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Update for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The focus of the international community is geared towards the upcoming 2016 United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which will serve as an opportunity for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the *Lima-Paris Action Agenda*.[1] October 2015, dubbed "Urban October," launched the year-long lead-up to Habitat III, with several public events and expert meetings being held to raise public awareness on how the New Urban Agenda can help contribute to a "Better Urban Future."[2] The Conference also held a central spot during major UN conferences, including the 2015 UN Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the General Assembly (GA) 70th session.[3]

To finalize the rules of procedure for Habitat III and set up the informal intergovernmental negotiation sessions that will take place in May, June, and July 2016, the GA adopted resolution 70/473 in December 2015.[4] GA resolution 70/473 additionally strives to make Habitat III as inclusive and far-reaching as possible, by allowing local, municipal, and regional stakeholders to join in any part of the Conference and by giving observer status to civil society.[5] Additionally, the GA encouraged Member States to finish negotiating the substantive content of the New Urban Agenda by the third session of the Preparatory Committee, in Surabaya, Indonesia, in July 2016.[6]

Since September 2015, several Habitat III regional and thematic meetings have been organized to discuss specific issues pertaining to urbanization in the 21st century.[7] The four regional and seven thematic meetings that are scheduled to take place before May 2016 hold a central role within the Conference's process, as the outcome agreements of each session, dubbed Declarations, will be included in draft zero of the New Urban Agenda.[8] Several of the meetings took place in the last half of 2015 including the Tel-Aviv Thematic Meeting on Civic Engagement (September 2015), the *Montreal Declaration* (October 2015), the *Jakarta Declaration* (November 2015), and the *Cuenca Declaration* (November 2015).[9] Each of the meetings covered specific thematic issues and explored ideas including encouraging greater civic participation and the role technology can play in inclusiveness and democratic engagement; rethinking how post-manufacturing economies can promote economic, social, and sustainable growth through increased coordination; governance within metropolitan areas; and emphasizing the importance of gender and age equality within local governance to strengthen institutions and to promote community participation.[10]
As part of broadening the understanding of urbanization, the *Cuenca Declaration* focused on the role of intermediate cities, defined as cities with populations ranging from 100,000-500,000, which are often neglected during the city planning process due to financial or technical constraints.[11] The most recent meeting in Abu Dhabi in January 2016 focused on how cities can use renewable energy as an effective instrument of poverty eradication, economic growth, and sustainable development.[12]

Habitat III held the spotlight during COP21 in November and December, as leaders and experts acknowledged the central role of leadership by cities in the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.[13] Notably, the World Urban Campaign, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Veolia, and the World

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[1] UN-Habitat, *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21*, 2015.
[2] Scruggs, *U.N. marks Urban October, one-year countdown to Habitat III*, 2015.
[3] UN-Habitat, *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21*, 2015.
[4] 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/70/473)*, 2015.
[5] Habitat III, *The GA approves the most inclusive modalities ever on stakeholders and local authorities' participation*, 2015.
[6] 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/70/473)*, 2015.
[7] Scruggs, *Habitat III "thematic meetings" process now underway*, 2015.
[8] Habitat III, *The GA approves the most inclusive modalities ever on stakeholders and local authorities' participation*, 2015.
[9] Scruggs, *Habitat III "thematic meetings" process now underway*, 2015.
[10] Habitat III, *Civic Engagement – Tel Aviv*, 2015; Habitat III, *Metropolitan Areas - Montreal*, 2015; Habitat III, *Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting*, 2015; Habitat III, *Intermediate Cities - Cuenca*, 2015.
[11] Habitat III, *Intermediate Cities - Cuenca*, 2015.
[12] Habitat III, *Sustainable Energy and Cities - Abu Dhabi*, 2016.
[13] UN-Habitat, *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21*, 2015.

