

H3 Informal Hearings at the UN, 17 May 2016

Excellencies, Honorable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you for the invitation to today's H3 Hearings here at the UN. I speak on behalf of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. Our statement builds upon the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments (GTF) initial reactions as of 16 May 2016, with which ICLEI fully aligns.

ICLEI welcomes the H3 Zero Draft, in particular, because of **the inclusive and innovative consultation process that is being used to carve the H3 outcomes**.

We value the use of mechanisms such as the policy units with broad stakeholder involvement, the thematic meetings hosted by local governments, the online consultations, the engagement with and recognition of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments and the Global Assembly of Partners (GAP), as well as today's H3 Hearings;

Secondly, we welcome the inclusion of **new and innovative concepts around urban development**, such as the right-to-the-city, the need for a territorial-approach; and, the need for increased metropolitan governance.

And thirdly, we welcome the Zero draft because of **the inclusion of proposals made by stakeholders**, such as reserving 20% of national budgets to local governments, the adoption of UN Decade for Sustainable Urbanization, the set-up of an International Multi-stakeholder Panel on Sustainable Urbanization and others.

Looking now towards your negotiation process to achieve a relevant H3 Outcome Document in Quito this year, **we strongly recommend that this Zero Draft is further strengthened** with the following three dimensions:

Firstly, the SDG11 on cities as well as the urban dimensions of the other SDGs must be more strongly anchored in the New Urban Agenda (NUA)

Whilst there is a brief reference in the preamble, the Zero Draft text does not provide explicit links to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular the SDG11 on cities, neither are there links to the Paris Climate Agreement.

In our view, however, the organization of H3, just one year after the adoption of a universal SDG11 on cities by Heads of State and the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement last year, should present a unique opportunity to identify the linkages and to specify further the implementation mechanisms of the SDGs as part of the New Urban Agenda. The H3 Outcome Document should therefore include detailed guidance, recommendations, processes and mechanisms on the implementation by all levels of government of the SDGs and in particular SDG11.

We feel that without such a clear linkage, the New Urban Agenda may be seen as a duplication of efforts rather than providing a coherent and integrated global strategy that builds upon existing multilateral efforts.

Secondly, we call for national governments to make action commitments as part of the New Urban Agenda and to further specify concrete mechanisms for implementing the New Urban Agenda.

In the current Zero Draft, we welcome that nations commit to visions for the New Urban Agenda but we wish to see also commitment to concrete actions under the NUA as well. We therefore suggest that the commitments and implementation must be defined clearer, such as in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Zero Draft.

In addition, we suggest that nations as part of the H3 Outcome document agree on some 4-5 concrete actions that can be launched in Quito, such as the development of guidelines for implementing the NUA at city level.

And finally, our local and subnational sustainability actions enhance your global, multilateral efforts.

Since the Rio Summit in 1992 and H2 in 1996, numerous sustainability actions have been undertaken by local and regional governments worldwide, many of them as part of Local Agenda21.

There is clear evidence that national and global sustainability efforts can be scaled-up when local and regional governments are effectively empowered, capacitated and resourced.

Today's urban reality and the fact that urban areas contribute to a significant portion of global prosperity and opportunities, but are -at the same- at serious risk and are confronted with various challenges of a global nature, require better mechanisms of dialogue for local governments at UN level.

Therefore, the H3 Zero Draft text must be strengthened with a vision and proposals from national governments on how they intend to better engage with their other levels of government to achieve a multilevel, holistic, and integrated approach to sustainability.

We call nations to agree at H3 on a process to design a new institutional architecture in which local and regional governments and their networks are provided with appropriate platforms for dialogue and representation in and with the UN.

Thank you for your attention,