ICOMOS Comments on the
Position Paper of the Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group
High Level Political Forum 2018

Summary

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To achieve SDG7 and ensure sustainable energy for all, we call for inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaborations in designing and delivering sustainable energy solutions that protect the environment, cultural heritage and human rights. This includes upscaling investment in renewable energy, through innovative and culturally sensitive approaches to reach energy-poor communities through end-user-oriented energy services harnessing the potential of embodied energy, which are truly affordable, reliable, safe, and sustainable.

Recognizing the right of humanity to safe, decent, culturally adequate and resilient living environments, we call for the implementation of SDG11 through inclusive approaches that bring together local, national, and international actors, including women and marginalized groups, in urban planning, expansion of technologies, and disaster risk management. Gender- and disability- sensitive and participatory budgeting and planning are key in urban planning and integrated territorial governance.

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Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SDG11, in focusing on homes, communities and cultures, is wide-ranging and therefore challenging to achieve. Success will require progress on the 2030 Agenda and other intergovernmental initiatives such as the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The transformation of damaging environmental trends presents major challenges but also great opportunities for cities to enhance sustainability through their properties of scale, integrated spatial planning, connected infrastructure, existing cultural and natural resources and organizational and social dynamics. Cities can directly improve the quality of life of their residents, while offering smarter alternatives for energy, transportation, food systems, and building standards, all of which affect large populations. Every proposal for development or change in human settlements should be preceded by a holistic assessment of the physical and cultural values of what already exists, so that the valuable is preserved and the less valuable is replaced with something of more lasting value.

Decent housing must be a right before it is an investment good. Skyrocketing rents, lack of security, poor quality housing and homelessness create misery and division. Coordinated, people-focused solutions are needed; slum clearances for example must guarantee that those rehoused have better lives. The cultural heritage of historic city centers, as well as the broader realm of tangible and intangible cultural and natural resources inherent in urban and rural landscapes, have enormous importance the wellbeing of their inhabitants,[21] and must be protected from inappropriate new constructions and profit- driven investor projects and harnessed for urban regeneration that enhances sense of place, social cohesion and resilience.

Government must be integrated and accountable at all levels, including empowering local councils to mobilize resources and take coherent action. Cities are dependent upon peri- urban and rural ecosystem

functions (clean water, soil, biodiversity and agrobiodiversity). Strengthening urban- rural linkages and integrated territorial governance is critical for urban sustainability and resilience. Spatial flows of people, food, fiber, water, and other vital services for cities of all scales must be more equitably and inclusively managed. The globalization of markets and methods of production causes shifts in population between regions and towns, especially large cities. Changes in political governance and in business practices require new strategies and new conditions in towns and urban areas. These are also necessary to counteract segregation and social rootlessness as parts of attempts to reinforce identity. Open government principles should be adopted at all levels, and regular, open, multi- stakeholder engagement platforms established. The Habitat III process along with the biannual World Urban Forum provides a valuable model, as thousands of civil society groups participated in developing the New Urban Agenda, the "operating manual" for SDG11.

For everyone to benefit from economic and social opportunities in their communities, universal access to information is required. Education and training, notably in the skills needed for the jobs of the future, is a priority. Equal access to technology must be ensured, particularly targeting populations living in poverty. Connecting diverse perspectives through effective stakeholder engagement ensures that citizens have a say in the development of policies that impact their lives. For example, ATD Fourth World's Street Libraries create a space of peace in neighborhoods that often face poverty and isolation, and opening minds beyond the challenges young people encounter.

Resilience is not a choice, it is an imperative. Because of climate change, more and more communities are at risk of disasters. Nature- based solutions to the challenges of urban wellbeing that draw on indigenous, traditional knowledge and culturally relevant practices enable safe and resilient human settlements. Effective disaster early- warning systems will help, as can comprehensive, partnership- based, community- focused risk management strategies integrating (local) economic, social, environmental and cultural concerns for physical and psychosocial resilience. Furthermore, the needs of women, children, families, older persons, people with disabilities, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, LGBTQIA people, and other marginalized groups must be at the forefront of planning.

A lack of disaggregated data and analysis risks is making many groups and concerns invisible in policy- making, so governments should invest in analysis based on wider stakeholder consultation to ensure informed and relevant data collection, policy- making and citizen- action.[22] A focus purely on the over- 50s, for example, masks major differences between sub- groups according to age. The Canadian Cities Indicator Portal provides a model of how city governments worldwide can help track progress, and through GIS, residents can engage in local data gathering. Another example is the insufficient metric of monetary expenditure, such as proposed for cultural and natural heritage safeguarding (Indicator 11.4.1), which measures inputs rather than outputs and should therefore be augmented with other indicators such as number and land area of protected sites, level of access and participation to, and generated employment and income from heritage.

No one should feel unsafe, insecure, or unwelcome in their community. By incorporating universal design principles into planning, governments can ensure everyone can travel, work and live without fear or undue difficulty, such as disruptions caused by disasters. Gender- and disability- sensitive and participatory budgeting and planning are key. We recommend city- level adoption of CEDAW and the WHO Age- Friendly Cities initiative.[23] Actors at all levels must also tackle disaster risks, as well as air and water pollution through regulation, enforcement and improved planning.

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