

Global  
Experts  
Group  
Meeting



# TOWARDS EFFECTIVE NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES : LESSONS FROM CURRENT PRACTICE

Madrid, 17-18 March 2014



With the collaboration of:

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



**Ajuntament  
de Barcelona**

**Cities Alliance**  
Cities Without Slums



TOWARDS EFFECTIVE NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES:  
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## 1. BACKGROUND

The planet reached a milestone in 2006 when more than three billion people, half the global population, started to live in cities and towns. The world urban population is yet expected to increase by 72 per cent by 2050, from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion in 2050, and virtually all of the expected growth in the world population will be concentrated in the urban areas of the less developed regions, whose population is projected to increase from 2.7 billion in 2011 to 5.1 billion in 2050 (UNDESA, 2011). Implementing required policy measures and planning for sustainable urban development offer a pragmatic basis for positive socioeconomic transformation to maximize the benefits of urbanization, while mitigating potential adverse externalities.

The economic benefits of sustainable urban growth will come from exploiting economies of scale and agglomeration. Failure to equip nations with adequate capacity to develop, implement and monitor appropriate urban policies as well as to plan, manage and guide urban growth and dynamics may place the urbanization on an uncertain developmental path. Through reasserting the positive role of urbanization, and providing an overarching coordinating framework to address urban challenges, inclusive national urban policies offer a key strategy for national socioeconomic development. Aimed at guiding the urbanization process based on compact, connected, integrated and inclusive cities, the new generation of National Urban Policy – NUP - seeks to strengthen the link between urbanization, socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability.

Urbanization can deliver social, environmental and economic transformation and prosperity if it is guided and supported by effective national policies and frameworks. UN-Habitat has prioritized inclusive national urban policies in its 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. The NUP is also a central pillar for the proposed urban goals in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda. Further, UN-Habitat has received over two dozen country requests for support in developing and implementing a NUP. The Cities Alliance Charter has underscored national policies of urban development and local government as one of its three strategic interventions. The momentum is testimony to the fact that countries and development partners would like to ensure a more integrated approach to sustainable urban development, including positioning of cities as engines of growth, the protection of natural resources, poverty alleviation and inequality reduction.

### UN-HABITAT National Urban Policy Framework

UN-Habitat is promoting the development of a National Urban Policy as a key step to reassert urban

space and territoriality and provide the needed direction and course of action to support sustainable urban development. The National Urban Policy provides an overarching coordinating framework to address the most pressing issues related to rapid urban development, including slum prevention and regularization, access to land, basic services and infrastructure, municipal finances, adequate housing, urban legislation, delegation of authority to sub-national and local governments, financial flows, urban planning regulations, urban mobility and urban energy requirements, as well as job creation.

Approved at the highest level, a National Urban Policy could be seen as the general framework to guide public and private interventions in urban areas and be a reference for sectorial ministries and service providers. When developed through a consultative process, the NUP can serve as one of the key references for legislative, regulatory and institutional reforms. Countries that have developed and are implementing National Urban Policies often use it as a good instrument for public and political awareness because such policy highlights the gains to be obtained from sustainable urban development, as well as an opportunity to promote consultation with urban stakeholders.

Through the development of a National Urban Policy the following results, amongst others, are expected:

- (a) Identification of urban development priorities towards socially, economically equitable and environmentally friendly urban and national development;
- (b) Guidance on the future development of the national urban system and its spatial configuration concretized through National and Regional Spatial Plans for Territorial Development;
- (c) Better coordination and guidance of actions by national actors, as well as lower levels of government in all sectors;
- (d) Increased and more coordinated private and public investments in urban development to better exploit agglomeration economies and enhance urban productivity, economic inclusiveness and environmental footprint.

### Existing mandates and Commitments

The Habitat Agenda underscores that “urban settlements, properly planned and managed, hold the promise for human development and the protection of the world’s natural resources.”<sup>2</sup> The Habitat Agenda encourages the international community to support and facilitate national and local efforts in human

settlements management and to promote the exchange of experiences and policy responses to urbanization and integrated regional development within the framework of national development strategies. This Agenda also calls to enhance the capabilities of national and local authorities to identify and analyze critical human settlements' issues, to formulate and effectively implement policies and programs in response to them.<sup>3</sup> Cities and towns have been engines of growth and incubators of civilization, industry and commerce.

The commitment made in the Rio+20 Outcome document<sup>4</sup> recognizes "the need for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements" and committing "to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements".

The UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 24/5 of 19 April 2013<sup>5</sup> mandates UN-Habitat to promote sustainable development through national urban policies as a key strategy for national socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability;

In its final Declaration, the Fourth African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) held in Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2012 committed Members State to "strengthening and developing transformative National Urban Policy and adopting strategies for realizing smarter and more sustainable urban development through reconfiguration of space, infrastructure and flows in new urban development and retrofitting existing cities, resulting into compact, mixed use, high density development that is walkable and bicycle friendly, and transit oriented."

1 UN DESA, "World Urbanisation Prospects" (2011). <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/world-urbanization-prospects-the-2011-revision.html>

2 The Habitat Agenda; p. 2. [http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/1176\\_6455\\_the\\_habitat\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/1176_6455_the_habitat_agenda.pdf)

3 The Habitat Agenda; p. 98

4 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development [http://www.unctd2012.org/content/documents/774futurewewant\\_english.pdf](http://www.unctd2012.org/content/documents/774futurewewant_english.pdf). paragraphs 134 and 135.

5 <http://papersmart.unon.org/habitatgc24/sites/papersmart.unon.org/habitatgc24/files/K1351318.pdf>

## 2. COMMUNIQUÉ

**Background:** 58 urban policy experts from national and regional governments, international organizations and academia including research and training institutions have participated during 2 days in the Global Experts Meeting "Towards Effective National Urban Policies: Lessons from current practice", held in Madrid this week.

The meeting, organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in collaboration with the City Council of Barcelona, Cities Alliance and the Spanish Ministry of Development, aimed to share recent experiences and approaches on National Urban Policies (NUP), and develop a broad "roadmap" for National Urban Policy implementation strategy.

In a global context where the majority of people now live in cities, and developing countries are urbanizing rapidly, this meeting tried to respond, through discussions, to the challenges linked to rapid urban growth. urban sprawl, informal settlements, squalid living conditions, inadequate and overloaded infrastructure, in order to foster a sustainable urban development path.

Throughout dynamic debates on rapid urbanization, legislative and regulatory processes, economic and environmental issues among others, the participants exchanged experiences and opinions on good practices in national urban policy strategies. Experts also worked in small working groups to discuss specific topics and drafted specific recommendations aimed at advancing the NUP policy framework.

At the end of the two-day meeting, the participants drew a joint communiqué capturing what was discussed.

**1. We, participants (53) to the Experts Group Meeting (EGM) on National Urban Policies met in Madrid, Spain, from 17 – 18 March 2014 with the aim of sharing recent experiences and approaches on National Urban Policies (NUP), and developing a broad "roadmap" for NUP implementation strategy.**

2. The Experts Group Meeting (EGM) comprised experts from national, regional and city governments, international organizations and academia, including research and training institutions.

3. In a context where the majority of people now live in cities, and developing countries are urbanizing rapidly, we recognize the need and urgency to respond in a collaborative manner to foster a sustainable urban development.

4. We recognize the challenges posed by the need to develop adequate answers to rapid urbanization, urban sprawl, informal settlements, squalid living conditions, inadequate and overloaded infrastructure, transport congestion, vulnerability to various kinds of disasters, etc.

5. We also recognize that countries and cities have a distinct urban development history, are at various stages of the urban development and have different urban capacity (financial, human and institutional).



An adequate response needs to be contextualized and adapted according to the specific experiences of countries and cities.

6. We believe that urbanization is unavoidable and that despite its inherent challenges, it also has potential gains for socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability from careful urban expansion and investment in facilities and services.

7. We affirm the role of NUP that strengthens the collaboration between national and local authorities. NUP can provide an overarching coordinating framework to address urban challenges and foster sustainable urban development, and offer a pragmatic basis for socioeconomic development and the engagement process of relevant stakeholders to maximize the benefits of urbanization, while mitigating potential adverse externalities.

8. We see NUP as a long-term agenda and a process that requires legal foundation, capacity building, champions and collaborative learning. We value the importance of sharing experiences and strengthening capacity of actors on NUP.

9. We also see National Urban Policies, developed in close collaboration with subnational, enabling institutions, regional and local authorities, and following local priorities as a key step to reassert urban space and territoriality by providing the needed direction and course of action to support sustainable urban development that positions cities as inclusive engines of growth, clarifies land and property rights, helps protect natural resources and reduces poverty and inequality.

10. We take note that the key pillars of NUP include legislation, institutions, financing, planning, spatial (place) and their interlinkages. An effective NUP has to be people-centered, requires a vertical and horizontal approach and must integrate various sectors and actors.

11. We appreciate the range of lessons learned from practice on National Urban Policies drawn from both developing and developed countries presented in this EGM. We recognize that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to NUP. We advocate for continued effort to distill and apply good experiences, lessons and practices to help countries, particularly in the context of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to be held in 2016.

12. We acknowledge the need to develop and improve the experiences and practices on national urban policies processes in the framework of a broader multilevel governance approach in order to respond effectively to the realities of countries in terms of their urbanization and level of development. We recognize the need of a strong and shared political willingness. As countries and cities are diverse, NUP need to be contextualized and adapted accordingly based on the local scenario.

13. We recognize that the NUP process is both technical and political with financial implications. We, therefore, underscore the importance of developing adequate instruments and tools to support the diagnostic, formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the NUP.

14. We also recognize the fundamental role of legislative frameworks for the effective implementation of NUP and we support their strengthening, improvement and enforcement as one of the main levers of economic and social urban development that will sustain the NUP.

15. We stress the need for a stronger partnership approach between national and local governments to effectively respond to urban development challenges using National Urban Policies that seek coherence of sectorial policies and local plans. The formulation of NUP may serve to inform new approaches to meet these challenges and mobilize private, public and civic stakeholders for its implementation.

16. We also stress that NUP support rural development and recognize the importance of cross national urban corridors.

17. We are of the strong view that many developing countries are at an opportune juncture to start or reinforce efforts to respond effectively to urbanization. The time is right for many countries to embrace urban development as a transformative force and source of wealth to reap social and economic benefits while managing and reducing negative externalities.

18. We note the importance of supporting countries in the NUP process, particularly to developing an enabling environment to undertake the diagnostic, formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of NUP.

**“We call for all concerned governments and citizens to join this proposal and discuss it in view of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and adopt it at Habitat III as a promising tool for future sustainable urban development”**

19. We propose that NUP, developed through stronger partnerships between national and sub-national governments and other actors, should guide the urban development process based on the norms of more compact, more connected, better integrated, socially inclusive and climate resilient cities to strengthen the

link between urbanization, socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability.

20. We suggest that the NUP process adopts a bottom-up approach to ensure sufficient buy-in.

21. We call for development partners to contribute and complement their activities in support of the National Urban Policies capitalizing upon new and existing development partnerships at the country level. We believe that a concerted approach between all tiers of governments and stakeholders can ensure the commitment, accountability and effectiveness of national and local urban policies in the long term.

