questions on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 2008.

<sup>324</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 100.

<sup>325</sup> UN-Habitat, *Human rights*, 2012.

<sup>326</sup> UCLG CISDP, *European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City: List of Signatory Cities*, 2014.

<sup>327</sup> UNDP, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, 2013.

<sup>328</sup> UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, *Addressing Inequalities: The Heart of the Post-2015 Agenda and The Future We Want*, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>329</sup> UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>333</sup> UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN system*, 2012.

<sup>334</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014, p. 8.

<sup>335</sup> UN-Habitat, *The World Urban Forum*, 2014.

<sup>336</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014.

<sup>337</sup> UN-Habitat, *Medellín Declaration: Equity as a Foundation of Sustainable Urban Development*, 2014.

At the core of UN-Habitat’s mandate is the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, with the goal of adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of urban settlements.<sup>338</sup> Making urban development more inclusive has more recently become a focus of UN-Habitat’s work; the two latest editions of UN-Habitat’s flagship publication, “Bridging the Urban Divide” and “The Prosperity of Cities,” were both dedicated to the issue of urban inequality and inclusive development, and provided important new methodology such as the “city prosperity index” to understand and improve urban inclusion.<sup>339</sup> The path to developing inclusive cities necessitates a “rights-based” dynamic that respects the indivisibility of human rights, while also incorporating a comprehensive approach to inclusion of all citizens into the political, economic, cultural, and social spheres.<sup>340</sup> UN-Habitat has been working towards mainstreaming human rights into its agenda, for instance through a cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the joint UN Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP) that is aimed at the gradual realization of housing rights.<sup>341</sup>

A focal point of inclusivity is UN-Habitat’s work to promote gender equality.<sup>342</sup> In 2012, the Advisory Group on Gender Issues (AGGI) was established as an independent expert body to advise UN-Habitat’s Executive Director on the cross-cutting nature of gender inequality within urban development and on practical solutions to this issue.<sup>343</sup> The following year, the Governing Council adopted a resolution on “Gender equality and women’s empowerment to contribute to sustainable urban development” and established gender equality as a priority issue through the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan.<sup>344</sup> In 2010, UN-Habitat entered into a partnership with the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), now part of UN-Women, to launch the “Global Programme on Safe Cities Free of Violence Against Women.”<sup>345</sup> It aims to make public spaces safer for women and girls by implementing tools to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence.<sup>346</sup> The programme was expanded in 2011 under the name of “Safe and Sustainable Cities for All” in cooperation with the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF).<sup>347</sup>

Civil society represents key stakeholders in inclusive urban development, and UN-Habitat works regularly with grassroots activists and local populations in its projects on the ground, such as through the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.<sup>348</sup> Self-help networks such as Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) are empowering urban residents to establish inhabitant records, map their settlements, and collect other valuable data that enables them to effectively negotiate with public and private institutions and claim their rights.<sup>349</sup> Furthermore, UN-Habitat works together with local governments and communities to develop and implement Local Economic Development (LED) plans.<sup>350</sup> LED is aimed at finding “economic solutions that ‘fit’ the local areas – that is, that build on local assets and strengths, involve local people and build capacity, and have greater buy in from the community.”<sup>351</sup> Finally, UN-Habitat has launched the World Urban Campaign (WUC) in the lead-up to Habitat III as a global umbrella platform for public, private, and civil society partners to serve for mutual exchange and coordination.<sup>352</sup>

### ***Inequality in Urban Spaces: A Multi-dimensional Phenomenon***

The inequalities that shape cities today are multi-dimensional and intersectional, meaning that they are often mutually reinforcing across the economic, political, spatial, and social dimensions.<sup>353</sup> It is important to note that

<sup>338</sup> UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN system*, 2012.

<sup>339</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*, 2012.

<sup>340</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 56.

<sup>341</sup> UN-Habitat, *Human rights*, 2012.

<sup>342</sup> UN-Habitat, *Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action*, 2003.

<sup>343</sup> UN-Habitat, *The Advisory Group on Gender Issues Annual Report, September 2012 – August 2013*, 2013.