Business Council for Sustainable Development co-hosted an event during COP21 on the theme of "The City We Need – Engaging the Private Sector on Cities and Climate Change towards Habitat III."[14] Business leaders took advantage of this opportunity to underscore the importance of public-private partnerships as an engine of socio-economic growth and to share best-practices on sustainable business models.[15] Another side event, titled "One UN Solutions for cities and climate change: the new climate agreement and the New Urban Agenda," called attention to the links between the SDGs, the *Lima-Paris Action Agenda*, and Habitat III.[16] The debate underlined how perceptions of urban development should shift in order to understand urbanization as a sustainable development tool rather than an environmental stressor.[17]

The General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III (GAP), an assembly of partners from civil society, multinational businesses, public administrations, and grassroots associations, held its executive committee and general meetings in October 2015 in New York.[18] The resulting outcome document makes note of the need to publish a GAP legacy document to share best practices, know-hows, and data on urban habitat and urbanization.[19] The essential role of GAP "in supporting and improving stakeholders' engagement in and contributions to the preparatory process for Habitat III" was recognized by the GA in its resolution 70/473.[20]

Finally, the Habitat III Secretariat set up a monthly Urban Thursday Breakfast to encourage civic participation in the process of sustainable urbanization.[21] Each discussion concentrates on a specific perspective of a region of the world and the challenges it faces, with contributions coming from UN experts, government representatives, and grassroots activists.[22] The first two Urban Thursday Breakfasts were held on 17 December 2015 and 21 January 2016 and focused respectively on Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific.[23]

With Habitat III's preparation process officially underway since "Urban October," public events and experts meetings have started to focus more and more on the content of the New Urban Agenda.[24] The outcome of the negotiations that occur between civil society, the private sector, and Member States during these various events will be directly or indirectly included within draft zero of the Agenda.[25] In addition, the adoption of COP21's *Paris Agreement* and the SDGs is conducive to the development of a very comprehensive and detailed-oriented New Urban Agenda, as the international community will use Habitat III as a chance to implement these agreements.[26]

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[14] UN-Habitat, *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21*, 2015.

[15] Ibid.

[16] UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat organizes 'One UN solutions for cities and climate change' event at COP21*, 2015.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Habitat III, *The General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III meets in New York*, 2015.

[19] General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III, *General Assembly of Partners – New York Declaration*, 2015.

[20] 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/70/473),* 2015, p. 6.

[21] Habitat III, *Urban Thursday Breakfasts,* 2016.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Scruggs, *U.N. marks Urban October, one-year countdown to Habitat III,* 2015.

[25] Scruggs, *Habitat III "thematic meetings" process now underway*, 2015.

[26] UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat organizes 'One UN solutions for cities and climate change' event at COP21*, 2015.

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> *In preparation for Habitat III, seven thematic meetings and four regional meetings will be held throughout the year in order to discuss a variety of issues linked to urban development. These forums adopt a unique perspective and focus on subjects ranging from regional specificities to practical issues like renewable energy or informal settlements. This website provides an overview of all the scheduled meetings over the next year in the lead-up to Habitat III. Delegates should research these events thoroughly in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the current issues being discussed by urban experts and stakeholders.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *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/70/473)* [Report]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://undocs.org/A/70/473

> *GA resolution 70/473 was reviewed by the Second Committee on 15 December 2015 before being adopted by the GA on 22 December 2015. It details the modalities of Habitat III and goes over the rules of procedures, participation process, negotiation process, decision-making and election process, amongst other fine points. One section of this resolution outlines how different members of civil society and representatives of local and regional government can ensure their representation during the conference and contribute to draft zero of the New Urban Agenda. Finally, this resolution outlines the modalities for participation in the preparatory process of the conference. This is an excellent resource for delegates wishing to gain a better understanding of how Habitat III and its preparatory process will be organized throughout 2016.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2015). *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://unhabitat.org/cities-in-spotlight-at-climate-change-summit-cop21/

> *With the historical adoption of the SDGs and the landmark COP21 agreement, 2015 will be remembered as the year of environmental diplomacy. Nonetheless, the focus has already shifted towards Habitat III as a Conference that will allow for implementation and review of these cornerstone agreements. Already, Habitat III was at the center of discussions regarding sustainable housing and urbanization during COP21. As revealed in this article, several UN agencies or members of the civil society organized events during the UN Climate Change Conference to underline the importance of Habitat III and how it tied in with COP21. This document offers a clear perspective on how the two Conferences influence each other and will allow delegates to better distinguish their roles.*

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Scruggs, G. (2015, September 9). Habitat III "thematic meetings" process now underway. *Citiscope.* Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://citiscope.org/habitatIII/news/2015/09/habitat-iii-thematic-meetings-process-now-underway

