



HABITAT III POLICY PAPER FRAMEWORK

6- URBAN SPATIAL STRATEGIES

31 December 2015

(not edited version)





This Habitat III Policy Paper Framework has been prepared by the Habitat III Policy Unit 6 members and submitted by 31 December 2015. It has followed the Habitat III Policy Paper Framework template¹ provided by the Habitat III Secretariat to all Habitat III Policy Units².

Habitat III Policy Units are co-led by two international organizations and composed by a maximum of 20 experts each, bringing together individual experts from a variety of fields, including academia, government, civil society and other regional and international bodies.

The composition of the Policy Unit 6 can be consulted at www.habitat3.org

¹ Note by the Secretariat: In specific cases slightly changes to the Habitat III Policy Paper Framework template have been accepted such as addition of executive summaries, introductions, bibliography, etc. However all frameworks have been adapted to the three basic expected accomplishments: challenges, priorities and implementation. The Habitat III Policy Paper Framework template can be consulted at: www.habitat3.org

² Note by the Secretariat: This Policy Paper framework has followed the main expected accomplishments: challenges, priorities and implementation. Subsections suggested in the template have been partly followed.





1. Challenges: Identify challenges, including structural and policy constraints	
a. Review of the Habitat III issues papers	Planning: persuasive argumentation of what spatial planning should be, and of its advantages as demonstrated by documented good practices, but less of an explanation of why its adoption and implementation has been so poor in so many countries, and of the conditions that should be put in place to have planning perform its role and achieve its full potential. No performance indicators. No references to resource mobilization strategies. Paper preceded the adoption of SDGs and in particular SDG11 and therefore it could not take them into account. Insufficient connection to important issues such as protecting and safeguarding the natural and historic heritage and to the capital role that spatial planning can play in creating climate-friendly settlement patterns. Land: very useful stress on the variety of possible land tenure solutions. Equally useful mention of land-policy related projects. However, the main issue of how to identify and tackle the causes that make land increasingly expensive and unaffordable for lower income groups is not addressed. Hardly a reference to the role of spatial planning. No references to resource mobilization strategies. No performance indicators. Paper preceded the adoption of SDGs and in particular SDG11 and therefore it could not take them into account. Need to confer strength to land issues in the New Urban Agenda since this issue is not covered specifically in SDG11. Urban-rural linkages: here also, the emphasis is on the good things that should happen, rather than on the causes that determine urban-rural disparities. The concept needs to be developed in clearer way. Structural factors are ignored, e.g. in the description of the demise of smallholder farming. The role of spatial planning (e.g. compact cities, green corridors, protection of valuable peri-urban land) is ignored save for a reference to the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.



	No references to resource mobilization strategies. No performance indicators. Paper preceded the adoption of SDGs and in particular SDG11 and therefore it could not take them into account. - Public Space: As in other issue papers, “main concepts” very useful, and in particular the definition of public space. Right emphasis is placed on the challenge of public space encroachment. Also welcome is the review of the positive qualities of public space for cities. Equally important is the recognition of public-sector responsibilities in creating and managing public space, flowing into the concept of “public-space led urban development”. No references to resource mobilization strategies. No performance indicators (although indicators are contained in UN-Habitat’s “Global Public Space Toolkit”) Issue paper preceded the adoption of SDGs and in particular SDG11 but does mention the adoption of public space as a SDG11 target. In view of this, more attention could have been given to the targets’ emphasis on public space accessibility on the part of women, older persons and persons with disabilities. a.2 Disagreements/controversies - As mentioned above, the question is not so much one of disagreement with the very sensible analyses and commendable aspirations contained in the issue papers, but rather one of concern about the need to identify and describe the causes of the challenges as well as the motivation and the practical means to be employed to meet them. - The Policy Unit also felt that the issue of spatial planning encompasses more than public space, land, and urban-rural linkages. This is why it recommends that the application of planning be extended to other important human settlements issues, including those contained in SDG 11. - The Policy Unit also wishes to call attention to wider phenomena than those considered in the issue papers, and in particular to present scenarios, foreseen consequences, and prevalent present approaches:
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Since the Istanbul Declaration on Human settlements adopted by the Heads of State or Government and the official delegations of countries assembled at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996, the urban world has changed considerably. Despite the many achievements within the frameworks of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations and the related activities of UN-Habitat (i.e. International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning), and the multi-lateral and bi-lateral international development cooperation, as well as due to the multitude of national development efforts, there are alarming signals calling for new approaches regarding urban spatial strategies.

