



Informal intergovernmental hearings

Habitat III

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Statement by Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Vice-President ISOCARP and GAP

Thank you, madam co-facilitator, for giving us the opportunity to speak in this session. I will try not to repeat what has been said by my colleagues here in the stakeholder benches already. These points I make below were clearly emphasized during from the two days of informal hearings with stakeholders on the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda, held earlier this week. Complete statements and detailed recommendations on the different paragraphs, are available online.

The Zero Draft has been universally lauded by stakeholders as an excellent start, an inspiring document containing all the key ideas. The vision on “leaving no one behind” is particularly inspiring and one that resonates with all stakeholder groups. Having said that, stakeholders believe that **our aspirations could be higher, our vision bolder, and our transformative commitments stronger**. These messages also need to be **clearer and simpler** in order to appeal to the hearts and minds of the people whose lives will ultimately be touched by the New Urban Agenda.

The New Urban Agenda needs to be closely aligned with other development agendas, including the Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and others, but it must have its own integrity. It should form the basis of a new social contract between national governments, local authorities and stakeholders towards shaping our common urban future. However, for this, local authorities and stakeholder groups need to be truly empowered and seen as partners and drivers, and not simply executors or beneficiaries of development. This is a central element of the paradigm shift that the New Urban Agenda hopes to achieve.

Further, we support the call for establishing a robust follow-up and review mechanism must be established within the New Urban Agenda, but it must be one that institutionalizes multi-stakeholder engagement. Periodic national reporting on the New Urban Agenda must be done in partnership with stakeholders, using appropriate top-down and bottom up data, both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Global platforms such as the World Urban Forum must be strengthened further and made an integral part of the follow-up and review mechanism, alongside various inter-agency mechanisms that may be established.

Excellencies, allow me to conclude with an appeal. The UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development is a once-in-twenty-years opportunity. While building on agreed concepts and language, we urge you to **seize this historic opportunity** to move the discourse forward. We urge you to **not shy away from** establishing precedence. We urge you to **recognize and build on the success** of a multi-stakeholder platform such as the General Assembly of Partners which has emerged and evolved during the Habitat III preparatory process. At present, the Zero Draft encourages multi-stakeholder partnerships, but neither spells out their nature, nor their role. It must

include specific proposals on how stakeholders would be involved in the planning and management of cities, monitoring of urban initiatives and progress, as well as follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda as a whole. Specific language on how this can be achieved can be found in the GAP document under the post H3 architecture where we propose five specific partnership modalities for implementation of NUA. We urge you to give these proposals serious consideration and set historic examples. The world is not the same place as it was twenty years ago. New challenges have emerged, but so have new ideas, new approaches and new solutions. Let us embrace them, for a brighter, more sustainable urban future.