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Preparations for the Conference: progress report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to resolutions 66/207, 67/216 and 68/239. It describes the activities carried out at the national, regional and international levels prior to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). It also provides information on the activities proposed to be carried out in the period from 2014 to 2016 in four areas: knowledge, engagement, policy and operations.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in resolution 66/207, decided to convene in 2016, in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). The purpose of the Conference would be to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization that should focus on the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda”, and the Conference and the preparatory process should be carried out in the most inclusive, efficient, effective and improved manner.
2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly emphasized that the Conference and the preparatory process should take full advantage of planned meetings by aligning with the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and with the sixth and seventh sessions of the World Urban Forum, and encouraged the regular regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development and other relevant expert group meetings to support the activities of the preparatory process.
3. By resolution 67/216, the General Assembly established a preparatory committee to carry out the preparations for the Conference, and decided that it should meet three times before the opening of the Conference. The first meeting of the Preparatory Committee should be held in New York for two days during the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly. The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee should be held in Nairobi in 2015 for three days, taking advantage of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. The venue and duration of the third and final Preparatory Committee meeting, as well as the dates, format and organizational aspects of the Conference, should be considered no later than at the sixty-ninth session, before the end of 2014.
4. In resolution 67/216, the General Assembly encouraged effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local governments, major groups as identified in Agenda 21, the relevant United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and specialized agencies, international financial institutions and other Habitat Agenda partners, at all stages of the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.
5. It also requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to make proposals to the Preparatory Committee on improved participation of local authorities and other stakeholders in the preparatory process and the Conference itself, building on the positive experience enabled by the rules and procedures of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and the inclusive engagement modalities of Habitat II.
6. The present report provides information on the activities undertaken by the secretariat in preparation for the Conference and presents proposals for improving the participation of local authorities and other stakeholders in the preparatory process and the Conference itself. It also outlines the work to be carried out between September 2014 and 2016.

II. Consultations and contributions from 2012 to 2014

A. Contributions by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 66/207 and 67/216, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat deliberated at its twenty-fourth session on how best to provide inputs for and support to the preparatory process for the Conference in the most inclusive, efficient, effective and improved manner, and to proceed accordingly.
8. In its resolution 24/14, on inputs for and support to the preparatory process of Habitat III, the Governing Council took note of the proposal of the Executive Director and, among other things:
 - (a) Called upon member States, using any available assistance and necessary guidance and support from UN-Habitat, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to form national habitat committees where they did not exist and to strengthen the existing national habitat committees to ensure their effective and efficient participation in the Habitat III preparatory process, including the preparation of national reports;
 - (b) Invited member States to prepare, before the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, national reports which considered the implementation of the Habitat II agenda and of other

relevant internationally agreed goals and targets, as well as new challenges, emerging trends and a prospective vision for sustainable human settlements and urban development, as a basis for the formulation of a new urban agenda, in line with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 67/216;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General of the Conference, using the expertise of UN-Habitat and of the United Nations system as a whole and, specifically, in cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, and of other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, to prepare regional reports drawing on the national reports as well as on available knowledge, resources and data, as inputs to the first and second meetings of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III;

(d) Also requested the Secretary-General of the Conference, using the expertise of UN-Habitat and of the United Nations system as a whole and, specifically, in cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, and of other relevant international, regional and subregional international organizations, to prepare a global report drawing on the national and regional reports, and also on available knowledge, resources and data, as an input to and support for the preparatory process for the Conference.

B. Sixth and seventh sessions of the World Urban Forum

9. Held every two years, the World Urban Forum is the world's premier conference on cities and urban issues and, as outlined by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/239, the foremost global arena for interaction among policymakers, local government leaders, non-governmental stakeholders and expert practitioners in the field of human settlements. The World Urban Forum is convened by UN-Habitat and hosted by a different country on each occasion. It is one of the most open United Nations meetings, bringing together stakeholders from across the spectrum to engage in the most pressing challenges facing human settlements.

10. In accordance with resolution 66/207, in which the General Assembly emphasized that the Conference and the preparatory process should take full advantage of the sixth and seventh sessions of the World Urban Forum, the events were successfully held in Naples, Italy, in September 2012, and in Medellin, Colombia, in April 2014, respectively.

11. The sixth session of the World Urban Forum focused on issues relating to the theme "The urban future" and was conceived as a platform where a number of segments of society could discuss, learn, practise, agree and disagree on different ways to build a more prosperous future for cities and human settlements. Initiatives and commitments were identified that could be effectively implemented to shape the cities of the future to be more democratic, just, sustainable and human.