Given the predominant existing business-as-usual approach, the following scenarios will likely prevail:

The population scenario (UN Projections): 96 per cent of the 2015-2050 global demographic increment to take place in the cities of the developing countries, with the highest rates of growth in their small and medium-sized cities; by 2035, global urban population to increase by 36% and rural population to decrease by 1%; Asia and Africa to host 94% of urban population growth, with small and medium-sized cities growing most rapidly.

Foreseen consequences: an arguably unbearable burden on the capacity, resources and natural assets of developing - world urbanizing regions; the de-anthropization and cultural destruction of rural regions.

Prevailing present approach: accepting the rate and distribution of demographic growth as inevitable.

The socio-economic scenario: decreasing global GDP growth rate, growth slowdown in virtually all countries, financialization of the economy accompanied by persistent poverty and increasing income inequality coupled with the weakening of social protection systems.

Foreseen consequences: high levels of social and political discontent leading to widespread governmental instability.

Prevailing present approach: global economic model viable and present difficulties to abate once growth resumes at the required rate.



The environmental scenario: reductions in fossil fuel consumption unable to stop and invert greenhouse effect. Serious risk of irreversible climate change due to GDP-led and carbon-based growth. Land consumption rates surpass population growth rates resulting in sprawl, destruction of ecosystem services and loss of prime agricultural land.

Foreseen consequences: desertification, famines, severe meteorological occurrences, sea-level rise and disappearance of coastal settlements.

Prevailing present approach: pursue adaptation and mitigation policies, adapt and prepare for the worst.

The human settlements scenario: urban settlements in the developing countries accommodate the virtual total of future global population growth but replicate in space socio-economic inequalities. Large cities to continue growing vertically and into their hinterlands, smaller cities to do the same, and rural regions to convert into exporters of excess labour and agricultural and mineral commodities. Increasing divarication between rapidly growing urban centres and “shrinking cities”.

Foreseen consequences: continuation of migration to cities, both national and international, of impoverished rural residents. Strained urban absorbing capacity likely to collapse. Rural regions losing their capacity to sustain rurally based economy and settlement systems. Difficulties in reversing the causes of economic decline occurring in many cities.

Prevailing present approach: belief in good management that includes strong governance, widespread and inclusive participation, multi-stakeholder partnerships and some international assistance will solve this challenge.

While the members of Policy Unit 6 conclude that these scenarios do not add up to sustainable urbanization, they also hold that trends are not destiny. To break this business-as-usual trajectory, they recommend the formulation of a New Urban Agenda that builds on and extends the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” as an approach that addresses the needs and requirements of all populations while giving special attention to the needs of the poor.



b. Review / analysis of key publications / documents	b.1 Reviews of key documents The following documents are suggested in addition to the documents listed in the issue papers: • World Urbanization Prospects, 2014 revision - http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/highlights/wup2014-highlights.pdf • UN-Habitat: The Global Public Space Toolkit http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Global%20Public%20Space%20Toolkit.pdf • Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld • The Charter of Public Space http://www.biennalespaziopubblico.it/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CHARTER-OF-PUBLIC-SPACE_June-2013_pdf-.pdf
c. Identify examples, projects, practices	c.1 List of examples/projects Under preparation.
d. Identify research and data	d. 1. SGD targets and indicators related The Policy Unit is of the view that its main area of expertise, spatial planning, is key in addressing the goal and the individual targets of sustainable urban development as defined in the most authoritative normative statement issued to date on that subject: Sustainable Development Goal 11.



