LINKAGES BETWEEN THE NEW URBAN AGENDA
AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A. Overall Relationship between the NUA and 2030 Agenda

1. Urbanization is one of the most important global trends of the 21st century. It is a transformative force that can be harnessed to enhance economic productivity, inclusive growth, and environmental sustainability. Urban areas now accommodate more than 50 per cent of humanity and are expected to accommodate around 60 per cent by 2030. They generate 70 per cent of the world’s GDP and contribute between 39 and 49 percent of the world’s greenhouse gases, a percentage expected to rise to 70 percent by 2050.

2. In light of the above, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), focuses on what needs to be done to ensure that cities and human settlements, as vehicles of development, are themselves planned, developed and managed in sustainable ways.

3. The NUA also addresses a range of actions necessary for making cities effective spatial or locational frameworks for sustainable development. It goes beyond Sustainable Development Goal 11, “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” by detailing strategic actions necessary for ensuring that cities and human settlements, as the location of many development efforts, support and facilitate effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

4. Habitat III is the first major UN conference to be held following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The NUA will thus be the first internationally agreed document detailing implementation of the urban dimension of the SDGs. It builds on SDG 11, but addresses a wider range of urbanization and human settlements issues.

B. Linkages in Substantive Content

5. With respect to linkages in substantive content, the NUA provides a spatial or locational framework for the delivery of SDGs within urban areas; has additional substantive urban issues not covered by the 2030 Agenda, in particular additional means of implementation; deepens a numbers of substantive urban issues already in the 2030 Agenda; and focuses on local level implementation.

6. The sectoral nature of the SDGs requires a spatial framework for achieving the 2030 Agenda. It will be impossible to address poverty (Goal 1), inequality (Goal 10), climate change (Goal 13), gender equality (Goal 5), water and sanitation (Goal 6), economic growth and employment (Goal 8), industrialization and innovation (Goal 9), and consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) without addressing the way cities are planned, grow and function. The NUA does not itself address directly most SDGs, but facilitates their delivery within urban areas.

7. Most of the SDGs and targets relevant to cities and human settlements target people, households and communities, rather than address processes. The ‘means of implementation’ of SDG-11 on sustainable cities and human settlements are very restrictive, i.e. 11a urban-rural linkages, 11b resilience plans and 11c local building materials. These do not cover the array of means of implementation required to achieve sustainable urban development. The means of implementation of other relevant SDGs (such as those related
water, energy, industrialization, and climate change) also do not cover some of the essential requirements in the context of cities and human settlements. This gap is filled by the means of implementation elaborated in the NUA.

8. One of the ways in which the NUA expands on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs is by addressing strategic spatial and governance frameworks essential for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs within urban areas, such as national urban policies, legislation, spatial planning and local finance frameworks. These overall frameworks, which are central to the NUA, will facilitate implementation within cities not only of SDG 11, but also of many other SDGs.

9. In some areas, e.g. urban basic services, the NUA deepens the scope of some of the targets of SDG 11. For example, transport is reflected more comprehensively in the NUA than in the SDGs, where it is limited to targets 11.2 (access to public transport) and 3.6 (road traffic accidents). There are a range of recommendations on sustainable transport and mobility in the draft NUA, including: sustainable transport infrastructure and services generation; rural-urban linkages; travel demand management; road safety; climate change, air quality, and energy efficiency; freight transport; land use, urban planning and transport planning; transport poverty, equity and inclusion; capacity building; and sustainable transport financing.

10. The NUA places emphasis on implementation at the local level and on the role of urban local governments. Agenda 2030 acknowledges the importance of implementation at the local level and the role of local governments, in addition to implementation of the SDGs at the national and regional levels. This is because of the traditional roles of local governments in facilitating development and providing services directly to households as well as of overseeing territorial development through local planning, governance and local public financial policies. The NUA also places emphasis on the need to develop the capacity of local authorities and other local actors to implement both the NUA and the SDGs at the urban local level.

C. Follow-up and Review Linkages

11. Because the NUA addresses a much wider range of urban issues than the SDGs, including national urban policies, urban legislation frameworks, and municipal finance systems, it will require its own follow-up and review process. While this will be a separate process, it will be complementary to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

12. The follow-up and review of the NUA will have to feed into the overall follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. In particular, follow-up and review of SDG 11, whose targets include those on housing, basic services, slum upgrading, transport, public space and waste management, will be covered in the follow-up and review of the NUA, in order to avoid duplication of effort, and the results on these targets will be fed into the follow-up and review of the SDGs as a whole. The 2030 Agenda provides clear guidance on the need for linkages and coherence in the follow-up and review of the SDGs and of the outcomes of all UN conferences (in paragraphs 82, 83, 85 and 88).