July 14, 2014

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

Your Excellencies,

As members of the *Campaign for an #urbanSDG*, we would like to congratulate you on the Open Working Group Draft Goals, circulated on July 2, 2014. The inclusion of Goal 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements marks a great step forward in the post-2015 process.

As previously communicated, we strongly believe that an urban goal focused on sustainability, inclusivity and resilience has the potential to transform the way we pursue development. The majority of the world's population lives cities and increasingly urbanized human settlements.

If we get urban and regional development right we will reduce both urban and rural poverty; create more jobs and offer better livelihoods; improve economic development and social inclusion; promote the decoupling of economic growth from resource use; protect local and regional ecosystems; reduce pollution; implement resilience and improve governance through local and regional governments.

If the sustainable cities and human settlements goal is retained in the final set of SDGs, it will help to mobilize a broad range of actors: cities and citizens; mayors; local, regional and national governments - in support of an integral and operationalisable vision of sustainable development. Such an approach has the potential to make history.

As you work to finalize the OWG's Goals and Targets we wish to provide some helpful recommendations. Many groups will look to ensure that their interest issue is preserved, but we understand the importance of consolidation. Having a concise set of goals and targets is crucial for political-support and public engagement. As such, we would like to propose three simple adjustments to Goal 11 in order to streamline its presentation.

First, to avoid promoting eviction policies, you may reconsider in target 11.1 the use of the word "eliminate" slums or, as an alternative, mention the participation of slum dwellers in the implementation of slum policies. We would propose the following wording: "*By 2030, ensure universal access to adequate and affordable housing and basic services for all, eliminate slums and upgrade informal settlements by working with inhabitants"*

Second, you may wish to consider merging 11.4 (on natural disasters) with 11.3 (integrated and sustainable human settlement planning), and make 11.4 an indicator under 11.3, since disaster risk reduction is a core part of effective urban and settlement planning. You may consider including a reference to strengthening the participation of local stakeholders in the planning process to enhance local ownership. The target would then read as follows: "*enhance capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management for all, improving urban resilience and reducing urban sprawl"*

Third, you may wish to consider merging 11.2 (on transport) and 11.5 (on public spaces) as follows: *"Provide universal access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport and public spaces*."

We appreciate your efforts to streamline the means of implementation, by placing sector-specific items under each goal, but we are concerned that such an approach results in repetition; for example, research and development is now handled in three separate places across your proposed framework. We suggest you return to the previous conceptualization, whereby means of implementation are tackled under Goal 17 that should also place emphasis on the role of local and regional governments in implementation including financing at sub-national level. To streamline the MoIs relating to cities and human settlements you may wish to consider making 11.b (on integrated policies and plans) an indicator under 11.3. We welcome target 11 and in order to stress the importance of improved local governance we would like to suggest adding in 16.4 a reference to the subsidiarity principle, which would stimulate participation.

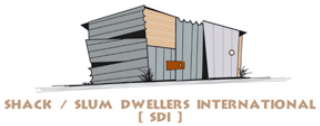
We hope that these suggestions prove useful in your final deliberations.

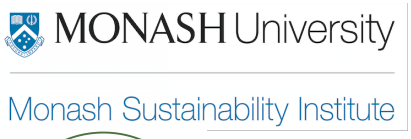
Once again, we congratulate you on your bold leadership of the Open Working Group and commend the prominent attention given to urban affairs.

With assurances of our highest esteem,

Members of the Campaign for an #urbanSDG
http://urbansdg.org/

Signatories:





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