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United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *Civic Engagement – Tel Aviv* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/telaviv

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United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015, October 12). *The General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III meets in New York* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/node/510662

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015, October 21). *Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/node/511346

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *Intermediate Cities - Cuenca* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/Cuenca

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *Metropolitan Areas - Montreal* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/Montreal

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2016). *Sustainable Energy and Cities - Abu Dhabi* [Website]. Retrieved 28 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/abudhabi

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2016). *Urban Thursday Breakfasts* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/urbanthursday

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *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/70/473)* [Report]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://undocs.org/A/70/473

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2015, December 8). *Cities in spotlight at Climate Change Summit COP21* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: http://unhabitat.org/cities-in-spotlight-at-climate-change-summit-cop21/

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

Recent Developments

As the third United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) approaches, Member States, regional and local stakeholders, and civil society organizations have continued their preparations. In light of the adoption of the *Paris Agreement* at the recent Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, national, regional, and local stakeholders fostered their commitment to implement strong strategies to strengthen climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) mechanisms in an urban context.[27] Furthermore, new mechanisms to address DRR have been introduced, and the first regional meeting in preparation of Habitat III took place in Jakarta, Indonesia.[28]

Cities are not only responsible for 70% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, but are also most affected by the impacts of global warming.[29] In fact, over the past decade, more than 80% of disasters have been climate-related.[30] Thus, as the urban population grows, so does the necessity to effectively inhibit the impact of climate change-related disasters on cities.[31] The threat of climate change to societies is also acknowledged in the *Paris Agreement,* the outcome document of COP21.[32] In the Agreement, Article 7 takes into account the crucial role of cities by highlighting the importance of enhancing adaptive capacities, "strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change" on local and regional levels.[33]

In a call for the full implementation of the *Paris Agreement*, the United Cities and Local Governments initiative gathered at Paris' city hall during COP21 to reaffirm its commitment to a new global climate change agreement, producing the *Paris City Hall Declaration*.[34] Furthermore, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and its Global Executive Committee stressed their commitment to the *Paris Agreement* and the *Paris City Hall Declaration* by highlighting the impact of their GreenClimateCities Program in mitigating climate change and reaffirming further commitment to strengthening climate resilience of cities.[35] Additionally, the C40 Forum, which assembles mayors from around the world, was held in December 2015 in Paris as part of the Sustainable Innovation Forum, a side-event to COP21 that discussed potential ways to achieve sustainability and climate action within cities and highlighted the benefits of a global network for building resilience within urban areas.[36] The Forum announced the establishment of the "C40 Cities Finance Facility," a joint project with Germany and the Inter-American Development Bank that aims to deliver green infrastructure to cities across low and middle-income countries.[37] To begin concrete implementation of the *Paris Agreement*, a network of national, subnational, and regional governments, as well as international funds, organizations, and other entities, drafted the Paris Action Statement.[38] Through this document, endorsing stakeholders promote concrete actions to act on climate change such as placing focus on the capacities of rapidly urbanizing metropolitan areas, furthering financial assistance to develop infrastructure to mitigate climate change, and enhancing the exchange of technology and knowledge between cities and regions.[39] Thus, the Action Statement underlines the importance of technology development and technology transfer in improving resilience in the long-term, a focus also stressed in the *Paris Agreement*.[40]

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[27] Scruggs, *Habitat III — the first post-Paris implementation opportunity?* 2015.

[28] UNFCCC, *Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative: Strengthening Systems at the Heart of Resilience*, 2016; Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting, *The Jakarta Declaration for Habitat III "Sustainable Urbanization to Accelerate Development,"* 2015.

[29] Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda: The Transformative Power of Urbanization*, 2016.

[30] Fowler, *New earthquake early warning drive launched*, 2015.

[31] Ibid.

[32] UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015.

[33] Ibid.

[34] United Cities and Local Governments, *Paris City Hall Declaration*, 2015.

[35] *ICLEI Declaration to the Ministers at COP21, Paris, France*, Culture of Peace News Network, 2015.

[36] C40 Cities, *About the C40 Forum*, 2016.

[37] C40 Cities, *Press Release: C40, Germany & IADB Achieve Major Breakthrough For Developing Cities - $1 Billion In Green Infrastructure Unlocked Within Four Years*, 2015.

