



GLOBAL TASKFORCE  
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS  
FOR POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA  
TOWARDS HABITAT III

## **Analysis of the Habitat III Framework Document Policy Unit 6: Urban Spatial Strategies**

Presented by UCLG urban strategic planning committee

### *1) A brief analysis of the Framework Paper*

The paper reviews previous work streams of UN Habitat in planning, public space, land management and rural urban linkages with the attempt to extract strategic lines to be aligned and further brought into implementation of the SDG 11. The paper recalls that urbanization is not only a matter of shifting population and growth, but a spatial phenomenon that conditions life and environmental resources.

It describes main trends and draws the spatial, social, economic environmental and human settlement scenario. It articulates the needed step between the planning guidelines and its implementation that is identified as a main remaining challenge to the planning exercise. The paper emphasises on the importance of public space as key for urban quality. It also introduces some indicators on public space, such as the WHO standard on green space per person, which is important, as it centres the attention towards people centre planning and debates the minimum requirements - % of urban area and use of public space of the SDG target.

### *2) Identify messages or proposals that are problematic for us: a brief comment or propose an alternative wording.*

- There is little reference to strategic planning, leadership and management. The paper points out that there is a gap of implementation, - but the localization of these challenges and responses does not refer to local governments.
- Planning is presented as a theoretical approach. In our view, it must be linked and measured by taking into account implementation and construction of cities.
- Local governments' role in decision making remains untapped. LG have mayor responsibilities regarding land use, planning, budgeting and maintaining infrastructure, on urban expansion and public space.
- It is not clear in which direction participation and inclusion will shape in this paper. The issue on "community participation" needs to be precise and refer to co-responsibility, as a way to assure efficient public spaces.
- Private sector, in particular real estate, is a very powerful stakeholder in the urbanization process that does not necessarily share the same interests as urban poor. The main groups building cities are large real estate or informal settlers.
- Urban Poverty, rights and safety of vulnerable populations are not stressed. The Planning objective must be to avoid and reverse spatial segregation of the poor.
- Connect planning to Fundraising remains limited to land management (value)
- The differentiation of green versus street space is somehow awkward

### **Elements deserving amendment (*in cursive*)**

**Environmental scenario:** include *Lack of sanitation, deforestation and air pollution.*

**Land:** *land protection is not addressed*, agricultural and natural use undervalued

**Economic dynamics:** development creates wealth *that is not fairly distributed*

**Urban-rural:** *Rural activities* and agricultural goods/ food have a **function**. On urban rural relation, the point on replacing the dichotomy is well taken, but it's not continuum, **its system**.

**Human settlement scenario:** *slums and planning in existing neighbourhoods* to be addressed.

**Priorities public space:** include poverty reduction, cultural value of public space, and maintenance. **Public space is a public service.**

**Urban agenda:** complete insufficient political work to create institutional frameworks **and delegate competences to local government and develop capacity**

**Spatial planning and land:** *data management to inform fiscal and also social policies.*

**On the targets and indicators**

SDG 11.3 enhance inclusive ...capacity for ...planning .. in all countries – **better: in all cities**

On public space standards, quality indicators on safety should be included

3) *Are there critical points or questions that are absent in the Framework Paper? Which ones?*

**In the conclusions, take into account** implementation and decision:

**1. Lack of strategic political process** (prioritization and synchronization)

- The current planning frameworks concentrate on compliance planning becomes sterile and lacks creativity, as opposed to being credible and developmental.
- Many planning processes are characterized as a technocratic process, however this needs to be changed to a more visionary or strategic approach

**2. Urban policies for regional and rural areas:**

- There needs to be greater emphasis on the development of the city region and not just key nodes at the city or regional level
- Intermediary cities play an important part in the developmental process and evolution of cities, current planning policy is limited and nor does it create an enabling environment for intermediary cities to develop. Planning and budgetary policy needs to actively support both city regions and intermediary cities.
- Successful planning process are characterized by strong leadership, at a political level the electoral periods remain a limitation. Confidence in creating long terms plans that span electoral terms needed especially in smaller municipalities

**3. Promote framework for participation:** If spatial planning wants to have a participatory dimension the local level is crucial. Participation works only locally. Information and communication become important issues.

**4. Stress necessary alignment of national regional and local planning frameworks.**

- National laws to ensure proper institutionalization in all government levels, especially local government.
- National planning focus should be as a centre of learning, innovation, research, and experimentation which would assist regional and local government to ground their planning process using appropriate planning methodologies and reliable data
- There is a need to ensure at a national level that there is proper institutional arrangements to lead planning processes but also to be custodians of the planning systems that enables delivery at local government level
- There has to be an understanding that planning is a process and that there are different levels of planning. Each level of planning has its own mechanisms and levers, not always interchangeable between the spheres of government.

**5. Stress opportunities of microplanning** Cities innovate Planning frameworks, ( special zoning , inner city/ priority plans ) for neighbourhoods, important for existing development, special zoning, urban regeneration- makes a difference and diversity

**6. Stress the role of culture and social value of public space.**

- Public space should be considered an asset in the development and strengthening of cultural, social and economic life

- Ensure existence of cultural facilities, including the resources that will be necessary to maintain them and allow a flexible use according to changing citizen's needs.

**Comments from UCLG Committee on culture**

- Not full understanding of the key role of culture (heritage, creativity, diversity) as a key factor to be taken into consideration in urban planning.
- A few ideas to give full consideration of the role of culture in a holistic "sustainable city" urban planning would be:
  - Public space should be considered an asset in the development and strengthening of cultural, social and economic life. Factors which hinder the cultural uses of public space should be identified and tackled.
  - Ensure the existence of cultural facilities. These facilities to enable access to culture for all and to be explicitly included in local masterplans and similar planning instruments. Decentralized facilities catering for a diverse range of activities should be considered.
  - Planning of new cultural infrastructures should involve a reflection on their sustainability, including the resources that will be necessary to maintain them and ensure they are dynamic hubs capable of responding to citizens' needs and expectations and to local governments' cultural policy objectives.
  - Consider how new cultural facilities relate to existing local and regional dynamics and can be part of a broader cultural ecosystem to prevent some facilities from being isolated or from accumulating all resources and limiting the sustainability of others.