12. The seventh session of the World Urban Forum focused on the theme "Urban equity in development: cities for life" and provided an important contribution with focused sessions and discussions towards Habitat III. The seventh session was attended by more than 22,000 people from 142 countries, with the purpose of improving collective knowledge, advancing cooperation and coordination and raising awareness on sustainable urban development.

13. Habitat III was recognized as a unique opportunity to develop a new urban agenda that could contribute to harnessing urbanization as a positive force for present and future generations and to advancing the quest for equity and shared prosperity. Participants in the seventh session acknowledged that when equity was an integral part of the development agenda, the deep structural problems and challenges of cities could be better addressed and that equity was both a moral obligation and a central element of social justice, and could become part of transformative change.

14. Participants highlighted the need to promote a new urban agenda that could overcome the challenge of lack of adequate legal frameworks and planning, which leads to the relentless expansion of cities, intensive energy use, alarming and dangerous impacts of climate change, multiple forms of inequality and exclusion and increased difficulties in providing decent work for all.

C. Regular ministerial conferences on housing and urban development

15. In resolution 66/207, the General Assembly encouraged the holding of regular regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development and other relevant expert group meetings to support the activities of the preparatory process.

1. African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development

16. The fifth session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), held in N'Djamena from 25 to 28 February 2014, included in its agenda a discussion of the Habitat III preparatory process and the post-2015 development agenda, which linked the two processes. The theme of the session was "Case studies in financing human settlements in Africa: appropriate legislative frameworks and innovations in implementation". Other matters discussed included the urban agenda for Africa and its linkage with Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the outcome of a conference on strengthening partnerships for a new African urban agenda and the progress of preparations for the seventh session of the World Urban Forum.

17. The main outcome documents of the session were the N'Djamena Declaration and the N'Djamena Action Plan. Both documents outlined the key priorities of Africa in the area of cities and other human settlements, forming the aligned input of the continent to the African Urban Agenda, the Habitat III preparatory process and the post-2015 development agenda. The priorities included access to affordable and decent housing; delivery of infrastructure and basic services, including sanitation and waste management; slum prevention and upgrading; urban and territorial planning; urban economy; and rural-urban linkages.

18. The conference emphasized that AMCHUD was fully engaged in the preparatory process for Habitat III. Three broad recommendations were made: first, AMCHUD needed to consider how to strengthen its engagement in regional and global level processes, including through the harmonization of inputs to Habitat III, the post-2015 development agenda and the seventh session of the World Urban Forum; second, effective preparations for Habitat III needed strengthened national habitat committees as well as a commitment for first drafts of Habitat III national reports to be prepared before the first meeting of the Habitat III Preparatory Committee was held; and third, AMCHUD members were encouraged to consider whether they were in a position to declare support to a stand-alone sustainable development goal on urbanization as well as to develop clear milestones in the preparatory journey towards Habitat III.

19. In addition, AMCHUD members agreed to ensure that State and non-State actors would work together to develop the African Urban Agenda and support preparations for Habitat III, including through national, subregional and regional reports.

2. Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development

20. The fourth meeting of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) was held in Amman in December 2012, with a view to considering challenges and exploring housing and urbanization opportunities in Asia and the Pacific. The members made a commitment to actively engaging in the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and to sponsoring a resolution on youth, as well as to being actively involved in the seventh session of the World Urban Forum, World Habitat Day, the post-2015 development agenda and preparations for Habitat III in 2016.

21. The fifth meeting of APMCHUD will be held in Seoul from 3 to 5 November 2014 on the theme "Equal opportunity for sustainable development".

3. Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean

22. Habitat III was discussed at the twenty-second general assembly of the Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI), held in Santiago from 30 September to 2 October 2013, with the representation of 13 Governments. MINURVI is responsible for the promotion of intergovernmental coordination and cooperation among Latin American and Caribbean countries in all areas relating to sustainable development in human settlements.

23. The main result of the meeting was a commitment to promoting the development of urban policies that are inclusive of populations of informal settlements, guaranteeing access to urban infrastructure, community services and environmental sanitation and strengthening human and social capital.

24. The main outcome document was the Santiago Declaration, in which the participants expressed their desire to actively engage in the seventh session of the World Urban Forum and the preparatory process of Habitat III, as well as the Conference itself.

25. The twenty-third assembly was held in Mexico City in August 2014 and concluded with a joint declaration confirming the commitment of all stakeholders to the Habitat III process by measuring the progress of cities and human settlements, assessing policies and setting plans and future actions.

