

**Habitat III Intergovernmental negotiations in New York – Fourth session -  
Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States – Thursday 19 May  
2016**

Madam Chair, distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its MS.

We want to thank the Bureau for this opportunity to share our thoughts on the Effective Implementation in Section B of the zero draft.

We welcome the efforts by the Bureau to propose an action-oriented NUA.

Within this section, we would appreciate if the following suggestions could be taken into consideration:

**Building the urban structure**

On the National level framework, sub-national, metropolitan and local framework

We fully support the understanding that the realization of the transformative commitments announced in section A requires the **engagement of national, sub-national and local governments**. This multi-level engagement will ensure the integration of enabling policy frameworks and the provision of effective means of implementation at all levels.

However, we would prefer to see a more explicit reference to the fact that these frameworks should be developed in close consultation with local governments and their associations as well as civil society and other stakeholders.

We highly welcome the **explicit link** that is made **between financial mechanisms and national urban policies** as complemented by sub-national and local policies. However, we suggest this link to be extended to national development policies.

On the Stakeholder engagement framework

We fully support the **stakeholder engagement framework** presented as a combined and coordinated effort of all stakeholders involved. Indeed, this joint effort is necessary at all levels of the policy process in order to ensure a multi-level and multi-actor governance approach and engagement in the

implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Inspired by the concept of democratic governance, urban governance goes beyond the frameworks of urban administration and governance. It involves adopting partnership-based mechanisms for action and decision-making centred around local authorities, particularly involving the most marginalized inhabitants.

### **Planning and managing the urban spatial development**

As regards Urban planning and management, we welcome the suggestion to implement **integrated urban spatial development strategies** that support the realization of compact, integrated, and well-connected cities and human settlements, including peri-urban areas and the rural hinterland, including catchment areas, which harness the social and economic benefits of the urban form.

The territorial approach fosters the development of exchanges between complementary spaces, notably in terms of energy and food resources. **Solidarity** between those spaces is an intrinsic condition for the harmonious and cohesive development of territories.

In this regard, we would also like to see a reference to **inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms** as effective instruments to perform municipal administrative tasks, deliver public services and promote local development.

The growth of cities also poses challenges in terms of **land use and informal settlements**. Around half of the urbanization in developing countries takes place in an informal manner, and this phenomenon should double over the next twenty years. The integration, through planning of the existing informal neighbourhoods in cities, enables access for all to urban services and decent housing, and reduces social, spatial and economic inequalities and vulnerabilities.

We truly believe that **urban planning** aims to anticipate future changes, with the aim of achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. To this end we should clearly commit for social mixing and cohesion.

Overall, the planning and management of urban spatial development has to take different national legislation and planning systems as well as local self governance into account. (98-104)

Concerning the reference (OP 99) to **urban indicator systems** and geographic information systems, we would have a number of questions:

Is there really a necessity for **urban indicator systems**? If so, what is the link to the 2030 Agenda indicators? Who would be in charge? Is there an intention to base this only on local initiatives or is there a will to come up with an overarching framework?

Also, more emphasis should be placed on the spatial aspects of development and **urban design**. Advocating compactness and density is not enough. We should commit to develop and set standards in the selection and design of the urban form and infrastructure.

As regards the **housing** sub-section, we feel that social inclusion can be particularly reached through measure promoting socio-economic **mixture** of inhabitants. This is currently missing in the draft. Furthermore, planning for housing schemes indeed cannot be detached from the urban system, but they also need to be well-located, which implies for example good access to public transport, (OP100) and distributed, **prioritizing urban renewal and rehabilitation and preventing gentrification**, while preserving cultural heritage. Finally, we believe that informal settlement upgrading programs also need to have the clear objective of de-segregation.

On **transport and mobility**: improving accessibility in the city is vital and we consider **transport planning** as a key component of integrated territorial and urban planning, currently not explicitly referred to (OP 103). In the same context, we think that action is not needed only at the city or metropolitan level but also at the national level, aiming at developing sustainable National Urban Transport policies.

On **urban basic services**: We not only recommend but urge anticipating water issues applying an **integrated water resources management** approach as well as sanitation issues when planning urban development, rather than adjusting it to the built environment.

Sustainable water management should take into consideration all dimensions of water, for instance by linking water and sanitation with disaster risk reduction, taking advantage of the opportunities this could bring. In this respect, coupled infrastructures provide an example of resilience. As regards **waste management** systems, an explicit reference to the **polluter-pays-principle** could be made.

We fully support that heritage and culture is considered a priority component of urban plans and strategies, but would like to see them referred to also as a fundamental means for dialogue, especially in post-conflict settings.

### **Enhancing means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda: financing and other tools**

A general reference to the AAAA should be made here, and to our commitment of their full implementation, in particular its Article 34.

We fully support emphasis on the importance of all **financial means of implementation** being firmly embedded into national legal and policy frameworks, which not only refers to domestic public resources, as currently suggested, but also to generally to all financial means (hence move from OP 129 to OP 125). They furthermore need to be guided by the principle of accountability and respect for human rights.

We believe that the importance of domestic and international **private business and finance** does not come out sufficiently in the draft.

While we fully recognize the importance of local governments having **adequate financial means** that their disposal, including through transfers from higher levels of government – means that match their mandate and functions - this transfer cannot be stipulated in terms of percentage. We suggest a reference to the allocation of a share commensurate to their task.

The suggestion to address **tax avoidance** along with the insertion of anti-abuse clauses in tax treaties and transparency mechanisms is welcomed, but it is suggested to take agreed language from para 23 of the AAAA. We miss a strong reference to the **fight against corruption and land grabbing**.

As for the **Green Climate Fund**, existing possibilities already providing some access to sub-national authorities should be taken into account.

The OPs under the heading “**Partnerships**” also could be more strongly worded, as mentioned earlier, as regards the important role of the private sector. However, private business activities are not necessarily always “drivers of productivity and inclusive economic growth”. Hence, the **potential harming role of the private sector** should be addressed too.

For the section on **International Development Cooperation**, we suggest a closer alignment with the principles stipulated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda:

1. ODA is only one part of the international public finance and cooperation spectrum. Appropriate framing language is already provided in para. 50 of AAAA. In this respect, an explicit reference to frameworks that facilitate blending ODA with debt financing could be moved here from OP 147.
2. Furthermore, the need to scale up international cooperation, in particular through de-centralised and city-to-city cooperation, in order to strengthen capacity of local authorities, should be explicitly mentioned (para. 34 AAAA).

We furthermore feel that the role and importance of **science, research and development** in general is not adequately reflected thus far. Capacity building in this respect is fully welcomed as an important aspect of this cooperation, that not only needs to be strengthened between local governments and civil society but also the existing networks of the latter. In particular peer-to-peer exchange among local government associations is an opportunity to strengthen the involvement of these organizations in national consultations on development priorities.

To conclude, we fully support the importance given to disaggregated **data collection and analysis** based on our strong conviction that good governance is evidence-based. However, we would welcome a reference to the importance of data in relation to the resilience of cities, as they are key in showing the economic relevance of investments in disaster-prevention measures.

We thank you for your attention!