

United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
United Nations Habitat Assembly of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme Second session
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Draft resolution - international guidelines on people-centered smart cities

The United Nations Habitat Assembly,

Recognizing the profound and dynamic impact digitalization and smart cities are having on human settlements and human lives; both in positive ways by providing new ways to support evidence-based sustainable urban development, delivering urban services, providing job opportunities, **enhancing** access to basic services and improving information sharing and collaboration between various stakeholders including governments and urban residents; and in negative ways if not managed well, by exacerbating existing inequalities, reducing sustainability and compromising economic growth, as well as, the right to privacy,

Noting the definition of smart city by United for Smart Sustainable Cities, the UN smart city platform co-chaired by UN-Habitat, ITU and UNECE and supported by 14 other UN agencies, as follow : “an innovative city that uses ICTs and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects”,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular paragraph 15 which recognizes that the “spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies” ; *further recalling* Sustainable Development Goal 11 to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable,

Reaffirming the target 17.6 target of the Sustainable Development Goals in Agenda 2030 and its will to “fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology” and “enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level”; *Further reaffirming* the pledge set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that no one will be left behind,

Recalling General Assembly Resolution 71/256 of 23 December 2016 entitled “New Urban Agenda” and *reaffirming* its commitment in paragraph 66 to adopting a smart-city approach that makes use of opportunities from digitalization, clean energy and technologies and its commitment in paragraph 156 to promoting the development of national information and communications technology policies and e-government strategies, as well as citizen-centric digital governance tools, tapping into technological innovations, including capacity development programmes, in order to make information and communications technologies accessible to the public, including women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and persons in vulnerable situations, to enable them to develop and exercise civic responsibility, broadening participation and fostering responsible governance, as well as increasing efficiency,

Recalling the General Assembly resolution 77/211 of 15 December 2022 on the right to privacy in the digital age, which calls upon States to respect and protect the right to privacy, both online and offline, including in the context of digital communications and new and emerging technologies, according to which no one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference of their privacy, family, home or correspondence and the right to the protection of the law against such interference; **which** also calls on States to take measures on a national level to put an end to violations of the right to privacy and to create the conditions to prevent such violations, including by ensuring that relevant national legislation complies with their obligations under international human rights law **and** furthermore recommends that States maintain or establish existing independent, effective, adequately resourced and impartial judicial, administrative and/or parliamentary domestic oversight mechanisms capable of ensuring transparency, as appropriate, and accountability for State surveillance of communications, their interception and the collection of personal data,

Recalling the Human Rights Council Resolution on new and emerging digital technologies and human rights, which recognizes the potential of digital technologies to facilitate efforts to accelerate human progress, to promote and protect human rights and express fundamental freedoms, to bridge digital divides, to support rights of persons with disabilities, the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and to ensure that no one is left behind in the achievement of the SDGs,

Noting the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap on Digital Cooperation in which the Secretary-General sets out a global agenda on internet connectivity, digital inclusion, digital capacity building, digital human rights, artificial intelligence and digital trust and security,

OPERATIVE CLAUSES

1. *Urges* the Executive Director and Member States to promote a smart city approach which is people-centered through developing guidance for national and local governments and ensuring that innovation and digital technologies are used to help cities and human settlements achieve the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda and that smart cities are based on the following approaches:

- a. **Ensuring** the involvement of people, including marginalized communities **and** ensuring digital and new technologies help in reducing spatial and digital inequalities and respecting human rights for inclusive cities,
- b. Ensuring that smart city approaches and urban digital infrastructures contribute to reducing the environmental impact of cities and to ensure that digitalization itself does not contribute to increased emissions and **the consumption of** natural resources,
- c. Building the appropriate capacity and skills-set for people-centered smart cities, including by promoting digital literacy, education and training national and local government officials and technical staff in digital transformation, data, smart city planning and digital public participation, among others,
- d. **Ensuring** appropriate multi-level digital governance to guide the development of people-centered smart cities, including data governance, management and use, system and data interoperability, the ethical considerations of technologies such as artificial intelligence, the privacy and rights of individuals and communities and appropriate collaboration frameworks between governments, the private sector, academia and civil society,
- e. **Creating economic opportunities through innovation and smart technologies, including to reduce socio-economic inequalities and fostering cities' prosperity ;**

2. *Encourages* the Executive Director and Member States to promote people-centered smart city approaches, by involving local governments and people, including the urban poor and **other** vulnerable groups, in the preparation and implementation of smart city charters, plans and strategies to promote equal

access and life-long education and training of all people to the opportunities provided by data, digital infrastructure and digital services in cities and human settlements and to favour accountability;

3. **Requests the Executive Director** to initiate the elaboration of international guidelines on people-centered smart cities that will act as a global framework for developing national and local smart city charters, plans and strategies, which ensure that digital urban infrastructure and data contributes to making cities and human settlements sustainable, inclusive, prosperous and respecting human rights and **to** present them for approval to the Executive Board at its last session of 2025;

4. **Requests the Executive Director to organize** an inclusive consultative process with the regional offices of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, national Governments, international associations of local authorities, including United Cities and Local Governments, all relevant United Nations organizations, international finance institutions, development agencies, relevant international and national professional associations and members of the Habitat Professional Forum, non-governmental organizations, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector and other national and international stakeholders, taking into account traditional knowledges, in order to inform the drafting process with best practices and lessons learned from different contexts and at different scales;

5. *Urges* Member States to technically and financially support the process for the elaboration of the guidelines and to host related field projects;

6. *Encourages* the Executive Director to leverage **technological platforms, such as** the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC), to support the **elaboration** and implementation of the people-centered smart city international guidelines, subject to **availability of** funding, and *Encourages* Member States to support the establishment of smart cities hubs to implement the international guidelines and the New Urban Agenda;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to report on the progress of the implementation of this resolution **to** the Executive board until the completion of the work.