[38] UNFCCC, *The Paris Action Statement: Transforming Local and Regional Climate Action*, 2015.

[39] Ibid.

[40] UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015, p. 27.

As a means to achieve these objectives and to better protect the most vulnerable from disasters that are exacerbated by climate change, France and other donor countries have launched the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative to increase capacities for Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems.[41] The goal of the initiative is to provide early warning systems and risk information capacities to 50 Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States worldwide by 2020.[42] The initiative is a joint effort of the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Meteorological Organization, and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and is expected to cost $100 million to fully implement the program by 2020.[43]

Finally, the first regional meeting in preparation of Habitat III, the Asia-Pacific meeting, took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, in October 2015.[44] Stakeholders present adopted the *Jakarta Declaration for Habitat III: "Sustainable Urbanization to Accelerate Development,"* which establishes the key priorities and objectives of the region regarding Habitat III and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 in order to increase resilience of cities in the region.[45] The Declaration regards cities' inhabitants as agents for sustainable urbanization rather than just beneficiaries, and states that resilience and climate change mitigation strategies must focus on the needs of poor and marginalized groups.[46] During the next two months, meetings of the regional groups of Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa will meet in Mexico, the Czech Republic, and Nigeria respectively.[47] Focus areas of each of the meetings have yet to be determined.[48]

As Habitat III approaches, stakeholders are stressing the role of cities in promoting climate change mitigation and DRR.[49] Recent events have shown the commitment local and regional initiatives have taken in not only being responsible for implementing strategies, but in actually formulating objectives for consideration at Habitat III.[50] Cooperation among regional and local stakeholders, the transfer of technology and knowledge, and special attention to vulnerable groups will be key issues the New Urban Agenda will have to address to promote climate change and disaster risk reduction.

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[41] UNFCCC, *Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative: Strengthening Systems at the Heart of Resilience*, 2016.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting, *The Jakarta Declaration for Habitat III "Sustainable Urbanization to Accelerate Development,"* 2015.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] UN-Habitat, *Regional and thematic meetings for the preparatory process of Habitat III*, 2016.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Scruggs, *Habitat III — the first post-Paris implementation opportunity?* 2015.; UNFCCC, *Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative: Strengthening Systems at the Heart of Resilience*, 2016.
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> *This source summarizes the importance of Habitat III as the first global conference to be held after the adoption of both the SDGs and the* Paris Agreement. *It also helps to put the climate agreement into the context of urban development and cities thus providing delegates with an additional source to reflect on the topic. Finally, it leads to other interesting sources that will help delegates identify priorities to be addressed within the New Urban Agenda, including a piece on a global alliance to react on urban disasters and an analysis on necessary steps towards the implementation of the* Paris Agreement.

United Cities and Local Governments. (2015). *Paris City Hall Declaration.* Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: http://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/climate_summit_final_declaration.pdf

> *This source represents the commitment of cities to global climate change adaptation and summarizes their key focus areas through 2020. The source is helpful since it addresses climate change through a local perspective, thus refining the broad topic of climate change to a more specific discussion of strengthening the climate resiliency of cities. Delegates will find this Declaration helpful in identifying priorities and possible strategies to be included in the New Urban Agenda.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting. (2015). *The Jakarta Declaration for Habitat III: "Sustainable Urbanization to Accelerate Development."* Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: http://www.habitat-indonesia.or.id/en/publication/86-jakarta-declaration

> *The Asia-Pacific meeting was the first regional meeting held in preparation of Habitat III. The outcome document, the* Jakarta Declaration, *shows the key issues the region is concerned with and its commitment to see these resolved within the Habitat III process. Though the Declaration is not explicitly focused on climate change or resilience, it expresses the necessity to develop strategies and improve international cooperation in order to reduce the risk of natural disasters. Delegates will find this source helpful as an example of Member States' positions and expectations for the outcomes of the conference itself.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)* [Draft Outcome Document]. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: http://undocs.org/FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1

