

Background paper for the preparation of the Quadrennial Report 2018

“SG Report to ECOSOC on the Progress on the
implementation of the New Urban Agenda
Report of the Secretary-General”

Final version prepared in the Writeshop, Granada

Reviewing the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and
Urban SDGs

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Introduction¹

¹ As received from Gulnara 15.00 pm- 23/3/18

The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-eight plenary meeting of the seventy-first session on 23 December 2016².

This report, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/71/235, is the first out of a series of five quadrennial reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the next one being in 2022.

In the last eighteen months since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, significant progress has been made in recognizing the massive transformative power of urbanization in all regions of the world and reinforcing the vision of cities for all, as assessed by the *Cities 2030 Declaration* of the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018.

As all existing qualitative and quantitative sources of information show a dramatic intensification of urbanization systemic consequences, the present report, a UN Secretary General report, comprehensively connects the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and Paris Agreement.

The New Urban Agenda is a shift from a data centered to a process focused understanding of global urbanization. The NUA implementation is gaining political commitment at the global level, elevating the role of cities in the decision making. In 2018, critical milestones of the global agenda will include urban issues to be discussed at the next G20 One Planet Summit with Urban 20 (U20) which include representatives of major cities in the G20 countries. In 2019, the UN will issue a Global Report on Sustainable Urban Development reflecting on the achievements in urban related SDGs. In 2022, the second quadrennial report on the New Urban Agenda will be submitted which will include actual data on the implementation process. In the same year, the UN will also issue a mid-term report on the assessment of the 2030 Agenda, including achieving the SDGs; and the first IPCC report on cities and climate change. In 2026, the third QR which will be also a midterm review of the NUA implementation, will take a stock of the progress made and identify further steps to address challenges faced.

Tracking progress, assessing the impact and the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda at all scales requires an innovative matrix approach addressing existing and new trends while also building trust and accountability for all. Despite massive sources of financing and the abundance of capital, such funding opportunities are not sufficiently converted into comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable urban development policies. Innovative approaches for financing the implementation are starting to be developed, especially at the city level, however, there is an urgent need in accelerating investments and partnerships.,

To develop an effective reporting mechanism, the NUA reporting system should build when possible on already existing reporting mechanisms of global commitments such as the 2030 Agenda, climate change, biodiversity, among others, which address urban issues through quantitative data. Given the integrative approach of the NUA, these existing reporting mechanisms need to be complemented by specific for NUA process oriented data and qualitative information.

Reporting on the New Urban Agenda is a crucial opportunity to foster a truly incremental approach to NUA and increase ownership by the largest groups of stakeholders and recipients possible, including national governments, subnational and local governments, regional and subregional organizations and networks, multilateral banks and international financial institutions, parliamentarians, civil society, women, organisations representing youth, as well as those representing persons with disabilities, grassroots, indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector, professionals and practitioners, the scientific and academic community and other relevant

² A/RES/71/256*

This first quadrennial report is a means to intensify multilevel and multistakeholder partnerships, reinforce the legitimacy of the New Urban Agenda partners and encourage a universal sense of ownership of urban issues. Grassroots and women organizations along with other vulnerable groups should be recognized as equal implementing partners given adequate resources along with governmental entities and the private sector.

The effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda is an accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in their urban and territorial dimensions, including Goal 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This major and historical paradigm shift introduced by the Habitat III preparatory process and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda will require comprehensive and in depth efforts at all scales in the coming months and years, by public and private leaders.

Together.

DRAFT

Chapter 1: Strengthening the Interlinkages of the NUA and the Global Urban Development Agenda

0. Introduction

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) serves as an accelerator of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, and the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit. Each of these agendas are interlinked through the implementation of the NUA in order to achieve the successful and effective implementation of all. There have been several examples of successful interlinkages and efficient utilization of the different agendas jointly, however much more can be done to clarify the interlinkages of policies and approaches at the national, sub-national, and local levels. This chapter summarizes the relationship between these agendas and their achievement in urban spaces and human settlements, as well as progress and requirements for their effective joint monitoring and implementation.

