



SLoCaT Report on the Habitat III - “New Urban Agenda” – informal meetings and negotiations

New York, 6th – 10th June 2016

I. Background

Habitat III is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to take place from 17-20 October 2016. Habitat III will be the first UN global conference following the adoption of the Global Goals on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; thus the “New Urban Agenda” (NUA) – the Habitat III outcome document – will be a key opportunity to shape the implementation of these agreements in a number of sectors, including transport.

Eighteen days of informal meetings in New York were scheduled before the **three days** of formal negotiations at the 3rd Preparation Committee (PrepCom3) in Surabaya, Indonesia from the 25-27th July 2016 and the **four days** at Habitat III itself in Quito, Ecuador, from the 17 to 20th October 2016. 16 May and 17 May 2016 were allocated to “**Informal Hearings with Local Authorities Associations**” and the 18th May until 20th May 2016 were allocated to “**Informal Intergovernmental Meetings**” the SLoCaT report of these meetings is available [here](#).

II. Informal meetings, New York – 6 -10 June 2016

6th June and 7 June 2016 were allocated to “**Informal Hearings with Stakeholder**”, the agenda, speaker profiles and statements are available [here](#).

8th June until 10th June 2016 were allocated to “**Informal Intergovernmental Meetings**”, to date (15h June) no statements are available online.

From these meetings we note the following:

- While the two days of **Informal Hearings with Stakeholders were rich with valuable content and views** only about 30-40 Member States seem to have physically followed the Stakeholder Sessions (6th and 7th June) (more may have followed online), often only with junior officials. Very few Member States asked questions or participated in the discussions.

- The Member States that did follow the stakeholder meetings seemed impressed by the depth and quality of the comments/input – which is very different in style and content from the governmental input.
- **The views of marginalised groups (women, people with disabilities, slum dwellers etc.) came through very strongly** - through good advocates and active participation.
- We see an **increasing number of Stakeholder groups (e.g. representatives of the elderly, people with disabilities etc.) speaking up on transport.**
- Procedural disagreements between Member States about **how** to handle the negotiations and **who** should chair the discussions – lead to the suspension of the informal meetings and the loss of very valuable negotiation time.
- With only 10 days of negotiation time left – there is a risk that **procedural disagreements will prevent deeper discussion of urban development** and the New Urban Agenda.
- Despite the UN decisions to include stakeholders in the negotiation process, the explicit support from some Member States and the **general recognition that stakeholders will be essential actors in the implementation of a New Urban Agenda – many Member States clearly still prefer to negotiate in closed "behind closed door" sessions, without stakeholders or reporters.**
- There is a proposal to add two extra days of informal intergovernmental negotiations on the 27th and 28th June – immediately before the long planned 3 day sessions on the 29th, 30th June and 1st July (to be confirmed).

III. Informal Hearings with Stakeholders – 6th and 7th June 2016

The two days were divided into 7 different panels addressing different sections of the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda. The parties present were the 14 GAP constituent groups¹, some member states² and other stakeholders.

This report focuses on the transport related aspects.

¹ Local and sub-national authorities, Research and Academia, Civil Society Organizations, Grass roots organizations, Women, Parliamentarians (not presented on the 6th of June), Children and youth, Business and industries, Foundations and philanthropies, Professionals, Trade Unions and workers, Farmers, Indigenous people, Media, Older Persons.

² About 35 Member States were identifiable on the 6th of June. These included: Chile, European Union, Netherlands, Kenya, Czech Republic, Argentina, Peru, Spain, Italy, Ecuador, United States, France, Germany, Benin, Thailand, Slovakia, Iraq, Mexico, Guinea, Chad, Russia, Israel, Romania, Kiribati, Columbia, Ethiopia, Maldives.

Day One – 6th June 2016

Introduction and welcoming remarks

Co-Chair of the Habitat III Preparatory Committee Maryse Gautier, France, highlighted the importance of the hearings as part of the participatory approach developed by the Bureau to be used in preparation for, and during, Habitat III.

