



# GLOBAL TASKFORCE

OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

FOR **POST-2015** DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

TOWARDS **HABITAT III**

## **Global Taskforce**

### **Inputs for the HABITAT III PrepCom 2**

**13 April 2015**

Local and Regional Government organizations, in our capacity as governmental stakeholders and gathered as part of the Global Taskforce for Post-2015 Development Agenda and towards Habitat III, are committed to fully under taking our responsibilities and assuming our role as key partners in the definition and implementation of the Habitat Agenda. We also strive to reinforce its linkages to the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its localization, in this way contributing to managing urbanization so this phenomenon can drive better living conditions and sustainable development.

The Global Taskforce is convinced that Habitat III will be a key mechanism to implement the Post-2015 Agenda at local level and address specific issues related to human settlements that will be the basis for a sustainable future.

#### **Recalling the Habitat II Consensus**

**Members of the Global Taskforce would like to recall the important agreement achieved by Member States in 1996 and to applaud their visionary statements recalling some of the many references of the Habitat Agenda:**

- ✓ The Habitat Agenda recognized local authorities as the “closest partner” and “essential” in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda (*Istanbul Declaration* paragraph 12).
- ✓ Furthermore, Art. 102 of the Habitat Agenda already stated that “The municipal level of government can be an effective partner in making human settlements viable, equitable and sustainable, since its level of administration is closest to the people. Governments must recognize the essential role of local authorities in providing services and empowering people”.
- ✓ While Art. 56 mentioned that local authorities are on the front line in achieving the goals of Habitat II, progress will depend to a large degree on local authorities, civic engagement and the forging of partnerships at all levels of government.
- ✓ Member States recognized in 1996 that sustainable human settlements could be achieved through the effective decentralization of responsibilities, policy management, decision-making authority and sufficient resources, including revenue collection authority, to local authorities, as closest to and most representative of their constituencies (Art. 177).
- ✓ Early references to the impact of urbanization also recognized the need for strong local governments: “In the process of urbanization, policies and programmes for the sustainable development of human settlements in both rural and urban areas require strong sub-national governmental institutions working in partnership with all interested parties” (Art. 104).
- ✓ Art. 180 (b) called signatories of the Habitat Agenda to “review and revise, as appropriate, legislation to increase local autonomy and participation in decision-making, implementation, and resource mobilization and use, especially with respect to human, technical and financial resources and local enterprise development, within the overall framework of a national, social, economic and environmental strategy, and encourage the participation of the inhabitants in decision-making regarding their cities, neighborhoods or dwellings”.

- ✓ Art. 180 (d) also requested government support for “local authorities reviewing revenue-generating mechanisms”.
- ✓ Art. 180 (g) further called to “enhance the performance of local authorities by undertaking data collection, disaggregated by gender, age and income, and comparative analyses of, and by disseminating information on innovative practices in, the delivery, operation and maintenance of public goods and services, in providing for the needs of their populations and in exploiting the fiscal and other potential of their cities”.
- ✓ Art. 180 (h) further encouraged the “institutionalization of broad-based participation, including consultative mechanisms, in decision-making and management processes at the local level”.
- ✓ Art. 180 (j) also called for promoting “policy dialogue among all levels of government and the private and community sectors and other representatives of civil society to improve planning and implementation”.
- ✓ And, very importantly, Art. 180 (m) also requested to “reinforce measures to eradicate corruption and ensure greater transparency, efficiency, accountability, responsiveness and community participation in the management of local resources”.
- ✓ Finally, Articles 185 and 186 particularly encourage paying special attention to “the management and development of metropolitan areas and mega-cities [which] face unique problems caused by the size and complexity of their tasks and responsibilities”.

### **Recovering the Spirit of Istanbul**

Building on the above agreed language, the associations and networks of Local and Regional Governments would like to call for Member States to reinstate the spirit of Istanbul and truly “intensify their cooperation with associations and networks of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups and community associations, and the private and cooperative sectors, in adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development” (Art. 211 (d) of the Habitat Agenda).

In this light, the Global Taskforce would like to highlight the following references for further reference during the upcoming negotiations:

- ✓ *Recalling* General Assembly Resolution 50/100 of 20 December 1995 which, inter alia, endorsed the rules of procedure for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey from 3 to 14 June 1996, and particularly Rules 62 and 63, on the participation of designated representatives of local authorities and accredited non-governmental organizations in the deliberations of Habitat II;
- ✓ *Recalling* General Assembly Resolution 55/194 of 20 December 2000 and in particular part III, entitled “Arrangements regarding accreditation of Habitat Agenda partners to the special session”;
- ✓ *Recalling* General Assembly Resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, entitled “Institutional arrangements for international cooperation in the field of human settlements”, and in particular part VIII, “Cooperation with organizations outside the United Nations system”;
- ✓ *Bearing in mind* paragraph 21 of General Assembly Resolution 51/177 of 16 December 1996, in which the Assembly requested the Commission on Human Settlements to review its working methods in order to involve in its work the representatives of local authorities or international associations of local authorities, as appropriate, and the relevant actors of civil society, taking into account the rules and procedures of the Commission on Human Settlements and the relevant provisions of the Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996;
- ✓ *Recalling* the General Assembly Resolution 66/288 of 11 September 2012 endorsing the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on

Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in which paragraph 42 reaffirms the key role of government and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development, further acknowledging the "efforts and progress made at the local and sub-national levels, and recognize[s] the important role that such authorities and communities can play in implementing sustainable development";

- ✓ *Bearing in mind* that the "The future we want" document further recognizes in Article 76 that "effective governance at the local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all is critical for advancing sustainable development", underlining the need for more coherent and integrated planning and decision making at the appropriate level"; further underscoring "the importance of inter-linkages among key issues and challenges and the need for a systematic approach to them at all relevant levels";
- ✓ *Recalling* the Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/2014/30 of 25 July 2014 on "Human settlements", in which Article 4 reiterates "its invitation to Governments to further enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the role of local authorities and to consider the environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and economically productive roles of cities and human settlements in their consideration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda".
- ✓ *Recalling* the decisions in other recent processes, including climate change (para.7 of Dec1/CP16 in 2010 and para.5b of Dec1/CP19), disaster risk reduction (Para 16.d of HFA 2005-2015 and Para 17.f of Sendai 2015-2030) and the Convention on Biodiversity (Decision IX/28 in 2008, Decision X/22 in 2010 Nagoya 10 Year Action Plan) that all recognise the specific role of local and regional authorities

**The Global Taskforce would like to put forward the following ideas to be included in the proposals that Member States bring into the Habitat III language:**

#### **Participation and Community Empowerment**

Local and Regional Governments would also like to recall the importance of empowering citizens and community organizations to play their full part in shaping the new urban agenda.

Cities are already the primary engines of economic growth and sustainable development. Yet, cities and their surrounding territories can be home to important inequalities, exclusion, extreme deprivation and environmental degradation.

In the face of this reality, and the need to counter its negative trends, we are taking on the challenge of building a sustainable model of urban life in order to respond to new forms of urbanization (megacities, corridors, metropolis, intermediary cities, cities in small states and towns), in harmony with their rural surroundings. We are doing this based on the principles of human rights for all inhabitants, solidarity, freedom, equity, dignity, and social justice, and founded in the respect for different urban cultures promoting heritage, creativity and diversity, gender equality and balance between the urban and the rural. This will only be possible through long term partnerships with civil society and between all spheres of government.

The New Urban Agenda need to be built at the nearest public governance authority to the people concerned by the problem. It should further promote a new concept of city understood as a collective common good, with real means for public management, and paying particular attention to women empowerment through innovative and inclusive governance mechanisms involving all stakeholders and spheres of government.

#### **Means of Implementation**

Habitat III will be fundamental to the implementation of the Sustainability Agenda. The Habitat III outcomes need to be closely intertwined with the Post-2015 Agenda, as they will generate the basis for its localization and implementation on the ground. Considering that Habitat III will be the first conference taking place after the UN Summit on the Post-2015 Agenda Resolutions, the members of the Global Taskforce

would like to stress the need to pay special attention to the means of implementation of specific targets and indicators for cities and human settlements.

In this regard, we would like to recall the role of the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development, where investment in long-term infrastructures are currently under discussion, and COP 21, where the urban challenges should be given stronger attention and resources should be mobilized for urban infrastructure adaptation and mitigation.

Local and regional authorities would also like to focus on the localization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. To support these agendas, we will have to work together to develop an enabling institutional environment, including National Urban Policies based on the principle of equal partnership and subsidiarity, the mobilization of appropriate resources and the strengthening of capacities at national and local levels.

**The Global Taskforce would therefore like to call on Member States to provide the mechanisms to ensure the far-reaching participation of local authorities in the definition of the outcome document of Habitat III by acknowledging the specific accreditation of local authorities through Associations of Local Authorities with consultative status to ECOSOC.**

The full involvement of local and regional authorities as policy developers, and not simply as implementers, will enable the creation of an inclusive Habitat III Agenda, as well as the achievement of urban sustainable development in the future.

As the inheritors of the First Assembly of Local Authorities, organized in Istanbul during Habitat II, local and regional leaders and their networks see the organization of the representation of local and regional authorities at the Conference, and their contribution to defining the key recommendations, as an important mandate.

Local and Regional Governments are committed to organizing the Second World Assembly of Local Authorities in 2016 and to taking on our role as the "closest partner" of the UN in the definition and implementation of the Habitat III Agenda. We are also committed to being an active partner in the future Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, called for by the UN for the implementation of the SDGs.