<sup>344</sup> UN-Habitat, *Gender Equality and women’s empowerment to contribute to sustainable urban development (24/2)*, 2013.

<sup>345</sup> UN-Habitat, *Gender Equality for Smarter Cities: Challenges and Progress*, 2010, p. 13.

<sup>346</sup> UN-Women, *Creating Safe Public Spaces*, 2015.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> UN-Habitat, *Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme*, 2012.

<sup>349</sup> UN-Habitat, *Civil Society Mobilization Indispensable for Inclusive Cities: The Perspective of a Grassroots Activist*, 2015.

<sup>350</sup> UN-Habitat, *Economy*, 2015.

<sup>351</sup> UN-Habitat, *Local Economic Development in Practice: A Toolkit for LED Practitioners*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>352</sup> UN-Habitat, *What is the World Urban Campaign?*, 2015.

<sup>353</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 1 - Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. 3.

urban inequality is not unique to developing countries, although a lack of city-specific income data, especially in European countries, complicates direct comparison with developed countries.<sup>354</sup>

### *Material Inequality*

Urban areas offer enormous potential for economic growth by creating environments that encourage innovation and exchange, attract capital, and increase productivity.<sup>355</sup> The supply of economic and personal opportunities continues to attract the move from rural to urban areas.<sup>356</sup> However, only a small fraction of urban residents find formal employment, while an overwhelming majority of workers in low-income countries, and 30% to 60% in middle-income countries, remain confined to the informal sector that is characterized by a lack of safe labor and social protection.<sup>357</sup> The unequal distribution of benefits in urban centers in developing countries is largely governed by weak domestic governance and institutions, including formal land and labor markets that are skewed in favor of private interests rather than the benefit of society at large.<sup>358</sup> Subsequent to economic exclusion, the poor experience marginalization in the social, political, and cultural spheres, and consequently lose access to opportunities to improve their situation.<sup>359</sup> While income inequality is generally higher in developing countries, it is not a phenomenon that is confined to the global South; it can be experienced in both developed and developing countries.<sup>360</sup>

### *Spatial Inequality*

Spatial segregation according to socioeconomic status is both a result of poor urban governance and income inequality.<sup>361</sup> While many cities in developed countries have introduced regulations to encourage mixed land use and integrated housing models, local authorities in low and middle-income countries can have difficulty in providing basic services to all parts of the city, and public transport systems to connect them.<sup>362</sup> High income inequality limits housing options for those poor to areas that lack access to basic services and job opportunities.<sup>363</sup> This is fueled by urban planning aimed at attracting international investments that can ultimately lead to higher property prices.<sup>364</sup> An example of this can be found in Nairobi, Kenya, where policymakers prioritize large-scale business projects, like the satellite city “Silicon Savannah,” over the expansion of basic services to the urban poor.<sup>365</sup> When physical isolation becomes entrenched through a lack of connection by affordable and accessible public transport, spatial separation turns into social disconnection.<sup>366</sup> Residents of “spatial poverty traps” suffer from a restricted access to education and economic opportunities; possibilities to build up social capital are limited in neighborhoods marked by poverty and unemployment.<sup>367</sup> The ensuing stark contrasts of immense wealth and endemic poverty undermine social cohesion and fuel social tensions, potentially leading to violent outbreaks.<sup>368</sup>

### *Marginalized Groups*

In addition to economic and spatial exclusion, some urban residents suffer from additional disadvantages, as they are marginalized based on physical and social traits including gender, age, ethnicity, ability, and others.<sup>369</sup> This marginalization can be connected to economic deprivation, as the example of slum dwellers clearly illustrates.<sup>370</sup> One-third of the urban population in developing countries lives in circumstances that qualify as slums, lacking one

<sup>354</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. xii.

<sup>355</sup> UN-Habitat, *Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council: Sustainable urban development: the role of cities in creating improved economic opportunities for all, with special reference to youth and gender (HSP/GC/24/4)*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>356</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 14 – Informal Sector*, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>358</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. xiii.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> UN General Assembly, *Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living (A/63/275)*, 2008, p. 13.

<sup>365</sup> Solés, *Future Nairobi? Plans favour the elite*, *UrbanAfrica.net*, 2014.