4. Economic Commission for Europe Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management

26. The Economic Commission for Europe Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Land Management, held in Geneva on 8 October 2013, adopted the Strategy for Sustainable Housing and Land Management, containing specific targets to be reached by member States by 2020. The Strategy is built upon a survey of opinions of the 58 States members of the Economic Commission for Europe on priorities and challenges in housing and land management, including sustainable urban development, in the region. The Strategy aims to contribute to Habitat III, with a focus on the global commitment to sustainable cities, while continuing to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, adopted in 1996.

5. European Union Urban Development Group

27. At the Urban Development Group meeting of directors general responsible for urban issues, held in Vilnius in November 2013, the States members of the European Union recognized that the Urban Development Group was the right forum in which to discuss the Habitat III preparatory process and the regional report for Europe. Member States also underlined the synergy that could be created between this process and the preparation of a European urban agenda. Member States further underlined the need for “urban” ministries to fully engage in negotiating global agendas, including the post-2015 development agenda and the new urban agenda for Habitat III.

28. In February 2014, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission laid a stepping stone for the formulation of a European Union urban agenda through the CiTIEs conference on the theme “Cities of tomorrow: investing in Europe”. The report of the conference considered the contribution of the European Union to Habitat III to be an opportunity to take stock of de facto urban priorities of the Union and affirm its lead role in sustainable urban development.

D. United Nations system

29. In paragraph 9 of resolution 68/239, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to mobilize the expertise of the United Nations system as a whole, including the regional commissions, and of other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, for the Habitat III preparatory process.

30. On the margins of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in Geneva from 1 to 4 July 2013, an agreement was made to establish a United Nations inter-agency coordinating committee for Habitat III. The committee met in New York on 27 November 2013 and in Medellín, Colombia, on 8 April 2014 during the seventh session of the World Urban Forum.

31. The first integration segment of the Economic and Social Council was held in New York from 27 to 29 May 2014. The segment focused on sustainable urbanization, and its purpose was to explore how urbanization can be an effective tool for the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It came to the conclusion that urbanization could serve as a transformational force for achieving and advancing sustainable development. To that end, an integrated approach would be required that engaged all key stakeholders with a view to producing innovative solutions to foster economic, environmental and social sustainability.

32. At the twenty-seventh session of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, held in Santiago on 17 and 18 March 2014, the introduction of an agenda item on a new United Nations urban agenda was proposed. Representatives of 17 organizations of the United Nations system spoke in support of creating a working group on the subject. The working group has now been established and has begun its work. On the basis of the report of the working group, it is expected that the High-level Committee on Programmes will make policy recommendations on a new United Nations urban agenda for consideration by the Chief Executives Board. It is also envisaged that those recommendations, after approval by the Board, will constitute the formal input of the organizations of the United Nations system to the preparatory process.

Regional economic commissions

33. “Regional preparations for Habitat III” was an agenda item at the third session of the Committee on Environment and Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok in October 2013. States members of the Commission reaffirmed the importance of the regional preparatory processes and endorsed the proposal for planned regional preparations for Habitat III. The Commission also organized an event on the theme “The role for local government in the future we want” in Bangkok on 28 October 2013.

34. Three Habitat III preparatory meetings have so far been held in the Arab States region. The Regional Office for Arab States of UN-Habitat held a meeting with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut on 27 May 2014, which focused on regional collaboration and preparations for the post-2015 development agenda process and the preparation of the Habitat III regional report. The Commission showed a strong interest in collaborating on both processes.

E. Coordinating efforts with global partners

1. World Urban Campaign

35. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of its resolution 24/14, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat called upon the Secretary-General of the Conference to strengthen the World Urban Campaign and to support national urban campaigns.

36. Since its launch in March 2010 at the fifth session of the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the World Urban Campaign has evolved from a knowledge-sharing network into a think tank and has been considerably strengthened in terms of legitimacy and the number of partners engaged. The World Urban Campaign currently has over 75 partners and members from civil society organizations, local government associations, networks of human settlements professionals, researchers and academia, private sector organizations, women and youth groups, parliamentarians and trade unions, among which feature major constituencies and umbrella organizations with large global outreach. The World Urban Campaign has gradually asserted itself as a consensus-building platform for stakeholders towards a new urban agenda.

