

**THE FUTURE WE WANT**

**THE  
CITY  
WE  
NEED**

# TOGETHER TOWARDS HABITAT III

**2011 - 12**

Increased synergies  
between partners and  
consolidation

**2012 - 14**

Increased global,  
national, and local  
communication

**2013 - 16**

Knowledge and  
consensus building for  
a New Urban Agenda

**2016**

**HABITAT III  
CONFERENCE**





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## BACKGROUND

At their last Steering Committee meeting in September 2013, the World Urban Campaign partners agreed to contribute to the Habitat III Conference by engaging the international community, public, private, and civil society partners to contribute to the new Global Urban Agenda through a consensus document that describes *The City We Need*.

This document is a collective contribution of committed partners united by shared goals and a common vision of the city for the 21st century. It sets key principles and establishes essential paths for building a New Urban Agenda towards the Habitat III Conference.



The Campaign partners are questioning what direction global urban development will take in the coming 20 years, and what shall guide governments, their partners, and the international community to prepare for the urban future. They need to provide pertinent answers as the 20-year anniversary of the Habitat Agenda looms, and while critical urban trends lead to increased segregation, inequality, and environmental degradation, making the urban agenda a global priority.

*This first version of **The City We Need** was prepared by the World Urban Campaign from September to December 2013. It represents the consensus of all partners engaged to date in the global coalition.*



## THE CITY WE NEED

### Towards a New Urban Paradigm

#### Introduction

Cities are either helpful or unhelpful in achieving sustainable development. As we declared in the 2012 Manifesto for Cities and further reiterate here: **“the battle for a more sustainable future will be won or lost in cities.”**

How we plan, build, and manage our cities now will determine the outcome of our efforts to achieve a sustainable and harmonious development tomorrow. Well-planned cities afford all residents the opportunity to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. Well-designed cities present nations with major opportunities to promote social inclusion, resilience, and prosperity.

The world is at a crossroads. In the next few decades, urban dwellers will not only double in number, accounting for nearly three-quarters of world's population. More than 60 percent of the built environment needed to accommodate these new urban dwellers has yet to be built.

**So what will our cities be like? Past and current trends provide some important lessons for what to avoid:**

- Lack of national urban policies uncoordinated with regional and local regulatory frameworks that neglect investment in basic infrastructure, protection of the public realm, and tenure security;
- Poor planning and “short-termism” that result in slums and informal settlements lacking public goods and services; irresponsible land use and construction yielding spontaneous urban sprawl vulnerable to natural and human-made disasters: flooding with each storm surge and crumbling under the force of earthquakes or fires;
- Disregard of urban-rural linkages and the destruction of ecosystem services upon which all humanity depends;
- Poorly regulated real estate markets that create speculative bubbles and financial crises;
- Mismanagement by all actors and tiers of government leading to inefficient and wasteful public services;
- Loss of urban identity caused by the destruction of cultural heritage, local bio-diversity, and public space;

- Lack of effective participation and engagement, especially of youth, leading to social tension and unrest;
- Absence of effective implementation and financing mechanisms for executing needed policies and programs.

The cities we want should be engines of economic development and lie at the core of a new urban era where people can find freedom, innovation, prosperity, and resilience. Public, private, and civil society organizations offer thousands of important solutions both small and large.

Primary among them are improvements in public services including mass transit, waste, water, and energy supply and management; and better housing for low income groups or slum upgrading programs including community stand pipes, basic sewerage disposal, community health centers, or cable cars to provide transportation to and from inaccessible areas. These efforts undoubtedly improve the lives of the people they touch.