<sup>366</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 83.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>368</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014, p. 4.

<sup>369</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 1 - Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. 1.

<sup>370</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 130.

or more of basic amenities: “durable housing, sufficient living area, access to improved water, access to sanitation, and secure tenure.”<sup>371</sup> Residents of these settlements regularly experience discrimination on the labor market based on their address, if they can provide a formal address at all, as the popular preconceptions of slums as violent, crime-ridden, and destitute areas turns into a personal stigma.<sup>372</sup>

Urban youth also face specific challenges; although cities generally offer more opportunities for education than rural areas, social and cultural barriers, as well as poverty, prohibit children, especially those of slum dwellers, to receive more than a basic education.<sup>373</sup> As inequality of opportunity builds up, a significant share of urban residents is impeded from reaching their intellectual and economic potential.<sup>374</sup> Consequently, many youth struggle to find formal employment.<sup>375</sup> The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates youth unemployment at 13% globally, three times the rate of adult unemployment.<sup>376</sup> When youth do find employment, their salaries are lower, and they face barriers in advancing jobs.<sup>377</sup> With a lack of formal employment opportunities, youth often become stuck in the informal sector, where job insecurity and low pay prohibits long-term development of capabilities.<sup>378</sup> Older segments of slum dwellers find their basic human rights such as access to social pension or medical aid similarly neglected, due to insufficient administrative support and infrastructure.<sup>379</sup> Similarly, people living with disabilities within slum communities are amongst the most marginalized populations, due to a lack of access to proper healthcare services, political representation, and social support.<sup>380</sup>

Another aspect of urban inequality is related to race and ethnicity.<sup>381</sup> Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities tend to make up a disproportionate share among the urban poor.<sup>382</sup> For example, in Brazil, black citizens were found to make up almost three-quarters of the poorest 10% of citizens, despite only representing 8% of the national population.<sup>383</sup> The results of limited access to education exacerbate the effects of poverty; illiteracy is almost twice as high among black residents as among white residents in the São Paulo region, while nearly 20% of college graduates in the city are white, compared to 5.9% of those who are black.<sup>384</sup>

Finally, gender equality represents a major cross-cutting issue in the debate on inclusive urban development.<sup>385</sup> A key reason which inhibits women from full economic, social and political participation is a combination of responsibility for unrecognized domestic labor, and an absence of basic services; for example, when access to water involves mile-long walks, women and girls dedicate a significant amount of their time to retrieving water, thereby missing out on more formal economic and education opportunities.<sup>386</sup> Spatial isolation also affects women’s mobility and employment opportunities disproportionately; research in Delhi’s Sanjay slum showed that 75% of women were restricted to workplaces within an area of five kilometers from their home due to a difficulty in accessing transportation and a perceived risk of vulnerability to crime, whereas an equal share of men worked within 12 kilometers of their homes.<sup>387</sup> Women also experience increased vulnerability to sexual and criminal violence in urban areas, both as compared to men and to women in rural areas.<sup>388</sup>

## ***A Positive Approach to Inclusive Urbanization and Urban Development: Best Practices and Emerging Responses***

### *Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth*

<sup>371</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 32.

<sup>372</sup> Grant, *Spatial inequality and urban poverty traps*, 2010, p. 8.

<sup>373</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. xv.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>375</sup> ILO, *World of Work Report 2014: Developing with Jobs*, 2014, p. 12.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 13 – Jobs and livelihoods*, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>378</sup> UN-Habitat, *Cities of Youth: Cities of Prosperity*, 2013, p. 8.

<sup>379</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 1 - Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>381</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 86.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>385</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>388</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of Women in Cities: Gender and the Prosperity of Cities*, 2013, p. 32f.

