

# Habitat III

## Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

### First Session

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Statement prepared by **Ismael Fernandez y Mejia** as Past President of **ISOCARP** in  
his capacity of Chairman of the **Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF)**

This statement does not necessarily represent the official position of ISOCARP

*“...we shall require a substantially new manner of  
thinking if humanity is to survive...”*

*(Albert Einstein, 1954)*

Thanks Ms. Chair for giving me the floor.

I am speaking in the name of the professionals around the world working in matters related to cities.

My name is Ismael Fernández y Mejía, past president of ISOCARP, a Professional Society with members, experts in planning, in more than 90 countries.

I am also, as its Chairman, speaking on behalf of the Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF), an umbrella organization that encompass more than six million experts in cities around the globe, with the inclusion of most of the multinational and regional organizations of professionals related to urban matters

I want to specially thank Dr. Joan Clos for his direct support to the professionals as lead members of the World Urban Campaign.

Cities are in transition.

It is clear that humanity is moving fast towards a future that is urban.

The urbanization phenomenon is Economic, Social and Physical, in that order of importance.

The Economy of the city is the key attraction component and the main urbanization driver.

The Social and governing networks generate its soul and flavor, and are the makers of the city personality.

The Physical and environmental urban fabric is the space, the field to the other two pillars.

As the process of urbanization unfolds, with variable intensity in different parts of the world, the phenomenon of the city reveals its primary essence

It is the center point of future civilization.

Data shows that today the expansion and growth in cities located in rising economies in comparison with the cities in developed economies is around six to one.

In 2050 will be nine to one

Such facts show that the foreseeable urban future is twofold.

Stable growth cities in developed economies will remain stable,

Accelerated growth cities in developing economies will remain growing.

Facts show that the present urban design paradigm, in fashion for eight decades is not the answer to such growth.

Wouldn't be better to consider the urbanite as the center of the design instead of the car as it has been for the last several decades?

This sole proposal would change the whole basic philosophy of the present model

In searching for a new paradigm, we are facing the option to either, follow the present tendencies and envision The Future of Cities,

Or change the paradigm to create The Cities of the Future.

It is The Future of Cities versus The Cities of the Future.

It is to modify the present patterns with a revolution

The Sustainable Development Goals, now been discussed ought to be the basis of that revolution. The SDG's should be the basis of the New Paradigm.

A new urban paradigm must be a philosophy, must be a set of principles that address all three pillars, and that are applicable to both urbanization processes.

A new urban paradigm must avoid fixed rules or measures that constrain the process, as it happens in the present one.

It should have an open architecture that can be molded according to the needs of a defined social and economic, environment,

But should be closed in relation to the application of the general philosophy and the adopted principles, and objectives to be pursued.

Following the concepts presently in the discussion arena, the idea to return to the human scale, and to the structure of mixed uses, are the most recurrent ones, together with other notions more in the field of perception, such as, friendly, equalitarian, affordable, resilient, efficient, beautiful and so on.

In conclusion, the City of the Future could be a planned polycentric and integrated network, a set of city spaces, which can be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

A new paradigm must have the human scale and its vital space as departure point.

A new paradigm must only be a philosophy, a set of principles, a framework allowing constant innovation.

A new paradigm must encourage social interaction and allow social inclusion and tolerance,

A new paradigm must move a step forward of the rapid urbanization process, previewing the future, and guide the urbanization process within the new framework.

A new paradigm must fulfil both, Economic, Social and Physical Environmental agendas

In order to achieve these goals, we the professionals, are the ones that are trying to interpret the aims and needs of the society and translate them into plans, which in turn become public policies and legislation, therefore become the city.

The professionals are the ones that assign the space dimension to the SDG's, in order to have these goals converted into a city which comprises all the Sustainable Development principles.

Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF) and the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) as Lead Members of the World Urban Campaign will support, in their capacity the efforts made by this group in order to search and implement a New Paradigm. The City We Need.

Thanks for your attention.

Ismael Fernandez y Mejia  
New York, September 18, 2014