

SUMMARY OF HIC KEY PROPOSALS FOR THE PREPARATORY PROCESS OF HABITAT III

July 2014



As a first contribution of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) for the preparatory process of Habitat III, the principal answers to questions submitted by UN-Habitat are outlined below. These questions originated from UN-Habitat to their civil society organized counterparts this past June.

1. What constituency do you represent, or are you most closely associated with?

NGOs, social movements and organizations, professionals and academic associations involved in social production and management of housing, environmental sustainability, and habitat-related human rights and gender issues.

2. What would be most important for your constituency's representation in the Habitat III preparatory process at the local, national and global levels?

1.-The most important prerequisite for our membership is the guarantee of an egalitarian position for all social partners (civil social, urban, and rural organizations) relative to the other participants in the Habitat Agenda definition. This includes:

- Representation and active participation in national committees.
- Equal access to information.
- Incorporation of their concerns and proposals in discussions at the national and international level.

Social processes should be especially empowered at a national level during the preparation of Habitat III.

2.- The activities that we consider priorities at a national level include the planning of workshops and discussions with local people and social organizations-indigenous, rural and urban- and their formal and permanent representation in the National Committee meetings.

3.-The central issues to our membership are:

- Remove focus of Habitat III on solely urban issues by reviving rural-urban continuum that was characterized in the Habitat I Agenda (Vancouver 1976).
- Place human rights and related state obligations at the center of Habitat III.
- Recognize the social production of habitat and housing in its various forms and the need to generate suitable tools (legal, financial, administrative, programmatic and promotion) for each form of production.

4.-The most important material aspects to ensure adequate representation and participation of social actors in the Habitat III process include:

- Means to facilitate appropriate conditions to carry out discussions.
- Accessibility of information.
- Logistical support for their proposals at local, national and international levels during different stages of the Habitat III process.

5.-Regarding strategies:

- Evaluate the implementation of the Habitat II Agenda in its entirety.
- Return to it to generate proposals towards Habitat III, taking into account the obligations of international human rights treaties and other instruments and rules on the subject.
- Destigmatize and support the recognition and implementation of the social production of habitat as a strategic component of urban development and housing policies.

6.-The most important forms of representation that require our membership are:

- Democratic participation in the deliberations.
- Transparency and exchange of knowledge, information, and technology .
- Collection and circulation of proposals.

The representation must also:

- Reflect gender diversity.
- Facilitate participation of the different age groups.
- Include indigenous people, as well as people with disabilities and/or special needs.

3.What is most important for your constituency in influencing the formulation of a New Urban Agenda?

- Commit to Habitat Agenda, which is not limited to urban issues.
- Consideration of urbanization as inevitable is ideological and prevents addressing habitat in its complex entirety.
- Habitat III should address rural-urban continuum.

Important values

- Urban and rural habitat should be spaces of inclusion and social justice.
- The social function of habitat, city, and property must be emphasized.
- The new Habitat Agenda should prevent spatial segregation and create more non-discriminatory public spaces for social use.
- The need to promote sustainability through measures that promote responsible production and consumption and avoid distortions of the "green economy". These often turn nature into commodity that is subject to speculation and rivalry.
- The process and agenda that arises from Habitat III should put at its center standards and international obligations on human rights, including new rights such as the right to the city, land, high-quality public transport, and energy.
- The need to recognize and promote measures and instruments of protection and compensation in case of human rights-related habitat violations.
- Habitat III must recognize that growth on its own does not guarantee equity. Responsible investment should be encouraged to generate quality employment and social protection, especially for young people and other groups who are suffering from marginalization and vulnerable conditions.
- The need to create participatory spaces and public-social partnerships that effectively impact planning, budgeting, production, rural and urban habitat management and social control of public life.
- Habitat III processes shall not reduce the resiliency concept to cities, but focus on the human dimension in the rural-urban continuum, seeing as the right to habitat does not end at the edges of cities.

4.What would be the greatest asset that your organization or constituency would draw on in defining a New Urban Agenda?

Our organization maintains and supports participatory social processes, which are critical in defining the new Habitat Agenda, which includes:

- The experiences social actors face, despite promises of Habitat II, such as conflicting reactions, lack of support, and even criminalization of their initiatives and projects.
- Innovations generated by large-scale production from popular sectors provide alternative lessons that should be considered, as well as undeveloped partnership opportunities.

For more information visit our website www.hic-net.org or e-mail us at gs@hic-net.org