

**ISOCARP Statement for Habitat III Asia Pacific Regional Meeting
22 October 2015, Jakarta**

*Delivered by Dr. Shipra Narang Suri, Vice President ISOCARP and
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Excellencies:

The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), which also co-leads the World Urban Campaign and the General Assembly of Partners towards Habitat III, would like to express its appreciation towards the Govt of Indonesia and the Habitat III secretariat for a successful hosting of this first regional meeting towards H-III.

It is indeed appropriate that we start this regional consultative process in Asia and the Pacific, a region which uniquely combines a very wide diversity in urbanization, growth and development, and of course society, culture and heritage. From very small island states with less than 20% urbanization, to others which are highly developed and nearly 95% urban, the regions urban problems are also wide-ranging. They include issues of poverty and informality; vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters and the impacts of climate change; insecurity, fragility and conflict; unplanned urban expansion; shrinking cities; shrinking, inaccessible and unsafe public spaces; challenges of resolution of customary and formal land rights, land management and governance; the marginalization and indeed exclusion of women as well as children and youth from development processes and their outcomes, which prevents them from reaping the full benefits of urbanisation.

Many of these issues were discussed at length at the 6th Asia Pacific Urban Forum, which concluded yesterday with the participation of 1000 stakeholders from across the region, as well as the youth forum which preceded it. I would like to urge you to particularly take note of the APUF Jakarta Call for Action in your deliberations and the final outcome of this Meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to highlight two governance challenges that cut across these themes, and are common to most countries of the region. First, the limitations of local authorities, despite being the level of government closest to people, due to inadequate human, financial and institutional resources and capacities; and second, the weak and outdated urban and spatial planning systems, including planning legislation, policy, process and capacity, as well as their tenuous link with wider national development planning.

ISOCARP would like to emphasise the importance of transformation of planning in countries across the Asia and Pacific, calling upon national governments to develop progressive national urban policy frameworks, underpinned by universal values, for instance those articulated in the recently adopted International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, which we as ISOCARP have supported and championed. At the same time, local authorities

and civil society organisations should form effective multi-stakeholder planning agreements, which include implementation, monitoring and review, for achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development. Planning is one of the SDG11 indicators, and will indeed be central to realizing the SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

While there are many best practices in this region, we would like to stress upon the need for systemic change, including legislative and policy reform, an improved horizontal and vertical coordination, a genuine commitment to partnership, and the courage to collectively address seemingly intractable issues such as land, climate change and humanitarian crises, which have a significant impact on our urban reality and our urban future. These priorities must find a place in the New Urban Agenda and its implementation.

ISOCARP, which represents the voice of planning professionals worldwide, stands committed and ready to support and facilitate this process, not only in Asia-Pacific, but also globally.

I thank you for your attention.