22. We recommend that countries consider the state of urban policy while preparing their National Report for Habitat III, and engaging in the discussion within the framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

23. We highlight the need to develop sustainable financing, legal and administrative instruments for effective national urban policy.

24. We submit that to make NUP work, we propose the following as basic guiding principles:

- Participatory and inclusive.
- Rights-based, gender responsive and sensible to all vulnerable groups

- Affordable (cost-effective and fundable).
- Strategic, pragmatic and context specific (free from undue complexity, functional, respond to priority and catalytic needs).
- Action-oriented and implementable (clear implementation plan, 'What is not implementable does not exist').
- Forward looking.

25. We commit to the following as a roadmap to advance the National Urban Policies Strategy (\*):

26. Finally, we call for all concerned governments and citizens to join this proposal and discuss it in view of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and adopt it at Habitat III as a promising tool for future sustainable urban development.

(*)WHAT	WHO Lead (others)	BY WHEN	COMMENTS
1. Document and share experiences on National Urban Policy processes	UN-Habitat (other actors and experts)	2015	Share outcome of the regional reviews of NUP experiences
2. Support selected countries in their national urban policy	UN-Habitat (OECD, Cities Alliance, World Bank, UCLG, ECLAC, experts, etc.)	Ongoing	Based on requested and funding availability
3. Work with academic researchers to ensure the NUP agenda enters the research literature (research capacity)	Universities, UNHP	Ongoing	In-kind and direct support by agreement if appropriate
4. Create a platform / network on NUP agenda enters the research literature (community of practices)	UN-Habitat	2015	In consultation with UN-Habitat and other interested parties
5. Development partners to share knowledge	OECD / UN-Habitat		Interested partners to create a task force on NUP, explore opportunities for joint action
6. Develop research and knowledge on urban legislation	UN-Habitat / Institute of Advanced Legal Studies	Ongoing	

### 3. THE UN-HABITAT EXPERTS GROUP MEETING

The EGM Towards “Effective National Urban Policies: Lessons from Current Practice” brought together in Spain around 50 participants, of whom 35 were international experts who work directly with National Urban Policies (NUP).

When establishing the list, special attention was devoted to balancing both gender and geographic location of the invitees to the broadest extent possible. Experts included academics and practitioners in the field of NUP, governmental representatives, as well as members of international networks and associations, in conformity with the objectives of the EGM.

During two days, participants had a chance to discuss core elements of National Urban Plans, share recent experiences and approaches on NUP, and developed a “roadmap” for its implementation strategy. The meeting also represented an opportunity to engage urban stakeholders to promote NUP as a key strategy for national socioeconomic development and sustainable urbanization for rapidly growing countries.

Selected experts were invited to speak in five different thematic sessions that tackled the following topics: “The Sustainable Urbanization Imperative and National Urban Policies”, “Towards Effective National Urban Policies: Lessons from Current Practice”, “Unlocking the potential of urban development using a robust legislative and regulatory framework”, “The Economic and Environmental Dimension of a National Urban Policy” and “Towards a “Road Map” on National Urban Policies”.

Their presentations showed practical examples of how NUP were implemented in several countries and brought to the table detailed approaches related to legal, institutional, financial, legislative and land-use issues.

Experts recalled that these important elements need to be analyzed thoroughly when drafting a NUP, especially in developing and fast urbanizing countries, to establish coherence among them and guarantee the means to implement NUP. Each session culminated in a debate moderated by specialists on these relevant themes. Additionally, participants had a chance to gather in small groups to exchange their own experience and opinion about one specific cycle of the National Urban Policies – diagnostics, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. These recommendations were then analyzed and reviewed by all participants in plenary and used to advance the NUP framework.

As a result of this event, a communiqué was drafted to reflect the outcomes of this encounter and will be used as a powerful advocacy tool to convince governments about the value of adopting NUP as a pragmatic model to achieve more sustainable cities.

This meeting represents the second of a series of five events funded by Barcelona City Council to promote the theme “towards a new urban agenda”. Supporting the national element of this proposed theme, the Spanish Ministry of Development opened its doors to welcome this specific meeting in Madrid, which also counted with the collaboration of the Cities Alliance.



## 4. INTRODUCTION AND OPENING SESSION

The seminar commenced with a word from Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, who welcomed the group of experts through a video call from Nairobi. During his short speech, he recalled that NUP is a very compelling instrument to help governments put together a policy and urbanization strategy to address the issues related to rapid growth. Clos reminded that in the next 30 years cities will receive more than three billion inhabitants and most of this urbanization will take place in developing countries. If national governments do not oversee this process properly, people will tend to move to megalopolis, aggravating even more its problems.

This new approach represents an opportunity for national governments to become key actors to deal with a series of matters that cannot be handled on a local basis, such as land issues, infrastructure, energy and even alternative ways to finance these initiatives. Moreover, he highlighted that this seminar represents an optimal environment to clarify the benefits of this framework and expose how national and local governments can work together to lead this process towards achieving a positive urbanization outcome.

Rafael Tuts, Coordinator of Urban Planning and Design Branch of UN-Habitat, pointer out the relevance of this seminar in the current global context and reminded that member states have explicitly asked, during the Rio+20 Conference “The Future We Want”, for a more holistic approach to the theme of sustainable urban development. According to him, “NUP represent a vital instrument to accomplish this goal, essentially because it can lead to a transformative, integrative, universal means of dealing with urban problems.”

In his opening remarks, Rafael Català Polo, Secretary of State for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing of the Spanish Ministry of Development, stated that the urban growth has changed the environmental and social face of our cities, leaving the governments with a new challenge to convert them in a place of opportunities and an adequate and pleasant home for the future generations. International experiences, such as this Experts Group Meeting, represents an important field of learning, hence this encounter embodies a unique occasion to share lessons learned and positive experiences from different countries, and take further steps towards achieving more human cities. He also reaffirmed the serious commitment of the Spanish Government to lead and actively participate in every initiative related to how we can build better and more sustainable cities, within its territory and, particularly, together with the European, Latin American and Northern Africa countries; nations with which Spain has traditionally built up a common and historical bond.

Carmen Sánchez-Miranda Gallego, Head of the UN-Habitat office in Madrid, concluded the introductory remarks by outlining the objectives of the meetings, which included sharing recent experiences and approaches on National Urban Policies (NUPs), and developing a “roadmap” for NUP implementation strategy”, as well as engaging with urban stakeholders to promote NUP as a key strategy for national socioeconomic development and sustainable urbanization for less urbanized countries. Furthermore, the participation of experts during this seminar represented a unique opportunity to define the principles of the NUP framework for diagnostic, development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation; foster a national urban policy partnership network; and contribute to the roadmap towards Habitat III. Lastly, she reminded that the presentations and treatments would be summarised in a story, and the most prominent topics would appear in the final communiqué.

“NUP presents a way to counteract the negative effects of rapid urbanization as it provides an overarching coordination to address urban challenges, maximize the benefits of urbanization, while mitigating potential adverse externalities”

Remy Sietchiping

Following these initial observations, a team of four experts exposed their contributions to the theme “Why National Urban Policies Matters” from the experience of different international institutions: UN-Habitat, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Commission and the Cities Alliances. Remy Sietchiping, leader of the Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit of UN-Habitat, clarified the engagement of the agency to promote NUP worldwide and the guidance it has offered to governments in drafting and taking their own urban policies. The agency focus on countries with less than US\$ 2.000 GDP, which are usually the less developed and the ones that will face a rapid urbanization in the following years. NUP, for him, presents a way to counteract the negative effects of this phenomenon, as it offers a framework that provides an overarching coordination to address urban challenges, maximize the benefits of urbanization, while mitigating potential adverse externalities.

Sietchiping pinpointed five crucial principles that UN-Habitat is promoting to ensure the efficiency of this



policy. First, the full analysis of the financial capacity of the country to fund its goals, making sure the strategy is affordable and can be funded. Secondly, a simplified and pragmatic approach that responds to the country's priorities, avoiding what many governments that UN-Habitat is working with acknowledged as "past policies that looked nice on paper but were simply not implementable".

Following this lead, he mentioned that policies should be action-oriented, structured around a clear working plan that states the roles and responsibilities of public authorities and other stakeholders. It should, likewise, ensure the inclusion and participation of all workers and the involvement of beneficiaries to assure coordination and ownership of this operation.

Finally, he mentioned that NUP must be based on a legal foundation, as its absence hampers the implementation and even the formulation process. Before wrapping up, he recalled that many countries lack the human, financial and knowledge capacity to carry on this process, and, therefore, the exchange of information, technical support and establishment of expert networks are essential to secure the development and implementation of NUP in certain countries.

Tadashi Matsumoto, in his presentation "Building Sustainable Cities of All Sizes: A National Urban Policy Framework", explained the role of the OECD as a lead organization that provides reviews of national urban policies, advise national and local governments on issues related to cities, such as urban competitiveness, climate change, green growth cities and promote forums and dialogue to facilitate knowledge exchange and best practices. The OECD has also achieved to create an urban database, which presently includes more than 300 entries from different metropolitan regions; a central instrument to enhance cross-country comparability and improve analysis and valuation of policies.

According to him, coherence is the driver of why NUP should be adopted by countries as a way to "get cities right", since it improves the well-being of their citizens and facilitate the achievement of goals that could only be rolled out at the national level, as it goes beyond cities' borders. These are the cases of competitiveness, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, in which only through a coordinated process among all different levels of the government these issues can be dealt with. He also called for coherence among different policies at the national level, then, using a vertical approach, looking at what central government are doing for cities and what cities are doing for themselves. Lastly, a horizontal analysis of the dialogue and exchange between different municipal authorities and local stakeholders should also be put in place. The presentation concluded bringing up five essential pillars that need to be considered when drafting a NUP and the emphasis

on how these cornerstones should interact among themselves.

**Money:** Assessing the impact on urban form and outcomes of the framework for municipal finance: own revenues, transfers, expenditure and debt.

**Place:** Coordinating policies on land-use, development, transport and environment, both vertically and horizontally.

**People:** Seeing labor-market, housing, migration, urban infrastructure and migration policies through an "urban lens".

**Connections:** Connecting cities within a country with each other and the outside world; seeing cities as part of a larger system.

**Institutions:** Putting in place structures and procedures to assure vertical, cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectorial coordination on an ongoing basis.

**"Coherence is the driver of why NUP should be adopted by countries as a way to "get cities right", since it improves the well-being of their citizens and facilitate the achievement of goals that could only be rolled out at the national level"**

Tadashi Matsumoto

Bringing the perspective of the European Commission, Wladyslaw Piskorz presented the "Evolution of the involvement of the European Union in promoting sustainable urban development". He began his address by reminding participants that although urban policy has no sound footing in the founding treaties of the European Union, since the late 1980s the EU has approved a number of initiatives, mainly the Cohesion Policy, which impact directly on cities. Just to name a few, he mentioned the European Capital of Culture, Smart Cities and Communities European Innovation Partnership, Green Capital Award, Covenant of Mayors, and several other experiences sponsored by the EU to promote both urban regeneration and the exchange of knowledge and best practices on cities. He added, as well, that the urban issues have a strong bearing on different directorate generals' agendas, which target and coordinate policies that affect cities, concerning education, transport, energy, information society, environment, climate change, among others.

