Global Platform for the Right to the City
Plataforma Global por el Derecho a la Ciudad
Plataforma Global pelo Direito à Cidade

HABITAT III

Policy Papers Frameworks

Review and Comments

February 2016

2.- SOCIO-CULTURAL URBAN FRAMEWORK

Overview

1**.** The paper includes several mentions to social **inclusion**, **inclusivity, inclusive cities**; as well as to the need to enhance and develop participation mechanisms that do not exclude socially disadvantaged: "participation and social innovation in planning, implementation and evaluation" (p.6); "mobilization of excluded groups" (p.6). However, there is still work to do to strengthen that **participation should not be reduced to "consultation"** but should include mechanisms for deliberative democracy so that participation of the urban poor and other marginalized groups can be translated in effective policies. The **role of civil society** should be acknowledged within the "renewed governance system" proposed. **Cultural actors** should play an active role in local and national strategies for sustainable cities.

2. We strongly recommend to adopt a **human rights and democratic governance approach**, in particular the right to the city approach, understood as the **right to habitat** that facilitates a network of social relations, the right to social cohesion and he collective construction of the city, the right to live with dignity in the city, the right to co-existence, the right to influence and participate in the municipal government's decision making processes and the right to equal rights. All the related commitments included in the Vancouver Action Plan (1976) and the Habitat Agenda (1996) should be taken into account.

3. At the same time, the **human being should be at the core of development**, as an active participant and beneficiary of the right to development. To promote social justice, the **inclusion of disadvantaged groups**, with special mention to the needs and priorities of women, children, youth, minorities, people with disabilities, aged persons and persons living in poverty and exclusion.

4. The Paper recognizes the need for comprehensively integrate culture in sustainable urban development in light of its economic, social and environmental contribution, but it should be more ambitious and pledge to recognize culture as the **fourth pillar of sustainable development**. Globally, several civil society organizations have actively advocated integrating culture within the **SDGs** through a campaign and the elaboration of three key documents. This work is worth being used in the definition of the **New Urban Agenda**: this should clearly provide (by specifying the key issues, main actors, processes and resources) a culture-based approach to local sustainable development.

5. Although there are mentions about **the role of local government** and also on national government´s role there is still work to be done regarding the specific roles of different spheres of government. As suggested in the GPR2C´s document the concept of **"spheres of government"** offers an alternative to deal with the hierarchy of different levels of government which is not still very clear in the current draft of PU 2 policy framework. The **Agenda 21 for Culture**, and its Culture 21 Actions framework, show how local culture can be harnessed for sustainable development and mobilize citizens to collaborate towards development in a way that works for them.

6. A balance should be sought between the efforts to strengthen the **heritage-urbanregeneration-tourism nexus** and other strategies on culture and sustainable development that include: the availability of **cultural infrastructures** (museums, art schools, etc.); the **culture-education link** and how the latter should recognize cultural diversity, integrate artistic and cultural education and ultimately contribute to the 21 st century of literacy; the **culture-health-wellbeing link** and how health and welfare policies should be responsive to cultural diversity and benefit active cultural participation; and the **culture-technology-knowledge link** and how cultural participation may enhance individual and collective knowledge, and cultural policies should be concerned with the access to digital tools and opportunities.

Challenges

7. Some important issues that need to be included/further developed:

- Build a city where youth, children and women could have a full and decent life.
- Pay special attention to root causes of habitat problems: exclusion, inequity, gentrification, evictions, homelessness, insecurity of tenure and segregation.
- Work on the concept of "solidarity" to face racism and inequalities.
- Ensure the right to development, to participate, contribute and enjoy economic, social and cultural development in which all human rights can be fully realized.
- Ensure the social function of -and human right to- land and property as a policy principle, with the collective good prevailing over individual property rights, including a socially just and environmentally sustainable use of urban space.
- Ensure access to open, free, public community infrastructures and facilities so that social movements and civil society organisations are able to develop their activities and promote cultural and social events.

Priorities

8. Urban renewal and development projects, as well as planning and law, should pay special attention to the needs of people with disabilities and aged people, securing their social integration and taking into account their capacities in order to provide them with a better living environment.

9. When referring to increasing culture-led competitiveness of cities, it's essential to explore how cultural activities and infrastructure can contribute to local economic development and, thus, change the **culture-economy link** presented in the Paper that calls for investments on cultural infrastructure and industries, capacity-building programs and new technologies. In this regard, it's imperative to stress that culture can be a channel to develop **solidarity and cooperation** in cities, and that **synergies** and partnerships need to be prioritized over competition.

10. When referring to the availability of cultural infrastructures, the paper should refer to **accessible and affordable infrastructures**.

11. **Culture is a tool** to build a new utopia and imagine new horizons. We need to recognize, protect and promote cultural specificities and diversity in order to **avoid cultural standardization.**

12. The effective **participation of youth, in political, economic and social life;** develop and enhance effective skills and provide education and training to prepare youth for current and future decision-making roles and sustainable livelihoods in human settlements management and development; development and support of strategies and mechanisms that encourage open and inclusive dialogue with special attention to youth needs and priorities.

13. Ensure that, in practice, men and women **enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights on a basis of equality**. Promote equal representation of men and women in public offices and decision making bodies; promote equal participation of men and women in development planning, decision making and in the benefits of development and all programs related to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

14. Add **bad effects of massive tourism** in some cities (prices, gentrification, policies for tourists instead for inhabitants, loss of local culture...).

15. Include the **affordability of public transport**.

16. Regarding safety, put into **debate the role of the police and security** forces.

17. Regarding the participation and engagement of civil society in policies, **try to foster bottom-up participation instead of top-down proposals**. Promote spaces of participation and respect and support spaces already created.