

Comments on Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3

National Urban Policy

Subject: Establishing *National Urban Policy Commissions*

Rationale:

The Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3 on National Urban Policy as well as many other Policy Paper Frameworks already recognize the existing gap between national and local policy making and the lack of good communication, coordination and consistency between these two levels of government. The inability of local actors to have a formal voice at the national level is in fact a critical limiting factor for the effective transition towards a more sustainable urban future.

As already extensively described in the Habitat III Policy Paper Framework III, the creation of National Urban Policies would help to mitigate the fragmentation among different levels of governance, to align “sectorial policies that affect urban areas” and develop “an enabling institutional environment”.

Comment:

In section 3.a.1 of the Habitat III Policy Paper Framework 3, recommendation No. 3 suggests “Creating a National vision/strategy for urban policies, with clear objectives, targets, **responsible institutions** and implementation and monitoring mechanisms”. However, greater emphasis should be given to the need to create a specific commission or institution to coordinate the design and implementation of these National Urban Policies. The World Future Council (WFC) therefore suggests to recommend the establishment of **National Urban Policy Commissions (NUPC)**, and include this point as a separate recommendation in the list. Such cross-ministerial commissions would be led by the national government and would help to bridge incompatibilities between local and national legislations and hence help the effective and consistent implementation of national programmes within the local context (e.g. sustainability programmes). National Urban Policy Commissions would be the institutional platform for the design as well as the implementation and monitoring of National Urban Policies.

Specific suggested additions to the text:

In section 3.a.1, the following point should be added to the list of action-oriented recommendations:

4. Create National Urban Policy Commissions in charge of designing, implementing and monitoring National Urban Policies and coordinating collaboration and communication across government departments and across levels of government

Further background:

Key benefits related to the creation of National Urban Policy Commissions (NUPC) include:

- **Improve coordination** across levels of governments, especially between national and municipal level
- **Improve consistency between levels of government** to ensure coherence between different policies in particular between national, regional and municipal policies
- **Empower local authorities** to take action and give them the appropriate political mandate and financial resources to carry out the needed transformations, in line with national and international priorities and guidelines.
- **Strengthen political commitment** for sustainable urbanization and promote mobilization of all relevant stakeholders.
- **Foster cooperation** among jurisdictions and cities across the country.
- **Create a unified national vision** for urban development.
- **Mitigate the short-termism of politics** by creating a body that ensures continuity throughout different political mandates and ensures coherent, continual and long-term political commitment for cities.
- **Reinforce the understanding of urban matters** and necessary national policies interventions
- **Promote capacity building** needed to enable governments and administrative bodies to work across departments and across levels of government.
- **Balance the development across urban, peri-urban and rural areas** and strengthen linkages between urban and rural areas and coordination between city centres and surrounding metropolitan areas.
- **Ensure adequate implementation** of national policies at the local level
- **Supervise monitoring** and ensure appropriate feedback is delivered from cities to the national government in order to carry out necessary improvements and policy changes.

Examples of existing governmental bodies in charge of coordinating national urban policies.

- Australian Minister for Cities and the Environment

<http://theconversation.com/urban-policy-could-the-federal-government-finally-get-cities-47858>
<http://www.directory.gov.au/directory?ea01f99120.&organizationalRole&845abec8-a7f2-4edc-a24f-b8886288b936>

- UK Minister for Cities
<http://www.theworkfoundation.com/blog/517/UK-Minister-for-Cities>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/minister-of-state-for-cabinet-office-2#previous-holders-of-this-role>
- Brazilian Ministry of Cities
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Cities

World Future Council Reports highlighting the lack of coordination across government levels and the need for coordination bodies for improved multi-level governance:

- H. Girardet, S. Schurig, A. Leidreiter and F. Woo, "Towards the Regenerative City," World Future Council, Hamburg, 2013.
http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Towards_Regenerative_Cities_web_01.pdf
- F. Woo, J. Wortmann, S. Schurig and A. Leidreiter, "Regenerative Urban Development: A Roadmap to the City We Need," World Future Council, Hamburg, 2014.
http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/WFC_Report_2014_-_Regenerative_Urban_Development_A_Roadmap_to_the_City_We_Need.pdf
- World Future Council, "Imagine a Regenerative City," World Future Council, Hamburg, 2014.
http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Climate_and_Energy/Cities/Imagine_A_Regenerative_City_-_FCF_Report_2014_-_digital.pdf