Two milestones towards achieving greater operational capability for EU urban policies were attained in 2008 and 2010, under the French and Spanish Presidency, respectively, through the approval of a "Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities" and the "Toledo Declaration". The latter was particularly important to highlight the EU political commitment on the definition and application of an integrated urban regeneration as one of the key tools of the 2020 strategy.

He underlined, thus, that member states recently asked the institution to have a more relevant role in ensuring better cohesion and coordination among the different EU policies and increased their demand for a European Urban Agenda. As the will exists, the next step is agreeing on the design and the work methodology of this common agenda. Therefore, he acknowledged that the experiences from the UN-Habitat and OECD on this matter have so far been vital to guide this process.

Rene P. Hohmann, in his remarks “Aligning Constituencies to Make National Policies Matter”, explained why and how the Cities Alliance is addressing National Urban Policies in its operations and why the Cities Alliance Partnership puts a special emphasis on inclusive governance in their formulation processes after an evaluation of their work, conducted in 2011, pointed out the limitation to deal with one particular tier of the government, instead of having a multilevel government arrangement that increased the institutionalization of the country. Moreover, countries complained about, what he defined as, “the parachute approach, projects that landed from the sky and that after a few years did not show any clear result or ensured the ownership of the country”. The assessment also demonstrated that the scale of investments clearly exceeded the financial capacity of one single entity to handle it. All these setbacks, as well as other circumstances, such as the lack of political will, leads to only a fraction of the national policies getting indeed implemented, he noted.

After concluding that Cities Alliances’ efforts were dispersed financing and assisting too many city development strategies within one single country, the organization decided to correct this reality by changing its business model and foster NUP as one of its main themes. Currently, they are facilitating the development of NUP in Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Ghana and Vietnam. With just three years of carrying out this new theoretical account, they have reached important achievements, such as the invigoration of the national urban forums, a stakeholders’ platform to direct responses to rapid urbanization; the case study of Uganda, which was afterwards revealed in another session; and finally the leverage of a considerable sum of investments in these country programs.

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

At the end of this round of presentations, the moderator, Vicente Guallart, proposed a discussion about how NUP can answer the challenges that we have in the 21st century without repeating the same mistakes from the past. Participants recalled that NUP is not necessarily a simple policy; nevertheless, it does provide an integrated approach to the urbanization problems that can no longer be dealt through the same sectoral models that countries have been using so far. Participants also showed their concern about the consumption stereotypes, taking place in urban cities, which leads to an uncoordinated territorial

expansion and aggravates environmental and social problems, such as congestions, contamination and lack of productivity. A need for a new paradigm is necessary to thwart the negative effects of modern urban cities and avoid unsustainable development. On the lack of implementation of NUP, Rafael Tuts remembered that many countries do not succeed to employ effective urban policies because they choose wrongly to replicate best practices and lessons learned without contextualising them to their own reality. In other cases, the designed policies were deliberately never meant to be implemented. They are drafted with no real intention to be executed, just to please an authority; hence they are weak on their design or prepared without further thought as a quick answer to a specific situation. Susan Parrell seconded this though adding that because NUP is complex, governments shall make it very specific, otherwise this will be just a blunt instrument, used for political means without any control. On this theme, Mohammed underpinned that only through a combination of a top-down and bottom-up approaches can NUP be fully integrated.

When asked how cities can organize themselves, get empowered to be more productive and exercise its leadership to decide about their own future, Rachelle Alterman reminded that many positive initiatives concerning urban issues started with grassroots’ movements, given that actions developed at the local level can ensure more coordination and inclusive participation. In the case of Africa, consultation and knowledge sharing are the key elements to prepare the population, government authorities and core stakeholders to decide among the several types of policy ideas that they are frequently bombarded. Participants praised the creation of a Ministry of Cities in Brazil as a good example of commitment and step forward to guarantee the right of the city and coordination efforts related to the progress of metropolitan areas.

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**Joan Clos** (Executive Director of United Nations Human Settlements Programme)

**Rafael Tuts** (Director. Urban Planning and Design Branch Coordinator)

**Rafael Català Polo** (Ministry of Development. Secretary of State for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing (Spain))

**Remy Sietchiping** (UN-HABITAT. Regional & Metropolitan Planning Unit Leader.)

**Tadashi Matsumoto** (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Senior Policy Analyst. Regional Development Policy)

**Wladyslaw Piskorz** (European Commission. Head of the Urban Development Unit at the Directorate-General for Regional Policy)

**Rene P. Hohmann** (Cities Alliance. Senior Urban Specialist)

**Susan Parnell** (University of Cape Town. Urban geographer (South Africa))

**Rachelle Alterman** (Israel Institute of Technology - Technion. Professor (Israel))

## 5. THEMATIC SESSIONS

This Experts Group Meeting counted with five thematic sessions that focused on the sustainable urbanization imperatives and National Urban Policies, aiming to respond questions related to the drivers, trends, impact, opportunities and disparity of global and regional urbanizations. Participants also mirrored on the specific aspects concerning the difference between developing and developed countries.

From analysing how the urban initiatives carried out in the past have led to an increased need for NUP, the sessions also shed light on lessons from current practice taking place in countries located in different regions.

The presenters brought to the discussion active examples of how finance, planning, legislative and institutional, as well as stakeholders' participation, have been successfully addressed so far to guarantee a full commitment to NUP. However, experts also noted that NUP does not have a fixed model and should be flexible enough to adapt to different countries' context and realities, particularly concerning the fast urbanising developing countries.

The sessions concluded with a debate about upcoming opportunities to further advance the NUP and how to promote and sustain the knowledge exchange, engagement and scale-up collaborative support for countries' efforts towards this goal in the near future.



### SESSION 1: THE SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION IMPERATIVE

Elkin Velázquez, acting as a moderator for this session, convened the meeting by doing a recap of the key points mentioned so far, highlighting the need to contextualize the NUP for each country, enabling them to answer their specific needs related to the level of urbanization, GDP, consumption, inequality, poverty, infrastructure, among others. The next three presentations focused on what are the drivers of urbanizations in different areas of the world and how regions completely different in terms of urbanization – in Latin America about 75 percent of people live in metropolitan areas, while in Africa this reality represents only 30 percent of the population – are observing and dealing with the trends, impacts and opportunities of urbanization.

“We have to acknowledge that governments constantly make decisions that impact on the vitality of our towns, whether or not they are defined as urban

policies”, said Susan Parnell starting off her presentation “National urbanization and urban strategies: necessary but absent policy instruments in Africa.” Though, African national governments technically exercise this lead, policy instruments dating from the pre-colonial times hamper their efforts to carry on this job effectively. Modernizing the political structure and policy tools are, therefore, not only necessary, but urgent in Africa “to address the dilemmas of the day and speak to the challenges of the future”. Thus, the necessity of adopting a national urban policy lands in this context not as a mechanism to give more power back to the national government.

On the contrary, she stated, the aim is to promote reforms that will empower and capacitate the municipal and sub-national scales to handle more effectively themes related to fiscal, legal, civil service reform, while establishing a national guideline and commitment to



tackle issues that cannot be managed locally, such as climate change, food security or economic prosperity. She also emphasized that since only 30 percent of the African population lives in cities, the NUP need to respond to two different realities concerning cities. An urbanization policy that addresses the national urban spatial system and the network of cities and towns; and an urban policy that states what sovereign states inspire to do in the cities and through the cities through reforms related to taxes, land, capacity-building, among others.

**“A national urban policy is not a mechanism to give power back to the national government. On the contrary, the aim is to promote reforms that will empower and capacitate the municipal and sub-national scales to handle more effectively themes related to fiscal, legal, civil service reform”** Susan Parnell

Before concluding, she underlined three key points that modern NUPs have to encompass. First, we can no longer think about the urban and rural being as opposite forces; the idea of urban needs to include the peri-urban and informal. Additionally, spatial fixes are necessary but not enough meaning that other institutions and strategic processes need to be included in this thinking. The final point she raised was that national planning can no longer ignore trans-boundary processes and interactions such as urban conurbations, migration and globalization.

In his presentation “The National Urban Policy for sustainable urban development: Uganda experience”, Samuel Shibuta Mabala shared the experience of this country in developing their own NUP. While highlighting the effects of unplanned urbanization – urban sprawl, poverty, environmental degradation and the incapacity to generate revenue, he also reminded that corruption is an endemic issue in Africa where a lack of accountability, transparency and ethics is pervasive. The need for the national urban policy is, therefore, justified to address these externalities and enhance the role of the urban sector as an engine of economic growth. He reminded that although Africa’s land mass correspond to the combined total area of China, the United States, Western Europe, India, Argentina and the British Isles, the continent barely contributes to the global wealth.

The NUP diagnosis’ assessment that took place in the country has identified the important role that stakeholders play in this process and how their contribution is the backbone to ensure ownership and participation. To achieve this goal, Ugandan government asked the universities to research urban policies ideas to support and contribute to this necessary reform and will organize a national forum to give stakeholders a chance to share their inputs on the next policy cycles: formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. All these measures have to be followed by an appropriate legal, institutional, regulatory and financial framework that allows the implementation of NUP, being imperative to assuring a strong coordination mechanism to guarantee all sectors’ commitment to fulfill their responsibilities.

An overview of the development of NUP in a Latin America context was illustrated by Alejandro Nieto Enríquez in his presentation “The role of national governments in the development of just, sustainable and productive cities; Mexico’s new National Urban Policy”. For more than 20 years urban policies were not included in the national agenda, and the government limited itself to distribute subsidies to allow the acquisition of cheap houses by low income households. This scenario led to an uncontrolled city growth, with an extensive land-use area built mostly as single family houses. The lack of a coherent national guideline to tackle urban problems also steered away investments precedents from the private sector. Meanwhile, the local authorities’ three-year term, without the possibility of reelection, still represents an institutional setback for giving continuity to urban policies.



Based on this diagnosis, a new federal government, elected in 2012, has taken urban matters into their hands and issued last May a National Development Plan, with the objective to provide an adequate environment for the development of a dignified life. The



planning includes three clear strategies: sustainable and intelligent urban development; responsible reduction of the housing deficit and; inter-institutional coordination.

The first steps towards the execution of the NUP have been taken to control urban sprawl by changing the subsidies' system to respond to the national priorities on housing. The government has also initiated dialogues with society, the private sector and other stakeholders involved in urban development and aligned with local authorities to establish coordination measures for the new national urban policy.

Throughout this year, the federal government will adopt a new legal framework to better address the current challenges and opportunities of the Mexican cities in terms of urban development, housing, territorial planning, sustainable mobility and regional development. For 2015, a similar legislation, not identical, yet respecting the same structure, will be also adopted by local authorities to reduce norms, strengthen their capacities and sharing with them common territorial planning tools and geographic information systems.

Nieto remarked that this new paradigm requires a new institutional architecture of the government, which does not imply on more decentralization, but translates into a key duty of the national level to support and capacitate local authorities in responding to the pressing urbanization challenges of their cities.

