



Informal intergovernmental hearings

Habitat III

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Statement by Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Vice-President ISOCARP and

General Assembly of Partners towards Habitat III (GAP)

Thank you, madam co-facilitator, for giving us this extraordinary opportunity to engage with the process of development of this historic Agenda. I add my voice to congratulate the co-chairs and members of the Bureau, the Secretariat of the Conference, member states and the co-facilitators in developing this Zero Draft. I will try not to repeat what has already been said by my colleagues here in the stakeholder benches other than fully align with their statements. The points I'm about to make were underlined during two days of informal hearings with stakeholders, held earlier this week. Complete statements and recommendations on different paragraphs are available on the *papersmart* portal.

The Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda has been universally lauded by stakeholders as an excellent start, a stimulating document containing all the key ideas. The vision on "leaving no one behind" is a particularly inspiring one that resonates with all stakeholder groups. Having said that, we believe that **our aspirations could be higher, our vision statements bolder, our transformative commitments stronger**. These messages also need to be **clearer and simpler** in order to appeal to the hearts and minds of people, whose lives will ultimately be touched by the New Urban Agenda.

We also believe that the New Urban Agenda should be closely aligned with other development agendas, including the Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework and others, but **it must have its own integrity**. It should form the basis of a **new social contract** between national governments, local authorities and stakeholders towards shaping our common urban future. For this, these groups need to be truly empowered and seen as partners and drivers, not simply executors or beneficiaries of development. This is a central element of the paradigm shift that the New Urban Agenda hopes to achieve.

Further, we welcome the centrality of housing, land, planning, the informal economy, gender equity, decent work and rural-urban linkages in the NUA. We also support the call for establishing a robust follow-up and review mechanism within the New Urban Agenda, one that institutionalizes multi-stakeholder engagement, as proposed in **Para 171**. Periodic national reporting on the New Urban Agenda as mentioned in **Para 168** must be done in partnership with stakeholders, using appropriate top-down and bottom-up data, quantitative and qualitative evidence. This merits a stronger mention under **Para 161-163** on data collection and analysis. Global stakeholder platforms such as the World Urban Forum must be strengthened (**again as in Para 168**) and integrated into any follow-up and review mechanisms that may be established.

Excellencies, allow me to conclude with an appeal.

The UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development is a once-in-twenty-years opportunity. While building on agreed concepts and language, we urge you to seize this historic moment to push the discourse forward. We urge you to not shy away from establishing precedence. We urge you to recognize and build on the success of a multi-stakeholder platform such as the General Assembly of Partners, which has emerged and evolved during the Habitat III preparatory process. Specific language on stakeholder engagement and partnership can be found in the GAP document under the post-Habitat3 architecture where we propose five specific partnership modalities. We urge you to give these proposals serious consideration and set historic examples. The world is not the same place as it was twenty years ago. New challenges have emerged, but so have new ideas, new approaches, new solutions. Let us embrace them, for a brighter, more sustainable urban future.