



January 2, 2014

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Yokohama

\*Steering Committee city

Ambassadors Csaba Kőrösi and Macharia Kamau  
Co-chairs, United Nations  
Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals  
New York

Dear Ambassadors Kőrösi and Kamau,

As the new chair of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group – and the first C40 chair from a city in the global south – I am writing to express my support for the concept of a specific urban goal among the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

I commend your admirable leadership of the UN Open Working Group (OWG) in consulting widely on what the SDGs should include. I note also that the OWG has already recognized the importance of cities, metropolitan regions and their linked rural areas in implementing sustainable development. But, as a global mayor, and one whose city will forever be linked to the global sustainable development agenda, I cannot stress enough the fact that without an urban goal the SDGs will be incomplete.

Cities are, of course, integral parts of their nations; and cities therefore share many of the same needs as non-urban areas, for education, health, and similar human needs. But the concentration of people in a small area gives the challenges of sustainable urbanism special, and critical, needs that must be acknowledged in the SDGs. A city cannot promote equality, opportunity, or economic growth effectively without sound urban planning; cities are inherently more infrastructure-intensive than rural and suburban areas; and issues of solid waste, water supply, transport and public health must be managed differently when population densities grow to the levels found in Rio, Nairobi, New York, or Tokyo. Further, the simple concentration of activity requires greater integration among solutions to these challenges than is acceptable where space is less constrained. This is why national programs can and must include urban areas, but there is no question that many urban issues require special attention.

An urban SDG would help concentrate the world's attention on these unique issues. It would help concentrate and coordinate the efforts of organizations such as the multilateral development banks to work with cities. And, because poverty in the world's richest countries often

concentrates in their inner cities, it would help reinforce the concept of the SDGs as a global agenda rather than just a “developing world” agenda.

As you may know, I will be meeting with the other mayors of the C40 cities in Johannesburg on February 4-6, 2014, and our organization may take a formal position on this question at that meeting. Until then, however, please know that I would very much appreciate your efforts to lead the OWG towards the adoption of a specific urban goal in the new SDGs.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eduardo Paes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eduardo Paes  
Mayor of Rio de Janeiro,  
Chair, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group