

**General Assembly of Partners – Grassroots PCG
Response to Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda (July 18 version)**

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We commend the inclusion of strong language around housing, basic services, slum upgrading, and the informal economy, including:

- Mentions of the need to recognize the contributions of the informal sector (par. 10d) and of the working poor in the informal economy, especially women (par. 51). However, for consistency all references to the 'informal sector' should be changed to the wider concept of the 'informal economy'.
- The commitment to “promote increased security of tenure for all, recognizing a plurality of tenure types” (par. 29).
- Acknowledgement of the need to address the challenges faced by informal settlement dwellers (par. 15, 20, 22, 47) and the commitment to upgrade, reduce vulnerabilities and risk, integrate measures for urban safety, and allocate resources for basic and social services in informal settlements (par. 68, 85, 94)
- Mentions of both formal and informal sectors (par. 46, 52) and economies (par. 50).
- Support for a gradual and sustainable transition from informal to formal economy (par. 10d) and from informal to formal employment that extends legal and social protections to informal livelihoods (par. 51)
- Commitment to support services to the informal workforce (par. 51)
- Vision of equal access to livelihoods (10a), commitment to an enabling environment for livelihoods (par. 39), and commitment to generate full and productive employment, decent work and livelihood opportunities (par. 49)
- The implementation of “planned urban extensions...including in slums and informal settlements, ensuring spatial equity and integrated participatory approaches and inhabitants, avoiding gentrification and spatial and socio-economic segregation” (par. 85)
- Support for provision of public space and streets for local markets and commerce, both formal and informal (par. 88)
- Strong commitments to the realization of the right to adequate housing, including enhanced “public supply of land for affordable housing, including land in central and consolidated areas of cities with proper infrastructure,” (par. 93).
- The development of “policies, tools, mechanisms, and financing models that promote access to a wide range of affordable housing options,” including “forms of collective tenure...incremental housing and self-build schemes, with special attention to slums and informal settlement upgrading programs,” (par. 94).
- An increase in allocation of financial and human resources for upgrading of slums and informal settlements, including housing, basic and social services, public spaces, security of tenure, and conflict prevention and mediation (par. 95).

- A commitment to implement housing and urban development programs that “avoid peripheral and isolated mass housing developments detached from urban systems, regardless of the social and economic segment for which they are developed,” (par 98).
- A commitment to participatory, innovative, context-specific, and culturally sensitive water and sanitation solutions (par. 105).
- Commitment to a multi trust fund for capacity development in support of sustainable urban development, specifically for use by countries of the Global South (par. 115).

We urge member states to re-integrate mentions from previous drafts of:

- References to the positive potential of cities and human settlements to help eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable and inclusive development (par.1)
- References to informal settlements and slums, currently noted in pars. 15, 20, 22, 47, 68, 85, 90, 95, 96.
- Specific mention of “grassroots communities” / or “slum dwellers” in the description of “all stakeholders” in par. 42.
- Specific mention of both “formal and informal workers” as recognized stakeholders in par. 42, in line with UN Major Groups platform for stakeholder engagement with “workers and trade unions;”
- The need to protect existing livelihoods in processes of formalization, consistent with ILO Recommendation No. 204

We urge member states to

- Remove the emphasis on competitiveness (pars. 11b, 39, 48) and leveraging the potential of increased property value (par. 46), and of value creation for architectural monuments and sites (par. 111), which often result in displacement and evictions of the urban poor.

Strengthen commitment to prevent forced evictions through the institutionalization of collaborative planning towards eviction alternatives in partnership with organized groups of informal settlement and slum dwellers. We emphatically insist that the New Urban Agenda commit to an end to the practice of forced evictions of any kind and for any reason. While language on this has improved to read that housing policies must prevent forced evictions (par. 25), there is still inadequate attention paid to this critical issues. The co-production of in situ, incremental slum upgrading solutions should be referenced as the providing effective alternatives to evictions and as the default approach to dealing with inadequate, unsafe housing, infrastructure and basic services.

References to “multi-stakeholder partnerships” (par. 139) and other participatory processes should be expanded to include specific mention of partnerships between government and organized communities of the urban poor. In addition, strategies for participation and engagement of communities and multi-stakeholder partnerships must be institutionalized and resourced. Strategy development for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda should factor collaborative development into program design. Investment must be made in organizing communities for effective participation.

Retain and expand the reference to “community-collected” data (par. 142). Involvement of grassroots communities should be mentioned in further references to the use of data in the

implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda, particularly in par. 91, regarding the use of data for the development of a basic land inventory and in par. 143 regarding the monitoring of progress achieved in the implementation of sustainable urban development policies and strategies. It is our experience that organized communities of the urban poor are more often than not equipped with more accurate data than national official data sources, and therefore should be regarded as invaluable resources in holding governments accountable to their commitments.