These targets are:

- 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- 11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
- 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
- 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- 11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
- 11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
- 11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.



	d.2. List of other indicators to be taken into account The preparation of a comprehensive list of indicators will be one of the main points on the agenda of the Policy Units' second and last meeting to take place on 4-5 February 2015. For the time being, and with regard to public space, attention is called to two broad standards: • 45% of urban space; 30% of it to streets and sidewalks, and 15% to open space, parks, plazas and promenades • Implementation of the World Health Organization recommendation that each citizen should have minimum of 9 m² green space within a 15 min. walking distance. A full list of indicators including other elements of urban public space is contained in the referenced publication "Global Public Space Toolkit".
2. Priorities: Identify the policy priorities & critical issues for implementation of a new urban agenda	
Inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements	In a world with an increasingly dominant urban population facing the effects of global climate change, poverty, social conflicts, unequal economic development and large scale migration, inclusive and sustainable urbanisation are amongst the many factors that challenge the management and planning of human settlements. Some of the challenges and constraints are the following: – The lack of innovative approaches to the development of planning systems, their instruments and techniques – A poor understanding of the integrative dimension of human settlement planning and management as an inter/cross-sectorial, inter-communal, cross-scale and inter-generational development tool – An insufficient recognition of growing complexity, development dynamics and uncertainty in decision making and increasing exposure of cities to external and internal shocks – Insufficient political will to create institutional frameworks and develop adequate capacities for participatory, integrated and



	sustainable spatial planning and management – A slanted perception of urbanization as the quantitative growth of the population living in cities rather than one of qualitative change across different types of settlement structures connected with regard to life styles and quality of the living environment – The lack of recognition of urban spatial justice as an integrative quality challenge for cities and their spatial strategies bringing together social justice and space, the concepts of environmental justice and equity and the concerns of environmental sustainability – An insufficient sense of responsibility for the efficient use and activation of available resources for sustainable and inclusive urbanization. Addressing these challenges requires concentrating the capacities of international organizations, national and subnational governments and civil society to: • Promote a framework for participatory, integrated and sustainable spatial planning and management that; ○ Improves the authority and effectiveness of multi-level spatial planning and management as integrative instruments in urban and regional development across the three dimensions of sustainability – social, environmental and economic ○ Codifies institutionally the centrality of planning for sustainable development and safeguard its practical implementation in urban and territorial management • Establish on-going monitoring systems that not only record progress on sustainable urban development initiatives but also identify new challenges resulting from global and specific regional and local conditions and from the acquisition of new knowledge as it evolves from the evaluation processes, basic research and the application of promising practices
Supporting positive economic, social and environmental	The growing complexity and interdependence of human settlements across different scales present the following challenges for national, regional and local development: • Growing fuzziness of the borders among settlements and their surroundings associated with the growing spatial expansion of human activities including the increasing material, personal and immaterial flows across territories; the permeability among



links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	administrative units due to changing and evolving functions and cooperation modalities in an era of globalization; and the spread of urban lifestyles from cities to rural settlements; • Absence of the recognition of urban-rural synergies, interdependences and existing linkages among cities and their functional areas by international, national and regional governmental authorities • Lack of their adequate mirroring in institutional arrangements in order to allow their efficient management; The priorities for current urban and regional development policies are: • Reconceptualise the so-called rural-urban dichotomy to a urban-rural continuum based on documented horizontal interactions and vertical interdependences; • Reflect urban-rural linkages in institutional frameworks that promote sustainable and efficient spatial planning and management; • Develop new urban-rural relationships supportive of sustainable urban development
Access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces	Green and public spaces are a key element of establishing healthy urban environments, and the provision of ecosystem services for the urban population, such as clean and cool air, recreation facilities and retention areas in case of flooding and storm water events. Public spaces are “all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive”. In countries with fast population growth and rapid urbanization, the pursuit of this target is made more difficult by the mutually reinforcing adverse combination of rapid population growth, a relevant percentage of whom of limited financial means, on one hand, and of scarce municipal resources, weak land use control mechanisms and inadequate governance and technical capacity on the other. In “shrinking” cities there are many opportunities to transform built-up areas into green and public spaces. However, in many cases this is restrained by the adverse expectations of landowners, prohibitive land prices, and high maintenance costs of green areas. In both cases, there are remarkable challenges to urban spatial strategies and planning. In consolidated areas, adequate public spaces must be carved out within the existing built fabric. In expansion areas, planning must secure the availability of adequate public spaces particularly for lower income residents. In shrinking areas, institutional arrangements between public authorities and private