37. Since the sixth session of the World Urban Forum and the launch of “Manifesto for cities: the urban future we want” as an initial engagement of partners, the World Urban Campaign has actively engaged in the Habitat III preparatory process. Partners have recognized the strategic importance of Habitat III to the elevation of the urban agenda globally. A working group on Habitat III, established by the steering committee of the World Urban Campaign in September 2012, met in April and September 2013, as well as during the seventh session of the World Urban Forum, to reflect on past conferences, initiate a strategy and draft a position on their vision of cities and human settlements in the twenty-first century. The first vision statement, entitled “The future we want, the city we need”, was presented in New York in March 2014 as a joint contribution of partners united by shared goals in the lead-up to Habitat III. This collective contribution constitutes a first step in the global consensus-building process of non-governmental partners towards contributing to a new urban agenda.

2. Local governments

38. During the preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, a group of local government associations met in New York in April 2012 to provide inputs to the Group of Friends of Sustainable Cities. This informal group of permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York, numbering 29 as of April 2012, was co-chaired by Singapore and Sweden and was instrumental in bringing the urban dimension to deliberations of the General Assembly.

39. Paragraph 42 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, reaffirms the key role of all levels of government and legislative bodies, including local governments, in promoting sustainable development. The success of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development convinced the main local government associations of the advantages of acting together. The result was the formation of the global task force of local and regional governments for post-2015 development agenda towards Habitat III, which aimed at building a joint strategy to contribute to the international policymaking debates within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development follow-up and the lead-up to Habitat III. The task force is composed of 19 institutions, made up mostly of local and regional government associations and representing about 2 million subnational governments.

III. Launch of the preparatory process for Habitat III (2014–2016)

40. Habitat III will be the first global United Nations conference to focus on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, scheduled to be adopted at the end of 2015. The calendar of the preparatory process for Habitat III will allow for the full integration of the post-2015 summit discussions and resolutions on the new goals on the sustainable development agenda.

41. To ensure that the Conference results in an innovative, concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document and that it is organized in an efficient, effective and inclusive manner, it is proposed that work be carried out in the following four areas: knowledge, engagement, policy and operations.

A. Knowledge: monitor, research, data and information

42. In paragraph 6 (a) of resolution 67/216, the General Assembly included in the objectives of the Conference the following actions: assessing accomplishments to date and addressing new and emerging challenges.

43. In response, the Secretary-General of the Conference, in his capacity as Executive Director of UN-Habitat, encouraged every State Member of the United Nations to prepare a national progress report on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and other internationally agreed goals and targets relevant to housing and sustainable urban development (see HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3).

44. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 24/14, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat invited member States to prepare, before the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, national reports which consider the implementation of the Habitat II agenda and of other relevant internationally agreed goals and targets, as well as new challenges, emerging trends and a prospective vision for sustainable human settlements and urban development, as a basis for the formulation of a “New Urban Agenda”, in line with paragraph 6 of resolution 67/216.

45. The national report, which must be evidence-based, should:

(a) Contain, as background information, an assessment of development progress made by the country since 1996, addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental;

(b) Contain an assessment of the progress made towards the attainment of the commitments and goals contained in the Habitat Agenda and of other internationally agreed goals and targets relevant to housing and sustainable urban development;

(c) Contain an assessment of the effectiveness of existing national arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of the Habitat Agenda and other relevant internationally agreed goals and targets, including the involvement of Habitat Agenda partners and the nature and effectiveness of partnerships with non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

(d) Identify the gaps, constraints and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and other relevant internationally agreed goals and targets, as well as other country-specific goals and targets;

(e) Review the level and effectiveness of the international support received by the country towards the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and other relevant international goals and targets;

(f) Identify emerging challenges and opportunities in the area of housing and sustainable urban development that should be addressed by a new urban agenda.

46. Suggested guidelines and a format for the preparation of national reports were shared with member States in February 2014, and the deadline for delivering the national report was set at 30 June 2014.

47. In order to ensure the full participation of all relevant national stakeholders, the Secretary-General of the Conference recommended that member States use their national habitat committees to prepare their national reports. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 24/14, the Governing Council called upon member States, using any available assistance and necessary guidance and support from UN-Habitat, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to form national habitat committees, where they did not exist, and to strengthen existing national habitat committees to ensure their effective and efficient participation in the Habitat III preparatory process, including the preparation of national reports.