**“This new paradigm requires a new institutional architecture of the government that translates into national support to and capacitation of local authorities in responding to the pressing urbanization challenges of their cities”**

**Alejandro Nieto Enríquez**

The presentations were followed by two short examples of NUP experiences in Zambia and Indonesia, where the adoption of a national urban policy framework is also taking place at this moment. The feeling that urbanization excludes automatically rural issues from the political agenda represented one of the setbacks in Zambia to commit with this new instrument. Even after the president himself had shown his full support to this process, the improvement of human and financial capacity constitutes a vital factor to guarantee proper implementation of national urban policies.

As highlighted by Muhammad Maliki Moersid, in Indonesia, however, one of the major problems relies on the coordination within the many institutions responsible for dealing with urban issues, as well as the challenges they face managing an archipelago that encompasses five main islands and 14.000 small ones, separated by three time zones and marked by a strong disparity and inequality between its Western and Eastern regions.

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Elkin Velásquez facilitated the discussion, after offering a brief synthesis of what had been discussed so far. Besides the importance of allowing the appropriate execution of policy vectors, he recalled that there is an urgent need to build more political will to pressure for the inclusion of the urban challenges to the current development's agenda worldwide.

Experts reinforced the idea that countries must adapt the planning to their context and city dimensions, ensuring transparency, comprehensive public participation and promoting an urban regulatory reform to effectively implement NUP. While Mohammed El Malti added that governments need to stop neglecting the informal settlements inside and outside the urban areas and start recognizing their right to be part of the city, Gullelat Kebede underpinned the idea that national governments should seek this opportunity to invest in urban development as a mean to achieve economic transformation of their country. Additionally, Joseph Maria Llop reminded that governments need to perceive cities as a place for people and, under this premise, should take planning very seriously to reduce distances and regulate their extents to make them more affordable for living, working and accessing basic services.

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**Samuel Shibuta Mabala** Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development. Commissioner of Urban Land (Uganda)

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**Mohammed El Malti** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Senior Policy Analyst. Regional Development Policy

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**Joseph Maria Llop** Universidad de Lleida, UNESCO Chair Intermediate Cities. Director of UIA-CIMES Programme, International Union of Architects (Spain)

## SESSION 2: TOWARDS EFFECTIVE NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES: LESSONS FROM CURRENT PRACTICE



This session aimed to shed light on the various drivers of NUP and how this instrument can be used to boost economic growth and alleviate poverty. An overview of tools that have been used or are being developed to support NUP was also debated. Experts also analysed in what extension policies should promote compact, integrated, connected and inclusive urban cities, as well as they should define clear orientations for implementation and guidance to other sectors, such as water, energy, safety, among others. Moreover, the discussion intended to recognize the main lessons to be learned and the scope of replicability and scalability of these policies in other countries across the world, in particular the fast urbanizing countries.

Ivan Turok guided the experts through an overview from the 1910 to present days that depicted the evolution of national urban policies across history. Besides mentioning coherent policies, long-term developmental agenda and building effective city institutions as fundamental principles for NUP, he also underlined that scholars, urban developers and political authorities committed to this process need to change their attitude. A more positive and persuasive argument to win the case for NUP is required to fight the inertia and opposition forces that hinder the development of this framework. According to him, the best current example of this positive thinking takes place in China, a country that has made urbanization its number one priority to rebalance its economy.

His comparative study also identified five broad tendencies, which, he emphasized, could not be characterized by any particular country, yet served as a guide to draw an emerging consensus towards what is NUP and why do we need it. These tendencies are:

From a crisis response to a more strategic approach: Instead of focusing on palliatives, short-term solutions for economic or social problems, governments have focused the urban strategies on implementing more long-lasting solutions.

From special projects and programs to a more integrated approach: Urban policy has shifted over time from separate programs and special initiatives, often focused on small areas, to more of a crosscutting integrated, multi-level governmental approach that focused more on the longer agenda.

From specific functions to a more comprehensive approach: A 'theory of change' was applied to distinguish the underlying causes of problems from the symptoms and consequences, leading urban policies to take out the focus on a singular issue, as poor housing, to work in a broader dimension where interrelations between these and other themes were deliberately addressed.

**“Although urban policy is fundamentally about places, we cannot neglect the needs of people and the planet. Therefore, a strong emphasis in developing decent living environments and resilience should not be left out of this new agenda” Ivan Turok**

From a policy of national government to a multi-level government approach: Governments have started to understand that national policies cannot be implemented without ultimately enabling local authorities to participate in this decision-making process and engaging and gaining the trust of other stakeholders in the private sector and civil society.

Under his final remarks he reminded that the emerging consensus for sustainable urbanization brings an opportunity to further promote the principles of NUP. He also emphasized that, although urban policy is fundamentally about places, we cannot neglect the needs of people and the planet, therefore, a strong emphasis in developing decent living environments and resilience should not be left out of this new agenda.

On his presentation “Delivery Mechanism of National Urban Policies”, Sebastian Elbe presented two cases where spatial planning and urban regional development are being carried out, the first in Germany, a federal state, and the other taking place in the Middle East, in Saudi Arabia and Oman, both central states.

One of the key findings of the diagnostic process in these regions is the identification of an important urban trend that should be looked at in the national level, as it concerns cross boundary issues: relative growth rates are declining, but not the absolute figures. That happens because after having a first wave of rural-urban migration a new phenomenon of urban-urban migration is taking place, where people constantly move from one city to another to look for better quality of life and job opportunities. This tendency translates into a stable degree of urbanization, yet there is still pressure on the capital and primary cities.

Germany has a high level of urbanization, but the federal administration does not have the power or legal authority to steer development at the local level. Thus, the urban development policy is, in fact, a combination of bottom-up approaches and initiatives placed in a central common framework, which generates very low impact nationally. Zooming in the Middle East, he depicted a scenario completely different, where an utterly central state, both in Saudi Arabia and Oman, manages incipient national spatial strategies in a fairly low urbanized country estimated in 30 percent of the population. Though these countries count with the financial resources to build large infrastructure and promote the administrative reform necessary to carry out these plans, they still lag behind to achieve the balanced development they wish due to the lack of coordination, coherent policies and the lead of a strong institution to lead this process.

Predicting the future road of NUP, he envisages that the next steps should consider three pillars:

**1. Content** – what do we want to address, including the objectives, intersections and scaling

**2. Structure** – responsibilities and scope of NUP and implementation capacities, and

**3. Process** – new modes of governance and partnerships; timing and feedback loops, through monitoring and evaluation. The lessons learned from the current practice showed that spatial planning systems is not the same as sectoral systems, and both plans should be brought together and coordinated in a coherent way. He also reminded that planning

**“Planning is not only about producing a document, but convincing people to approve laws, budget and the plan itself. Therefore, a participatory approach is essential to ensure the future road of NUP”**

**Sebastian Elbe**

is not only about producing a document, but convincing people to approve laws, budget and the plan itself. Moreover, he underscored that budget and participatory approach are essential to ensure this process.

Finally, as a tool to appraise the performance of a national urban policy and in what stage it stands, he presented a benchmark system of effective metropolitan spatial planning developed by Metrex, a metric for metropolitan regions on EU level that uses 29 indicators to support this evaluation.

Entitled “Colombia’s System of Cities: a new approach to define National Urban Policies”, the presentation of José Alejandro Bayona centered on the recent analysis that was conducted in the country to assess cities as a system. One of the first conclusions reached is that the agglomeration phenomenon must be understood to determine the real functional space of the Colombian metropolitan areas. Also, as he pinpointed, the potential to exploit economic opportunities and increase trade between these conurbations is compromised by the poor intercity connections, elevated cost of transportation and high concentration of skilled labour in the major cities, especially in Bogotá. The diagnosis also showed that demographic and economic dynamics vary acutely from one region to another, a gap that should be closed with strategies that respect the singularities of these contexts.

With this new policy, the Colombian Government will focus on six priorities: Planning, with a sustainable vision of the system of cities and a better correspondence among them; coordination, promoting joint work on urban development between the territorial entities and the national government; Financing, identifying new instruments to finance urban development; Connectivity strengthening the connectivity of the

city system; Productivity, strengthening local factors that help improve the city system productivity and quality of life, reducing social gaps between urban agglomerations.

Participating through a video call, Nancy Lozano Gracia introduced the key findings of a report launched by the World Bank and entitled "Planning, Connecting, & Financing Cities - Now: Priorities for City Leaders". The World Bank carried out diagnostics in more than 10 countries in varying stages of urbanization. The lessons learned were synthesized in a common framework with three pillars -planning, connecting and financing- and three core actions – value, coordination and leverage. These model and tools aim to help mayors and policy makers to anticipate and implement strategies that can avoid their cities from locking into irreversible physical and social structures.

Concerning the planning, she focused on the necessity to set a proper regulation of urban land market to respond to the emergency needs, as well as the request for infrastructure, environment and risk hazards. Connecting, she added, means thinking on how to connect labor and markets within cities and, also, how to make the modes of transport more accessible and the investments on the necessary infrastructure more feasible. Respect to the financing, she stressed about the importance to establish rules to guarantee transparency and consistent monetary flow, build a credit-worthiness of the local government and then coordinate and leverage to access private resources of funding.

Edgardo Bilsky reinforced the idea that the local capacity must be strengthened, especially in Africa. While learning how to draft and coordinate a national urban policy is important, increasing governance in these countries should be the main priority. The decentralization process that happened in Africa has transferred competence, but not capacity or resources for local authorities to deal with the urban emerging issues. Local authorities can only become a main partner of national government in the quest of building cities more sustainable, equitable and human if the central administration, donors and other partners handle the need for capacity building in the local level more serious.

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Claude Ngoms, the moderator for this session, opened up the floor for discussion bringing his own experience in Rwanda, where he is providing technical support to elaborate the NUP. Besides the lack of human capacity, he also highlighted the need to ensure ownership of the country, asserting that the government and civil society understand why this police is important, effectively taking part in this process and championing it to other stakeholders, such as the private sector.

Experts focused on the difference between the migration phenomenon related to rural-urban and urban-urban movements. While the rural to urban resettlements still imposes a strain to cities, especially the small and intermediate, as people look for basic services, the urban-to-urban migration is considered a healthier trend.

Nancy Lozano also stressed that NUP should not be used as an instrument to determine the size of cities should, but as a potent tool to establish that the urbanization foundation can happen in a proper manner. Despite the general consensus that the lack of policy coherence and coordination seem to be a chronic disease in all levels of the government,

Frédéric Saliez underlined that locally many cities have managed to achieve successful results in tackling urban problems. One of the key elements for these accomplishments might be related to the strong connection between local level authorities and the spatial reality, which gives them a sense of real life; a feeling that became very abstract when arrives at national government.

Joseph Maria Llop also reminded that when we talk about space, we have to include several elements that come with it - culture, climate, people and an array of other aspects – that make urban policy development unique for every single context. Moreover, he pinpointed that capacitating and coordinating urban development policies take time; therefore this new framework has to forge stronger institutions able to last long enough to nurture this whole process.

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**Ivan Turok** Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Deputy Executive Director. Economic Performance & Development (South Africa)

**Sebastian Elbe** SPRINT - Scientific policy consulting. CEO and Co-founder (Germany)

**José Alejandro Bayona** National Planning Department. Urban Development Director (Colombia)

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## SESSION 3: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT USING A ROBUST LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This session zoomed in two cases located in Australia and Spain and detailed the processes and challenges faced by both countries to adopt a national urban policy. Experts also revealed a great deal of institutional arrangements developed or still in progress to assert coordination issues and power competences. Furthermore, this session explored different models of how land can be levied for financial revenues, representing, when applied carefully, a sustainable source of income for local governments in developing countries.



