

**H III**

**REGIONAL MEETING**  
LATIN AMERICA &  
-THE CARIBBEAN-  
TOLUCA 18-20 APRIL 2016

**THE TOLUCA DECLARATION  
— FOR HABITAT III —  
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN**

TOLUCA  
18 - 20 APRIL, 2016



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## **Habitat III Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean Toluca Declaration for Habitat III**

In the city of Toluca, Mexico we gather, representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, including national, sub-national, and local governments, legislators, the academic community, and civil society social organizations to share the challenges and opportunities of our cities and communities, and build, from our own realities, a regional vision for their future. We assume this responsibility with a conviction that the consolidation of cities and human settlements where people can fully exercise all their rights and freedoms is an indispensable condition to combat structural lags that harm our countries and cities like poverty, insecurity and violence, social and territorial inequality and the vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

Habitat III is being held at a decisive moment. It is a time to assume long-term commitments to materialize the efforts of the international community that resulted from, during 2015, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development; together, these agreements recognize that the prosperity and well-being of humanity depends on our capacity to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions -- economic, social and environmental -- in a balanced and integrated way, including the way we plan, manage, and build our cities and human settlements.

The Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 11, (“Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”), recognize the relevance of urban and territorial development to improve the well-being of the world population. Reaching adequate living conditions in cities and human settlements so that they are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, is an inextricable goal to the detachment of the challenges presented by poverty, climate change, energy and infrastructure, and inclusive economy, among others.

The Right to the City is considered in some countries as a guiding concept advocating for a living environment that has the necessary conditions to facilitate the universal and effective exercise of all human rights, economic, social, and cultural. When these rights will be realized and all actors will assume the corresponding commitments and responsibilities, urbanization will effectively generate development opportunities that humanity has looked since it started concentrating in urban agglomerations.

For this reason, we reiterate the commitment of the region, which during the last few years has been developing solutions (both political and urban) related to urban development in order to contribute to the process of constructing the New Urban Agenda, which will be adopted in Quito during the Habitat III Conference; and we call for the participation of its political leaders to assume the commitment to push it forward. Due to its comprehensiveness and reach, the New Urban Agenda should be structured as a set of commitments that all national and sub-national governments and communities should adopt as a road map for the implementation of a new model of sustainable and inclusive urban development. Its success will depend on the clarity and forcefulness that countries, governments, and communities will project onto the agreements that result from Habitat III. It also depends on us being able to put people, their needs, and their rights at the center of the New Urban Agenda.

With this conviction, the participants of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Meeting:

*We recognize that it is imperative to:*

- Recognize that urbanization and development are intricately linked and that it is necessary to ensure sustainable growth. Urbanization must be a driving force and a source of development with the power to change and improve living conditions for all.
- Highlight the role of cultural diversity and the heritage in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, as a way to strengthen social participation and the exercise of citizenship.
- Guarantee that the New Urban Agenda is built within a focus of human rights and gender equality, where the priority is the equity and sustainability of human settlements as a medium for the full development of all.
- Assume that the new model of urban development should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development to promote equity, well-being, and distribution of common goods and public services to reduce exclusion and social-spatial segregation.
- Recover the calling of the city as a meeting place and a space for culture, entertainment, and opportunities for the development of people, in which plurality and diversity can be expressed from those who inhabit it, and where the free interchange of ideas promotes innovation and development; and where heritage plays a significant role in the processes of conservation and urban regeneration.
- Ensure that the agreements that countries adopt within the framework of the Habitat III Conference achieve that all people, women and men of all ages and from all conditions of human and cultural diversity, have full access to the territory and the city and all opportunities that these generate, and to guarantee their political, social, economic, and cultural participation in its construction and development.
- Build and adapt cities within a gender perspective that allow and promote the human rights and empowerment of women of all ages in the development, decision-making, and enjoyment of the city and its public spaces -- including prevention of all types of violence against women and girls -- in order for them to enjoy a safe and respectful environment, free of violence, and to exercise their rights in a free and full manner, to achieve their development and ensure the conditions for economic, occupational, political, and social equality.
- Adopt agreements that ensure effective integration into the community and access for all, in particular people with disabilities, to the cities, physical environment, transportation, information, and communications -- including information and communications systems and technologies -- and other services and installations open to the public or for public use, in both urban and rural areas.