*But, in the end, these approaches do not address basic structural problems nor do they offer answers appropriately scaled for tomorrow's challenges.* To do so requires rethinking the very organization of a city and envisioning its future. For this reason we need to forge a **new urban paradigm for the city we need.**

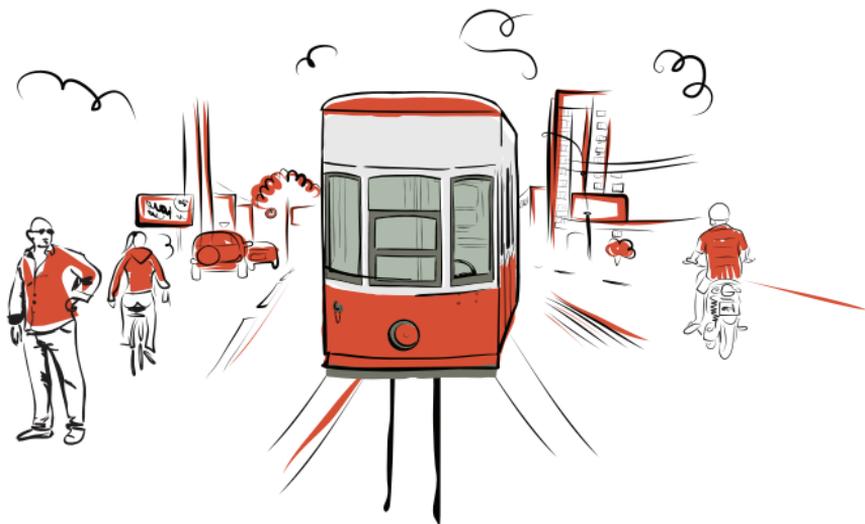
**While the city we need must** recognize local contexts, cultures, and customs, stripped to its barebones, it is founded on two key qualities: the respect of public and private uses of land, and a well-coordinated system of systems. If a city is to function properly, it needs to coordinate

very diverse agendas related land use, energy, water, waste, mobility, health and education, economic development, and the promotion of cultural vitality and social inclusion.

Consider it as a spatial entity: If it occupies its space well, it is livable and sustainable. If it runs rampant over the landscape, it is inefficient and destroys the environment on which it depends. Consider its complex and interlocking systems: engineering arrangements, social and cultural organizations, economic structures and environmental components. If like a tree where different parts work in harmony, they heighten possibilities for prosperity. But if like a machine run amuck, they malfunction and heighten human frailty.

**To make sure we have the city we need in the 21st century, our new urban paradigm will have to be guided** by a set of principles preliminarily articulated in the Manifesto for Cities and further refined here. We will have to translate these principles into policy action areas tailored to local conditions.





## The City We Need: Principles for a New Urban Paradigm

**The city we need is socially inclusive.** It provides spaces for all segments and age groups of the population to partake in social and cultural expressions. It eliminates all physical and spatial forms of segregation and exclusion.

**The city we need is well planned, walkable, and transit-friendly.** Schools are within walking or biking distance from homes. Offices are located no farther than a few transit stops away from homes. Shopping for daily necessities is within walking distance of residential buildings and located near transit stops. Open space for recreation is near schools, work, and home.

**The city we need is a regenerative city.** It is designed to be resilient by being energy efficient, low-carbon, and increasingly reliant on

renewable energy sources. It replenishes the resources it consumes and recycles and reuses waste. It uses water, land, and energy in a coordinated manner and in harmony with its surrounding hinterland in support of urban and peri-urban agriculture.

**The city we need is economically vibrant and inclusive.** It encourages and fosters local economic development from the smallest entrepreneur to the largest corporations. It provides a one-stop-shop for streamlined licensing and other administrative services. It recognizes and protects the specific needs of the informal sector of the economy in its economic development policies and strategies.

**The city we need has a singular identity and sense of place.** It recognizes culture as key to human dignity and to sustainability. It involves cultural actors to unlock the creative potential of all citizens. It strengthens the bonds between city and its surrounding hinterland.

**The city we need is a safe city.** The city is welcoming night and day, inviting all people to use the streets, parks, and transit without fear. Public officials - the police, the fire department, and health, welfare, transit, and environmental services - and neighborhood residents and community groups communicate frequently and speak with one voice.

**The city we need is a healthy city.** The city's parks and gardens are havens of peace and tranquility and harbor local flora and fauna and biodiversity. All public and private entities providing public services (water, waste, energy, transport) work together with the city's residents and have public and environmental health as a common performance indicator.