The latter is one of the conclusions that Rachelle Alterman reached during her research, presented in this expert meeting under the name “Levying the Land: Land-based instruments for financing public services in transition economies”. She started by outlining an array of positive arguments to use land profits for financing urban policies, including the fact that land is a fixed asset and, therefore, a stable source of revenue. Land is also fairly easy to administrate, compared to other sources of revenue and, together with real property, have a high potential of economic value. Moreover, land holdings are publicly known to community members, which makes easier to identify the holders and size of it than personal financial income/wealth. On the negative side, she pinpointed problems such as the fact that land and real property policies are susceptible to corruption and it depends on the market value and political will to levy rates.

She distinguished among three groups of instruments that can be used to levy land and pointed out some lessons learned from each model that could serve as an inspiration for developing nations, highlighting, though, that there is not a best practice to follow. In the first set of instruments, land is publicly dominated and embedded in some overarching land policy regime based on public land ownership or extensive interventions. Most developed countries, however, no longer apply some of those practices that can be translated as land nationalization, expropriation, land banking and readjustment.

The second model is direct value taxation or direct sharing, which implies that properties or the private sector that have collected benefits from public actions or community growth should pay to redistribute wealth to others. It could be done, for example, by taxing property transfers.

Finally, she went over the indirect value capture model, a rather experimental scheme that some advanced economies are adopting, especially in places where there is an absence of land revenues. This rationale includes recovery of direct municipal investments, such as charging a development for the prevention of negative impacts on a specific area where construction is being carried out. Another example could be imposing a condition, whether it is the construction of a road, or creation of jobs or supply of basic services, to approve the proposed construction.

When countries decide to explore further any of these models or other land based resources as a national policy, they should take into account that no optimal legislation can be copied and applied. Legislation in this case, she advised, should be incremental and experimental, based on few pilots and also count with funds from the central administration and foster the exchange of experience across local governments.

The institutional factors, dynamics and prospects of Australia’s national urban policy were presented by Jago Dodson, who explained the steps taken by the federal, state and local authorities and other key stakeholders to approve the country’s first NUP in 2011. As one of the most urbanized countries in the world, Australia decided to adopt a NUP to respond to a number of challenges arising in the cities, among them, rapid growth of the population, emerging infrastructure deficits, anxieties about urban environmental sustainability and the increasing recognition of cities as key sites for economic prosperity. It also aimed to correct existing and unequal political arrangement. Whereas the state authorities carried the responsibility to provide basic services and deliver spatial and infrastructure planning, the federal government was the sole institution able to charge taxes and control the fiscal power to finance these actions.

Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), representatives from the federal, regional and local governments were able to sit together to conceive a national urban plan. Feedback from survey responses, submissions, city consultations and stakeholder workshops has informed the development of the National that culminated in a consensus about three specific goals:

**Productivity:** To harness the productivity of Australia's people and industry, by better managing our use of labor, creativity and knowledge, land and infrastructure.

**Sustainability:** To advance the sustainability of Australia's natural and built environment, including through better resource and risk management.

**Liveability:** To enhance the liveability of our cities by promoting better urban design, planning and affordable access to recreational, cultural and community facilities.

Since 2011, the plan has been streamlined within the different jurisdictions, and specific budgets and financial lines of credit were designed to ensure policy coherence and the correct implementation of projects directly related to these three goals. Dodson also highlighted that although a recent shift in the political party running the government could have compromised this process, NUP proven to be fully institutionalized and appraised as an important task that the Federal Government should continue to carry out.

**“As one of the most urbanized countries in the world, Australia decided to adopt a NUP to respond to a number of challenges arising in the cities and as a recognition of cities as key sites for economic prosperity.”**

Jago Dodson

To give participants an overview of the difficulties the Spanish Government faces to adopt national urban policies, Angela de la Cruz started her presentation asking three questions: “A National Urban Policy is indeed necessary to ensure a balanced and rational urban development?”, “What should NUP include as content and how should these policies be organized?”, and lastly, “how can NUP be implemented in a country with a political-administrative system largely decentralized such as the one in Spain?”

Constitutionally, the Spanish government cannot interfere directly in the definition of urban and housing policies, as these competences rest in the hands of the 17 Autonomous Communities, which, partly share this burden within its 8.112 municipalities. This reality imposes a challenge for the central government, especially when it comes to implementing infrastructure projects that go beyond municipalities' borders, or correct social, territorial, economic or environment gaps among different parts of the nation.

The central government, can, however, aid this process through two channels: the regulatory and economic frameworks. It has established, for example, policies to fund housing projects to guarantee the citizen's right to housing or other measures to protect the environment or social cohesion.

She recalled, however, that these actions are short-sighted, lack coherence and do not offer an integrative approach, which poses an obstacle to tackling the problems related to the progressive urbanization and hinder the efforts to close the regional breeches. Responding to this reality means creating a greater coordination and convergence between the three levels of the government. An initiative that is currently on the national agenda, aiming to generate a national model that respects these different competencies, but boost a more efficient and productive system.

Maria Mousmouti spoke about effectiveness and the importance of guaranteeing a legislative framework within NUP to achieve this goal; an apparently simple task which, however, many nations fail to put in place. She outlined four key elements that should be considered when adding the legislative component to NUP to reach effectiveness. First, have a clear purpose and objective, setting a benchmark. That allows people to understand the purpose of the law and respect and follow it. Secondly, establishing coherence among instruments and the legislation applied. Then, create an effective coordination between different institutional dynamics to ensure that their conflicts are cleared before law comes into place. Finally, she stressed that legislation should not be a top-down decision. Through reviewing the outcomes, both local and national authorities can assess what worked and what did not function in order to set the right regulatory measures to correct this reality.

Mohammed El Malti stressed the importance for cities to find alternative sources to generate its own revenues since in most countries, especially in developing nations, where the central government is the one in charge of collecting taxes nationwide, yet it does not always distribute it evenly. He detailed a long-term and sustainable tax system on construction material that was implemented in Morocco, which has created a permanent financing source to fund housing and urban policy, as well as creates a direct return for cities to finance their own urban projects. A new tax to

levy unbuild land was also recently created, generating a new source of revenue. Malti, however, stressed that this model cannot be replicated easily in other developing countries as the traditional land system, inherited from the colonial period, may impose an obstacle for controlling the land-use and taxation.

**“Governments should not, necessarily, increase the number of sectors or departments responsible for managing National Urban Policies. Instead, they should reorganize these structures, establish new alliances and coordination roles, praise its qualities and reinforce its political willingness for tackling urban challenges”**

#### DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

The importance of establishing a regulatory framework that focuses on the quality of laws rather than on its quantity was one of the central themes of this debate. Participants stressed that urban laws should be simple and stable to ensure a setting where all the direct participants involved in the NUP can be totally clear about the rules of game and their performance can be measured and appraised.

There was a question whether or not laws could also be experimental, and if this factor could menace the stability element previously underscored. For which Maria Mousmouti replied that there is nothing wrong to increment the regulatory framework by testing something at a small scale and then applying it regionally or nationally. What should be avoided, however, is the tendency that many countries have to legislate as a way of showing they are the ones in charge

or are taking action, which is not necessarily true.

Matthew Glasser stressed that for this framework to be legitimate it has also to be participatory and reflect societal consensus by involving the people who make the laws, the ones who implement the statute and the individuals affected by it.

Participants also debated about the role of institutions in guiding this process and helping cities to tackle urban problems. And again they stressed that governments should not, necessarily, increase the number of sectors or departments responsible for managing the course of action related to NUP. Instead, a measure should be taken to reorganize these structures, establish new alliances and coordination roles, praise its qualities and reinforce its political willingness for tackling urban challenges.

This model, however, should not mean promoting more centralization, as Maria Buhigas and Angela de la Cruz pointed out. They recalled that NUP should be a process for cities and in cities, which are the ones in charge of planning and designing the responses for their own needs, whereas the central government can aid to tackle problems that go beyond their boundaries and municipal capacity to solve. That applies especially for questions related to environment, social cohesion and energy supply.

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**Rachelle Alterman** (Israel Institute of Technology - Technion. Professor (Israel)

**Jago Dodson** Griffith University. Associate Professor and Director. Urban Research Program (Australia)

**Angela de la Cruz** Ministry of Development. Vice-director of Urbanism (Spain)

**Maria Mousmouti** Executive Director, Centre for European Constitutional Law (Greece)

**Mohammed El Malti** National School of Architecture. Professor (Morocco)

**Matthew Glasser** World Bank. Lead Urban Specialist. Legal Vice Presidency

**Maria Buhigas** Urban Facts Consultants. Urban Planning Expert (Spain)

## SESSION 4 – THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF A NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

This session revolved around the identification of urban advantages that have unleashed or can produce wealth and opportunities and how governments have dealt effectively with the constraints. Experts also reviewed some economic and financial instruments essential for the implementation of NUP and alternative options available for developing countries.

Moreover, an interesting case from Colombia also depicted how a functional economic space, managed

through a good diagnostic tool, brought together national, regional and local actors together to create a system of cities that complements each other. Finally, a look into the environmental issues and how this approach should be mainstream in order to achieve sustainable cities were also exemplified through a case in Mexico.

An innovative approach, showing how analytical and quantitative methods can help estimate

the impact of population and generate urban development, was introduced by Juan Carlos Duque in his presentation “Planning a system of cities in Urabá-Colombia: Population, urban and economic growth”. This particular region is located in the centre of the American continent, a privileged position that offers connections to different parts of the world and houses one of the most biodiversity areas on the planet. While this scenario favors the development of a number of economic activities, this region also faces severe social problems related to land ownership, forced displacement, poverty and food insecurity.

Commissioned by the regional government, this methodology made possible to look at different variables and estimate the urbanization and economic growth while, at the same time, guaranteed an optimal resource allocation. It also helped to depoliticize the decision making process and provide good arguments to local authorities regarding investment decisions in the region.



Through this approach, experts were able to define where economic activities took place and classified the region according to its potential. Then, they fostered economic growth and social welfare through the distribution of investments to leverage the economic activities within the whole system of cities. Mobility was also taken into account, connecting this system of cities among themselves, with the rest of the country by road, air and sea. As these investments have already triggered population growth, this methodology, based on the simulation of different models of city expansion using as input variables the size of the population, land-use and density, has also been used to orient policy-making and predict the need for land extension areas.

Matthew Glasser walked the participants through some of the instruments to link urban development plans and infrastructure financing during his presentation entitled “Mobilizing Capital for Infrastructure Finance”. Before outlining the instruments, Glasser recalled that in the various strategies previously presented in this EGM for developing a NUP, money always appeared as a main pillar. “If you are serious about national urban policies, you should be serious about national financial policies”, he stressed, remembering that, paradoxically,

most urban development plans neglect to include long-term financial strategy.

Development requires investments, yet, good investments create financial opportunities, he emphasized. A long-term financial strategy helps tease out the progressive relationship between investments, growth and municipal revenue, creating a virtuous cycle. Five steps were identified to develop this strategy: Mapping which investments are needed at what point in time; estimating the capital cost over time; the impacts of future investments on operating budgets; closing the finance gap, and finally, playing with different scenarios and interactions and studying its vulnerabilities and opportunities.