We propose the following as key elements to be included in the New Urban Agenda:

### **Urban and territorial planning**

- Incorporate into development planning schemes a focus on the integral and sustainable management of the territory, promoting equitable growth of regions and reinforcing links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, with the goal of establishing productive and harmonious relationships between the different areas. This will enable the advancement towards competitive cities, allowing for productive transformation, resilience and the reduction of risk, food security, the sustainable management of land, and migratory patterns that are determined not only by factors of expulsion.

- Foster the development of an urban economy that must translate into benefits for all people, improving their quality of life. Urban development expenses are investments in the wellbeing of the population.
- Promote inclusive economies that ensure decent and sustainable ways of life and work for all people, taking into consideration the existence of other economic schemes, such as: solidarity with financial support mechanisms, informal, social, and circular economies that especially recognize the role of women in them, valuing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid domestic work.
- Promote national planning schemes that include a vision of a system of cities that recognizes both the functional relationships and dependence that is economic, urban, environmental, technological, and social; existing between the municipal nucleus and other human settlements.
- Promote the development of intermediate cities as service centers for rural areas and as the first link in generating value in production chains, which originate in the rural environment; recognizing the contributions that they bring to indigenous communities in the provision of eco-systemic services.
- Prioritize the urban regeneration, repurposing, and rehabilitation over extensive models and the occupation of new territory. The proposed model should be implemented avoiding processes of gentrification and expulsion of the low-income population from the city center to the periphery.
- Incorporate and promote the local cultural values, avoiding the importation of integral planning models based on cultural models, social environments, or economic frameworks foreign to the territory to be planned. Promote planning model that incorporate the gender perspective.

## Urban Governance

- Improve joint and multilevel urban governance in all spheres and at all scales of cities: networks and systems of cities, mega cities, metropolis, intermediate and small cities, including their relation to all rural sectors, promoting the development of mechanisms and legal frameworks that guarantee the collaboration and coordination between municipalities and between different levels of government. Additionally, promote adequate and balanced processes of administrative and financial decentralization that are accompanied by processes of strengthening the technical, administrative, and financial capacities of local governments.
- Innovate within metropolitan management through planning, governance, partnership, and financing mechanisms that are adequate in order to guarantee the quality, efficiency, and affordability of goods and services demanded by the inhabitants of urban areas, ensuring adequate coordination with national governments.

## Adequate housing

- Ensure, within a framework of human rights, housing schemes that are inclusive and integrated in sustainable urbanization strategies that facilitate the access to housing and basic services that are adequate, safe, and affordable for all people, and to improve informal settlements. In order to do so, it is necessary to strengthen programs and institutions that have been successful at tackling the housing shortage, qualitative and quantitative, while innovating strategies to cater to groups that have lagged behind the most. These include women, youth, older persons, those with disabilities, the population involved in the informal economy, and those that live in informal settlements, in areas prone to risks or in sprawling rural communities, among others. Such innovations should include a

logic of the proximity of services, adequate financing schemes, technical and financial assistance to those who produce their own housing, and the development of new markets such as renting, renting with the option of buying (leasing), and the exchange of used housing, providing different forms of tenure, guaranteeing its security.

- Recognize that the housing shortage includes the structuring of a comprehensive land policy that takes into account the use of urbanized land, especially the empty urban spaces, the orderly and progressive production of new neighborhoods in adequate land for urban expansion, and the production of housing in rural areas with patterns that are appropriate in the surrounding environment.
- Recognize urban informality as a result of dysfunctional land markets and urban policies, and strengthen programs of urbanization and integration of informal settlements. These programs should include, as the case may be, access to basic services, quality public space, community services such as regularization measures for the property of land and the promotion of security of tenure, as well as the establishment of methods and strategies for the prevention and mediation of conflicts.