When it comes to the implementation of inclusive urban development policies, a fundamental imperative is to promote economic growth that benefits all members of urban societies, especially the poor.<sup>389</sup> This requires a specific focus on the structural factors that inhibit marginalized groups from realizing their potential, including inadequate access to basic services and education.<sup>390</sup> A key problem in urban economies in developing countries is existing legal frameworks and institutions neglect the needs of the poor.<sup>391</sup> To overcome this divide, cities need to develop a clear, sustained, and comprehensive vision in a participatory process to identify policy priorities that respect and promote the human rights of all citizens.<sup>392</sup> Secondly, cities need to devise plans and implement strategies that include effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms.<sup>393</sup> Thirdly, institutions need to be created, improved, or strengthened to be inclusive, accountable, and efficient.<sup>394</sup> Finally, promoting equity requires implementing procedures that ensure adequate distribution of the material benefits of economic growth and development, with fair and transparent legal frameworks.<sup>395</sup>

### *Increasing Participation of Marginalized Groups*

In order to be truly inclusive, urban development must involve youth, women, and other marginalized groups in decision-making processes at all levels.<sup>396</sup> This can be achieved through institutions that appreciate and encourage the participation of these groups, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society alliances which put pressure on institutions and politicians for greater engagement.<sup>397</sup> Grassroots organizations can also contribute to finding solutions for inclusive development when included in negotiations with both public and private stakeholders.<sup>398</sup> The Kampala Learning Center is one example of this approach; after a successful forum where slum dwellers had the opportunity to present and discuss profiles and maps of their settlements, an Advisory Committee was established between the grassroots activists and public authorities in a bid to develop participatory slum upgrading projects and policy proposals for urban development.<sup>399</sup>

### *Case Study: Medellín, Colombia*

The city of Medellín is an example of a comprehensive effort to strengthen urban inclusivity and social cohesion.<sup>400</sup> Under the slogan “Medellín – a Home for Life,” the city mobilized public servants and civil society to launch a variety of reforms to overcome the challenges of inequality, exclusion, and violence which had prevailed in the city.<sup>401</sup> One key piece of this strategy was to significantly increase investments in early education, including through nutritional programmes, with a focus on strengthening the quality of schooling in the poorest neighborhoods to “break the cycle” of poverty and violence.<sup>402</sup> Further, to promote access to opportunity from early on in life, the local government launched an early childhood care initiative.<sup>403</sup> Another point of intervention was enhanced public transport. Slum areas located on the valley’s steep slopes were connected with the rest of the city through a cable car system and a number of escalators.<sup>404</sup> Finally, local authorities tried to boost social cohesion by providing public spaces that welcomed civil and cultural activities; this was realized through the establishment of library park centers located in socially vulnerable neighborhoods.<sup>405</sup>

<sup>389</sup> UN-Habitat, *Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council: Sustainable urban development: the role of cities in creating improved economic opportunities for all, with special reference to youth and gender (HSP/GC/24/4)*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. xix.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 56.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*, 2012, p. 68.

<sup>396</sup> UN-Habitat, *Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council: Sustainable urban development: the role of cities in creating improved economic opportunities for all, with special reference to youth and gender (HSP/GC/24/4)*, 2013, p. 8f.

<sup>397</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. xxii.

<sup>398</sup> UN Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 1 - Inclusive Cities*, 2015, p. 5.

<sup>399</sup> SDI, *Annual Report 2014-15*, 2015, p. 21.

<sup>400</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>401</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*, 2012, p. 120.

<sup>402</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World’s Cities 2010/11: Bridging the Urban Divide*, 2010, p. 158.

<sup>403</sup> UN-Habitat, *Construction of More Equitable Cities*, 2014, p. 100.

<sup>404</sup> Henley, Medellín: the fast track from the slums, *The Guardian*, 2013.

<sup>405</sup> UN-Habitat, *Construction of More Equitable Cities*, 2014, p. 195.

An important condition for the successful implementation of these projects was a high degree of institutional coordination, the involvement of local communities, and the provision of public goods and services such as transport, public space, and education around key projects.<sup>406</sup> The rampant violence was effectively curtailed, with a reduction of the homicide rate by 70% in 2010 as compared to 1991.<sup>407</sup> Despite these successes towards inclusivity, Medellín continues to experience challenges with economic inequality.<sup>408</sup> Notably, income inequality grew by a staggering 20% between 1989 to 2010.<sup>409</sup> As a result, the city's authorities have vowed to turn their focus on equity in the local economic agenda in the future.<sup>410</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Cities continue to offer great potential for economic and social development. However, non-inclusive growth has increased the gap between a small elite and a larger population that is economically, spatially, and socially excluded. To prevent the deepening of this “urban divide,” a major paradigm shift towards inclusive and equitable cities with strong social cohesion between all residents will be required. The successful implementation of policies aimed at increasing equality will improve social cohesion and act as a catalyst for other inclusive development policies.<sup>411</sup> Habitat III and the recent adoption of the SDGs represents a unique opportunity to break the cycle of perpetual inequality and create shared prosperity by including equity, equality, and social cohesion as priority issues in the New Urban Agenda.<sup>412</sup>