Habitat III Secretary General Joan Clos stressed that this session is a key opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to speak to member states in the context of the negotiations on the draft outcome document. He lauded the participatory process which ensured stakeholders inclusion and integration at every step, not only in presenting their views but also contributing their expertise. **Highlighting Habitat III as a step forward in strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, he stressed they will be the main partners on the ground, playing a vital role in implementing the New Urban Agenda once adopted.**

General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III (GAP) President Eugenie Birch expressed appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the draft, its commitments, and its recognition of stakeholders’ participation. She called for the creation of an open multi-stakeholder post-Habitat III coordination mechanism focusing on knowledge, advocacy, innovation, monitoring and investment. She highlighted the urgency to act by saying “Our world population will grow by a city of a million, every week, for the next forty years”.

GAP Vice President Shipra Narang Suri said the consensus at Habitat III should not only be achieved among member states but also stakeholders. She described the partnership for the New Urban Agenda proposed by GAP as: rights-based and people-centered; rooted in decent work and social inclusion; gender responsive; planet sensitive; contextualized; just and participatory; evidence-based; and grounded in subsidiarity. Underscoring the vision on transformative commitments, she stressed the need to further develop: women’s rights and gender; the role of stakeholders in the follow-up and review process; and the recognition of the new urban reality, which includes an increasing number of humanitarian and environmental crises in cities.

Panel 1: Key Recommendations by Co-Chairs of the General Assembly of Parties

The representative of **Civil Society** mentioned the role of transport as a tool to create strong more equitable cities. She informed us that her mentioning of transport was inspired by SLoCaT’s input.

The representative of **Farmers** mentions briefly the importance of infrastructure that promotes rural-urban linkages.

The representative of **Older Persons** mentions strongly that older persons have a need to walk and take public transport as their main forms of transportation, and called for less car-oriented cities.

The first panel, provided an opportunity for the constituent parties to address their concerns about the NUA and give recommendations to the Member States.

Ramon Cruz (ITDP) took the floor to speak about transport on behalf of **SLoCaT** during this session, his statement is available [here](#).

The representative of **Civil Society** and the representative of **Older People** also talked about transport as a major concern.

Panel 2: Vision: Quito Declaration (paragraphs 1-16)

Victor Pineda representing **World Enabled** and all disabled people, mentions that he personally feels unwelcomed in the city. In a story about him and the city, he describes how bad he feels when a public bus does not stop for him. He wonders “where is my right to the city?”.

Alison Brown (member of the steering committee of UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign) mentions that she hopes to see bolder language in the NUA and that she hopes that not all the humanitarian goals will be deleted from the text. Other delegates stressed the importance of a very strong vision, and a financing and funding method.

Panel 3: Transformative commitments for sustainable urban development (paragraphs 17-83)

Thomas Bergman, **Children and Youth** strongly emphasizes the role of walking and biking in reducing obesity and promoting a healthy lifestyle. He also mentioned the importance of road safety for children.

Other issues that also came up during the meeting were: the need for inclusion of the informal economy, the need for inclusion of people with disabilities, the need for inclusion of poor people, the funding and financing, and methods of implementation and evaluation.

Day 2 – Tuesday 7th June

Panel 4: Effective Implementation (paragraphs 84-163)

Ramon Cruz (ITDP) was one of the five panellists in this session, in which transport got a lot of attention.

Daria Cibrario, Public Services International (PSI), member of the **Trade Unions and Workers** Constituent Group mentions transport briefly by including transport in a list of public services she believes should be organized by the public sector, not the private one.

Clinton Moloney, **PricewaterhouseCoopers** (PwC) (Australia), panellist: He mentions transport briefly in relation to green infrastructure and land use.

Ramon Cruz, **Institute for Transportation & Development Policy** (ITDP) was on the panel on behalf of SLoCaT. He mentioned that the role of transport in cities is often underestimated. A lack of access to urban opportunities is a major cause of urban poverty and inequality, while providing high-quality urban access, particularly to the disadvantaged, brings great social and economic benefits. He also mentioned the need for good planning to minimize the need to travel – as well as urban mobility through Transit Oriented Development based on walking, cycling, public transport and new “shared mobility” options. But what we face now is a lack of global implementation, at scale. We know what works – it’s just NOT YET implemented. SLoCaT is preparing a Quito Action Plan for Sustainable Urban Mobility that will be launched in Quito. He asked for more detailed language on HOW to take action and stressed the importance of creating national guideline frameworks; countries and cities that have plans are the ones that can access financial resources. His full statement is available [here](#).

