



GLOBAL TASKFORCE
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS
FOR **POST-2015** DEVELOPMENT AGENDA
TOWARDS **HABITAT III**

**THE WORLD NEEDS A STAND-ALONE GOAL ON SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION
IN THE POST-2015 AGENDA
CONTRIBUTION TO 7TH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP¹**

*“Local authorities form a **vital bridge between national governments, communities and citizens** and will have a **critical role in a new global partnership**”
(HLP, May 2013)*

The Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments² believes that a **stand-alone goal on “sustainable urbanization”** is necessary in order to harness the unique potential of cities to respond to the major threats faced by humanity in the coming decades. **Cities represent both the greatest challenge and the greatest hope for a sustainable future.**

Just six hundred urban centres generate 60% of world GDP at the same time cities consume a great majority – between 60 to 80% – of energy production worldwide and account for a roughly equivalent share of global CO₂ emissions. UN projections suggest that almost all the growth in the world’s population in 2010-2030 will be in urban areas in today’s low- and middle-income countries. The infrastructure to provide food, basic services and employment for all these 1.4 billion new urban-dwellers still does not exist, whereas unsustainable patterns of consumption of production and dependency on the use of fossil fuels in existing human settlements continue to prevail. Furthermore, the doubling of the urban population will be accompanied by a tripling of the built-up area of their cities, majority of which will be expanding in low-elevation coastal zones that are adjacent to biodiversity hotspots and prone to cyclones, floods and sea-level rise.

Paradoxically, the solutions to these challenges can only be found in cities themselves. The density and innovative capacity of cities provide a unique opportunity to stimulate more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Effective and participatory urban governance can harness the agglomeration advantages of cities. A Sustainable urban development policies can contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty, stimulate local economic development, make public services more accessible, increase social inclusion, promote gender equality, boost civic participation, limit urban sprawl, enhance sustainable consumption and production, and reduce degradation of ecosystems, disaster risks and greenhouse gas emissions.

The past two decades contains a wealth of experience in this regard. Inspired by Chapter 28 in Agenda 21, tens of thousands of local initiatives and urban projects in many cities, towns and counties, improved local and global environmental conditions introducing and anchored a participatory

¹ This proposal was developed with the support of the “Development Partners Working Group on Decentralisation & Local Governance” – DeLoG (www.delog.org)

² **Local and regional government leaders and their global organizations have gathered in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III, in order to build a joint strategy to contribute to the international policy making debates within the framework of the Post 2015 agenda, Rio+20 follow-up and towards Habitat III.** The Taskforce is composed of local and regional government **members**: UCLG - World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments and its Thematic Committees, UNACLA, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, AIMF, - ATO, CLGF, MERCOCIUDADES, Nrg4SD, FOGAR - Forum of Regions of UCLG, METROPOLIS, CEMR-CCRE, UCLG-ASPAC, UCLG-Euro-Asia, UCLG-MEWA, UCLG-NORAM, FLACMA, UCLGA, CUF, FMDV. And count on various **partners**: CITIES ALLIANCE, DeLog, European Commission, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Habitat for Humanity, HLP Post 2015, Huairou Commission, ILO, Millennium Campaign, One UN Secretariat, Slum Dwellers International, SUEZ, UN-Habitat, UNCDF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Urban Campaign.

governance culture. Furthermore, hundreds of local and subnational governments are advancing with their ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation plans and actions³.

National governments have already recognized local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders of global climate regime, adopted a 10-year action plan that enables their engagement to meet global biodiversity targets and finally at Rio+20 Summit, acknowledged efforts and progress made at the local and subnational levels, and recognized the important role that such authorities and communities can play in implementing sustainable development.⁴

By not including urban targets (with the exception of target 7.D on improving the lives of slum dwellers), the MDGs failed to address the distinctly urban nature of poverty, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Promisingly, both the High Level Panel's Report to the Secretary-General of May 2013 and the United Nations Global Compact of June 2013 have acknowledged importance of sustainable urbanization.

Why a stand-alone goal?