	landowners are necessary in order to establish intermediate or permanent green spaces, which allow public use. Priorities are: • Emphasize awareness that the provision of green public spaces is an important responsibility of public authorities • Make the provision of green and public spaces a priority of urban spatial strategies and settlement planning, with particular regard to location, design and quality aspects. • Pay attention to the fact that in many countries the vicinity to high quality green and public spaces has a direct impact on land and real estate values; this may have a positive impact on municipal income, e.g. through land taxation and the granting of development rights; however, it may also lead to inequality and segregation. • Promote urban planning approaches, which help combating inequality by giving priority to underserved portions of the city, including slums and informal settlements. • Promote the creation of compact cities with networks of green and public spaces in order to raise the accessibility to green and public spaces for all and to enhance the provision of ecosystem services. • Promote green and public space planning and devote a commensurate amount of budget resources to the implementation and maintenance of green and public spaces. • Creation of ecologically functional public space for resilient development through urban heat island effect reduction (now causing 30% of climate warming) and stimulation of a healthy water cycle while improving human and natural habitats.
Spatial planning and land	In the wake of “Cities without slums” campaigns, registered freehold and land titling is the main policy stream taken by local governments to ensure tenure security. In some cases, this has restricted available alternative solutions to tenure security and encouraged speculative land market practices. Collaborative arrangements such as the “sharing economy” were created to cope with segregation both in growing and shrinking cities. However, there is a crucial contradiction between private exclusive land ownership and a sharing economy. Self-help slum upgrading programs have succeeded where reciprocal community is present. Some of these communities, for example in



	South-East Asia, stand on customary land ownership which derives from a kind of “guardianship” - a rule of conduct distributing responsibilities to maintain the land properly among community members. This ‘reserved land without distribution’ practice is equivalent to the concept of public space in European cities. Settlements ruled by land guardianship have proved to allow for more sustainable land use. Huge megacities, or megacity regions characterize monsoon Asian countries. The high productivity of paddy fields has enabled to support a population density that is equivalent to the urban density of regions with cooler climates. The high productivity of land has allowed for scattered peri-urbanization naturally and suburban areas where people can survive without urban infrastructure. More generally, there is a strong correlation between how land markets work in many countries and the segregation effects that are produced. This is shown not only in informal settlements but also in the vast scale dormitories being built without any quality urban services. One of the main challenges remains the low delivery supply capacity for affordable serviced land. Policy makers and planners should understand and take into account the nature of informal land rules, which have ensured tenure security. The physical urban tissue is often the appearance of local knowledge in land management. Alternative land policies suited to a culture of sharing are needed. The plurality of tenure security should be respected. Spatial planning should be inspired by the concept of inalienable common goods, also to preserve urban-rural balances. Land development creates wealth. Therefore, one of the most important priorities in combating segregation and inequality in cities is to recuperate a fair share of the economic benefits created by land development, both private and public, and use them to make land available for social housing and adequate services.
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3. Implementation: Develop action-oriented recommendations

Inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlements	a.1 Key recommendation for action • Promoting use of the <i>International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning</i> in Developing innovative spatial planning and management systems than encompass ○ An institutional (legislative, governance and financial) framework tailored to individual national arrangements to underpin spatial planning and management ○ Building adequate institutional, regulatory, fiscal and human capacities for planning ○ The efficient implementation of planning decisions safeguarding sustainable spatial development while balancing the interests of multiple stakeholders and social groups, different types of settlement structures and integrating urban and rural areas; • Creating an Intergovernmental Panel on Sustainable Urbanization that ○ Supports the development of knowledge through analysis and dissemination of planning practice and decision-making and related financial and institutional support for sustainable urban development ○ Consolidates and disseminates the knowledge of the multiple institutions devoted to basic and applied research on cities and human settlements in order identify and anticipate new challenges to sustainable urban development ○ Supports permanent monitoring of new challenges for sustainable urban and regional development resulting from global as well as specific regional and local development and knowledge development and supports adequate responds to respective challenges • Incorporating the appropriate and efficient use of state-of-the art techniques, technologies and methods; • Developing and strengthening active partnerships among different stakeholders creating the precondition for their efficient engagement in decision-making and implementation of spatial planning and management.
Supporting positive	• Formulate national urban policies to ensure the balance between urban and rural areas with special focus on urban and suburban and on urban and peripheral areas;



economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	• Establish a multiscale continuum of spatial planning activities aligning different spheres of governance with powers appropriate to their respective levels of responsibilities. • Develop a framework for crafting shared coping strategies to address problems resulting from growing exposure to global conditions (e.g. climate change, economic volatility, societal development); • Create the legal, fiscal and institutional frameworks for winner/loser balance in territorial development.
Access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces	The following actions are proposed: • Consider green and public spaces a major priority of planning. • Develop guidelines and a set of criteria regarding green and public spaces planning. • Promote and conduct citywide inventories of green areas and publicly owned land, and identify areas that can be reserved for creating new green and public spaces. • Promote the knowledge transfer of good practices regarding the quality of green and public spaces, e.g. in devising layouts, ratios, spaces and built-open space and frontage ratios capable of reconciling socio-economic vitality and environmental quality with safety and pleasantness. • Promote equal citywide access to high quality green and public spaces. Public-space oriented planning and design should include establishing a sound proportion between citywide and neighbourhood/local level public spaces. • Ensure walkable access to green and public spaces in all neighbourhoods; and make sure that green and public space design



	offers easy use and access to children, elderly people and people with disabilities. • Consider optimal urban standards of 45% of urban space; 30% of it to streets and sidewalks, and 15% to open space, parks, plazas and promenades; and in terms of provision, the World Health Organization recommendation that each citizen should have minimum of 9 m² green space within a 15 min. walking distance. • Foster participation in public space planning and design. Professionals, city administrators and interested citizens alike should be trained in the most effective techniques to use effective participation as a key driver of green and public space development. • Provide adequate resources for green and public space planning and implementation. Inquire the possibilities to share cost of green and public spaces management among the different sectors of government which derive benefits from the existence of green and public spaces. • Inquire the possibilities to fully tap the economic potentials of green and open spaces. Technical criteria for sustainability and resilience include permeable pavements, collection ponds for storm water retention, coastal buffers and floodable parks and surfaces. Monitoring, in addition to progress on public space endowment standards, should pay special attention to urban heat islands, cooling loads, air quality, water quality, storm water runoff volumes, habitat value, carbon sequestration, coastal resiliency, and human health factors.
Spatial planning and land	Enabling national legislation and vigorous municipal practice are required to have land development processes legitimized by planning decisions function as generators of financial resources for combating segregation and support the development and maintenance of adequate urban services. This can be done through mechanisms that allow public authorities to recuperate a fair share of the increased values produced by development rights and direct public investment in infrastructure, green spaces and services. Good practices of urban acupuncture, including those described as guerrilla/ alternative/ radical urbanism should be encouraged in order not alter the urban tissue in informal settlements, encourage participation and provide small but successful experience shared with local people. Land policies and formal planning could integrate these approaches strategically. Alternative land policies should be introduced to settlements where conventional land markets have failed because of land overutilization (overcrowded informal settlements) or underutilization (aging settlements under depopulation in shrinking cities).



	Local governments should explore the most appropriate measure of tenure security in accordance with the integration of community culture, climate and landscape.
	Conclusion In summary, Policy Unit 6 offers the following key actionable recommendations: • Adopt the <i>International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning</i> ○ Create national urban strategies that recognize the role of cities as engines of the economy and call for balanced territorial development by attending to national infrastructure investments that support economic prosperity, environmental protection and social justice for all. ○ Support integrated and comprehensive strategic territorial and local spatial planning and management to assure synergies between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, as well as economic prosperity, environmental quality and social justice for all • Provide the governance, legislative and financial framework to support regional and local development plans that offer orderly, sustainable and affordable settlement patterns and their implementation. ○ For new development, promote environmentally friendly urbanization models based on low carbon consumption and emission that feature well-designed and resilient compact subdivisions (or urban extensions) with adequate streets and sidewalks, accessible public space, multi-modal public transport, and affordable housing; ○ For existing development, upgrade slums and other distressed urban areas, and conserve the history and culture of the existing urban fabric in a socially responsible and environmentally friendly way. ○ For shrinking cities, promote the revision of existing planning concepts and strategies in order to provide for new approaches in dealing with the consequences of de-population in a responsible way. • Support the creation of an Intergovernmental Panel on Sustainable Urbanization for evaluation of policies adapted at Habitat III, identification of new and emerging challenges to sustainable urban development and the dissemination of new applied and basic research on sustainable urban development.