Thomas Wright, **Regional Planning Association** (United States), moderator: Wrapped up the panellist comments and briefly mentioned that land use should be more integrated and include transport.

Jose Galvez Contreras, **Honduras** spoke in support of Ramon Cruz’s comments made on the panel – and that we should look at specific projects that can be done.

German asked the panellists for about more detailed recommendations and language about partnership approaches.

Victor Pineda representing **World Enabled** and all disabled people, Other Stakeholder: Recommended the Member States to listen to the comments made by Ramon Cruz on mobility. He stresses that accessible public transportation benefits everybody, and that we have to be explicit in the outcome document about what we mean by accessibility.

Panel 5: Implementation at the Local Level

Emilia Saiz, **United Cities and Local Governments** (UCLG), and **Global Task Force** (GTF) (moderator): Raises the question in the introduction of panellist Andrew Bata “How do we make cities work in a sense that they allow us to move around?”

Rohit Aggarwala, **Sidewalk Labs** (panellist) states that technology alone won’t solve the problems that our urban areas are facing; there is absolutely a need for a healthy governance framework.

Andrew Bata, **International Association of Public Transport** (UITP) (panellist). Urban public transportation is the ultimate connector in the city that is therefore very important.

Public transit is a proven policy element that can help healthy urbanization. He mentions four major areas in which public transport plays a role:

- Economics; public transport provides the poorest with opportunities to contribute to the economy due to its low costs.
- Environmental health: helps decrease carbon footprint, getting people out of cars.
- Health benefits: Public transport can make people reach 20 minutes of walking per day and help with obesity and cardiovascular problems.
- Integration: on a national, social and cultural level for marginalized groups, for its low-cost. It's also the ultimate meeting place, connector, for different groups of society.

UITP's vision is to move away from cars and push for walking and biking. National governments should establish funds for transport, both in the form of new investments and repairing investments. National governments should also prioritize structures that integrate public transport, and local governments need a bigger role in transport planning.

Ishtiaque Zahir Titas Co-chair of **Professionals Constituent Group**: Explains that in the country he comes from (Bangladesh), public transportation is in fact a big expense. He also explains that now in his city there is a brand new metro but still the city does not yet have proper public roads. He asks "What is the prioritizing system?" We now have a new metro but no proper public roads.

Victor Pineda **World Enabled** and all disabled people "In what ways can the work that you do engage more fully people with disabilities?" Rohit Aggarwala, **Sidewalk Labs** replies saying "Providing mobility to people who cannot drive is one of the technologies that can help transport of disabled persons."

Andrew Bata, **International Association of Public Transport** (UITP): In response to Ishtiaque Zahir Titas' comments: In terms of prioritization, roads are poisons to cities. The more you build, the more cars you attract. Inside a city, shared rides and public transportation is advised. Highways and roads on countryside are no problem, but inside cities roads are bad for congestion, safety, pollution, health. NY does not have the best transportation system, but in terms of transportation for disabled NY is very strong. Many other countries with fantastic public transportation have poor access for people with disabilities e.g Paris. Doesn't have step free access. This is counterintuitive, and should be seen as two separate issues.

Marcelo Montenegro, **Action Aid**: When we design transport systems there are some specifications on public transport. Marcelo talks specifically about women in public transport and concern for harassment.

Panel 6: Follow-up and Review (paragraphs 163-175)

Inez Sanchez de Madariaga, **Technical University of Madrid** (panellist) Used transport as an example of a type of data collection in which gender needs to be taken into consideration. She mentions that she worked on how to engender transportation statistics. Men mostly do commuting back and forth to work, women make use of public transport much more. They not only work but also often function as caregivers and they work at home. The current system is based on male mobility. What women do is hidden under topics like visiting others and leisure, instead of the mobility of care. If this is taken on board by transport policy makers, this will change the policy making completely. Engendering of data collection is crucial to policy making.

Panel 7: Partnerships for the New Urban Agenda

Rose Molokoane, **Slum/ Shack Dwellers International (SDI)** (panellist) while explaining the importance of data collection and information in the development of slums, she mentions very briefly the problems of traffic congestion in slums.

