

CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE FORM THE  
FOUNDATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA:  
a position paper

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## 1. Capacity building in the international agendas

The capacity of institutions and individuals is central for the success of any transformative policy. Strengthening the institutional capacity of national and local governments was considered essential for the achievement of the commitments and actions towards sustainable cities that were outlined in the Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda<sup>2</sup> and the Third United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio+20 Conference, expressed in the document ‘The Future We Want’<sup>3</sup>. According to OECD, capacity development is a fundamental component of development and aid effectiveness and a key element in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>4</sup>

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Bogota Declaration on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development (2010) had already recognized that ‘the capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives’<sup>5</sup>. In fact **capacity building is regarded as one of the five distinctive features of south-south cooperation**<sup>6</sup>, strengthening south-south learning in all phases of development through sharing of experiences, knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

The recognition of knowledge exchange and the interchange of best practices as a way to absorb lessons learned in the advance of policies is a major breakthrough in the capacity development agenda. Much of the innovations in cities and local governments can be accredited to the increasing accessibility to knowledge and information, dissemination of best practices and multiple forms of exchange of experiences and local capacity development. Innovations and urban solutions are also drawn from different forms of endogenous capacity building processes led by external providers of training, education and capacity building services.

The commitments on capacity building and institutional development spelled out in the Habitat Agenda (1996), specifically its paragraphs 177 to 193, reassured that governments would adopt capacity building strategies at national and local levels to create the basic conditions to foster broad-based civic participation in human settlements development, improve land delivery for housing and sustainable urban development and improve the liveability and sustainability of the built environment<sup>7</sup>. Capacity building was indeed one of the five pillars of the Habitat Agenda adopted at the Habitat II Conference in 1996.

**Emphasis on capacity building is not new.** The outcomes of both Habitat I and Habitat II conferences, the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements, stressed the importance of capacity building. In particular, the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements of 1976 stated in recommendation F.7 that “in most countries, the lack of adequate knowledge, skills and progressive resources is a serious constraint on the implementation of human settlement policies and programmes”. Furthermore, the Vancouver Declaration recommended that “the development of research capabilities, and the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and information on human settlements should receive a high priority as an integral part of the settlement process”.

The Habitat Agenda adopted by the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul (1996) further emphasized the importance of capacity building. Section D of the Global Plan of Action of the Istanbul Declaration focuses on capacity building and institutional development. As mentioned above, the Habitat Agenda stressed that **capacity-building and institutional development strategies must form an integral part of human settlements development policies at all levels of government**. Over and over several United Nations conferences have emphasized the need and the fundamental role of capacity building in improving the living conditions in the world.

The 'Future We Want' Declaration of Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 gave a strong mandate to capacity building, as did the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development identified concrete strategies for achieving education for a sustainable future. The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape dedicates a full section on 'capacity-building, research, information and communication'.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has capacity building, education and awareness integrated into a number of the different Goals. In addition, the Goal 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, calls for enhancing **"international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation"**. The Goal 4 on ensuring "inclusive and equitable quality education" and promoting "lifelong learning opportunities for all" is also very relevant to capacity building, in particular Goal 4.7 on ensuring that "all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development".

The New Urban Agenda is currently being defined. The debates, issue and policy papers already indicated that it will shape the course and form of urbanization in the world for decades to come if fully adopted and implemented by cities and national governments. This is the unique opportunity to reaffirm the need to adopt capacity building strategies and outline a way forward in concrete terms. Urban stakeholders need to have the appropriate skills and knowledge to make the New Urban Agenda a reality in their cities. **Capacity building should become the foundation of the international development agendas in the city, and these should be underpinned by state-of-the-art knowledge and research and innovative methods of knowledge and practice sharing**. By large the debate has neglected the importance of knowledge and capacity building which justifies the importance of this paper.

Twenty years down the line we come to realize that capacity building is still an unfinished business. Despite the efforts and significant number of programs adopted nationally, regionally, locally and internationally, it is noticeable that institutions, national and local governments stumbles and fall short in achieving their development goals due to inadequate institutional and human resources capacity and weak institutional frameworks. Even in situations where financial resources are made available.

This is the fundamental reason behind this paper. It intends to bring to the attention of all involved in the Habitat III process that knowledge, skills enhancement, and the development of know-how through capacity building processes and problem-solving education should gain a central place in the New Urban Agenda and the Quito Plan of Implementation that are expected to be adopted in October 2016. **Strengthening urban institutions must be part and parcel of the new paradigm of sustainable urban development.**

The point of departure of this paper is that without strong institutions that are capable to plan, manage and implement development policies, and exercise and apply planning and management instruments to guide urbanization, and can rely on well-trained and capacitated staff who are capable to respond adequately to the challenges derived from urbanization and the demands of cities and its citizens, it is nearly impossible to assure that cities will become a sustainable place to live and work in dignity and peace.

By default, one of the imperatives is that more opportunities and different modalities to acquire knowledge, develop skills and consolidate know-how should be made available to individuals, practitioners, policy makers, urban managers and decision makers in order to enable them to formulate evidence-based policies, programs and projects and take well-informed decisions. This should be concomitant with institution building programs to strengthen institutions and turn them into leaders of innovation, efficiency, transparency and urban transformation. Strengthening institutions goes hand-in-hand with the consolidation of stable and well-functioning institutional and organizational environment within which all takes place. The achievement of sustainable urban development and ultimately the success of the New Urban Agenda and the SDG11 are intimately conditioned to the quality of human resources, the strength of institutions and the institutional and regulatory frameworks that they operate.

