

## Discussion topics for the five high-level plenary sessions

### Habitat III Regional Meeting “European Habitat” in Prague

The proposed topics for the high-level plenary discussions are based on the thematic matrix of the New Urban Agenda that has been guiding the Habitat III Preparatory process.

The New Urban Agenda will be the outcome document of the Habitat III conference to be adopted in Quito, Ecuador, in October, 2016. It will guide the implementation policies and initiatives around housing and sustainable urban development of a wide range of actors — United Nations member states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, United Nations programmes and civil society — for the next 20 years. The zero draft of the New Urban Agenda will be unveiled by May 2016.

At technical level, the preparatory process started by the elaboration of 22 Issue papers by the United Nations Task Team on Habitat III. They are stocktaking documents that address one or more research areas, highlight general findings and identify research needs on topics related to housing and sustainable urban development. Issue papers are available in English, French, Russian and Czech.

Topics for the five high-level panel discussions as well as discussion questions are based on of these Issue papers, which provide in depth reviews and analyses of specific issues relevant to the discussions during the event.

More information at: [www.habitat3.org](http://www.habitat3.org) or [www.europenahabitat.com](http://www.europenahabitat.com)

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### Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March


14:00-15:30 Plenary and High-level Discussions I

#### Panel discussion on Urban Governance

##### Discussed topics:

- ❖ legislation and rules
- ❖ spatial and integrated planning and design
- ❖ land policy
- ❖ public spaces

##### Discussion questions:

- Which role should Urban Governance play in the New Urban Agenda?
  - How can national governments empower strong, capable, accountable local governments to strengthen urban governance? What are the key prerequisites for adequate organizational and institutional structures, effective financing systems and procedures?
  - How can national governments support strategic participatory urban planning?
  - Which steps help create collaborative relations between different levels of government, based on the principle of subsidiarity?
  - How to enhance policies to support broader partnerships in local governance, including public goods, private sector and local communities?
  - Can use of smart technologies support for local planning and monitoring of urban development? Can it encourage citizen participation and accountability? Are there any examples of such arrangements?
  - How to engage diverse segments of the population, particularly the poor, women, youth and marginalized groups in urban and territorial planning?
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- How to deal with metropolitan areas, where fragmentation of services can create missed opportunities for service provision efficiencies? How to support for spill-overs across jurisdictional boundaries?
- Is concept of Smart Cities able to deliver economic and social change? What is further potential of this concept and how could it be effectively implemented?

#### 16:30-17:30 Plenary and High-level Discussions II

##### **Panel discussion on Urban Economy and Development, and Creation of Jobs**

###### **Discussed topics:**

- ❖ local economy and finance
- ❖ public - private partnership
- ❖ jobs and livelihoods

###### **Discussion questions:**

- How to expanding endogenous urban resources? Which incentives can help increase the local resource base and improve efficiency in the use of these resources?
- Is enabling local government to access the capital markets and to leverage its funds with private sector resources a realistic way? Are there good examples of such an approach?
- How to ensure quality data that can improve understanding of the causes and local variation of negative externalities accompanying rapid urbanization and economic growth (e.g. poverty, rising land prices, environmental degradation, etc.)?
- Which instruments can enhance economic development while supporting a high quality of life in cities?
- How to create enabling environment for urban job creation in cities? What types of investment e.g. in education and skills can support job creation?
- How integrating work and residence; while reducing transport costs facilitate job creation? Are data or comparative analyses available relating this approach?
- How to support investing in labour intensive and growth industries including housing and infrastructure and thus promote business environment that encourages investment, entrepreneurship and innovation?

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#### **Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March**

#### 11:00-12:30 Plenary and High-level Discussions III

##### **Panel discussion on Urban Housing and Public services**

- ❖ Video Message by the UN Special Rapporteur on Affordable Housing

###### **Discussed topics:**

- ❖ security of tenure
- ❖ housing availability and affordability
- ❖ specific housing needs
- ❖ public services and infrastructure
- ❖ informal settlements
- ❖ transport and mobility

###### **Discussion questions:**

- What are the roles of national and local governments in housing policies?
- How to effectively respond to housing needs, especially of the most poor and vulnerable? Is there a risk of disturbing of housing markets?



