

HABITAT III Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements

Pretoria, South Africa 7th and 8th April 2016

Context

Informal settlements are a global urban phenomenon¹. They exist in urban contexts all over the world, in various forms and typologies, dimensions, locations. While urban informality is more present in cities in developing countries, housing informality and substandard living conditions can also be found in developed countries.

In 1996, when the Habitat II Conference took place, four out of every ten people living in cities of the developing world lived in slums, and the Habitat Agenda recognised the alarming implications of rapid unplanned urbanisation and slums.

In the year 2000 the international community recognised and agreed to prioritise the improvement of living conditions of slums within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite great progress recorded between 2000 and 2014 when 320 million people were lifted out of informal settlements conditions, absolute numbers continue to grow globally.

¹ **Informal settlements** – are residential areas where 1) inhabitants have no security of tenure vis-à-vis the land or dwellings they inhabit, with modalities ranging from squatting to informal rental housing, 2) the neighbourhoods usually lack, or are cut off from, basic services and city infrastructure and 3) the housing may not comply with current planning and building regulations, and is often situated in geographically and environmentally hazardous areas. In addition, informal settlements can be a form of real estate speculation for all income levels of urban residents, affluent and poor. Slums are the most deprived and excluded form of informal settlements, characterized by poverty and large agglomerations of dilapidated housing often located in the most hazardous urban land. In addition to tenure insecurity, slum dwellers lack formal supply of basic infrastructure and services, public space and green areas, and are constantly exposed to eviction, disease and violence. (Ref Habitat III Issue Paper on Informal Settlements)

Currently, there are around one billion slum dwellers worldwide, compared to three quarters of a billion in 1996. If curative and preventative policies are not initiated, sustained and up-scaled, this is expected to increase threefold by 2050.

The continued existence of informal settlements is directly linked to the persistence of poverty and inequality, distorted land markets, excluding people from decent work and livelihood to attain individual and collective progress and prosperity.

Informal settlements are caused by a range of interrelated factors: population growth and rural to urban and international migration, poverty, basic service deficits, poor governance and policy frameworks, and limited access to financial markets, land and property.

People living in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to spatial, social, and economic inequalities, dependence on precarious income generation and livelihoods, poor health as well as lack of affordable housing, and are highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of poor and exposed environments, climate change, and natural disasters. Exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation characterise the life in informal settlements which is exacerbated by displacements, including the one caused by conflict, crisis, natural disasters and climate change.

The recently adopted Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and especially a new transformative urban agenda will have to address the above

challenges taking stock of the shortcomings and achievements of the previous development frameworks and approaches.

PRETORIA DECLARATION FOR HABITAT III

We, the representatives of national government, local and regional authorities, intergovernmental organisations, United Nations Agencies and experts from civil society, community, grassroots and women’s organisations, farmers, professionals, academia, business and private sector, older persons and youth from all parts of the world, participating in the Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements in Pretoria, South Africa on 7th and 8th April 2016:

1. *Express* our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of South Africa for the excellent organisation of the meeting as well as the commitment of co-hosting the event on the issue of informal settlements that challenge inclusive urbanisation in many countries and cities around the world;
2. *Recall* the outcomes of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a focus on cities through Goal 11 and the specific target on slums (Target 11.1 “*ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, basic services, and upgrading slums*”) as well as other interlinked goals and targets across the whole agenda, and the recently adopted Paris Agreement;

3. *Recognise* the unfinished business of the MDGs and particularly MDG 7d “*Improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020*”;
4. *Emphasise* that informal settlements, especially slums, are a cause and a consequence of poverty, social exclusion and environmental degradation;
5. *Acknowledge* the right to an adequate standard of living, including the right adequate housing that was endorsed by the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights article 25 and in other international conventions and declarations, such as the Habitat Agenda, to address the issue of informal settlements;
6. *Emphasise* that the New Urban Agenda, as an outcome document of Habitat III, should be consistent with Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 11. It should be an ambitious, robust, action-oriented and implementable agenda, focusing on inclusive cities with equal opportunity effectively reflected in its principles, vision, strategies and priorities, and embracing the importance of participatory slum upgrading approaches in sustainable urbanisation;
7. *Recognise* that informal settlements, especially slum related issues, can only be effectively addressed if they are part of an integrated approach to sustainable urban development that takes into consideration national urban policy frameworks, the legal, financial and spatial design, as well as planned city extensions, consolidation, densification and efficient use of land in the overall urban fabric, where applicable;
8. *Acknowledge* UN-Habitat’s role in supporting states in the implementation of the proposed New Urban Agenda, especially through its Participatory