### **Water and sanitation**

- Develop the necessary infrastructure for the provision of water, sewage systems, public cleanliness, solid waste management, urban drainage, and storm water management to guarantee universal and equitable access to potable water and adequate sanitary and hygiene services.
- Ensure that this infrastructure forms part of plans and projects that are articulated and integrated, including interventions in terms of housing, mobility, among others, and counts on the participation of the local population.

### **Sustainable mobility**

- Accelerate cities' transition towards inclusive and equitable models of sustainable mobility that respond to the different necessities of accessibility of people, recognizing the requirements of mobility of women and men, and that reduce green house gas emissions in cities. This transition will have to be reflected in the priorities of investments in infrastructure, in measures to guarantee road safety and a reduction in deaths and grave injuries caused by road accidents. More importantly, it should reflect an adequate provision and distribution of public space, with a vision to maintain, within the modal distribution, a greater participation of public transport and non-motorized means of transportation that combat a sedentary lifestyle, and prevent non-contagious sicknesses in cities.
- Integrate processes of urban and transportation planning, in order to drastically reduce the number, distance, time, and cost of trips taken by the inhabitants. Among other strategies, propose the model for transit oriented development, the revision of housing densities, the promotion of mixed-use, changes to regulations in city parking provisions, and the model of polycentric development tied to a greater flexibility of the housing market.
- Adopt financing strategies for the public transportation systems, that guarantee its viability and that promote its economic sustainability, to allow for all people to access the services through affordable fees.

## Land Management

- Promote the social and ecological function of land, considering food safety and nutrition, in order to promote fair cities through policies that distribute the burdens and benefits of urbanization fairly and avoid the processes of segregation. In order to do so, it is necessary to count on the regulation of the land market to ensure the capture and distribution of the value created as a result of the processes of urbanization, starting with fiscal, urban planning, and urban management tools, as well as to avoid speculative practices. Innovate the instruments that allow for the planning of organized urban growth, minimizing the prevalence of intra-urban voids and consolidating optimal densities within cities. In this regard, the cooperation for the design, financing, and implementation of state-of-the-art urban indicator systems and geographic information systems is essential.
- Create and recover quality public spaces that are accessible and safe, and that facilitate social cohesion, the interaction between generations, livelihood opportunities, including in peripheral areas. In the same way, strengthen the strategies for conservation and preservation of heritage and landscape, and expand accessibility and improve connectivity in cities through the removal of all types of barriers.

## Environment, climate change, and resilience

- Reduce significantly the impact cities have on climate change through the promotion of consumption and production patterns that are sustainable including management patterns of land, waste, water, sanitation, air contamination, the generation and use of clean and renewable energies, green areas, infrastructure, and sustainable housing, efficient energy programs, and in general, the sustainable management of natural resources that the city consumes, as well as the restoration of degraded ecosystems.
- Increase preventive and reactive measures to boost the resilience in cities, meaning their capacity to recover after extreme events in the least amount of time possible minimizing human, environmental, and economic losses through the reduction and risk management of disasters.
- Prevent and reduce the exposure to risk of people located in informal settlements through, inter alia, in-situ interventions and planned relocations of people depending on the specific circumstances.
- Integrate disaster risk management in the use and occupation of territory, allowing for the planning of territorial development to integrate, in its economic, socio-economic, and biophysical components, holistic actions to prevent conditions for future risks and mitigate present ones.
- Develop and apply mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change that serve to prevent and reduce new conditions of vulnerability to disasters associated with the occurrence of the phenomena of variability and/or climate change.

For sustainable development in the region, it is essential that a new generation of national urban policies will be built on the basis of a new paradigm of urbanization that promotes accessibility, adequate housing, equity, security, mobility, and cultural identity.