- What tools help ensure security of tenure and secure of lease? Which prerequisites depend on national government level decisions?
- Can public sector encourage pro-poor performance of the markets? If so, through what instruments?
- How to encourage innovative and more inclusive housing finance systems? What alternative financial institutions for low-cost housing can be used?
- What is experience with new approaches to tenure, collateralization and guarantee mechanisms, housing microfinance or community finance?
- Can applying of technological innovation be a critical driver for action in the water or energy systems, recycling of waste, and other public services?
- What policy, planning, financing and regulations can strengthen the capacity of urban areas to improve the lives of slum and informal settlement dwellers? How to integrate people and systems?
- How to effectively support access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons?
- Can promoting of mixed-land use planning and more compact cities help shorten trip-lengths and reduce transport activity in cities?
- What is the role of ICT in urban transport improvement? How can innovative approaches help public urban transport? What potential is in PPP projects?

#### 14:00-15:30 Plenary and High-level Discussions IV

#### **Panel discussion on Social Cohesion and Equity**

##### **Discussed topics:**

- ❖ inclusive cities – ageing population, gender, youth
- ❖ socio-economic equity
- ❖ migration and refugees in urban areas
- ❖ culture and heritage

##### **Discussion questions:**

- Can innovative spatial planning establish a link between land use and accessibility, eliminate or reduce the imbalances between residential and working? Can it reduce the gap between slums and consolidated neighbourhoods?
- How to facilitate access to the areas in which job opportunities, equipment and public services are located, thereby limiting territorial inequality?
- What is your understanding of the term “inclusive urbanization?”
- How to perform urban planning and design for social integration?
- By what steps can national government ensure framework for social and territorial cohesion and safety for all?
- Can innovative financing for building safety enhance slum upgrading? What proactive social and cultural investments using the notion of social urbanism can help in crime prevention?
- How to promote a more balanced approach to the perception of migrants?
- What are the paths to citizen empowerment and participation? How to effectively support genuine participation from communities and other stakeholders, including the private sector for developing and implementing effective and inclusive policies and laws to enhance safety and security in cities?
- How to prepare and implement urban crime prevention and safety policies and programmes in which communities are consulted and interventions are based on evidence and tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of key populations?
- Can urban regeneration be stimulated through cultural and creative industries, events and institutions? If so, what steps are expected from national and local governments?

- How to foster social inclusion and enable urban livelihoods at neighbourhood level? How to ensure an inclusive urban agenda for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities? How to support for urban design working with communities, creating rich, vibrant public spaces?

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## Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March

09:00-10:30 Plenary and High-level Discussions V

### Panel discussion on Urban Environment and Resilience

#### Discussed topics:

- ❖ healthy and resilient cities
- ❖ energy efficiency
- ❖ climate neutrality
- ❖ ecosystems and resource management
- ❖ disaster risk management

#### Discussion questions:

- How to substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement?.
- How to enhance holistic disaster risk management at all levels? How to leverage city planning instruments to reduce existing risk and prevent creation of new risks and at the same time prepare for climate and disaster risks?
- How to develop mechanisms to allow for the monitoring, assessment, and reporting on the progress towards building urban resilience?
- What is experience with the concept of “climate neutrality” in cities?
- How to effectively enhance investing in “green infrastructure” - parks, greening of pedestrian corridors, conscious planting of trees - as one of the ways to embrace an ecosystems approach in city management?
- What steps should do national and local governments to support energy efficiency targeted solutions in buildings (isolation), services (waste, water & lighting) and electricity?
- What measures can reduce significantly energy consumption in existing residential buildings?
- Which systematic efforts can help analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, prevent vulnerability of people and property, and improve preparedness for adverse events?



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