48. A document entitled “Guide on national habitat committees: purpose and composition” was shared among member States in 2013, and it was proposed that member States establish their habitat committees by June 2013.
49. A few countries have submitted their national reports in advance of the first session of the Preparatory Committee. Member States are urgently encouraged to finalize their national reports before the end of 2014 in order to allow the Secretary-General of the Conference, in cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, and other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, to prepare regional reports drawing on the national reports, as well as on available knowledge, resources and data, as input for the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III.
50. A global report drawing on the national and regional reports as well as on available knowledge, resources and data, will be prepared as input for the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III.
51. The Habitat III preparatory process is a unique opportunity to address the urgent need to improve the worldwide base of urban knowledge by helping Governments, local authorities and civil society organizations to develop and apply policy-oriented urban indicators, statistics and other urban information. A working group on urban data will be proposed to strengthen current mechanisms assessing global progress in implementing the Habitat Agenda and to monitor and evaluate global urban conditions and trends.
52. In line with requirement that the inputs for, and support to, the preparatory process of the Conference be provided in the most inclusive, efficient, effective and improved manner (resolution 67/216, para. 14), the Habitat III secretariat will make use of new information and innovative knowledge management approaches to facilitate the dissemination of tools and methodologies, as well as promoting capacity-building among members of national habitat committees, national and international experts, other urban stakeholders and public opinion.

B. Engagement: improved participation, partnership, advocacy and communications

53. In paragraph 11 of resolution 67/216, the General Assembly encouraged effective contributions from and the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local governments, major groups as identified in Agenda 21, the relevant United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and specialized agencies, the international financial institutions and other Habitat Agenda partners, at all stages of the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.
54. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to make proposals to the Preparatory Committee on improved participation of local authorities and other stakeholders in the preparatory process and the Conference itself, building on the positive experience enabled by the rules and procedures of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and the inclusive engagement modalities of Habitat II.
55. Habitat II set precedents at the time for its inclusiveness and the participation of local authorities and their associations, civil society and other major groups. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report of the Conference (A/CONF.165/14) read:

In the view of many participants, the “Partners’ Committee” was the most exciting feature of Habitat II. For the first time at a major conference of the United Nations, eminent representatives of the different components of civil society, identified on the “road to Istanbul”, were given the opportunity to assemble in their own partners’ forums and present their views and commitments to delegates at the Conference in an official forum created especially for that purpose – Committee II. They brought to the Conference the voice of local authorities, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, business, foundations, scientists, professionals and researchers.

The forum experience itself included many novel elements. While international non-governmental organizations had assembled at non-governmental organization forums at each preceding United Nations conference – albeit separately from the official conference – many partners were organizing their own global meetings for the first time. For example, the international and national associations of cities and local authorities had the opportunity to

organize their first world assembly and to endorse a common declaration stating their objectives and their contribution to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Other partners, such as the academies of science and engineering and the foundations, also welcomed the novelty of the experience and stressed its value in bringing new global constituencies together.

56. The innovative partners approach at Habitat II was also reflected in the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration. Both highlight the principle of partnership between national Governments, local authorities, civil society and other relevant stakeholders as key to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the international, national and local levels, based also on the recognition that sustainable urban development may be facilitated by national policy but ultimately depends on local implementation for success.
57. In this context, the Secretary-General of the Conference proposes to build on one of the main legacies of Habitat II – the need for participation and partnership of local authorities, civil society and grass-roots communities, the private sector, academia and researchers, parliamentarians, professional organizations, and children's, youth and women's groups, with a view to achieving sustainable urban development.
58. The active participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular those from developing countries, in the preparatory process and the Conference itself, would provide the basis for a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenge of sustainable urban development successfully. New mechanisms for the promotion of transparency and the effective engagement of civil society should be explored to enhance working methods and processes in the preparatory process and the Conference itself with a view to ensuring informed discussions and contributions by all relevant stakeholders to the intergovernmental decision-making process.
59. The World Urban Campaign, launched in 2010 as an initiative combining the two campaigns established after the Habitat II Conference – the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure (1999) and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance (1999) – represents a key platform for public, private and civil society actors to share urban solutions and provide inputs to the process leading to the Conference. In the Medellin Declaration, adopted at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum, the participants recognized the World Urban Campaign as a participatory process and partnership platform among actors of change working to ensure an inclusive and encompassing process towards Habitat III.
60. Several meetings of the World Urban Campaign will be held in the lead-up to Habitat III in order to facilitate the process of consultation and building consensus among stakeholders. The first will be held in Caserta, Italy, from 15 to 18 October 2014, during the Urban October celebration, under the theme "Urban thinkers campus: the city we need".
61. In the same context, pursuant to Governing Council resolution 24/14, the World Urban Campaign will also continue to engage all Habitat Agenda partners and new partners in order to debate urban challenges and policies, as well as identify good practices that could contribute to the new urban agenda. It will also actively engage in national urban campaigns and support communication and outreach activities to promote the participation of all stakeholders in national preparations for Habitat III.
62. In resolution 67/216, the World Urban Forum was recognized as the foremost global arena for interaction among policymakers, local government leaders, non-governmental stakeholders and expert practitioners in the field of human settlements. In the Medellin Declaration, participants at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum recognized the unique and positive role that the Forum plays as a space for effective dialogue.
63. As the World Urban Forum is convened every two years, the eighth session could be organized back to back with Habitat III in 2016, promoting the strong participation of Habitat Agenda partners and relevant international programmes, funds and agencies and thereby ensuring their inclusion in the identification of new issues, the sharing of lessons learned and the exchange of best practices and good policies.
64. The promotion of national urban forums at the national level would also contribute to enabling the effective participation and contribution of all Habitat Agenda partners at all stages of the preparatory process and at the Conference itself.
65. Finally, the celebration on 31 October of World Habitat Day and, pursuant to resolution 68/239 and beginning in 2014, of World Cities Day, will increase opportunities to engage relevant international