*We identify the following as key elements for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda:*

a) At the national and local level:

- Development of innovative models of multi-level governance where different levels of government participate in territorial development in a coordinated and co-responsible manner, establishing long-term commitments, when possible. Promotion of national urban policies and the revision of existing legislation that allows sub-national and local governments to plan and manage cities and urban areas, and urban-rural linkages in a sustainable and participatory manner, aligned and articulated with national development strategies.
- Promote institutional solidity, professionalism, transparency, and accountability in urban management based on efficient use of and access to available information, and that urban development is assumed as a social and a political commitment where its implementation demands the allocation of sufficient and timely resources appropriate for achieving a long-term transformation.
- Recognize that urban development, land use, sustainability and housing are the responsibility of the different levels of government, including intermediate levels between the national and local authorities.
- Establish spaces that are effective for citizens to participate in the development of their cities and settlements as a tool and an opportunity to foster good governance, social cohesion, and democratic consolidation. These spaces for participation must be accompanied by processes of empowerment and co-responsibility of citizens and promoted in the planning, execution, and monitoring of works and projects that have an impact on the sustainable development of the city. It is therefore essential to have a space for dialogue, joint development and joint monitoring between national government, sub-national governments, and representatives of civil society and the private sector, which also guarantees the commitment and sustainability of the process.
- Promote sub-national financing mechanisms based on strengthening revenue collection mechanisms in cities, including property taxes, and by capturing the value of urban land, and public-private partnerships, among others, to complement the transfer of national public resources. These measures should contribute to improving the living conditions of all people, especially those who lack access to urban infrastructure and services, promoting tools and mechanisms of local economic development stemming from endogenous resources of cities and territories.
- Use information technology and communications at the service of the population and public decision-making, to increase the quality and relevance of territorial planning, the efficiency in the delivery of urban services, allow the sustainable management of natural resources and facilitate the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability through citizen observatories. Promote the generation and availability of information, data and indicators disaggregated by sex, age, and territories, among others.
- Change the prevailing paradigms on the use and the way we relate with each other in the public space, as well as a new culture of sustainable production and consumption of goods, services and urban amenities, where national, sub-national and local governments, the academic community and the education system, the media, and social organizations play a decisive role.

b) At the international level:

- Strengthen the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), endowing it with the appropriate resources and establishing adequate working arrangements for it to continue to be the leading authority on the field of sustainable urban development within the United Nations system. To call upon agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system to work efficiently, in a



coherent and coordinated manner in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially with regard to issues that include sustainable urban development and housing.

- Expand the opportunities for international cooperation, including North-South, south-south, triangular, and decentralized cooperation, as well as the mobilization of financial resources from all sources to contribute to the implementation of the agreements that are adopted at the Habitat III Conference.

Encourage the participation of civil society, local authorities, parliamentarians, the private sector, the scientific community, academia, philanthropies and foundations, and volunteers in the implementation of the New Agenda Urbana, through partnerships between the different stakeholders to mobilize and share resources, knowledge, experience and technology, complementing the efforts of governments.

### **Monitoring and review**

- We consider a monitoring mechanism for the Habitat III Conference indispensable to assess progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to identify the challenges and gaps in relation to urban development that require international cooperation, including the mobilization of financial resources.
- This monitoring system shall generate inputs in terms of sustainable urban development that fuel the work of the High Level Political Forum which will monitor and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, we propose to consider the creation of regional monitoring mechanisms.
- Promote the development and strengthening of the capacities of developing countries to implement the New Urban Agenda, including the mobilization of adequate means of implementation.

We commit ourselves and agree to promote this declaration as an input to the New Urban Agenda and for the agreements that are adopted during the Habitat III Conference, and we commit to using its considerations and proposals as guiding elements for inclusive and sustainable planning and management of our cities and human settlements during the next decades.

We gratefully acknowledge the hospitality of the Mexican Government, of the State of Mexico, and of the City of Toluca and we recognize the work that was done to ensure the success of the Habitat III Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Toluca, Mexico; 20 April 2016