The presentation also depicted different revenue instruments available to urban financial planners, including grants and transfers, general taxes, user fees and charges, with a focus on development charges. Fundamentally, they are divided into two broad groups, transfer from different sources or generation of its own proceeds. For a proper urban development to take place, national governments must decide how cities can finance their needs of expansion, infrastructure or basic needs, either by facilitating financial transferring or allowing local governments to develop their own source of revenues.

However, even with adequate and substantial revenues, cities may face the burden to have to build infrastructures that they cannot allow to pay with their own revenues. One of their options relies on borrowing, which, according to him, municipal authorities should consider the pros and cons before committing. Among the several potential advantages, he suggests:

- Municipalities and other sub-sovereign entities can use borrowed funds to build more infrastructure, quicker than if they try to fund it on a pay-as-you-go basis. This allows public entities to extend basic services to citizens; to invest in strategic infrastructure to support economic development and population growth and to rehabilitate aging infrastructure.
- Debt finance helps support intergenerational equity: future users of an infrastructure will help pay for its construction cost, through fees, charges or taxes as they receive services and use the infrastructure.
- Autonomous borrowing supports decentralization. When municipalities are able to borrow on the strength of their own plans, management and finances, they have the financial muscle to implement local priorities.

Boris Graizbord talked about the importance of integrating environment and promoting green city policy in the Mexican National Urban Policy in his



presentation “Economic changes and opportunities in the Mexican Urban System”. This measure comes to counteracting the negative environmental effects from the past decades, where, as he explained, Mexico was one of the few countries within the OECD that could not decouple with the primary energy inputs to the national growth.

Based on the greenhouse gas abatement cost curves, the Mexican Federal Government adopted a thorough strategy to reduce emissions. The actions, based on consumption and production patterns, had a direct impact on urban policies, including substitution of housing equipment, change in public and private lighting, and improvement of public transportation. The aim is to reach a reduction of 30 percent of emissions by 2020.

“Governments have so far treated urban problems as a disease that could be cured with some small doses of remedies. Cities, however, are engines of growth, and, therefore, governments should treat them as athletes that are getting their engine ready to run a long and difficult marathon towards achieving social, sustainable, economic developments”

Ricardo Jordán

The stimulation of compact cities is also a strategy that the Mexican Federal Government is using to promote a greener city model and reverse the negative environmental tendencies throughout the country, as cities offer an opportunity to translate a green economy strategy into “quality of life”.

In his presentation “Towards more sustainable cities in Latin America and the Caribbean” Ricardo Jordán gave an overview on how economics is shaping cities in Latin America. According to him, the new paradigm, that some experts called for, is directly related to the shift in our economy from a rural to an industrialized society that have different patterns of production, distribution and consumptions of goods and services. Therefore, in order to achieve smart cities, we need new smart policies, which include more sustainable economic and social initiatives.

Governments have so far treated urban problems as a disease that could be cured with some small doses of remedies. Jordán, however, reinforced the idea that

cities are known as engines of growth, and, therefore, governments should treat them as athletes that are getting their engine prepared to run a long and difficult marathon towards achieving social, sustainable, economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The mature urbanization in this region has allowed countries to deliver quantity in terms of services and goods, but not quality. Governments need, thus, to close this gap of inequality and segregation that exists in the primary urban centers, looking for new ways to distribute its wealth among all its citizens. Sustainability also means finding solutions for cleaner production, distribution and consumption, focusing on reduction of industrial and mobility emissions, promoting recycling and cutting back unnecessary patterns of consumption.

He concluded by underscoring a triple track road map to achieve this urban sustainability. First, improving quality of growth and maximizing net growth; secondly, changing the invisible structure of the economy by closing the gap between economic and ecological efficiencies and finally, changing the visible structure of the economy through urban planning and design.

Luis Brau López brought to the table another concern about the future of urbanization. While all the presentations focused on an optimistic scenario for the forthcoming of global cities, he evoked some threats to this model, such as a possible energy crisis, the escalation of nations’ debt and the effects of climate change. Not to forget the social tensions arising from inequality, which he considers a ticking time bomb. These variables cannot be neglected from the NUP framework if we want to have a true picture of the outcomes of our cities.

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

The discussion session was facilitated by Gulelat Kebede, who summarized some of the main points raised during the presentation and debate. Experts showed their concern about the risk factor and how it should be incorporated in the future NUP to tackle possible hurdles related to economic, energy or social crisis. Finding new ways to create equitable ways to finance the cities and share the benefits of productivity growth are not only necessary, but an urgent measure to avoid aggravating social problems and avoid civil unrest. The impact of the informal economy and the benefits to developing green economy strategies to create productivity were also highlighted.

Maria Buhigas and Agustín Hernández Aja reminded that central governments should resume their leadership in defining and providing services and goods for its population, a role that has been abandoned or handed over to the private sector in most of the cases. Edgardo Bilsky, however, recalled the difficulties national governments will face, especially in

Africa, to build infrastructure and offer basic services in metropolitan areas that have already been fully urbanized. Any movement towards this goal will implicate in displacement and large investments, so he called experts to reflect about a planning for cities that comes out-of-the-grid, commissioned to look for alternative ways to promote these developments with the lowest impact possible on the population.

The gaps in capacity and competences of the civil servants, particularly in Africa, was underscored by Susan Parnell and Ivan Turok, who, urged the group to work towards establishing serious collaboration between cities, through staff exchanges, development of one-to-one partnerships, genuine sharing of expertise, mentoring and helping to set-up information systems.

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**Juan Carlos Duque** Universidad EAFIT. Research Director RiSE (Research in Spatial Economics) School of Economics & Finance (Colombia).

**Matthew Glasser** (World Bank. Lead Urban Specialist. Legal Vice Presidency

**Boris Graizbord** Advanced Studies Programme on Sustainable Development and Environment (LEAD). Coordinator (México)

**Ricardo Jordán** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Chief of Human Settlements Unit

**Lluís Brau López** Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners - FIU. President

**Gulelat Kebede** UN-HABITAT, Urban Economy Branch Coordinator

**Maria Buhigas** Urban Facts Consultants. Urban Planning Expert (Spain)

**Agustín Hernández Aja** Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid. Director of Urbanism and Land Planning Department (Spain)

**Edgardo Bilsky**, United Cities & Local Government -UCLG. Director of Research

**Ivan Turok** Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Deputy Executive Director. Economic Performance & Development (South Africa)

## SESSION 5 – THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF A NATIONAL URBAN POLICY

This session centered in drawing lessons and practices presented during the EGM to address the question: and then what? In particular, the session sought to identify key actions to further promote engagement on NUP. Ulrich Graute, in his presentation “National Urban Policies and the Post 2015 Development Agenda”, underscored the valuable opportunity that the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) may bring for cities and its leaders, who can play a vital role in the implementation process of this agenda and embrace NUP as a system to help them carry out the activities related to these new targets.

UN Member States are currently in negotiations on the final set of SGD and the mechanisms that are going to be adopted to implement the agenda. This new agenda will not impose a regulatory framework to member states and will operate in a similar manner as the Millennium Development Goals, where countries fully embraced this cause and made remarkable progress achieving the objectives and targets.

This new agenda will also include quantitative targets that can be monitored during the implementation process, and although there will not be a specific agenda for local governments, this responsibility will certainly become a byproduct. Graute recalled that the Secretary-General reinforced this idea at Rio+20 when he stated that “the road to global sustainability runs through the world’s cities and towns”.

Currently, the SDG encompasses 19 focus areas, one of them commuted to sustainable cities and human settlement issues. However, as he evoked, this agenda is not yet finalized, which means that this topic could be dropped from the last version. He also emphasized that although this agenda may represent a powerful tool to guide NUP, the United Nations cannot oblige governments to follow its recommendations and, therefore, neither can offer the resources for its implementation.

While metropolitan areas and local governments must get ready for this new agenda, they should also learn how to manage the high expectations with the lack of implementation provisions. In order to bridge this gap, Graute outlined three suggestions:

- Sustainable Development Goals need appropriate implementing provisions.
- NUP as the linkage between global agenda and local implementation.
- Strengthen capacities of local governments.

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**Ulrich Graute** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Senior Adviser / Interregional Advise

## 6. BREAKOUT SESSION. THE NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES PROCESS

Under this session, participants had a chance to work in groups to analyse the different states of a NUP cycle – diagnostic, formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The goal was to detail the important actions, instruments and concerns that should be considered for each component and identify key messages to incorporate into the final communiqué. They were encouraged to put into the spotlight not only the emerging consensus, but also the practical approaches that countries can adopt when developing their own NUP. Experts divided up choosing the theme they wanted to work with, and later a representative of each group exposed their conclusion in plenary.

### “DIAGNOSTIC” WORKING GROUP

The group focused the debate on how different actors could collaborate to generate an effective diagnostic of the city reality in their countries. Consequently, ensuring participatory consultation was one of the key aspects that guided this discussion as well as how to bring all stakeholders on board. Only through their full commitment this diagnostic can be successful, the experts agreed. Then, they listed a number of actors that could not be left out of this process, taking into account the importance of including local authorities and, particularly in Africa, the key role that traditional leaders still play in deciding about the future of cities.

Experts did not undermine the lack of capacity in certain countries to carry on this task and stressed that alliances between countries and efforts within one nation should be implemented to strengthen this competence.

They also went over two types of diagnostic models and which one would be the most appropriate to address the needs of the population. A short one, aiming to tackle immediate needs? Or a longer methodology that looked thoroughly into the origin of urbanization challenges? Either way, they agreed that the diagnosis should not go beyond six months and must adopt new lenses, aiming to focus not only on the roots of the problems, but also mirroring the solutions.

The group also outlined the key elements focusing national urban diagnostic to achieve sustainable urban development:

- Legislation – Review the laws to regulate the balance between the private and public investment; integrative planning, land legislation, building codes.
- Institutional Capacity – Identify what the different administrative levels can do, and mainly, improve the participation of the local level in the decision-

Before starting, Themba Phakathi outlined ‘targeted’ diagnostic to reflect imperatives that may be considered in the formulation of a National Urban Policy. UN-Habitat is developing a NUP diagnostic framework for the initial assessment to inform the subsequent interactive stages of a National Urban Policy, and the agency is taking stock of what other organizations are also doing – such as the World Bank and the OECD – to try to draft this common methodology.

making process.

- Policy coherence – Close the gaps between the national policies and local policies.
- Infrastructure, services, housing and mobility – Calculate the need for renewing old infrastructure and build new one. Same with services, housing and mobility, measuring the need for expansion or renewal and the impact of their existence delivery.
- Economy/ Finance – Review the performance of the city and look for new sources of financing and revenues.
- Demographic trends – Assess the migration and population growth, taking special note to the tendencies and projections.
- Urban environment - Evaluate what has been done to counterbalance the negative effects of pollution, solid waste and fragile ecosystems.
- Urban safety and security – Measure how safe the city is, as this factor can also make cities friendlier and attract investor’s confidence.

Finally, they mentioned a number of tools and instruments that are needed to undertake this job, which included statistic, desktop reviews, consultation workshops, focused group meetings with specific stakeholders, informal surveys using structured questionnaires, social media, and other tools such as SWOT and problem tree analysis.