> *The new climate change agreement from COP21 has important implications for Habitat III. This source includes the strategic vision for the upcoming years regarding climate change adaptation and also Member States' commitment to it. As the* Paris Agreement *has set a general outline for the following decades, its implementation falls into the responsibility of individual committees and Member States. Delegates will find this source helpful in identifying necessary priorities that can be discussed within the mandate of the Habitat III conference.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). *The Paris Action Statement: Transforming Local and Regional Climate Action*. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from: http://newsroom.unfccc.int/media/544089/action-statement-list-endorsers-en.pdf

> *The Paris Action Statement represents a multilateral commitment to work towards effective climate change mitigation and resilience in light of the new climate change agreement. The statement entails four concrete measures to be undertaken by the international community in order to achieve climate change goals. It also links the* Paris Agreement *to SDG 11, as it puts emphasis on its respective targets such as improving the exchange of technical expertise and building efficient infrastructure. Thus, it is a helpful source for delegates to understand the link between the SDGs and the* Paris Agreement.

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

Recent Developments

The issue of addressing the right to adequate shelter through the New Urban Agenda was discussed on a variety of occasions over the last several months. With intersections to human rights, sustainable development, and urban development, the right to housing was featured in discussions on the United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), during the Sustainable Development Summit, in the work of the General Assembly (GA) Third Committee, and during other processes within and beyond the UN system.

On 22 October 2015, Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, Leilani Farha, presented her report on "Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda from the perspective of the right to adequate housing" to the GA Third Committee.[51] Ms. Farha raised concerns that human rights were not sufficiently represented in the ongoing debate on the New Urban Agenda, despite the significant insight that a human rights perspective could offer in defining the responsibilities of stakeholders and in improving the allocation of resources.[52] Welcoming the interest of Member States in linking the New Urban Agenda with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she noted that Habitat III constituted an opportunity to establish the scope and implementation of Target 1 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which aims to "ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums."[53] The report identifies social exclusion, migration, vulnerable groups, land and inequality, and informal settlements as five cross-cutting issues that a human rights-based urban agenda needs to focus on.[54] On 18 November, Ms. Farha spoke at the third European Forum on Housing in Berlin, where she underlined the important task of Habitat III in defining tangible solutions for the implementation of Target 1 of SDG 11 within the framework of an "urban rights agenda."[55]

"Housing in the City We Need" was the theme of an Urban Thinkers Campus held in Barcelona from 16 to 18 November 2015, organized by the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the World Urban Campaign in the run-up to Habitat III.[56] The Urban Thinkers Campus is a series of workshops gathering experts, local authorities, and civil society actors to discuss individual aspects of urban development in order to develop a comprehensive and innovative vision of "The City We Need."[57] The outcome of these workshops will be considered for integration into the zero draft of the New Urban Agenda.[58] In Barcelona, participants focused on measures to ensure adequate housing for all through the New Urban Agenda.[59] Key recommendations included a call for participatory and democratic planning that integrates urban settlements within rural areas; the promotion of diverse forms of tenure arrangements that offer protection from eviction and dispossession; and the respect, protection, and fulfillment of the human right to adequate housing.[60] An Urban Thinkers Campus held in Dubai in January 2016 underlined the role of public policy measures such as inclusionary zoning to create incentives for private enterprises to supply affordable housing.[61]

Coinciding with World Cities Day on 31 October, held under the slogan "Designed to Live Together," UN-Habitat launched a new publication entitled "Right to Adequate Housing for Persons with Disabilities Living in Cities."[62] Furthermore, UN-Habitat celebrated Human Rights Day on 10 December at its headquarters in Nairobi.[63] On both

[51] UN DPI, *Warning Third Committee, Experts Express Alarm at Organ-Harvest Attacks on Persons with Albinism, Criminalizing Homelessness, Violence against Rights Defenders*, 2015.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] UN General Assembly, *Adequate Housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living: Note by the Secretary-General (A/70/270),* 2015.

[55] UN OHCHR, *Statement by Leilani Farha "A Step in the Rights Direction: Housing in the New Urban Context" at the 3rd European Forum on Housing,* 2015.

[56] UN-Habitat, *Housing in The City We Need,* 2015.

[57] UN-Habitat, *Urban Thinkers Campus: Overview*, 2012.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Alcaide, *Home is where we practice citizenship, Habitat III stakeholders say,* 2015.

[60] UN-Habitat, *Housing in The City We Need,* 2015.