**The city we need is affordable and equitable.** Land, infrastructure, housing, and basic services are planned with low income groups in mind. Public services are planned together with the communities they serve and consciously include the needs of women, youth, and vulnerable populations.

**The city we need is managed at the metropolitan level.** It coordinates sectoral policies and actions (economy, mobility, biodiversity, energy, water, and waste) within a comprehensive and coherent local framework. Communities and neighborhoods are active participants in metropolitan decision making.

Roles and responsibilities between all stakeholders, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, are clearly defined with resources allocated strategically, justly, and around a common agenda. In sum, the city we need is socially inclusive, well-planned, regenerative and resilient, and prosperous.





## The Policy and Legislative Framework We Need: A Roadmap for a New Urban Paradigm

To achieve the 21st century city we need, we must encourage nations, regions, cities, and the Habitat Partners to work together to craft their respective policy and legislative frameworks that:

- Calls for each nation to adopt its own national urban policy, one that also drives and coordinates regional and local urban policy that embodies the key principles of a new urban paradigm: cities planned to be just and inclusive, resilient and regenerative, and prosperous.
- Asks public and private decision-makers to move from sectoral interventions to those that address the city as whole and are at the scale of the problems. These interventions should:
  - Embrace the compact and mixed-use city.
  - Assert that public space is a highly effective method for improving a city's functioning, identity, and sense of place.

- Places marginalized groups, including women, as primary beneficiaries of the called-for solutions based on the principle of equal rights to the city in terms of access to housing, land, and basic services.
- Assumes that solutions will involve all actors of society - public, private, and non-governmental in a participatory manner.
- Puts democratic and transparent controls on public goods such as the public domain, urban services, and land management.
- Sets regularly reviewed and revised legislated targets and an associated roadmap for cities working in close collaboration with private sector and civil society stakeholders to ensure implementation of policy measures.
- Establishes urban observatories open to the public to monitor and measure progress by mutually agreed to indicators and to inform decision-makers on the state of urban sprawl, urban biodiversity, affordability and access to housing, public services, urban mobility, urban safety, etc.





# WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

Better City, Better Life



## WHAT IS THE WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN?

The World Urban Campaign is the partners' platform preparing for the Habitat III conference. The Campaign acts as a global advocacy and partnership platform to promote dialogue, sharing, and learning about improving our urban future. It is driven by diverse partners including civil society organizations, local authorities, the private sector, research institutions, professionals, academia, parliamentarians, trade unions, youth groups, and the media, and is coordinated by UN-Habitat.

The Campaign works to place the urban agenda at the highest level in development policies. It also helps partners to share best practices and innovative ideas amongst themselves, working together towards a better urban future.

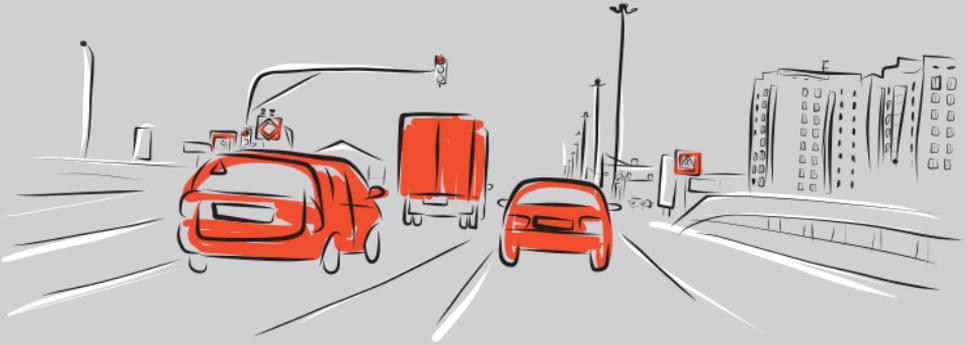


Through the Campaign, partners work to consolidate and articulate a united message for the Habitat III Conference. The Campaign also works with national governments to encourage National Urban Campaigns, through which governments can develop, debate, and articulate their goals going into the Habitat III conference.

