

**Statement of local and regional governments at the opening plenary of
3rd Preparatory Committee of HABITATIII Conference**

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Delivered by Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Municipal President, Municipal Council Of Seberang Perai, Malaysia; President, Malaysian Association of Local Authorities (MALA); Member, ICLEI Global Executive Committee

Your Excellency's and distinguished delegations,

Allow me to start by thanking you for the opportunity to intervene in this Third Preparatory Committee for Habitat III on behalf of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments.

The Global Taskforce welcomes the new draft of the New Urban Agenda released on the 18th of July.

We particularly welcome the **increased recognition** of the roles that local and subnational governments play in the different aspects of the agenda. The Habitat II Conference, twenty years ago, was ahead of its time in acknowledging local authorities as the "main partners" in the implementation of the Urban Agenda, and in its recognition of the transformative potential of decentralization.

Empowered local governments will be essential to the successful implementation of the Agenda on the ground. That's why it's vital that the reference to **decentralization based on the principle of subsidiarity** is maintained going forward.

We are also pleased to see that the reference to the **Right to the City** has been maintained. I would like to assure you that local and regional governments will continue to take the lead in exploring how to make this right a reality in our cities and territories.

We are pleased to see that the need to improve local government capacities in financing, management, planning, human resources and data collection has been recognized so explicitly in the latest draft.

however, we would like to emphasize four key components needed in this New Urban Agenda,

First; We must be daring on the **renewal of the social contract**; there is a clear call from citizens which, in our view, is best captured in the notion of the right to the city.

Second, We must address the great **challenges of financing** the new urban reality. Business as usual will not work to create the infrastructure we need in our metropolitan areas and intermediary cities over the coming decades.

Third, We must be prepared to **rapidly change track to sustainability** of our cities in the way we plan our infrastructure, deliver our services, consume our resources and produce our energy.

Finally, and most importantly, we will need to address the **renewal of governance**. The current text fails to make the paradigm shift necessary on multilevel and urban governance that is necessary for a truly transformative agenda.

I would urge you to consider the scale of the challenges we face: in planning for the rapid growth cities of the global south, in the need for a more sustainable consumption and production pattern cities in the North and South, in the existential threat of climate change, in the call of citizens for a new relationship with the state, in the growth of inequalities, in global migration.

Let's be bold and ambitious and use the Habitat Agenda to renew local democracy, increase accountability, practice sustainable lifestyles and strengthen participatory governance across the world.