1. Short description of the different global agendas and why it is important to have and create synergies and how coherence can be achieved at urban level

Since the adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there has been an increased recognition of the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the implementation of the various global agendas. This is fundamental in order to realize these agendas. Along this line, from an urban perspective, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) has recognized the importance of integrating the relevant global agendas including the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Addis Ababa Action agenda on Financing for Development (see NUA paragraphs 6, 9, 11, 12, 77, 79, 127, 128, 150). While cross-references are available, it is important to ensure that the implementation of all these global agendas is complimentary and that relevant synergies are created for coherent implementation and follow up and review. Climate change, for example, particularly complicates the urbanization challenge. By 2030, climate change and natural disasters may cost cities worldwide USD 314 billion each year, and push more than 77 million more urban residents into poverty. The actions and decisions taken in urban spaces and development (e.g. housing and infrastructure) have lasting impacts which will determine if the Paris Agreement goal of keeping the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius can be achieved. The New Urban Agenda serves as an accelerator of the other relevant agendas, guiding and defining the processes and actions needed for their effective implementation at the regional, national and local levels. The critical nature of the issues addressed in these global agendas highlights the urgency of establishing effective interlinked monitoring systems for the NUA.

Some regional efforts to combat climate change showcase the use of the NUA as an accelerator. For example, using the guidance of the NUA, the Arab Ministerial Water Council, the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, and the Economic and the Arab Social and Economic Council have assessed and mitigated the effects of extreme climate-related events, such as droughts, floods, heat waves and sandstorms, which are straining the resilience of cities and communities throughout the Arab region. These efforts have thus contributed to bridge the gap between the global urban, sustainable development and disaster reduction agendas.

Urban spaces and human settlements as agents of change offer great platforms for exploring and assessing the joint implementations of these global agendas and how these converge and complement each other. Climate change, housing, financing, gender equality, and migration, etc. are good examples of urban related issues that link and require complimentary delivery and implementation of these global agendas. (Well managed urbanization as articulated in the NUA presents an opportunity for climate change adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the Paris agreement. It is also a good opportunity to advance SDG5 gender equality around the globe, through provision of urban infrastructure and facilities that are more responsive to the needs of women and the caring economy. Hence many of these agendas will be judged by how successfully they transform their communities, and articulating such success can benefit

from stronger synergies and coherence in implementation and reporting. Furthermore, there are significant interlinkages between NUA and the SDGs, especially SDG 11 that focuses on cities and human settlements. Due to the interdependence of the SDGs, a holistic approach is necessary generally, and particularly at the urban setting for a successful implementation of all SDGs. Legal frameworks, governance and institutional arrangements, land, and partnerships are basic necessary prerequisites for creating the enabling environments for achieving the urban SDGs and the NUA.

One example of such interlinkages is Goal 1 and Goal 8 and Goal 16: Poverty reduction and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. 80 percent of the global gross domestic product is produced in cities. To achieve the SDGs, the investment needed for infrastructure will surpass 50 trillion USD until 2050. These numbers reflect a huge economic opportunity. Yet, in many cities most of the employment is in the informal sector (Africa 80%). The demand for jobs is rapidly increasing, Cities need to boost employment in the informal sector, most of it for low skill workers. Public tendering by cities for infrastructure projects can ask for including local labor force; the means of service delivery can include local labor (e.g. waste pickers and recyclers), access to affordable transport is fundamental (Nairobi walkers), plus access to education/vocational training, plus incremental housing schemes, food supply by local markets. Localizing the global agendas and integrating them into city development planning and management is a key role for cities.

In Ethiopia, the SDGs are fully integrated in Ethiopia's Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), which was adopted in parallel with the SDG process. For example, efficient and clean energy (SDG 7) is recognized as a precondition for sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), while clean and affordable water (SDG 6) is stated to foster agricultural sector development (SDG 2). The interdependency of the SDGs is very clear and visible, the individual SDGs will affect each other. In republic of **Benin**, 49 SDG targets were identified as priorities for the future National Development Plan, and what has happened in the last 18 months? Has it enabled the government's implementation strategy? (Example of middle-income country) **In Colombia**, the Colombian government embraced a particularly ambitious approach to the attainment of the SDGs, which it conceived as a process that takes place simultaneously with the internal peace-building after a period of long civil war, accession to the OECD, and the implementation of the country's green growth strategy. Colombian policy-makers started to implement the SDGs in the context of its National Development Plan 2014–2018. (Example of high-income country) **In Switzerland**, the Swiss government conceives of the SDGs as thematic clusters that need to be addressed jointly in order to attain their underlying policy goals: The clusters formed do not correspond to the identified interlinkages when consulting the SDGs directly. Climate change has the greatest number of linkages with other thematic areas. But when looking at the Swiss approach, the governance of natural resources, for example, is associated with more SDGs than climate governance.

At the urban level, many global agendas also benefit from an overarching unified monitoring system

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