Urban development policy and practice must be informed by the uniquely rich information that organized informal settlement and slum dwellers gather through settlement and city-wide community-driven data collection methodologies, including profiling, enumeration and mapping. Data collection serves as a critical tool for the empowerment of these communities, and as a powerful basis from which to enter into partnerships with other key stakeholders, including the State, to set the agenda for development priorities and upgrading needs.

Regarding integrated territorial and urban planning (par.86) a key function should be to provide to provide sufficient and affordable land for housing and livelihoods, as well as preventing urban sprawl and reducing service delivery costs.

Regarding upgrading of slums and informal settlements (par. 95) the promotion of security of tenure should be enhanced by measures to support livelihoods, as well as conflict prevention and mediation.

Regarding issues of climate change and disaster risk (par. 131) we consider that these cannot only be addressed through insurance, which is often unaffordable or inaccessible to the urban poor, but that measures should include better information and regulation.

We also urge member states to acknowledge the role of working people as engines of urban social integration and inclusive growth, the importance of social dialogue and collective bargaining as eminent levers of social inclusion and sustainable development, and the need to consistently promote decent employment as the pathway to social mobility and social inclusion for informal workers, consistent with the comments submitted by the General Assembly of Partners' Trade Union and Workers PCG response. We second their recommendation to replace 'informal sector' with 'informal economy', and we urge member states to qualify the term 'private sector' to include both the corporate private sector and the non-corporate private sector.

Regarding representation and voice, we regret that the July 18 version relies on the phrase "relevant stakeholders" rather than naming those stakeholders who for centuries have been considered irrelevant by those in power, namely, organizations of the urban poor. Although organizations of the urban poor have been represented through the grassroots constituency group of the General Assembly of Partners throughout the Habitat III process, and have incurred disproportionate costs in order to contribute, grassroots organizations do not appear once in the July 18 draft. Their omission is a signal that governments lack the courage to implement truly inclusive processes whereby the urban poor and their representative organizations may have a voice in decisions that affect them. This is also despite specific recognition of informal economy workers, for example, as "contributors and legitimate actors of the urban economies"

(par. 51), and despite on-the-ground evidence of positive partnerships and engagement between representative organizations of informal workers, informal settlement dwellers, and other working poor with their city governments to develop inclusive city policies.

In that context, with regard to Member State comments on the second draft, we applaud the EU’s proposal to add “voice and representation” to par. 32 (June 18 version, par. 51 in July 18 version); the Africa Group’s plea for direct language on participatory slum upgrading at par. 35 (June 18 version, par. 20 in July 18 version); and Mexico’s proposal to ensure “that women, poor households, and marginalized communities are included in decision making” and not disproportionately affected by local government plans to expand their revenue base at par. 112 (June 18 version, par. 121 in July 18 version). We urge member states to implement these suggested revisions.

Regarding the Right to the City,

- We appreciate the vision to ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements as a common good that essentially contributes to prosperity and quality of life (par. 8)
- We also appreciate the acknowledgement of the Right to the City, based on a people-centred vision of cities as places that strive to guarantee a decent and full life for all inhabitants (par. 8)
- We appreciate the commitment to cities that fulfill their social function (par 10a) and that preserve the social function of land (par. 60)
- We appreciate the commitment to an urban paradigm shift that transforms the way we plan, finance, develop, govern and manage cities and human settlements (par. 12a).

But we regret that the July 18 version lacks any reference to:

- The prioritization of human well being over market dynamics;
- The importance of public space being free of barriers that discourage the presence of the low-income community;
- The prioritization of community-led initiatives in data collection, planning and governance; and
- The establishment of structures and processes to guarantee effective and meaningful participation by the urban poor and their representative organizations.

Ultimately, the July 18 version pledges that governments will do many things *for* the urban poor, and nothing *with* the urban poor. It lacks any reference to the urban poor as a stakeholder and to grassroots organizations of the urban poor as partners and stakeholders in urban governance.

This deletion threatens local governments’ accountability to these constituents, and it misses the critical opportunity to set a framework for collaboration with representative organizations of informal workers and informal settlement dwellers. Their omission from the NUA threatens the already precarious position of this critical mass in cities; in failing to establish a standard for engaging with representative organizations of the informal poor in data collection, priority setting, planning, implementation processes and follow-up accountability measures, governments are creating adverse economic and legal consequences for those struggling to work their way out of poverty.

Without partnerships and collaborations with the urban poor, the stated commitment to “generate full and productive employment, decent work, and livelihood opportunities in cities and human settlements”(par. 49) cannot be achieved for the large number of workers in these vulnerable situations.