[61] Scruggs, *Developers seek affordable-housing market in New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

[62] UN-Habitat*, The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons With Disabilities Living in Cities*, 2015, p. vi.

[63] UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat celebrates Human Rights Day,* 2015.

occasions, Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos underlined the importance of human rights for the New Urban Agenda, and reaffirmed the central role of the human right to adequate housing for UN-Habitat's comprehensive "Housing at the Centre" approach.[64] To promote the equal treatment of people with disabilities, UN-Habitat's approach emphasizes the need to ensure that housing is accessible, removes barriers both within the house and the community, and supports an independent lifestyle.[65]

In a bid to foster the link with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a high-level side event entitled "One billion slum dwellers: Tackling the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goal on water, sanitation and slums" was held during the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September.[66] The event was organized by the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP), a joint initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) funded by the European Commission (EC) and implemented by UN-Habitat.[67] Lauding the achievements of PSUP, the partners committed to continue their efforts with a view to implementing Target 1 of SDG 11.[68] In November, UN-Habitat conducted a workshop with the Botswana PSUP country team at the UN Headquarters in Nairobi, including a visit to a variety of projects realized with the support of PSUP and grassroots organizations like Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) in Nairobi's Kibera slums.[69] In Ecuador, a slum upgrading project that received technical assistance from UN-Habitat was awarded the first prize in a national competition for "Best Practices in Local Management" in December.[70]

The events of the past months have raised conceptual challenges, such as mainstreaming sustainable development and a human rights-based approach in the New Urban Agenda, as well as suggesting concrete approaches to ensure the supply of adequate and affordable housing for all, including vulnerable groups. The information and recommendations provided should inform the debate at Habitat III and inspire innovative and comprehensive solutions mainstreamed throughout the New Urban Agenda.

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[64] UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat celebrates Human Rights Day,* 2015.
[65] UN-Habitat*, The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons With Disabilities Living in Cities*, 2015, pp. ix-xi.
[66] UN-Habitat, *Countries call for the tackling of the unfinished business on slums at historic SDG meeting,* 2015.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] UN-Habitat, *Botswana delegation attend slum upgrading workshop in Nairobi*, 2015.
[70] UN-Habitat, *Slum upgrading initiative awarded in Ecuador*, 2015.

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> *This article published on Citiscope gives an accessible account of the debates at the Urban Thinkers Campus on housing that was held in Barcelona in November 2015, including numerous accounts from urban development practitioners. The article is complemented by two expert interviews. Delegates can learn about practical solutions regarding the supply of adequate housing such as community participation arrangements, as well as planning pitfalls that can turn social housing blocks into poverty traps.*

Housing in The City We Need. (2015). *Key Outcomes and Recommendations.* Retrieved 2 January 2016 from: http://www.amb.cat/documents/11656/4131217/1+UTC+Key+Outcomes+and+Recommendations_DRAFT.pdf/e5d df94e-b890-4d4f-856e-c5cad941ec28

> *This document offers a collection of key recommendations that emerged from the Urban Thinkers Campus on the topic of "Housing in the City We Need." It gathers a number of concrete and concise proposals and can thereby serve as an overview of current approaches and an inspiration for further research into individual urban planning measures. Delegates will find this useful in understanding potential key components that should be integrated into the New Urban Agenda to successfully address the right to adequate shelter.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Adequate Housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living: Note by the Secretary-General (A/70/270)* [Report]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: http://undocs.org/A/70/270

> *This is the latest report of Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context. Leilani Farha focuses on how Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda can be guided by human rights. It offers a rich analysis of the urban agenda from a human rights perspective, and identifies links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Delegates can use this report to gain an insight into the transformational potential of the human right to adequate housing for urban development, and draw on the wealth of concrete recommendations suggested, in order to establish the right to adequate housing as a pillar of a new urban agenda.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2015, October 16). *Countries call for the tackling of the unfinished business on slums at historic SDG meeting* [News Article]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: http://unhabitat.org/countries-call-for-the-tackling-of-the-unfinished-business-on-slums-at-historic-sdg-meeting/

> *This account of the side event on "Tackling the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goal on water, sanitation and slums" highlights the potential of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) as a rights-based mechanism that can be used to effectively link the right to adequate housing with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Target 1 of SDG 11. Delegates can use this resource as a starting point for their research on the various models of concrete implementation that exist under the headline of slum upgrading, which represents a crucial link between urban development, human rights, and sustainable development.*