**“Ensuring participatory consultation was one of the key aspects that guided this discussion as well as how to bring all stakeholders on board”**

## “FORMULATION” WORK GROUP

Participants recognized that one of the major difficulties faced during the formulation process is setting a time frame, given that a number of variables should be taken into account to determine an accurate deadline. “Does the formulation counters with the government support?” “Do planners have all the proper data available to formulate the NUP?,” were some of the questions raised.

## “IMPLEMENTATION” WORKING GROUP

This group had a productive, collaborative and intense debate about the key aspects that should be considered for the implementation phase. The debate reached a five-point consensus, which was shared in plenary.

1. Asking what are National Urban Policies is a duty of every nation planning to implement NUP. Countries should do this exercise aiming to establish not a plan, nor a declaration of intentions, but something in between that can be measured.

2. Promoting capacity building initiatives, such as this EGM, is a core step to guarantee that the efforts towards implementation will take place correctly. Experts can profit from these meetings to develop a common set of concepts that can be further explored at home as a way to influence other actors and constituencies. High level politicians can also learn from this process in order to garner commitment to these initiatives.

Experts highlighted that the formulation should be inclusive and have a clear focus, setting key objectives, but also establishing a budget, as it prepares for the implementation phase. It should also include a key message, preferable from the presidential office, which could be used as a vision to support this initiative.

3. Guaranteeing commitment from all levels is one of the backbones of the implementation process. The whole political and social body of a nation should be involved in this methodology. This step makes the acceptance of these policies natural and enables NUP to be completely integrated and assumed by the society.

4. Putting in place proper feedback and monitoring instruments to help identifying the necessary changes and adjust NUP to respond better to its current reality.

5. Ensuring that NUP can offer enough adaptability and flexibility during its implementation phase. It should be able to adapt to the different instruments – finances, legal, planning, infrastructure and negotiation process - but also let it breathe to policy makers some room to readjust the framework according to the appropriate context.

## “MONITORING AND EVALUATION” WORKING GROUP

This group emphasized that although Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) always appear at the end of the cycle, it should not be considered as an afterthought. On the contrary, it should be placed in front of the whole process, directly linked to the diagnosis phase, given that the valuable information assessed in this phase can also be embedded and carried forward into the M&E process. Experts tried to identify the key principles of the M&E phase, coming up with three ideas:

**Simplicity:** The monitoring and evaluation process should be clear from its baseline, avoiding unnecessary analysis or complex measurement of outputs. Simplifying M&E also makes this model less bureaucratic and, therefore, easier to be executed and assimilated by the authorities and people implicated in this process.

**Milestones:** M&E should focus on principles and priorities, which have to be both quantified and qualified. One of the key elements to be evaluated is if citizens have gotten something better out of this process. Experts also discussed the possibility of having a universal set of measures that could be applied transversely across different countries that

are implementing NUP. The idea is to have a starting point to compare their performances. Nonetheless, these measurements should also be specific to respond to each nation’s reality and, if possible, used by municipalities and metropolitan areas to craft their own evaluation according to their needs.

**Affordability:** The budget for monitoring and evaluation must be included in the national urban policy framework to avoid running short of money to pay for the correct realization of this process.

Finally, experts also discussed whether monitoring and evaluation was indeed the correct model to evaluate the performance of National Urban Policies, given that this process is very recent in the urban agenda within international organizations and countries. Consequently, nations do not count with a universal benchmark to set the standards or an array of measurements that can determine the effectiveness of NUP. The group proposes, instead, a more collaborative learning methodology. Rather than using metrics, this new approach would imply a collaborative process of dialogue and discussions amongst cities, national entities and global agencies that are involved in the NUP process.

## 7. COMMUNIQUÉ DISCUSSION

**A**fter the conclusion of the thematic sessions, UN-Habitat opened the floor for discussions about the draft communiqué prepared for the occasion, an advocacy document that tried to capture the essence of the Experts Group Meeting. Participants had a chance to submit their comments previously in writing, which were summarised by Remy Sietchiping.

- **Participatory and Inclusive:** Put emphasis on the importance of a bottom-up approach, guaranteeing an inclusive process, with full participation of stakeholders and local authorities.
- **Simple and Pragmatic:** Reinforce the idea that NUP must be simple and pragmatic, based on practice.
- **Affordable:** Add that NUP must be affordable, cost-effective and fundable
- **Action-oriented:** Underscore that NUP is action-oriented and implementable. (clear implementation plan, 'What is not implementable does not exist').

Before proceeding with a new round of comments, Sietchiping clarified other important initiatives that were also included in the communiqué, such as UN-Habitat's commitment to supporting countries in the process of developing their own NUP, and document experiences of countries that have adopted this policy structure. Furthermore, he recalled that Jago Dodson agreed to take an important role in promoting the NUP agenda among colleagues dedicated to research and academia. Experts, then, proceed to draw special further attention to the following points:

- **Forward looking:** Add a principle that this initiative has a forward-looking approach, improving capacities progressively, institutionalizing this agenda and building for the future.
- **Strategic, not simple:** Use the word strategic to define the agenda, rather than simple or comprehensible. Strategic denotes an understanding and knowledge behind it, a more powerful word than just simple. Many experts showed their discomfort with the word simple, whether by highlighting that NUP is actually a complex political process, or by adding that the word simple undermines the importance of this framework.
- **Community of practice:** Look for ways to strengthen this initiative through funding, the establishment of research networks and building capacity. Ivan Turok was pointed out to lead this action.

- **Rights-based:** Include a line that states that, besides participatory and inclusive, this process is rights-based.

- **Legislative:** A key point that is missing from the text and preamble. Identify some qualities from the legislative framework that could assist in the effective implementation.

- **Land-security:** Ensure, through NUP, that legal measures are taken to secure land to implement city policies in an appropriate manner.

- **Political Will:** Guarantee strong political commitment at the central and local level.

- **Why do we need NUP and What is NUP:** Explore further why governments should adopt NUP, as an instrument to promote policy coherence at the territorial level. This explanation, exhaustively debated during the sessions, is missing from the preamble.

- **Ownership and response to the country's specific needs:** Highlight that although the NUP concept comes from international organisations, this policy does not impose a rigid framework. On the contrary, it should be appropriated by nations and designed to address the countries' specific concerns.

- **Environmental sustainability:** Include a reference that NUP should impulse cities more environmentally friendly .

- **Long-term agenda:** Build understanding about the principles of the agenda, trust among various authorities and the capacities within the institutions to carry out this initiative. Also, find champions that can endorse and foster this agenda.

Elkin Velásquez underlined that this declaration, supported by more than 50 experts, will serve as a powerful tool in Latin America, where the agency will use this document regionally to convince member states of the key value of this tool to achieve urban sustainable development.

In the final remarks about this exercise, Claude Ngomsu highlighted that this Experts Group Meeting provided him with an opportunity to expand his knowledge about the different facets of NUP and learn from fellow participants. Knowledge that now he feels compelled to share with authorities and other stakeholders in Rwanda and contribute to the national political thinking.



## 8. CLOSING REMARKS

Rafael Tuts wrapped up this Experts Group Meeting bringing back the relevance of NUP in the current context. His goal was to leave participants with a clear vision of the past and the future opportunities to embrace and promote this initiative. He reminded that the Secretary General, when referring to the development of the new agenda, emphasised that new goals and ambitions should reflect a transformative, integrative and universal vision. Three principles that, as these two days of discussion have shown are deeply embedded in the concept of NUP.

- NUP is **Transformative** because it demonstrates what cities can do for the country, and what the country can do for cities. NUP can transform the political structures and ensure that local governments are adequately equipped to fulfill their mandates.
- NUP is **Integrative** since it represents an ambitious instrument of coordination, which serves to breach the gap between different sectors, domains, stakeholders and the dichotomy between rural and urban.
- NUP is **Universal** as it promotes common values of resilient, inclusive, compact cities, which can be adopted by every single nation and adapted to its particular context.

He recalled that UN-Habitat is currently pushing to include an urban policy dimension to the Sustainable Development Goals within the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The proposed target aspires that “by 2030,

increase to 50% the number of countries adopting and implementing inclusive national urban policies to coordinate ministerial and sectoral efforts at different levels of government for sustainable urban development, territorial cohesion and urban-rural linkages”.

He regretted the fact that representatives from China and India, home of about 40 percent of the population, could not be present at this meeting to give their perspectives of the rapid urbanization taking place in these countries and the measures they have been taking to hinder its negative effects. Furthermore, he thanked the effort made by experts to attend this face-to-face meeting and bring to the table active examples of NUP and the instruments used to guarantee its effective design and implementation.

For the near future, he aspires that this initiative sets the cornerstone to create a community of practice to support different steps of formulation and implementation of policies using an array of capacities coming from the group – in research, legal, finance, regulatory, political arenas, among others. Finally, he thanked the Spanish Ministry of Development for hosting this act in its premises and the City of Barcelona for sponsoring this series of activities.

In the name of the city of Barcelona, Joan Llord praised the quality of the communiqué and contribution from experts to come up with this powerful advocacy document. He also recalled the commitment the city has undertaken to support UN-Habitat in the development of these series of five Experts Group Meetings aiming to foster knowledge, innovation and practical experiences about urban issues.

“This declaration, supported by more than 50 experts, will serve as a powerful tool in Latin America, where the agency will use this document regionally to convince member states of the key value of this tool to achieve urban sustainable development” Elkin Velázquez

