



GTF Intervention at HABITATIII Open Ended Informal Consultation Meetings (OEICM) on Ecological and Resilient Cities and Human Settlements

Delivered by Yunus Arikan, Head of Global Policy and Advocacy, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, (shorter version of this intervention is delivered [orally at the session on 27 April 2016](#))

Dear Ms. Moderator,

This intervention is delivered by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability on behalf of Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments who also represents its constituency at the General Assembly of Partners.

ICLEI congratulates all the co-lead organizations and international experts who have been involved in the work of the HABITATIII Policy Unit:8 and welcomes the outcome document and its proposals.

Starting from this session of Open Ended Informal Consultation Meetings (OEICM), Member States will enter into a negotiation mode, a very critical step in the HABITATIII process.

Thus, this intervention highlights as an input to drafting of the Zero –Order Draft HABITATIII Outcome document, in support of the key recommendations of local and regional governments towards HabitatIII as presented by the Global Task Force.

At the beginning of the session, the Moderator underlined key issues that have evolved since HABITATII in 1996. We would like to present 2 more additions; a) We are now living in an Urban World, which introduces significant challenges and opportunities b) We are now living in the Age of Sustainability, where global community, through the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement in particular, is now on track to fulfill the promises they have committed 25 years ago at the 1992 Earth Summit that concluded with the Agenda 21 – the sustainability agenda for the humanity in the 21st Century.

We would like to note that over these more than 2 decades of concerted efforts, the urban community achieved significant success in particular in areas like biodiversity, climate change, disaster risk reduction, sustainable procurement in engaging all levels of government in the global efforts. We sincerely recommend HABITATIII should build upon these achievements and make sure that the New Urban Agenda leads into a sustainable urban development globally and enable the global community to enjoy the transformative power of the Urban World.

In this regard, we also welcome the title of the sessions of today and yesterday as “*The Transformative Commitments for a Sustainable Urban Development*” since we believe the New Urban Agenda should be nothing different than a sustainable urban development.

The question for HABITATIII is now how to lead, guide, facilitate or support this transformation, taking into account the universal nature of Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement adopted by Heads of States, where the first includes a specific goal 11 on cities and human settlements and the latter recognizes the importance of engagement of all levels of governments, and non-Party stakeholders, including cities and other subnational authorities. Below are the 3 specific proposals that may contribute in these discussions;

1- Anchoring the NUA to SDG:11 and other SDGs

The NUA must be the universal driving frame to achieve a rapid implementation of SDG:11 and the other SDGs. As such, the NUA should be the home for SDG:11, in pursuit of attaining all the other goals as well. It has to be noted that through the para.1 of the HABITAT Agenda adopted at HABITATII in 1996 in Istanbul, national governments have already committed to *“making human settlements safer, healthier and more liveable, equitable, sustainable and productive.”* which is almost identical to SDG:11 which aims *“Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”*. Thus, the HABITATIII community should be proudly and vocally welcome the adoption of SDG:11, and underline that in fact, it enables to full realization of the unfinished business of HABITATII.

2- The NUA at the National Level

The NUA must enable national governments to commit to national sustainable urban planning processes that features effective and democratic multi-level government cooperation and action building upon the experiences, practices and spirit of Chapter:28 of Agenda 21. It has to be noted para.12 of the HABITAT Agenda adopted at HABITATII in 1996 in Istanbul commits to *“promote of decentralization through democratic local authorities and work to strengthen their financial and institutional capacities”* as well as notes that local action should be *“guided and stimulated through local programmes based on Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, or any other equivalent programme”*. Considering the realities of the Urban World of the 21st Century where the challenges and opportunities are beyond the capacities of one single Minister or Mayor, the New Urban Agenda expected to be adopted at HABITATIII should not only operationalize the decentralization as foreseen in HABITATII, but also advance it further with multi-level governance, vertical integration and participatory mechanisms in order to ensure full efficiency and effectiveness.

3- The NUA at the Global level

The NUA must enable the engagement of all levels of governments in the global governance of sustainability through innovative, integrated, inclusive governance approaches and mechanisms at UN level, pursuant to para 42 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document and preamble para.15 of Paris Agreement opened for signature on 22 April 2016. ICLEI reiterates its commitment for a rapid scale-up of its network by expanding the transformative impacts of its local sustainability work through its 10 Urban Agendas to 30% of global urban population by 2030. ICLEI will support a global partnership for a Decade on Sustainable Urbanization, in collaboration with the One-UN system including the UN Subnational Climate Action Hub, Friends of Sustainable Cities, Global Task Force and General Assembly of Partners.