### ***Further Research***

While performing further research on this topic, delegates should consider how equity can be effectively integrated into the New Urban Agenda. How can Habitat III's mandate be refined and renewed to fit the challenge of inclusive urban development? How will the New Urban Agenda guide the way to realize SDG 11 with regard to making settlements inclusive? What major obstacles prevent urban development from being inclusive today? How can we assure that all parts of the population profit from the economic and social potential of cities? What are suitable arrangements on the local and national level to ensure that the voices of marginalized populations are heard and their needs addressed? What are necessary adjustments for urban planning to strengthen social cohesion?

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<sup>406</sup> UN-Habitat, *Construction of More Equitable Cities*, 2014, p. 200.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>408</sup> UN-Habitat, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, 2014, p. 8.

<sup>409</sup> UN-Habitat, *Construction of More Equitable Cities*, 2014, p. 72.

<sup>410</sup> UN-Habitat 2014, *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*, p. 8.

<sup>411</sup> UN-Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*, 2012, p. 69.

<sup>412</sup> UN-Habitat, *Medellín Declaration: Equity as a Foundation of Sustainable Urban Development*, 2014, p. 2.

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*Citiscopes is a portal dedicated to urban themes that publishes articles and commentaries by journalists and policymakers. In this section on “shared prosperity,” it features stories from cities around the world that relate to the issue of inclusive urban development. Delegates can draw on this accessible resource to learn about innovative approaches and best practices, and follow relevant policy debates in the run-up to Habitat III.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2010). *State of the World’s Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide* [Report]. Retrieved 17 July 2015 from:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=1114&menu=35>

*This edition of UN-Habitat’s biennial flagship publication focuses on the “urban divide,” an umbrella term describing the dynamics of exclusion and fragmentation within cities. The report provides an overview of the empirical state of inequality around the globe, as well as offering an analysis of the “urban divide” across the dimensions of economy, space, opportunities, and society, and uncovers the linkages between them. The final section is dedicated to potential ways of “bridging the urban divide.” Delegates will find the empirical material provided in this publication helpful as a starting point for their research, and will be able to draw inspiration for innovative approaches from a variety of cases around the world.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2012). *State of the World’s Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: <http://mirror.unhabitat.org/pmss/getElectronicVersion.aspx?nr=3387&alt=1>

*Prosperity of Cities is the latest edition of UN-Habitat’s flagship report. Besides supplying the most recent numbers and statistics on urban trends, it opens up the debate on rethinking the notion of prosperity along the lines of quality of life, inclusiveness, and sustainability of urban settlements. Conceptually, the “City Prosperity Index” and the “Wheel of Prosperity” presented in this report represent an innovative understand of the connections and trade-offs between the dimensions of urban prosperity. Delegates will find this resource useful to retrieve the latest facts and figures on the state of urban development, and learn about links between the different dimensions of urban prosperity.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2013). *Local Economic Development in Practice: A Toolkit for LED Practitioners* [Report]. Retrieved 23 August 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/local-economic-development-in-practice>

*The practitioner’s guide presents key principles, strategies, and successful examples of Local Economic Development (LED) policies. The five-part toolkit outlines a framework towards LED solutions that involve stakeholders, including marginalized groups, and identify and make use of local assets, illustrated through case studies and examples from projects across the world. This document will help delegates understand practical forms of implementation of urban development policies which foster inclusiveness and provide a base for developing their own working papers.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2013). *State of Women in Cities 2012-2013: Gender and the Prosperity of Cities* [Report]. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from:

<http://mirror.unhabitat.org/pmss/getElectronicVersion.aspx?nr=3457&alt=1>

*This volume offers insights into the distinct challenges girls and women are facing in urban settlements today, in connection with broader challenges such as urban poverty and insufficient provision of basic services. In addition to academic research and public documentation, it draws on the results of a UN-Habitat survey of policymakers and officials in five selected cities. Based on these sources, it develops a range of policy recommendations that delegates will find useful for integrating a gender-sensitive perspective into their work.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2014). *Report of the Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum: Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life*. Retrieved 21 July 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/books/world-urban-forum-7-report-march-2015-2/>



*UN-Habitat's report on the most recent World Urban Forum (WUF) offers an overview of the current global debates on urban development. The seventh session of WUF was devoted to the topic of urban equity, which was reflected namely in the Dialogue, Roundtable, and Assembly sections of this source. The sessional reports on these events will provide delegates with valuable insights, including positions brought forward by representatives from academia and civil society. Specifically, they will find key issues and recommendations raised by youth, women, and indigenous people, whose influence on urban policymaking otherwise continues to be somewhat limited.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2014). *Urban Equity in Development - Cities for Life: Concept Paper*. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from:

[http://wuf7.unhabitat.org/Media/Default/PDF/Urban%20Equity%20in%20Development-Cities%20for%20Life\\_English%20%282%29%20%281%29.pdf](http://wuf7.unhabitat.org/Media/Default/PDF/Urban%20Equity%20in%20Development-Cities%20for%20Life_English%20%282%29%20%281%29.pdf)

*This concept paper was prepared by UN-Habitat in the run-up to the seventh World Urban Forum, which took place in the Colombian city of Medellín in 2014. It contextualizes the debate on inclusive urban development with the global debate on inequality, and introduces and defines the concept of equity. Furthermore, it provides an insight into the distinct experiences of the city of Medellín in devising and implementing inclusive urban policies under the motto of "Cities for Life." A conceptual framework for this approach is presented that maps a range of equity priorities and the appropriate policy tools to attain them. Delegates will find this document useful as an entry point to the current debate on inequality and a structured overview of the distinct issue areas in inclusive urban development.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme, et al. (2014). *Construction of More Equitable Cities* [Report]. Retrieved 18 July 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/books/construction-of-more-equitable-cities/#>

*While Latin America suffers from the highest rates of inequality in the world, it has also been the only region that has made significant progress on this issue in the past decade. This book, issued by UN-Habitat and the Development Bank of Latin America, analyzes the development of inequality and associated phenomena, such as economic growth and spatial segregation within and beyond the region, based on rich empirical material from the local level. The publication points to the importance of coordinating national and local policies, and advocates the provision of spatial connections and public spaces within the city to strengthen social cohesion. The diversity of trajectories described in this book will be helpful for delegates to understand the complex factors and policies that alleviate or exacerbate inequality.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Governing Council. (2013). *Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council: Sustainable urban development: the role of cities in creating improved economic opportunities for all, with special reference to youth and gender (HSP/GC/24/4)* [Theme Paper]. Retrieved 19 July 2015 from: [http://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/11895\\_1\\_594747.pdf](http://mirror.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/11895_1_594747.pdf)

*This paper, presented by Executive Director Joan Clos to the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, emphasizes the role of cities as motors of growth and development, and calls for the extension of economic opportunities to all shares of the population, including women, youth, and minorities. It argues that jobs and income need to be at the center of urban policies, suggesting that creating jobs will be a crucial step to empower citizens and enable them to realize their full potential. Delegates will find this paper useful to understand in what ways marginalized groups are currently excluded from formal employment, and to identify ways to harness the potential of local urban economies for their integration.*

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*This think piece was issued by a number of UN bodies to argue for the importance of addressing inequality through the post-2015 development agenda. It holds that inequality is not only harmful for individuals, but endangers the economic performance and well-being of entire societies in the long term. It is argued that in the post-2015 agenda, inequality should not only be reflected in goals and targets, but also in the indicators that will be used to measure the progress of policy*

measures. The paper allows delegates to comprehend the argument to include inequality as the international community moves beyond 2015, and thereby tie the issue of inclusive urbanization to broader debates within and beyond the UN.

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