During 2013, the leaders of the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments have expressed their commitment to: eradicate extreme poverty, ensure food security, promote universal access to quality basic services to reduce inequalities, support local economic development, promote gender equality, improve the protection of biodiversity and natural resources, recognize culture as an enabler of development, ensure better intergovernmental coordination and an enabling environment for local governments.⁵ They have identified sustainable urbanization as a key priority with regards to territorial cohesion, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and safe cities. Local and regional leaders have warned that if the forces of urbanization are not managed speedily and efficiently, the spread of informal settlements, the lack of basic service provision and infrastructure and the growing environmental impact of cities will derail the Post-2015 Agenda. **They have called on the world to put an urban goal at the heart of the sustainable development agenda.**

A "cross-cutting" approach which spread urban issues across separate goals would be inadequate. Such an outcome would fail to harness the urban opportunity and to ensure that an important part of policy making authorities, namely local and sub-national governments are fully involved in the agenda and become drivers of sustainable development by adopting a transformative, integrated and multi-sectorial strategy that only a stand-alone urban goal allows. It is essential to recognize local and sub-national governments as essential governmental stakeholders in the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, and to mobilize them to commit to implement and monitor urban targets and indicators.

Both UN-Habitat and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2013) supported by the 2013 Bonn Declaration of Mayors and the UCLG World Council in Rabat have called for a stand-alone goal to make all cities socially inclusive, economically productive, environmentally sustainable, secure and resilient to climate change and other risks. Building on targets proposed by Habitat and SDSN, and with the aim of developing common approaches to support the negotiation process for a stand-alone goal on "sustainable urbanization", local and regional governments propose the following areas for establishing specific targets in cities.

³ <http://local2012.iclei.org/local-sustainability-study/> and citiesclimateregistry.org

⁴ Dec.X/22, CBD COP10, Nagoya, 2010, para.7 of Dec.1/CP.16 , UNFCCC COP16, Cancun, 2010, para.42 of "The Future We Want" Document

⁵ See 1st communique of the GTF (March 2013), the Munyonyo Statement on Local Government's role in the Post-2015 development Agenda (Kampala, May 2013), the Bonn Declaration of Mayors (June 2013) in the Mayors Adaptation Forum, Nantes Declaration of Mayors and Subnational Leaders on Climate Change and the 4th UCLG Congress (Rabat, October 2013)

One Goal on Sustainable Urbanization

In our view, an urban SDG must essentially seek to be

- a) “Transformative and Integrative”: this SDG must be led by a multi sector approach, linking urban land use including informal settlement with urban energy, with water, with resilience, with mobility and opportunities for employment ,
- b) “Prioritizing, Enabling and Innovating” in particular the exercise of urban planning as ongoing unplanned, uncontrolled urban development has to be halted.
- c) “Progressively Measurable as part of Visioning the Future”: this SDG will need essential criteria to measure progress and indicators not for the sake of the indicators themselves but rather to allow a local engagement through participatory dialogues “for the progress”.
- d) An urban SDG must build upon the participatory approach that was agreed in 1992 and based Local Agenda 21 planning or similarly local participatory planning processes. It is difficult to embrace an urban SDG if its implementation does not involve local participation on visioning our global future.

The goal should promote socially inclusive, economically productive and environmentally sustainable and resilient cities and territories, with participative, efficient and accountable city governance to support equitable urban development.

1. **Poverty reduction and equality in urban areas:** end extreme urban poverty and universalize access to basic services so that these reach vulnerable urban populations, including those living in slums and informal settlements. Poverty lines should take account both food needs and the costs of non-food basic needs (e.g. housing and adequate access to essential services). Food security for all requires that poverty lines are adjusted within countries to reflect differences in the costs of food and other basic needs. Reducing inequalities requires equal right to assets, particularly equal rights for all in land tenure.
2. **More socially inclusive economic growth:** support local economic development as a process that brings together partners to harness local resources for sustainable and equitable economic development; expand urban employment, particularly for young people and female heads of households, encourage higher productivity by integrating the informal sector and marginalized urban areas; ensure access to the urban services that support employment generation (i.e. transport, housing and electricity) and invest in the urban green economy, urban regeneration, culture and heritage.
3. **Sustainable and healthy urban environment:** reduce urban pollution and achieve marked reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption (including improved management of buildings, transport, waste and wastewater management and wider use of clean fuels and renewable energy; buildings and transport management); and develop robust urban climate change and disaster resilience plans integrated into national climate adaptation and mitigation plans.
4. **Urban management and governance:** sustainable development cannot be achieved without strong, accountable, capable and adequately resourced local governments and citizen participation. A wider concept of public governance, supported by reinforced territorial approach and cooperation between different municipalities and levels of government to develop more integrated urban policies (multilevel governance) and public participation in decision-making processes (multi-stakeholder approach), is an essential component of stronger local institutions. Local government development cooperation and peer-to-peer exchanges among local governments should be used as tools to develop stronger local institutions.

To “meet the challenge of urbanization”, the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments calls upon all UN State members and UN Agencies to **support a stand-alone goal on “Sustainable Urbanization”**.