Slum Upgrading Program (PSUP), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), the Safer Cities and Public Space Program, and the Cities and Climate Change Initiative (CCCI), among others, and specifically through the continuing focus on transforming the lives of slum dwellers, and fostering cities and human settlements that are inclusive, promote equal opportunity, and are sustainable;

9. *Underline* the decision and resolutions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its twenty-fourth session, particularly Res. 7/24: “*Making slums history: a worldwide challenge for 2020*” conference held in Rabat from 26 to 28 November 2012, to review and share global progress in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010 and to devise a strategy for inclusive, sustainable and prosperous cities;
10. *Recognise* that urban informality is the result of dysfunctional urban land markets and policies, not simply a manifestation of poverty, and can be mitigated and forestalled, among others, through land use and fiscal policies that promote diverse market solutions and provide avenues to address physical and social infrastructure, where applicable;
11. *Call for* the issue of evictions to be addressed in the new urban agenda in line with the international guidelines on resettlements;
12. *Acknowledge* the prioritisation of in situ upgrading to respond to the scale of urban poverty and at the same time strengthen socio-economic and cultural dynamics for safe and sustainable neighbourhoods;

- 13. Stress* that North-South, South-South, triangular, regional and international cooperation are crucial steps in improving national and local capacities in upgrading informal settlements, which need to be strengthened through partnerships on all levels, learning exchanges, the preparation of case studies, and the development of regional tools;
- 14. Recommend* to continue strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships, including those with the private sector, CBOs and NGOs contributing to slum upgrading, and initiating people-public-private-partnerships (PPPPs) with sound accountability mechanism to ensure all partnerships go through the community assessment of their social, economic, and environmental impacts.
- 15. Recognise* the human need for access to land for housing and livelihoods, as well as the social function of property (space, housing and habitat);
- 16. Acknowledge* and respond to the gender, age, socio-economic, ethnic and cultural diversity of informal settlement residents by using participatory, inclusive and institutionalised approaches when developing policy, legislation, planning, and programme processes for urban development, slum upgrading, and livelihood strengthening initiatives;
- 17. Acknowledge* that women's multiple roles as family and community caregivers and income generators produce gender specific needs that informal settlement upgrading and development must address to be effective and responsive, and that women's tenure security is a cornerstone of women's empowerment and gender equality, and encourage public policies that promote women's safety in public and private spheres;

- 18. Recognise* that the health of slum-dwellers, which is a fundamental precondition for development, depends not only on health services but on all aspects of the planning and management of cities;
- 19. Acknowledge* the need for strong commitment by national and local government to put in place the capacity needed to deliver urban planning, land governance and property development, especially in the technical, professional and science sectors, as well as with elected representatives and civil society who are key to successful outcomes of participatory processes;
- 20. Understand* that security of tenure (using the continuum of land rights), basic urban services and adequate housing can both prevent the creation of informal settlements, and also be a prerequisite to sustainable incremental slum upgrading, thus triggering further investments from the government, businesses and private households in neighbourhoods, and harnessing the land value increments, and thereby enabling local investments, local economic development, and local value addition;
- 21. Stress* the importance of addressing the inequality among and within cities and between urban and rural areas and call for policies to achieve more balanced and integrated territorial development to ensure a better standard of living;
- 22. Recommend* that incremental upgrading and participatory approaches that institutionalise platforms and partnerships between national and local institutions and slum dwellers should be promoted, together with flexible coordination and cooperation frameworks and multi-pronged financing

mechanisms involving communities, government, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector;

23. *Recommend* that strong coordination mechanisms, frameworks and structures at national and local level, including at city and neighbourhood level be institutionalised, to steer proactive measures for upgrading of informal settlements as a joint effort by all stakeholder groups, using and empowering all stakeholders in their roles and responsibilities;

24. *Stress* that credible and timely data and research are necessary to recognise and understand the drivers and dynamics of urbanisation and the situation in informal settlements, in order to further formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate upgrading programmes against the slum deprivations at global, regional, national, city, and community levels, while empowering local authorities and communities in decentralised data collection frameworks;

25. *Restate* the importance of human settlement statistics, indicators, and mapping, to review and follow up the proposed implementation of the New Urban Agenda, placing a particular emphasis on dialogue between producers and users of data and promoting the allocation of sufficient resources by States and international cooperation agencies in order to compile pertinent, timely, and reliable information;

