

Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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Agenda item 6

Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council

Draft resolution on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure

Submission by the drafting group

The Governing Council,

Recalling the targets set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹ of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 and to halve by 2015 the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water and the target agreed in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)² to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,³ in which Heads of State and Government resolved, among other things, to achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020,, recognizing the urgent need for the provision of increased resources for affordable housing and housing-related infrastructure, prioritizing slum prevention and slum upgrading, and to encourage support for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009, which outlines the three objectives of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development:(to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development; to assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development; and to address new and emerging challenges), and further specifies two themes for the Conference, to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: the green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and an institutional framework for sustainable development,

Recalling Governing Council resolution 20/2 of 8 April 2005, on the establishment of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, and its paragraph 4, on other regional organizations such as the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of

1 See General Assembly Resolution 55/2.

2 Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996 (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. 1, resolution 1, annex II.

3 See General Assembly Resolution 61/1.

Housing and Urbanization in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Asian Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development,

Acknowledging the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development of 26 November 2010, the Solo Declaration and Implementation Plan of the Third Asian Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development of 24 June 2010 and the Buenos Aires Declaration of the nineteenth Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urbanization of Latin America and the Caribbean of 3 September 2010,

Recalling the Habitat Agenda, in particular its paragraphs 65 and 67, which encourages the formulation and periodic evaluation and revision, as necessary, of enabling housing policies, with a view to creating a framework for efficient and effective housing delivery systems, as the cornerstone for the provision of shelter for all,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution S-25/2 of 9 June 2001 adopting the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, by which the Assembly resolved to promote access to safe drinking water to all and to facilitate the provision of basic infrastructure and urban services, including adequate sanitation, waste management and sustainable transport, through transparent and accountable management of public services and partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations for the delivery of those services,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 65/165 of 24 November 2010, supporting the dissemination and implementation of the international guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services for all adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in its resolutions 21/3 and 22/8,

Recalling, as part of the International Year of Biodiversity, the Aichi/Nagoya Declaration on Local Authorities and Biodiversity of the city biodiversity summit 2010 of 26 October 2010 and the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision X/22, in October 2010,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 65/153 of 20 December 2010, promoting a global effort to realize sustainable sanitation through “Sustainable sanitation: the five-year-drive to 2015”, which is of particular relevance in growing cities and slums where poor sanitation and lack of waste water treatment seriously endangers public health and water resources,

Recognizing the need to minimize the negative impacts of climate change on human settlements, especially by reducing the vulnerability of poor populations and increasing the adaptive capacities of cities,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements⁴ and paragraph 75 of the Habitat Agenda, which encourages legal access to land to be seen as a strategic prerequisite for the provision of adequate shelter for all and for the development of sustainable human settlements affecting both urban and rural areas,

Recalling also General Assembly resolutions 65/165 of 20 December 2010, which encourages Governments to support the World Urban Campaign as an important tool for promoting the administration of land and property issues, and 59/239 of 22 December 2004, which encourages Governments to support the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign for Urban Governance as important tools for promoting the administration of land and property rights,

Recognizing the notable contributions that the UN-Habitat facilitated Global Land Tool Network has made in building partnerships for developing and implementing land tools at scale, in championing the cause of the poor and vulnerable groups such as women and slum dwellers, in promoting inclusive land policies and in developing affordable and equitable land administration systems that emphasize the important transitional role that intermediate tenure and incremental approaches play,

Emphasizing that sustainable urban development is essential for humankind and that Governments need to formulate appropriate policies and make deliberate interventions to create an enabling environment for the provision of secure tenure rights and the delivery and management of land, housing, basic services and infrastructure,

Understanding the imperative need for all levels of government to work together in a coherent approach to service provision,

4 Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996.