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2015). *The Right to Adequate Housing for Persons with Disabilities Living in Cities: Towards Inclusive Cities* [Report]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: http://unhabitat.org/books/the-right-to-adequate-housing-for-persons-with-disabilities-living-in-cities

> *Persons with disabilities make up a disproportionate share of the poor, and continue to face challenges regarding access to adequate housing both with regard to physical accessibility of urban infrastructure and discriminatory laws and policies. This publication offers insight both into the international legal framework that ensures the right of persons with disabilities to adequate housing, as well as trends in policy and practice on the national and sub-national level, illustrated with case studies. It is not only instructive with regard to persons with disabilities, but can also serve to inspire research on other vulnerable groups.*

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

Recent Developments

As the United Nations (UN) Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) approaches, the international community has been actively discussing the most pressing issues to be included in the New Urban Agenda.[71] Several international and regional meetings have maintained a constant debate about topics related to the Habitat III agenda, including sustainable development, urban planning, human settlements, and the relationship between Habitat III and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[72] In this regard, SDG 11 seeks to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.[73] Its targets are related to accessing adequate, affordable, and safe housing for all; enhancing inclusive urbanization; and adopting and implementing policies toward inclusion.[74] The "urban SDG" is a step towards achieving inclusive urbanization and reducing inequality.[75]

In early October 2015, representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs), local and regional authorities, and representatives from national governments gathered for the Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas in Montreal, Canada.[76] During the meeting, Dr. Joan Clos, Secretary-General of Habitat III and Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) highlighted that urbanization should be recognized an important tool in addressing poverty.[77] Furthermore, he underlined that for the first time, urbanization is considered an important driver for development.[78] The outcome of this meeting, the *Montreal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas*, stresses the importance of metropolitan areas for economic growth, as well as the challenges of urbanization to social cohesion and inclusion.[79] Additionally, the Declaration recognizes that "through integrated participatory planning, solidarity and management approaches," metropolitan areas can be economically and socially sustainable.[80] As a result, the Declaration seeks the promotion of sustainable metropolitan development policies to foster inclusive housing through means including citizen participation.[81]

Similarly, from 21-22 October 2015, the Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, and was attended by representatives from Member States, the United Cities and Local Governments organization, CSOs, and several UN agencies.[82] One focus of the meeting was encouraging the international community to address the infrastructure and financing needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), because LDCs are facing urbanization at a faster pace.[83] The resulting *Jakarta Declaration* calls for the participation of local, regional, and national governments, as well as the international community, in improving the processes of urbanization by adopting policies that consider the needs of children, youth, women, migrants, and other vulnerable groups.[84] Moreover, the Declaration noted that measures that increase equality and inclusion in cities require "national governments and local authorities to develop and implement well-focused strategies and programmes to alleviate urban poverty and reduce inequalities."[85]

In addition to regional meetings, numerous thematic meetings are also being held in preparation for Habitat III.[86] The Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Intermediate Cities was held in Cuenca, Ecuador, in November 2015, and it focused on establishing the role of intermediate cities as key players in creating opportunities for all through the

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[71] Scruggs, *We have a likely urban SDG. Now, for indicators,* 2015.
[72] Ibid.
[73] UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Scruggs, *We have a likely urban SDG. Now, for indicators,* 2015.
[76] Habitat III, *Reporting on the Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas in Montreal,* 2015.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Habitat III, *Fostering metropolitan cooperation for sustainable urban development: The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas,* 2015, p. 3.
[80] Ibid., p. 4.
[81] Ibid., p. 5.
[82] Habitat III, *Habitat III Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting,* 2015.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Febrina, *Habitat III Jakarta Declaration Urges 'radical' urban shift,* 2015.
[85] Ibid.
[86] UN-Habitat, *Regional and thematic meetings for the preparatory process of Habitat III,* 2016.

utilization of urban planning policies and regulations.[87] These policies and regulations can ultimately be used to mitigate or prevent social, environmental, and economic issues caused by urbanization.[88] Other thematic meetings include a meeting on Sustainable Energy and Cities in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, that occurred in late January 2016; a meeting on Financing Urban Development in Mexico City, Mexico, at the beginning of March; and two meetings in April on Informal Settlements in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Public Spaces in Barcelona, Spain.[89]