Kenya: Mentions briefly (when explaining how youth initiatives and partnerships can be effective) that in Nairobi, there are lines of congestion, insufficient water drainage system, etc. The National Youth Service Initiative helped cleaning the walking pathways and drainage system, etc. for a small compensation. Slum areas become an economy.

Germany: "Very impressed. Based on the past weeks' experiences, what do you - stakeholders of GAP- wish to be your role in the NUA?" Shipra Narang Suri, Vice President of the **General Assembly of Partners:** in response said that the NUA incorporates the views discussed by the multi-stakeholder platform. She wants stakeholders to have a role in monitoring and review mechanisms. She also comments that the NUA does not mention partnerships in the data collection section. Hopes that stakeholders will be involved in giving input in data collection.

Final statements

Shipra Narang Suri, Vice President, **General Assembly of Partners**, presented her key messages from the day:

- The ideas are all there in the zero draft, excellent start with the vision of "no one behind". We however need clearer articulation in the draft. Our messages could be stronger and simpler.
- The Habitat agenda should be closely tied with other agendas.
- There is need for empowered cities and empowered stakeholders.
- Institutions and frameworks come first. Technologies cannot fix everything and cannot work with unhealthy frameworks.
- Measurable outcomes and financing elements need to be strengthened.
- There were key messages related to housing, planning, land.
- Precariousness.

- Data collection was a very strong point, both qualitative and quantitative. There is no reference of partnerships in the section of the NUA on data collection. This needs to be corrected.
- Need for open platforms and building on existing platforms.
- The concept of partnerships has to be spelled out more clearly.

IV. Informal Intergovernmental Meetings 8th – 10th June 2016

Background:

These three days should have been an opportunity for the UN Member States to discuss a second draft of the New Urban Agenda. But the late agreement on the co-facilitators to revise the Zero Draft meant that there was no new draft available to discuss (had been expected on the 27th May).

Wednesday 18th June 2016

Opening Statements

Opening remarks by co-facilitator (Philippines): Mentioned that "It was wiser to first establish co-facilitators before releasing the next draft. We will use the existing Zero Draft as basis for this meeting."

Session One - Exchange of views on the Preamble and Quito Declaration (Vision) of the Zero Draft (compilation as reference) & Discussion on Convergence Points on the Preamble and Quito Declaration (Vision) of the Zero Draft

Thailand (Mrs. Chulamane Chartsuwan, **speaking on behalf of G77 and China**) expressed dissatisfaction about the absence of the 1st Draft and the late appointment of co-facilitators.

European Union expressed thanks for engagement of co-facilitators, and hopes for a concrete and precise action agenda. Some important topics for the EU include human rights, resilience and climate change, follow-up and review. The EU also hopes for inclusion of the 2030 agenda, and is supportive of multi-level partnerships and the three guiding principles of the NUA. The EU also encourages strong language on gender equality, on accessibility of persons with disability and the condition of refugees.

Brazil argued that we cannot address the future of our cities without talking about human rights. Brazil also mentioned that the NUA should make reference to the interrelation between cultural, environmental, economic rights.

The **US** presented the concern that there is a lack of understanding amongst Member States over what happened the past two weeks, and fears a lack of transparency in the process. The US urges the co-chairs to be as transparent as possible. The US also stressed the importance of the role of stakeholders and partners in the process, and agrees with Canada and EU about the need for inclusion of human rights in the NUA.

Jamaica (representing the G77 and China) gave suggestions for the actual writing of the next draft.

The **EU** proposed to separate into break-out groups, due to the lack of a new draft to work on.

China supported the comments made by Thailand. China also mentioned that the NUA should not only be viewed through the lens of human rights. It should be seen as a people-centred document that helps people live in cities. They emphasized that there is no “one fits all” solution and that this discussion is getting too much involved in countries’ own affairs. China does not want to include the language of the stakeholders.

Japan hopes to see more about human security. The “right to the city” concept is not well-established, and needs to be defined better.

Jamaica (representing the G77 and China) said there is more preparation needed and requested Informal Informals.

The **EU** supported Jamaica in its request for Informal Informals.

Co-facilitator (**Philippines**) accepted the request to adjourn the meeting until this afternoon.

Brazil proposed that the co-chairs and the bureau revise the draft to create some kind of provisional draft, adjourn the meeting for today and re-start tomorrow with a better draft. This proposal was rejected by the co-facilitator (Mexican).