1. *Welcomes* the dialogue on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure at the twenty-third session of the Governing Council, contributing to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2012, and requests the Executive Director to ensure the transmission, through the President of the Governing Council, of the results of the dialogue to the Bureau of the Conference;
2. *Takes note* of the theme paper of the Executive Director⁵ on the dialogue of the twenty-third session of the Governing Council entitled “Sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure”;
3. *Requests* the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to ensure UN-Habitat’s involvement in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
4. *Encourages* Governments and Habitat Agenda partners:
 - (a) To include the issue of sustainable urban development in their contributions to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including on the two themes identified in paragraph 20 (a) of General Assembly resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009;
 - (b) To develop strategic responses to the problems of sustainable urban development, building on the recommendations of the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly;
 - (c) To mobilize the commitment of Governments and Habitat Agenda partners at the international, national and local levels to promote decentralization and improve urban governance to ensure expanded equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure and to secure tenure rights for all segments of society within an integrated urban governance and sustainable urban development framework;
5. *Also encourages* Governments and Habitat Agenda partners, with regard to urban planning, mobility, climate change and biodiversity issues:
 - (a) To consider seriously increasing urban density through intensification of land use, as part of improved urban planning, so as to promote development patterns that allow housing for all, increased job opportunities and reduced urban sprawl to reduce infrastructure investment costs, the ecological footprint of urban centres and demand for transport and energy use and to overcome a growing social divide, spatial fragmentation and resulting land use patterns;
 - (b) To address this social divide through support for strategic planning approaches that seek to balance the dimensions of sustainable urban development (social, economic and environmental) based on wide consultation processes;
 - (c) To promote public transport and mass transit systems, non-motorized transport and the provision of equitable space for pedestrians and cyclists, along with improvements in road systems and urban connectivity;
 - (d) To invite international agencies to facilitate the improvement of access by cities, and by local and regional authorities to climate change mitigation and adaptation financing, prioritizing countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, including least developed countries and small island developing states, and to monitor the appropriate and complete implementation of projects funded;
 - (e) To undertake coordinated action to promote cities and biodiversity, including urban forestry and urban wetlands and ecosystems services, as an integral part of their sustainable urban development strategies, and to cooperate with developing countries and their local authorities to strengthen their capacities in promoting, measuring, monitoring and protecting urban biodiversity and developing local biodiversity strategies and action plans;
6. *Further encourages* Governments and Habitat Agenda Partners, with regard to increasing access to land, basic services and infrastructure options to consider:
 - (a) Reforming regulatory and institutional frameworks, codes, norms, laws and standards, if necessary, and developing and implementing enabling policies, regulations and strategies, taking into consideration the implementation of comprehensive systems of social protection;

(b) Strengthening the capacities of administrative and financial institutions and delivery systems responsible for expanding access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure, particularly by the poor, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups;

(c) Promoting integrated urban governance to foster the participation of beneficiary groups in the decision-making process and support the efforts of cities and local and regional authorities to innovate and learn from one another through the sharing of information, innovative ideas, expertise and best practices to meet the challenges they face in the areas of land, housing, basic services and infrastructure;

(d) Promoting decentralization and the role of local authorities and enabling institutional frameworks for partnerships with service providers and civil society, sustainable financing, pro-poor policies and environmental sustainability in the delivery of basic services for all;

7. *Encourages* Governments and Habitat Agenda partners, with regard to land issues:

(a) To implement land policy development and regulatory and procedural reform programmes, if necessary, so as to achieve sustainable urban development and to better manage climate change, ensuring that land interventions are anchored within effective land governance frameworks;

(b) To promote security of tenure for all segments of society by recognizing and respecting a plurality of tenure systems, identifying and adopting, as appropriate to particular situations, intermediate forms of tenure arrangements, adopting alternative forms of land administration and land records alongside conventional land administration systems, and intensifying efforts to achieve secure tenure in post-conflict and post-disaster situations;

(c) To review and improve urban land governance mechanisms, including land/spatial planning administration and management, land information systems and land-based tax systems, so as to strengthen tenure rights and expand secure and sustainable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure, particularly for the poor and women;

(d) To create mechanisms for broadening land-based revenue streams, including by improving the competencies and capacities of local and regional authorities in the field of land and property valuation and taxation, so as to generate additional local revenue for pro-poor policies and to finance infrastructure development;

8. *Also encourages* Governments and Habitat Agenda partners, with regard to housing issues:

(a) To encourage the development of a thorough assessment of the performance of their housing sectors;

(b) To promote enabling housing policies, including slum upgrading initiatives, and reforms that facilitate the delivery of affordable and adequate housing solutions for all social groups;

(c) To enhance the contribution of the housing sector to national economic development through policy and institutional reforms;

(d) To provide support for the development of a global housing strategy and its presentation to the Governing Council and the General Assembly, as outlined in the medium-term strategic and institutional plan 2008–2013;

9. *Invites* the international community and financial institutions to contribute adequate financial resources to UN-Habitat and the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to enable UN-Habitat to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in mobilizing public investment and private capital to achieve sustainable urban development;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to inform the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.