

MAKING MULTILATERALISM WORK

*Declaration of the Second Global Stakeholder Forum
under the auspices of the Second United Nations Habitat Assembly
June 3-4, 2023*

I. Preamble

- 1) We, the Global Stakeholders, have participated in the Second Global Stakeholder Forum convened by the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) on 3-4 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, prior to the Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UNHA), June 5-9 in Nairobi, to capture diverse perspectives, insights and experiences as key elements of inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism,¹ the theme of the UNHA, within the context of a sustainable urban future to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals in times of global crises.
- 2) We represent diverse voices of self-organised stakeholders drawn from local and regional governments, public sector, business sector, civil society, academia, intergovernmental organisations as articulated in the UNHA’s thematic paper.² We come as members of coalitions and platforms, regional networks, national consortiums, and local and international associations.
- 3) We renew our resolve to fulfil the promise of the *2030 Agenda* and the principles enshrined in it, including to leave no-one behind. We have a particular focus on Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11) – *Make cities and communities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable* and the *New Urban Agenda* (NUA), especially the commitment to its implementation by national governments with important contributions from regional and local governments, civil society and other relevant stakeholders and their legacies established at Habitat III.³
- 4) We reaffirm the findings of the General Assembly’s High-Level Meeting to Assess Progress on the Implementation of the *New Urban Agenda* held 28 April 2022, United Nations Headquarters, New York that the NUA offers a roadmap for accelerating sustainable development, climate action, and building peace, and recognizes the importance of cities and transformative actions for ensuring a more just, sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴

¹ “Inclusive, effective multilateralism is more than merely adding seats around a table. It requires a fundamental transformation towards more distributed, networked decision-making for our collective well-being. It recognizes that in many areas, the future of global governance will not be based on worldwide unity or top-down control, but rather on connectivity across distinct domains, communities, and spheres of influence.” p.13.
https://www.highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/pdf/highleveladvisoryboard_breakthrough_fullreport.pdf

² UN Habitat, *A Sustainable Urban Future through Inclusive and Effective Multilateralism: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Times of Global Crises*, HSP/HA. 2/7 <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/04/2304593e.pdf>

³ “We commit ourselves to working towards an urban paradigm shift for a *New Urban Agenda* that will recognize the leading role of national Governments, as appropriate, in the definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation for sustainable urban development and the equally important contributions of subnational and local governments, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders, in a transparent and accountable manner.” para 15 and “We will build on the legacy of the Habitat III conference and the lessons learned from its preparatory process, including the regional and thematic meetings. We note, in this context, the valuable contributions of, inter alia, the World Urban Campaign, the General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III and the Global Land Tool Network, para 128.

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_256.pdf

⁴ UN Habitat, *High-Level Meeting to Assess the Progress on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda*.

https://www.urbanagendaplatform.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/Final%20HLM%20on%20NUA%20-%20PGA%20Summary_0.pdf

- 5) We welcome the convening of the United Nations President of the General Assembly Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanisation to inform strategy for championing sustainable urbanisation to accelerate pandemic recovery, climate action, and women’s empowerment, and to promote inclusive multilateralism and multistakeholder partnerships.⁵
- 6) We recognize the positive role of the leadership of UN Habitat Executive Director and welcome the thematic paper prepared for the UNHA to articulate the urban dimensions of inclusive and effective multilateralism.⁶
- 7) We recognize the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) assistance in the convening of this Global Stakeholder Forum.
- 8) We welcome the UN Secretary General’s report on *Our Common Agenda* with its recommendations to create a stronger, more networked multilateral system within the United Nations.⁷
- 9) We welcome the Final Report of the UN High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, *A Breakthrough for People and Planet*, whose six transformative shifts stress the importance of rebuilding trust in multilateralism and highlight the importance of broad representation of all spheres of government and civil society.⁸
- 10) As we reaffirm our commitment to networked and inclusive multilateralism anchored in human rights for all, we underline the central role for cities in sustainable development, working in synergistic relationships across the rural-urban continuum. We note that an estimated 65% of SDG targets must be implemented in urban areas with engagement of local and regional governments.⁹ While the SDGs are based on “achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,”¹⁰ women’s rights, gender equality, and women’s empowerment, must be strategically at the centre of the efforts for the implementation of all UN development frameworks.
- 11) We further appreciate the 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report* (GSDR) with its call on national governments “to translate global ambitions into their national, subnational and local contexts.”¹¹ We welcome the draft second 2023 GSDR with its support of multi- stakeholder approaches in policy making.¹² We recall Abu Dhabi Declared Actions (2019) and Katowice Declared Actions (2022) with their commitment to stakeholder engagement in¹³ sustainable urban development.