Session 2

Co-Chair (**Philippines**): Proposed a new agenda including Informal Informals on Thursday 9th and Friday 10th of June, and including the continuation of the Thursday afternoon discussion (despite having no 1st Draft).

Thailand (Mrs. Chulamane Chartsuwan, **representing G77 and China**) did not think repeating the comments made in the last meeting is useful. Requested the suspension of the meeting for 24 hours.

The **EU** also thought it was time to engage in real conversation. “Right to the city” is amongst the issues that we should discuss in a more frank and open manner. Informal

Informals doesn't mean that there will be a conclusion or consensus paper necessarily, but at least we will have good discussion. The EU is also willing to listen to comments made in this meeting if it continues, but doesn't want to waste time.

Norway supported the decision of the co-facilitator to continue the meeting.

Co-facilitator **(Philippines)**: makes another proposal: Thursday morning would be negotiations on the three topics missed today, and in the afternoon there would be Informal Informals.

Thailand (representing G77 and China): Reiterated their request to suspend the meetings.

The meeting was suspended at Wednesday 8th June at 3:50 pm.

The suspension of the informal meetings meant that negotiating groups (e.g. G77) have extra time to co-ordinate their joint positions and Member States can discuss together in private closed sessions – what is being called here “Informal Informals”.

The open informal meeting reconvened on Friday 10th June from 16:30 to 17:00.

Following the loss of 2 days negotiation time, the co-facilitators proposed to add 2 days of Informal Intergovernmental Meetings on the 27th and 28th of June (right before the 3rd round of Informal Intergovernmental Meetings) to discuss a new draft.

Co-facilitator **(Philippines)** invited summaries of the Informal Informals.

Dominican Republic (summarised the “rights to the city” Informal Informals). Most Member States are not opposed to new language. Some Member States are worried about the legal implications of the word “right”, and wonder what the meaning and value of “right to the city” actually is. “Right to the city” fails to address universality; not every Member State agrees on the systematization of rights.

Brazil (additional comments) pointed out one of the consensuses beyond the discussion on “right to the city”; The NUA is supposed to have a human rights based approach.

Czech Republic (summarised the “means of implementation and follow up and review” Informal Informal consultation): Criticism from Member States included that it is too early to talk about follow up and review, rather we should concentrate on the substance now.

Co-facilitator **(Philippines)** mentioned that from the past three days, we have heard the need to reference topics including (but not limited to) disaster prevention, climate change, rural-urban linkages, human rights, and stronger coherence with other processes such as HLPF, 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, Sendai, and Addis Ababa.

If there is any opposition to the proposal for two extra negotiation days, the co-facilitators need to be informed before next Wednesday (15 June).

*Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT)
Report on the "New Urban Agenda" – informal negotiations 6th-10th June 2016.*

Columbia (representing G77 and China) asked that the structure of the draft document is revised, and hopes for a completely new, clean version of the document, that should not be longer than the Zero Draft.

V. Conclusions and outlook

Two days of well prepared and informed ideas and suggestions from a broad range of organised stakeholder groups provide valuable suggestions to improve the New Urban Agenda, however the Member States currently appear to be more focussed on the procedural aspects of the negotiation.

The UN is making a great effort to include the broad range of urban stakeholders e.g. cities, citizen groups, NGO’s etc. seriously in the Habitat III process. The problems we saw this week appear not to be about the issues related to urban development but the reluctance of some Member States to negotiate in open public meetings with stakeholders. Probably not because of a particular sensitivity about their views on urban development – but because of any precedent that it may set for other UN negotiations.

These differences are unlikely to be resolved before Habitat III so we can expect more negotiations taking place “behind closed doors” - in effect reverting to the normal UN multi-lateral method. A triumph of states broader interests over the issue of urban development.

Behind closed door negotiations may lead to a less informed, balanced and pragmatic result than if the rich stakeholder knowledge and experiences is full included in the process and raises questions about the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, much of which will need to be done by stakeholders and the suitability of the UN system to solve urban problems.

VI. Sources

1. Bo Donners, SLoCaT in New York.
2. https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/intersessional_process
3. <http://www.iisd.ca/habitat/3/stakeholders/html/enbplus231num3e.html>