organizations, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders in raising awareness of sustainable urban development.

C. Policy: action-oriented commitment on the implementation of a new urban agenda

66. In paragraph 6 (a) of resolution 67/216, the General Assembly decided that the objective of Habitat III would be to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable urban development, assessing accomplishments to date, addressing poverty and identifying and addressing new and emerging challenges.

67. In paragraph 6 (b), the Assembly also decided that the Conference should result in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document, which would reinvigorate the global commitment to and support for housing and sustainable urban development and the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda”.

68. Pursuant to resolution 67/216, the work of several policy units on thematic areas could facilitate the collection of inputs to the Habitat III preparatory process in a more innovative way, ensuring the participation of all actors in the composition of those units. The link between the post-2015 development agenda and its implementation in the new urban agenda should be one of the policy units’ thematic areas to ensure proper coordination and substantive alignment between both processes.

69. High-level regional meetings would also support efforts to formulate a new urban agenda, as recognized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in its resolution 70/12, in which the Executive Secretary of the Commission was requested, in collaboration with UN-Habitat and other relevant bodies and agencies, to organize the sixth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum back to back with the high-level regional preparatory meeting in Indonesia in 2015 in order to provide substantive inputs to the Habitat III preparatory process.

70. An effective United Nations system-wide coordination mechanism would be established for the preparatory process after informal consultations with all agencies, building on the experience of the inter-agency committee created in 2013. It would work on progress made by the United Nations system in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and other relevant goals and targets.

D. Operations: transparency, accountability, innovation and creativity

71. In paragraph 13 of resolution 67/216, the General Assembly decided to establish a trust fund for Habitat III. It urged international and bilateral donors, as well as the private sector, financial institutions, foundations and other donors, to support the preparations for the Conference through voluntary contributions to the trust fund and to support the participation of developing countries in meetings of the Preparatory Committee and at the Conference itself. The Habitat III secretariat would ensure the transparency and accountability of the trust fund.

72. In line with resolution 67/216, the preparatory process and the Conference itself will adopt, where feasible, innovative technologies and approaches so as to ensure that the preparatory process for Habitat III is inclusive, participatory and efficient, such as implementing paper-smart meetings and Internet platforms to share analytical tools and reports and for promoting dialogue during the preparatory process, not adversely affecting the participation of countries with limited information and communication technology capacities.

73. Further details will need to be discussed with the host country, and lessons learned from other United Nations conferences, as well as the World Urban Forum, should be applied.

74. A Habitat III webpage was created during the course of 2013 and improved in July 2014 to include all key documents relating to the process. The preparatory process will also make extensive use of social media and other creative advocacy-related tools as a means of engagement and supporting dialogue during the Habitat III preparatory process.

IV. Conclusion

75. Advances in technology, the realignment of global power relations, changes in demographic profiles, the recognition of emerging resource constraints and the reassertion of questions of rights and justice in the context of global development have triggered a profound systemic change since the holding of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (“Peoples’ Forum”) in 1976 and Habitat II (“City Summit”) in 1996.

76. The new international order provides more room for towns, cities and regional economies to contribute to national development through direct participation in the global economy. It provides an opportunity to discuss a new urban agenda, which will focus on policies and strategies that can result in effectively harnessing the power and forces behind urbanization by promoting a new model of urban development that is able to integrate all facets of sustainable development to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity, thereby reducing poverty and inequalities.
