

Statement of the Cities Alliance Secretariat at the 2nd Session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, Nairobi (Kenya)

Thursday, April 16, 2015

Madame Co-Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear Habitat Partners,

It is an honour to address the preparatory committee on behalf of the Cities Alliance Secretariat. The Cities Alliance as a global partnership for promoting the role of cities in poverty reduction and sustainable development would like to express its full support to a successful Habitat III conference, which will frame how we use the opportunities of the urban millennium to create a sustainable future for all.

The Cities Alliance Partnership wishes to support the preparation process towards the Habitat III conference by highlighting the crucial role of partnerships between national governments, local authorities and organised civil society for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

We would like to foster and show the assets of these partnerships to address in our view two overarching global challenges to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable: limiting the environmental impacts of human in general, while simultaneously achieving more equitable and sustainable patterns of growth.

We have therefore given ourselves three key priority areas under the overall theme of promoting equity in cities.

Firstly, we will need to pay far more attention to identifying and promoting those policies and practices essential for equitable economic growth in the city. Such growth will need to support livelihoods and provide jobs that are needed not just to reduce rural and urban poverty, but most particularly to address one of the world's greatest and most pressing developmental challenges – meeting the legitimate expectations of the growing proportion of children and youth in the world's population.

Secondly, we are promoting gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in all of our work. Throughout the world, and through a range of policies, customs and practices, women have fewer opportunities and rights, depriving both them and society of a significant source of human potential, and undermining both stability and sustainability of development. Women

act as drivers of positive change in cities, promoting household economic resilience and more equitable decision making.

Thirdly, we will focus on joining international efforts to increase the resiliency of cities and their citizens but expanding the tool sets and capacities of cities beyond 'climate proofing'. Cities will have to be "future-proof" themselves against the risks associated with climate change, resource scarcity and lack of services to become inclusive, growing sustainably with functioning urban services, and creating jobs. In particular, their poorest residents will benefit from more jobs, better access to basic services, and be less vulnerable to natural disasters.

Madame Chair, not only are equitable growth, gender equality and resilience integrally linked, they will be mainly resolved in the world's urban areas. This requires attention not only to the world's megacities, but also in thousands of small and medium-sized towns, intermediary and secondary cities – cities whose names are not well known, which gain limited attention from national governments and international development agencies, but where capacity is often weakest whilst the needs are greatest.

Madame Co-Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Thank you very much for your attention.