



HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS NETWORK

H a b i t a t I n t e r n a t i o n a l C o a l i t i o n

Statement to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom 3) for Habitat III

The “New Urban Agenda,” from its inception, is inconsistent with historic agreements, today’s global priorities and the “world we need.” Particular interests have narrowed the Habitat Agenda to urban priorities, subordinated rural areas, and ignored issues of forced migration, presuming that urbanization is “inevitable” and beyond human will or policy direction.

That vision neglects the crises and root causes of displacement that create and deepen suffering and impoverishment. If we truly want to “end poverty in all its forms,” consistent with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, we would need a vision consistent with increased rural investment and development and that—as in the Habitat Agenda—“treats villages and cities as points on a human settlements continuum within a common ecosystem.”

Positively, the new draft reiterates the human right to adequate housing and corresponding housing policies. That aligns with international obligations of every state represented here and forms a basis for further progress toward achieving a “human rights habitat” for all, including the Right to the City and good-governance norms that do not stop at urban boundaries.

However, the dismissal of lessons learned from implementing Habitat II commitments joins neglect of the inequity and cyclical crises created by globalized markets. Such omission ignores the repeated Habitat II commitments to ensure implementation within a just macroeconomic order. Habitat International Coalition (HIC) calls for states to regulate financial and property markets to remedy their impoverishing consequences.

We are shocked to find nothing in the new draft about the transnational regulation of mortgage securitization and the real estate sector, corruption or land grabbing. Operationalization of rental housing and market alternatives toward inclusive urbanization is possible only by remedying the global financial order.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda leaves obvious gaps for the Habitat III Agenda to fill, including obstacles to sustainable development posed by “foreign and military occupation.” The 2030 Agenda notes the need for effective remedial measures, but offers none.

The new draft's section on Follow-up lacks the intent and specificity needed for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It maintains the 20-year lack of Habitat Agenda implementation and amnesia about committed actions of states and UN organizations. Among the broken promises of Habitat II was the repeated commitment "to prevent and remedy forced evictions" across all habitats.

A human rights approach must guide global human-settlement policy and corresponding commitments consistent with state obligations. HIC calls for a holistic New Habitat Agenda, not an "urban agenda" that leaves half of humanity behind. A New Habitat Agenda must incorporate environmental sustainability gender equality, non-discrimination, accountability, reparations for harm done, inter-generational equity with a strong focus on the rights of children and older persons, as well as persons with disabilities, sexual minorities, indigenous peoples, and the progressive realization of all human rights for all. Effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation should align with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international obligations and commitments of states. There is too much at stake, and now is our chance to get it right.

Surabaya, 26 July 2016