⁵ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/03/Final-Summary-2nd-AdCom-Meeting-1.pdf>

⁶ <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2023/04/2304593e.pdf>

⁷ He called for “a stronger, more networked and inclusive multilateral system, anchored within the United Nations that urges stronger involvement with relevant stakeholders and notes “calls for an updated resolution defining how organs like the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council relate to civil society, local and regional governments and business actors,” p.4. <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

⁸ See Principle 2 “Representative: legitimacy from meaningful representation and a clear role in decision-making for all stakeholders; and allowing representative majorities to make and implement decisions in the face of minority opposition where necessary to deliver on issues of global concern.” pp.11-14 https://www.highleveladvisoryboard.org/breakthrough/pdf/highleveladvisoryboard_breakthrough_fullreport.pdf

⁹ <https://www.oecd.org/about/impact/achieving-sdgs-in-cities-and-regions.htm>

¹⁰ United Nations, A/RES/70/1, October 2014 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>

¹¹ https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf p.29

¹² The GDSR will be posted on this site upon publication <https://sdgs.un.org/gdsr>

¹³ https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/summary_wuf10_outcomes.pdf; <https://wuf.unhabitat.org/news/declared-actions-eleventh-session-world-urban-forum>

- 12) We look forward to the Summit of the Future in 2024 and its promise to transform approaches to implementing sustainable urbanisation.

II. Stakeholders at UN-Habitat

- 13) In recalling the Declaration of the First Stakeholder Forum the first UNHA, we reiterate our call to the UNHA to strengthen the role of stakeholders in UNHA inter-governmental processes and throughout programs of UN-Habitat by providing policies and adequate financial resources for their meaningful and active representation and participation.¹⁴
- 14) We call for the timely establishment of a UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement and coordination mechanism inspired by similar mechanisms currently operating in other intergovernmental processes that are based on self-organisation, independence, and effective and balanced representation, principles that recognize stakeholder participation as critical to inclusive and effective multilateralism.¹⁵
 - i. We commit to work with the UN Habitat secretariat to develop a proposal outlining an inclusive, representative stakeholder engagement mechanism.

III. Aligning Inclusive and Effective Multilateralism at UN Habitat

- 15) Within the mandate of the UN-Habitat, as custodian of SDG 11 and a focal agency of the NUA, we are determined to make all efforts to contribute to their achievement especially through the five priority areas listed below, but common to all are the enablers referred to later.
 - i. We commit to partner for the development of **universal access to adequate housing** with basic services in well planned neighbourhoods for all.
 - a) We pledge to support the co-creation of people-centred plans, policies, and programs developed through evidence and inclusive participation that ensure security of tenure; basic services and infrastructure; affordability, including access to finance; habitability; accessibility; proximity to employment; and cultural appropriateness – with particular emphasis on informal settlements.
 - ii. We commit to partnering in **urban climate action** and to supporting local and regional environmental sustainability and urban biodiversity.
 - a) We pledge meaningful engagement at UNFCCC COPs and to develop actionable policies and programs such as SURGe, supportive of urban mitigation and adaptation including urban nature-based solutions, compact development, multi

¹⁴https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-07/20190529_new_clean_first_global_stakeholder_declaration_un_habitat_assembly_1.pdf “We advocate that UN-Habitat, UN-Habitat Assembly and governance bodies institutionalize stakeholder partnership within their governance and operational structures and provide a level of support required to facilitate necessary stakeholder partnerships.”

¹⁵ like the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Major Groups and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism, the UN Office on Disaster Risk Reduction Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism, the Observer Constituencies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Marrakech Partnership on Global Climate Action born out of the *Paris Agreement*, and many others. a.... (definition of common agenda / what to do)

modal transport (public transit, walking, cycling), climate resilient infrastructure, and green buildings.

- iii. We commit to partnering in programs and strategies to **strengthen urban crisis recovery**.
 - a) We pledge to support the development of inclusive, bottom-up disaster reduction policies and strategies that address community preparedness and resilience, loss and damage discussions, forced evictions and support of vulnerable populations.
- iv. We commit to continuing the **localization of the SDGs** in alignment with community priorities in partnership with national and subnational development frameworks.
 - a) We pledge to support the work of the Local 2030 Coalition, the elaboration of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), and the mobilisation of local stakeholders for the integration of plans, policies, and programs at the local and subnational scales.
- v. We commit to partnering plans, policies and program that **generate prosperity and local finance**.
 - a) We pledge to support the work of local governments in developing capacity to increase self-generated revenues and attract funding from national and multinational institutions, the private sector, and philanthropy to support the local implementation of the SDGs. Further, we support the efforts of member states to reform the global financial architecture to increase funding for national and subnational governments and private businesses. We resolve to engage with the G7, G20, and other global forums for international economic cooperation to prioritize the issue of local finance for sustainable urbanisation.

IV. Enablers for Inclusive and Effective Multilateralism

- 16) The work of the enablers – data systems and knowledge, advocacy, communication, partnerships, capacity-building and digital transformation presented in the UNHA theme paper will not be achieved without meaningful inclusion and participation of diverse stakeholders at and across all levels.

V. Our Expectations

- 17) We invite Member States to acknowledge the commitment and pledges of stakeholders through this declaration and to support the process mentioned in the above sections.
- 18) Fundamental, transformative, and urgent change at all levels and by all stakeholders is needed to overcome the crises and obstacles facing our world.