

Statement of the Cities Alliance Secretariat at the 3rd Session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, Surabaya (Indonesia)

26 July 2016

Madame Co-Chair,

Excellencies,

Government of Indonesia,

Mayor of Surabaya

Distinguished delegates,

Dear Habitat III Partners,

It is an honour to address the preparatory committee on behalf of the Cities Alliance Secretariat. The Cities Alliance is a global partnership promoting the role of cities in urban poverty reduction and sustainable development - we believe that a successful Habitat III conference, and the New Urban Agenda, is essential to fully engage regional and city governments in delivering Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, which are the cornerstones of a sustainable and inclusive future for all.

The Cities Alliance Partnership will continue to actively support the Habitat III process by highlighting the crucial importance of inclusive partnerships between national governments, local authorities, organised civil society and the private sector. In order to overcome existing backlogs, the expected growth of urban populations and growing inequalities within and between cities, it is essential that the appropriate national and local governance conditions are created to support and sustain long-term investments: **in people, institutions and infrastructure**. Above all else, we need new behaviour to promote equitable economic growth, and to protect and sustain the environment.

We have identified three priority areas under the overall theme of promoting equity in cities:

Firstly, we need new thinking and behaviour by development partners. In the first instance, it is essential that we move beyond multi-lateral and bilateral agencies to also include the formal and informal private sector, universities and knowledge institutions, cities themselves and national and international Non-Governmental Organisations. Additionally, all development partners need to move away from short-term, project-based approaches to become longer-term, programmatic and more reliable partners, offering consistent support over time, and not chasing the latest short-term developmental fashion. These conditions are essential for creating the necessary conditions for public and private investment, and ensuring environmental sustainability;

Secondly, we seek to transform the relationship between national, regional and city governments and promote an enabling environment for cities, with improved coordination within government, and between different tiers of government. In too many countries, regional and local government is viewed as little more than an administrative arm of the national government – improved coordination between government tiers based on the principle of subsidiarity is essential;

Thirdly, we seek to transform the relationship between cities and citizens. Too many city administrations focus service provision on the needs of the elite, resulting in systemic social exclusion, with poorer residents even left to the mercy of war-lords or gangsters to provide land, services and, perversely, governance. Cities Alliance supports long-term citywide planning with participation by all citizens - private and corporate - at the local and national level in developing inclusive urban development strategies and policies.

Finally, Madame Co-Chair, we should not only focus on the world's megacities, but also on the many thousands of small and medium-sized towns, intermediary and secondary cities – cities whose names are not well known, which gain limited attention from national governments and international development agencies, but where capacity is often weakest whilst the needs are greatest.

Madame Co-Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Thank you very much for your attention