

Habitat III informal consultations - Mr. Maurice van Beers, Head of Delegation, Kingdom of the Netherlands statement on Urban Governance, Capacity and Institutional Development, 28 April 2016

Dear chair, dear delegates,

Thank you for the presentation and the good work of all the experts of the policy unit. We support the statement of the EU on Governance, Capacity and institutional development. Elaborating on these priorities and adding and complementing the analysis and conclusions of the paper presented we like to share some additional points.

- ***Legitimately elected local governments*** are the first level of government able to find concrete solutions for (global) challenges that citizens face in their daily lives. Local governments need to be **accountable** to their citizens and explain their choices for priorities and services. **Elected** local leaders are well-placed to develop and test new models of leadership and participatory governance to ensure a collective vision for local development.
- **Clear frameworks for local democracy, intergovernmental relations and decentralization policies** need to be at the heart of the New Urban Agenda: a clear division of powers and responsibilities and the corresponding division of **financial resources** needs to be in place to ensure effective response to citizen's needs.
- Local governments are strategic partners to build a strong national system of cities and more balanced territorial development. The **urban identity** of urban regions needs to be the engine for the development of cities: national urban policies need to provide the framework, but should refrain from being normative in the development of cities: enabling **national urban policies** should aim to foster innovation, investment, access to financial markets, and economic development.
- The New Urban Agenda cannot limit itself to towns and cities but should look at the territorial aspects that integrate peri-urban and rural areas. Cities generally form part of a "**functional region**", that ensure service provision for the entire urban area.

Thank you