26. *Stress* the need for new comprehensive financing frameworks, with a mix of instruments from international, public, and private institutions, governments, the banking and finance sector, multilateral agencies, and the people, to address the settlements upgrading needs, and utilising existing and new financing mechanisms and options that leverage the value created through

sustainable urban development, applied in combination with redistributive objectives and the continuum of land rights;

27. *Suggest* governments at all levels, including local and regional authorities, explicitly and systematically integrate migration into their regular urban planning processes – both to take advantage of the opportunities that migration brings and to manage its challenges, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, and respecting national policies and priorities;

28. *Stress the importance for a New Urban Agenda that:*

- a) is sustainable and socially inclusive, that promotes equality and combats discrimination in all its forms, and that empowers individuals and communities, as an opportunity to realise the human rights of all inhabitants;
- b) advances inclusive urban, land, fiscal and housing policies, legislation and governance frameworks, by applying participatory urban planning, local development and finance approaches to empower the people living in informal settlements, and promotes equal social and economic access;
- c) empowers women living in informal settlements by increasing their public leadership in upgrading housing, basic services and public space in their communities, providing gender-responsive tenure security and land rights, and investing in livelihood, enterprise and credit initiatives to measurably improve their economic status;

- d) transforms informal settlements through incremental participatory slum upgrading including: evidence-based, pro-poor, and inclusive urban and housing strategies and related regulatory frameworks recognising people living in informal settlements, and tackling the formation of new slums and the improvement of existing slum-like conditions through incremental upgrading and affordable housing;
- e) strengthens Local Governments and improves urban governance and management in order to ensure the delivery of urban benefits and advantages to all inhabitants with transparency and accountability for all, as well as establishing coordinated efforts towards a common vision for participatory slum upgrading and prevention;
- f) improves urban governance and management in a measurable way, distributing benefits and advantages to all inhabitants through transparent and accountable decision making and public administration processes that include fostering a collaborative, participatory process to improve living conditions in informal settlements, incrementally upgrading existing and preventing new slums;
- g) adopts participatory urban planning and design guiding urban development and renewal in such a way that ensures access to adequate and affordable housing, infrastructure and basic urban services for all, in particular for people living in poverty, women, children, youth, older persons, people with disabilities and vulnerable households, thus guiding the transformation of informal settlement neighbourhoods to inclusive,

safe, resilient, and sustainable settlements with access to affordable basic services including safe drinking water, sanitation, energy, food, security, health, education, transport and adequate public spaces, as well as stimulating productivity and promoting incentives for livelihood and decent employment;

- h) recommends the development of strong urban planning and land use strategies, such as the development of guidelines for minimum planning standards to improve understanding and responses to the adequate housing challenge, the demarcation of spaces for social and cultural activity and the preservation of multi-use function of community and public space in slum contexts to promote economic, social and cultural capital. This includes fostering public policies that promote urban farming which is a corridor to food security;
- i) considers encouraging States to establish procedures and regulations in accordance with the UN International Guidelines on Eviction and Resettlement, and offers a continuum of tenure security for slum dwellers and thereby progressively advances the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing, leaving no one behind;
- j) adequately equips National, sub-National and Local Authorities, as well as slum dwellers, with strategic partnerships for sustained and affordable financing strategies for participatory incremental sustainable slum upgrading and prevention. This includes technical support to Finance and Line Ministries, as well as the empowerment of Local Authorities, through appropriate resource allocation from National and Local

budgets, and informal settlements own source revenue collection, further making communities more financially resilient through saving groups, and community managed funds, where livelihood initiatives of slum dwellers are made more sustainable and are strengthened;

- k) supports economic vibrancy and diversity and ensures access to income opportunities and sustainable livelihoods, existing and new opportunities for decent work and enterprise in the local economy, across formal and informal sectors, through inter alia education, vocational training and skills development, access to finance and/or sponsorship, and simplified administrative procedures for the aspiring self-employed and entrepreneurs;
- l) promotes strategies that enhance social cohesion among communities living in informal settlements by among others ensuring inclusive participation, equal opportunity and transparency;

We commit to promoting the principles and the recommendations included in this Pretoria Declaration for Habitat III, ensuring that this effectively contributes to the formulation of the New Urban Agenda at the next United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development to be held in Quito (Ecuador) in October 2016.