## ANNEX 1: FINAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## PANELISTS AND SPEAKERS

- **Rachelle Alterman.** Israel Institute of Technology - Technion. Professor (Israel).
- **José Alejandro Bayona.** National Planning Department. Urban Development Director (Colombia).
- **Edgardo Bilsky.** United Cities & Local Government -UCLG. Director of Research.
- **Lluís Brau López.** Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners - FIU. President
- **María Buhigas.** Urban Facts Consultants. Urban Planning Expert (Spain).
- **Lisette Buki Rwiyereka.** Ministry of Infrastructure. Urban Planning Local Counterpart (Rwanda).
- **Rafael Catalá Polo.** Ministry of Development. Secretary of State for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing
- **José Antonio Corraliza Rodríguez.** Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Professor (Spain).
- **Ángela de la Cruz.** Ministry of Development. Vice-director of Urbanism (Spain).
- **Juan Luis de las Rivas Sanz.** Universidad de Valladolid. Professor (Spain).
- **Jago Dodson.** Griffith University. Associate Professor and Director. Urban Research Program (Australia)
- **Juan Carlos Duque.** Universidad EAFIT. Research Director RiSE (Research in Spatial Economics) School of Economics & Finance (Colombia).
- **Rahma El Badoui.** Barcelona City Council. Advisor (Spain).
- **Mohammed El Malti.** National School of Architecture. Professor (Morocco).
- **Sebastian Elbe.** SPRINT - Scientific policy consulting. CEO and Co-founder (Germany).
- **Eva Gímenez.** Rousaud Costas Duran. Associate (Spain).
- **Matthew Glasser.** World Bank. Lead Urban Specialist. Legal Vice Presidency.
- **Boris Graizbord.** Advanced Studies Programme on Sustainable Development and Environment (LEAD). Coordinator (México).
- **Sebastián Grau Ávila.** Asociación Española de Técnicos Urbanistas (AETU). President and Barcelona Metropolitan Area Secretary General (Spain).
- **Ulrich Graute.** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Senior Adviser / Interregional Adviser.
- **Vicente Guallart.** Barcelona City Council. Chief Architect (Spain).
- **Sonia Hernández.** Ministry of Development. Deputy Vice-director of Urbanism (Spain)
- **Agustín Hernández Aja.** Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid. Director of Urbanism and Land Planning Department (Spain)
- **Rene P. Hohmann.** Cities Alliance. Senior Urban Specialist.
- **Ricardo Jordan.** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Chief of Human Settlements Unit.
- **Joseph Maria Llop.** Universidad de Lleida, UNESCO Chair Intermediate Cities. Director of UIA-CIMES Programme, International Union of Architects (Spain).
- **Joan Llort.** Barcelona City Council. Director of Concerted Actions Office (Spain).
- **Nancy Lozano Gracia.** World Bank. Senior Economist.
- **Samuel Mabala.** Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development. Commissioner of Urban Land (Uganda).
- **Muhammad Maliki Moersid.** Ministry of Public Works. Director of Human Settlements Development (Indonesia).
- **Pilar Martínez.** Ministry of Development, General Director of Architecture, Housing and Land (Spain).
- **Tadashi Matsumoto.** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Senior Policy Analyst. Regional Development Policy
- **Pablo Molina Alegre.** Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners – FIU. Partner, J&A Garrigues, S.L.P. (Spain)
- **Maria Mousmouti.** Executive Director, Centre for European Constitutional Law (Greece)
- **José Luis Nicolas Rodrigo.** Ministry of Development. Technical Advisor (Spain).
- **Alejandro Nieto Enriquez.** Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU). Under

Secretary of Urban Development and Housing (Mexico).

- **Carles Pareja.** Pareja&Associats. Director (Spain).
- **Susan Parnell.** University of Cape Town. Urban geographer (South Africa).
- **Ignacio Pemán Gavin.** Universidad de Zaragoza. Professor (Spain).
- **Wladyslaw Piskorz.** European Commission. Head of the Urban Development Unit at the Directorate - General for Regional Policy.
- **Fernando Prats Palazuelo.** Arquitectos Urbanistas e Ingenieros Asociados, S.L (AUIA). Architect (Spain).
- **María del Mar Requena Quesada.** Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Assistant Deputy Director for Development Policies (Spain).
- **Muhammad Sundoro.** Ministry of Public Works. Head Sub-Director of Evaluation of Program Development (Indonesia).
- **Eduardo Torres.** Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU). Advisor of the Under Secretary of Urban Development and Housing (Mexico).
- **Ivan Turok.** Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Deputy Executive Director. Economic Performance & Development (South Africa).

#### UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

- **Rafael Tuts.** UN-HABITAT. Urban Planning and Design Branch Coordinator.
- **Remy Sietchiping.** UN-HABITAT. Regional & Metropolitan Planning Unit Leader.
- **Gulelat Kebede.** UN-HABITAT, Urban Economy Branch Coordinator.
- **Elkin Velásquez.** UN-HABITAT, Regional Office Latin America and the Caribbean Director (ROLAC).
- **Themba R. Phakathi.** UN-HABITAT. Associate Settlement Officer.
- **Robert Lewis Lettington.** UN- HABITAT. Unit Leader- Urban Legislation.
- **Alexander Chileshe.** UN-HABITAT. National Technical Advisor (Zambia).
- **Claude Ngomsi.** UN-HABITAT. National Technical Advisor (Rwanda)
- **Frédéric Saliez.** UN-HABITAT. Office for Liaison with European Institutions.
- **Carmen Sánchez-Miranda Gallego.** Head of Office. UN-HABITAT Office in Spain.
- **Joaquín Pardo.** UN-HABITAT. Consultant (Spain)
- **Anaís Malbrand.** UN-HABITAT. Consultant (Spain)
- **María Alejandra Rico.** UN-HABITAT. Consultant (Spain)
- **César Sánchez Rosales.** UN-HABITAT. Intern (Spain)



## ANNEX 2: PROGRAMME

## MONDAY, 17TH MARCH

## 08.30-09.00 Registration

## 09.00-09.30 Welcome and opening remarks

- **Joan Clos.** Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Under Secretary General, United Nations (video message)/  
**Rafael Tuts.** Urban Planning and Design Branch Coordinator. UN-Habitat.
- **Rafael Catalá Polo.** Secretary of State for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing. Ministry of Development (Spain).

## 09.30-09.45 Presentation round

## 09.50-11.00 Introduction

**Carmen Sánchez-Miranda Gallego.** *“Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Experts Group Meeting”.* UN-Habitat Office in Spain.

*Why National Urban Policies Matters:*

- **Remy Sietchiping.** Leader. Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit. UN-Habitat.
- **Tadashi Matsumoto.** *“Building Sustainable Cities of All Sizes: A National Urban Policy Framework”.* Senior Policy Analyst. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- **Wladyslaw Piskorz.** *“Evolution of the involvement of the European Union in promoting sustainable urban development”.* Head of Unit. Competence Centre, Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development. Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. European Commission.
- **Rene P. Hohmann.** *“Aligning Constituencies to Make National Policies Matter”.* Senior Urban Specialist. Cities Alliance.

Moderator: **Vicente Guallart.** Chief Architect. Barcelona City Council.

## 11.00-11.15 Coffee break

## 11.15-13.00 SESSION 1: The Sustainable Urbanization Imperative and National Urban Policies

- **Susan Parnell.** *“National urbanization and urban strategies: necessary but absent policy instruments in Africa”.* Urban Geographer. Cape Town University (South Africa).
- **Samuel Shibuta Mabala.** *“The National Urban Policy for sustainable urban development: Uganda experience”.* Commissioner of Urban Land. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (Uganda).
- **Alejandro Nieto Enríquez.** *“The role of national governments in the development of just, sustainable and productive cities; Mexico’s new National Urban Policy.”* Under Secretary of Urban Development and Housing. Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (Mexico).

Discussants:

- **Alexander Chileshe.** National Technical Advisor. UN-Habitat (Zambia).
- **Muhammad Maliki Moersid.** Director of Human Settlements Development.

Ministry of Public Works (Indonesia).

Moderator: **Elkin Velásquez**. Director. Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC). UN-Habitat.

*Debate*

**13.00-14.00 Lunch**

**14.00-15.30 SESSION 2: Towards Effective National Urban Policies: Lessons from Current Practice**

- **Ivan Turok**. *“Evolution of National Urban Policies”*. Deputy Executive Director. Economic Performance & Development Human Sciences Research Council - HSRC. (South Africa).
- **Sebastian Elbe**. *“Delivery Mechanism of National Urban Policies”* CEO and Co-founder. SPRINT-Scientific policy consulting (Germany).
- **José Alejandro Bayona**. *“Colombia’s System of Cities: a new approach to define National Urban Policies”*. Urban Development Director. National Planning Department (Colombia).
- **Nancy Lozano Gracia**. *“Planning, Connecting, & Financing Cities - Now: Priorities for City Leaders”*. Senior Economist. World Bank.

Discussant:

- **Edgardo Bilsky**. Director of Research. United Cities & Local Government (UCLG).

Moderator: **Claude Ngomsi**. Technical advisor. UN-Habitat (Rwanda).

*Debate*

**15.30-17.00 SESSION 3: Unlocking the potential of urban development using a robust legislative and regulatory framework.**

- **Rachelle Alterman**. *“Levying the Land: Land-based instruments for financing public services in transition economies”*. Professor. Israel Institute of Technology –Technion (Israel).
- **Jago Dodson**. *“Australia’s National Urban Policy: Institutional factors, dynamics and prospects”*. Associate professor and director. Urban Research Program. Griffith University (Australia).
- **Ángela de la Cruz**. Vice-Director of Urbanism. Ministry of Development (Spain).

Discussants:

- **Maria Mousmouti**. Executive Director. Centre for European Constitutional Law (Greece).
- **Mohammed El Malti**. Professor. National School of Architecture (Morocco).

Moderator: **Robert-Lewis Lettington**. Urban Legislation Unit Leader. UN-Habitat.

*Debate*

## TUESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

### 08.30-09.00 Recap of the previous day

**Elkin Velásquez.** Director. Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC). UN-Habitat.

### 09.00-10.30 SESSION 4: The Economic and Environmental Dimension of a National Urban Policy

- **Juan Carlos Duque.** *“Planning a system of cities in Urabá-Colombia: Population, urban and economic growth”*. Research Director. Research in Spatial Economics (RiSE) School of Economics & Finance. EAFIT University (Colombia).
- **Matthew Glasser.** *“Mobilizing Capital for Infrastructure Finance”* Lead Urban Specialist. Legal Vice Presidency. World Bank.
- **Boris Graizbord.** *“Economic changes and opportunities in the Mexican Urban System”*. Coordinator. Advanced Studies Programme on Sustainable Development and Environment –LEAD (Mexico).
- **Ricardo Jordán.** *“Towards more sustainable cities in Latin America and the Caribbean”* Chief, Human Settlements Unit. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Discussants:

- **Lluis Brau López.** President. Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners - FIU.

Moderator: **Gulelat Kebede.** Coordinator. Urban Economy Branch. UN-Habitat.

*Debate*

### 10.30-10.45 Coffee break

### 10.45-12.45 BREAKOUT SESSION: The National Urban Policies process

**Themba R. Phakathi.** *“UN-Habitat’s NUP framework for a rapid diagnostic”*. Regional & Metropolitan Planning Unit. UN-Habitat.

- Working Group on “Diagnostic”:  
*Facilitators:* **Themba R. Phakathi.** Regional & Metropolitan Planning Unit. UN-Habitat.  
**Lisette Buki Rwiyereka.** Urban Planning Local Counterpart. Ministry of Infrastructure (Rwanda).
- Working Group on “Formulation”:  
*Facilitators:* **Claude Ngomsi.** Technical advisor. UN-Habitat. (Rwanda).  
**Maria Buhigas.** Urban planning expert. Urban Facts Consultants (Spain).
- Working Group on “Implementation”:  
*Facilitators:* **Elkin Velásquez.** Director. Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC). UN-Habitat.  
**Pablo Molina.** Partner, J&A Garrigues, S.L.P. Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners – FIU.
- Working Group on “Monitoring & Evaluation”:

*Facilitators:* **Frédéric Saliez.** UN-Habitat Office for Liaison with European Institutions.  
**Carles Pareja.** Director. Pareja&Associats (Spain).

**12.45-15.00 Lunch**

**15.00-16.00 SESSION 6: Towards a “Road Map” on National Urban Policies**

- **Ulrich Graute.** “National Urban Policies and the Post 2015 Development Agenda”. Senior and Interregional Adviser. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).
- **Remy Sietchiping.** “Joint action plan and work plan for the Global partnership-project, national, global”. Leader. Regional and Metropolitan Planning Unit. UN-Habitat.

*Participants’ reflections and evaluation*

**16.00-16.30 Closing Session**

- **Rafael Tuts.** Coordinator. Urban Planning and Design Branch. UN-Habitat.
- **Joan Llord.** Director of Concerted Actions Office. Barcelona City Council.





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