In the last week of October, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Conference on Migrants and Cities took place in Geneva, Switzerland.[90] The conference focused on highlighting how cities are attracting people in search of better employment and a higher standard of living.[91] Additionally, the IOM published its annual report on cities and migrants; the report evaluates and establishes the relationship between the two.[92] It discusses how cities are characterized by the presence of immigrant groups that often face inequality and segregation.[93] However, the report highlights that migration can be an advantage to cities because of the diversity it brings to the city, although comprehensive policies need to be adopted that recognize patterns of migration and better integrate migrants into urban societies.[94] Such policies include "providing migrants with a space for their opinions to be heard, establishing transparent frameworks that enhance trust between local stakeholders and migrant associations."[95]

In his address at the second session of the Habitat III Preparatory Committee in April 2015, Dr. Joan Clos emphasized that one of the pillars of sustainable development that the New Urban Agenda must address is "paying attention to the basic needs of the millions of people living in poverty within towns and cities."[96] To that end, the international community continues to discuss policies that can better promote equality and social cohesion to ensure that the benefits of urbanization are equally shared by all members of urban societies. Through inclusion in the New Urban Agenda, these policies can be widely implemented to achieve inclusive, sustainable urban development.

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[87] Habitat III, *Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Intermediate Cities,* 2015.
[88] Ibid.
[89] UN-Habitat, *Regional and thematic meetings for the preparatory process of Habitat III*, 2016.
[90] IOM, *Conference on Migrants and Cities,* 2015.
[91] Ibid.
[92] IOM, *World Migration Report 2015: Migrants and Cities, New Partnerships to Manage Mobility.,* 2015.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Habitat III, *Opening Statement by Dr. Joan Clos, Secretary-General of Habitat III at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee,* 2015.

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> *The* Jakarta Declaration *is the product of the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting and contains key positions on the urbanization and development of Least Developed Countries and policies to diminish inequality and social exclusion. It puts special focus on infrastructure and how improvements in infrastructure could potentially be the central element to sustainable development. Like thematic meetings, regional meetings are important because they aggregate the issues and agreed-upon positions of specific regional blocs.*

International Organization for Migration. (2015). *World Migration Report 2015: Migrants and Cities, New Partnerships to Manage Mobility.* Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: https://www.iom.int/world-migration-report-2015

> *The International Organization for Migration dedicated its annual report to migrants and cities. This report is important because it explains the relationship between migratory influxes to cities and urban development. Among those relationships, the report establishes facts about discrimination, segregation, and inequality regarding migrant groups that result in poor living conditions, and it contains policy recommendations to promote migrant inclusion in urban areas.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *Fostering metropolitan cooperation for sustainable urban development: The Montréal Declaration on Metropolitan Areas*. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: http://cmm.qc.ca/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/20151007_habitat_declarationMontreal-en.pdf

> *The Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas gathered representatives from different sectors of society to discuss the importance of metropolitan areas to development. This Declaration is important because it fosters cooperation in order to achieve sustainable development and because urbanization processes are regarded as instruments in addressing poverty and inequality. Delegates should pay attention to thematic meetings because they contain priorities and policies that countries seek to include within the New Urban Agenda.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015). *Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Intermediate Cities* [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/node/513767

> *The importance of this article is centered on the fact that intermediate cities often lack the resources to ensure adequate planning like larger cities do and that intermediate cities are going through different urbanization processes that require the attention of the international community. Additionally, this meeting raised topics like social inclusion and economic development as key priorities to intermediate cities. This information is important for delegates in viewing urbanization in a broader, more holistic manner that includes all urban areas.*

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. (2015, October 7). *Reporting on the Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Metropolitan Areas in Montreal* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: https://www.habitat3.org/node/510234

> *This meetings coverage is important for delegates to consider because it depicts the process through which the* Montreal Declaration *was adopted. Metropolitan areas represent the hub for urbanization, and this source gathers valuable information on the inputs provided by different actors in regard to the theme of this meeting. In addition, this source provides an overview of the main concerns for Habitat III preparations to address in the process leading up to the conference.*

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