**In essence, the World Urban Campaign is a key part of the Habitat III process, as it prepares organizations, cities, and countries to have maximal impact and to generate the best results at Habitat III, which will shape the future of our urban spaces in the 21st century.**

## Joining the World Urban Campaign

The World Urban Campaign welcomes new partners to join the dialogue and to share our commitment for a sustainable and bright urban future. The prevalent model for urbanization generates segregation, poverty, and environmental degradation in most parts of the world. Together, we can challenge this model and generate new solutions.



The Campaign is for organizations, cities, and countries innovating for better urban spaces. Private sector companies and foundations can join both as partners and sponsors, while media and nonprofit organizations can choose the level of commitment they would like to make, joining as either Lead Partners (with a seat on the Steering Committee), or as Associate Partners or Members. Cities can join as City Partners, and countries can join by launching National Urban Campaigns.

If your institution is working towards a better urban future and would like to be part of influencing the New Urban Agenda in 2016, **join the partnership today!** You can learn more about which level of commitment is best for your organization on the World Urban Campaign website: [www.worldurbancampaign.org](http://www.worldurbancampaign.org).



## What is Habitat III?

'Habitat III' is the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. It will be held in 2016, as the first global UN Conference to take place after the establishment of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, or the Sustainable Development Goals. It will be an opportunity to shape the implementation of these new Goals, and to chart new ways forward in response to the challenges of urbanization.

The conference will generate a 'New Urban Agenda' for the 21st century which shall recognize the ever-changing dynamics of human civilization. This 'New Urban Agenda' will focus on policies and strategies that can effectively harness the power and forces behind urbanization to create more sustainable and equitable urban spaces. It will shape the development agenda and impact all urban actors.



As Habitat III shall be a UN conference, the ‘New Urban Agenda’ will be decided by Member States. However, the conference will be unique in that it will bring together a large range of urban actors including local authorities, civil society, the private sector, academic and professional institutions, and all relevant interest groups to review urban and housing policies affecting the future of cities.

As a partners’ advocacy platform for Habitat III, the World Urban Campaign offers non-UN institutions the opportunity to discuss, collaborate, and prepare for the conference, in order to enter with a strong, unified voice. The Campaign is working with these actors to ensure that all voices of society are considered when this vital agenda is decided.

The Campaign is also working with national governments, encouraging them to launch their own National Urban Campaigns, through which they can conduct consultations with civil society and local authorities to establish national positions before Habitat III.

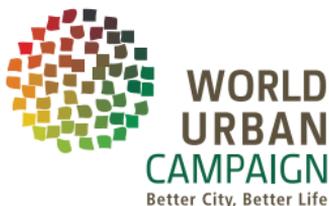


## What is 'I'm a City Changer'?

Although the World Urban Campaign is made up of institutions working to influence policy and create high level solutions, it also advocates for a global movement of positive urban change. Individual and unaffiliated citizens play an instrumental role in transforming our shared urban future.

The World Urban Campaign promotes individual activities at the local level through the 'I'm a City Changer' movement. The 'I'm a City Changer' slogan is meant to inspire these individuals to take ownership of their cities and to launch their own campaigns for change.

As an advocacy campaign, the World Urban Campaign produces resources to help individuals and groups to launch 'City Changer' campaigns in their own communities. It also provides the website *imacitychanger.org* in order to give these individuals an online platform to share their stories and campaigns with the rest of the world, inspiring others around the world to become city changers.



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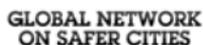
UBM'S future cities

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Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**



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CAMPAIGN**  
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[www.worldurbancampaign.org](http://www.worldurbancampaign.org)



[imacitychanger.org](http://imacitychanger.org)

Contacts:  
World Urban Campaign Secretariat, UN-Habitat  
Email: [wuc@unhabitat.org](mailto:wuc@unhabitat.org)  
Tel: +254 20 762 4576  
[www.worldurbancampaign.org](http://www.worldurbancampaign.org)

Ms. Ana Moreno  
Chief, Advocacy, Outreach, and Communications, UN-Habitat

Ms. Christine Auclair  
Project Leader, World Urban Campaign

Ms. Sarah 'Laney' Stone  
Communications and Partnerships, World Urban Campaign