

URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN LABS

tools for integrated and
participatory urban planning

Quito, Habitat III Version 1.0.

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participatory urban planning

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urban planning and design

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FOREWORD



Dr. Joan Clos

I am delighted to present this publication on the UN-Habitat Urban Planning and Design Lab.

Since its inception in 2014, the UN-Habitat Planning and Design Lab has provided direct assistance to more than 40 cities across all continents. The Lab has become an integral part of UN-Habitat's strategic support to local, regional and national governments, by improving urban planning and design processes.

In a relatively short period of time, the Lab has contributed to the creation of the Spatial Development Framework 2040 for Johannesburg; the Urban Planning Guidelines for the Union of Myanmar; the Planned City Extension National Priority Project in Ghana; and the Urban Renewal Plan for Canaan in Haiti. UN-Habitat's Urban Planning and Design Lab has also created a network of Planning Labs that exchange applied knowledge of best practices in cities.

The New Urban Agenda (NUA) identifies urban planning as one of the key principles for achieving sustainable development and growth. In the new paradigm shift of urbanization, urban planning and design is a crucial tool that can help to effectively address the complex urban challenges and make from urbanization, a strategy for development.

We strongly believe that urban planning is, along with rules and regulations and urban economy, one of the three fundamentals of sustainable urbanization. Good urban planning and design does not come by chance. It comes by choice. At UN-Habitat we stand ready to support cities and governments in urban planning and design processes through the Planning Lab.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joan Clos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Joan Clos

Secretary-General of Habitat III
Under-Secretary-General, United Nations
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN-Habitat founded its in-house Urban Planning and Design Lab in Nairobi in order to provide assistance to local, regional and national authorities with urban planning and design. The Lab has been a response to a growing demand from cities to UN-Habitat not only to provide tools for their urbanization challenges, but also to respond to urban planning in general that remains to be hampered by general reflections without providing clear solutions that can cope with the speed of urbanization.

As cities grow and change rapidly, they are confronted with a wide range of new problems. Planning departments often struggle to address such problems as they are occupied with daily administrative tasks. This leaves them with insufficient time to introduce new approaches, and with plans that are not fit-for-purpose. Furthermore, the typical institutionalized sectoral approach (separating 'sectors' as land management, infrastructure, water) delays the integration of issues in an urban plan. Plans get stuck in procedures as a result.

The Lab started as an in-house technical team

together in-house expertise on urban legislation and urban finance in every assignment. The Lab methodology is based on a strong project approach that integrates different sectoral demands and brings stakeholders and citizens together around projects, fast-tracking the design of clear planning proposals that can be implemented on the short and medium term.

The Lab does not work in an isolated way, but through equal collaborations with the local authorities - this is key to implementation. It is important to emphasize that the Urban Planning and Design Lab (later in this publication to be referred to as Planning Lab) model as described in this publication is not an alternative or substitution to local government planning functions, nor to private sector consultancies. It acts as an urban planning advisory service, indeed, but combines deploying specialized capacity with the management of the process from within the government apparatus. This has proven to help cities understand how to navigate urban projects towards implementation, how to inform the leadership and to understand which crucial changes in

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