

WILLIAM COBBETT  
Director

Brussels 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2014

**Ambassadors Csaba Kőrösi and Macharia Kamau**  
**Co-Chairs**  
**UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**  
**United Nations**  
**New York.**

Dear Ambassadors,

As Director of the Cities Alliance secretariat, I would first and foremost like to express our thanks and appreciation for the inclusive manner in which you have undertaken the consultations towards the elaboration of a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The purpose of this letter is to add our strong support to the many calls for a specific urban goal within the SDGs. We believe that an objective examination of development challenges will reinforce the need for a stand-alone SDG. We further believe that such a goal should broadly focus on meeting the challenge of inclusive, productive and resilient cities.

Let me try to summarise a complex issue into the following essential points:

Through the process of urbanisation, an ever-increasing majority of the world's population will be located in cities, of all sizes. The proper management of cities demands policies and simultaneous action across multiple sectors, from water and sanitation, through health and education, to governance and accountability. Those national and local governments that have acted to maximise the many benefits that can accrue from urbanisation have shown the most rapid progress both in promoting growth, and in reducing poverty.

History has shown that cities have a proven track record as extremely effective vehicles for reducing poverty over the long term – not just in urban areas, but also in rural areas. In our view, a SDG on Sustainable Cities would transcend not only the urban/rural dichotomy, but **also globalise the issues for all cities.**

It is worth recording that it was the Cities Alliance's own internal target – **for significant improvements in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers** – that was incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the first time that urban development in general, and the plight of slum dwellers in particular, had received international recognition. The Cities Alliance is now constituted as a global partnership promoting the role of cities in sustainable development.

We believe that the international community now needs a far more comprehensive and ambitious goal. A Sustainable Development Goal would necessarily empower a whole new range of local actors, create opportunities for ordinary citizens and stimulate inclusive policies.

In conclusion, let me assure you of the very enthusiastic support that such a goal would generate, not only amongst our own global partners, but amongst a truly significant and diverse range of actors.

Excellencies, please accept the renewed assurances of our highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Cobbett', with a period at the end.

**William Cobbett**  
**Director**