**Thus, the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the SDG11 and the realization of their transformative elements on the ground will depend on the ability of institutions and individuals to move away from status-quo urbanization towards a new paradigm of sustainable urban development.** This is where knowledge development, capacity building, training and problem-solving education, city to city cooperation, peer to peer learning and different forms of knowledge and practice exchange will make a difference. This is where universities, training institutions, think tanks, development NGO's and communities of practice have an important role to play. But also donor organizations, multilateral and bilateral development cooperation institutions.

During the period from Habitat II to Habitat III, some countries and cities in the developing world adopted capacity building as mainstream in their development plans. **Ethiopia**, for example, adopted a comprehensive capacity development strategy supported by external partners and strengthened an existing national institution<sup>8</sup> to plan and implement training and capacity development programs addressed to technical cadre of local governments but also city managers, mayors and policy makers. A master program on urban management was developed and provided training and education to a remarkable number of public servants working at different levels of local government. It further enlarged to a number of training and continuous education programs.

**Indonesia** undertook an ambitious capacity building and training program to support the Integrated Urban Infrastructure Development Programme totally embedded into the national strategy to strengthen local level institutions to manage, plan and execute infrastructure development programs. It is worth mentioning that Indonesia like Ethiopia placed capacity building at the top of the policy agenda of its national government, allocating resources, facilitating double degree education with foreign universities, and sponsoring nationals to pursue post-graduation and specialized education to strengthen the capacity of the government labor force.

In **Brazil**, in the aftermath of the enactment of the Cities Statute and the mandatory development of participatory urban development plans in cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants, the Ministry of Cities embarked into an ambitious national capacity building program that included in-situ training and massive online courses reaching more than 25,000 professionals within a short period of time. The goal was to strengthen the ability of cities and municipalities to manage urban development with up to date knowledge and tools. External partners helped the ministry to get access to expertise and wide dissemination of programs, tools, information and online education.

These three cases counted on external partners assisting in the development of the knowledge and training packages, curricula and training of trainers.

For many years the **Government of the Netherlands** adopted a development cooperation policy that promoted the strengthening and/or development of capacity building institutions in developing countries, combining a process of transfer of knowledge and expertise through its international education institutes with endogenous in-country capacity strengthening strategy<sup>9</sup> that helped to establish national institutions and capacity building programs in various countries.

There are many of similar cases. These are flagship examples from which one can draw important lessons for the New Urban Agenda. **First**, capacity building needs to be closely linked with development objectives and ongoing transformation processes in order to remain effective and demand-driven. **Second**, there were clearly defined needs and demands as well as gaps to be addressed through different forms of capacity building. **Third**, funding is key to allow for continuation and prolonged impact. And **finally**, the existence of a solid capacity building institution with proven knowhow and acting as external partners propelled endogenous processes while enabling access to cutting edge knowledge and high level on-the-job training assistance.

## 2. The Meaning and Scope of Capacity Building for Sustainable Cities

Capacity building is a transformative engine for creating and maintaining development change. It is strongly associated with effectiveness of organizations and individuals<sup>10</sup>. Thus it is intrinsically linked to the ability to understand problems and design solutions to resolve them, to deliver and sustain development programs over time. It has been widely recognized by international development cooperation agencies and national and local governments that it is a fundamental condition for achieving development<sup>11</sup>. It is intimately associated with institution building and strengthening human

resources as well as the institutional environment in which they operate. 'Capacity building' and 'capacity development' are terms used interchangeably in this paper and they mean exactly the same as defined herein.

The Agenda 21 adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), defined Capacity Building as an activity that encompasses the country's human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. **A fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options**, based on an understanding of environment potentials and limits and of needs perceived by the people of the country concerned"<sup>12</sup>.

**Capacity building for sustainable urbanization is a multi-faceted process**<sup>13</sup> by which the ability of multiple stakeholders and institutions at all levels of governance are strengthened, developed and consolidated, enabling individuals and institutions to formulate, plan, implement, manage and enforce public policies towards sustainable urban development. It develops the ability to understand the spatial dimension of sustainable development, the urban governance systems and the elements that produce urban prosperity such as housing and infrastructure development, urban mobility, slums and social exclusion, environmental sustainability, urban planning and municipal finance.

Reinforcing the institutional and organizational framework that governs urbanization and strengthening the capacity of public and non-public stakeholders must be part and parcel of the New Urban Agenda for the next 20 years. **Capacity building for sustainable, inclusive and just cities is the foundation for the shift in paradigm towards the path of planned urbanization managed by the rule of law and led by urban plans that altogether generate prosperity and wealth for all.**

This means in practice the strengthening of the capability of multiple stakeholders that include but not limited to local, national and regional governments, local government associations, civil society organizations, NGO's, the academia and research institutions. Specific target groups should be given attention such as urban planners, economists, housing practitioners, civil engineers and public administrators whose disciplines reinforce the multidisciplinary character of urbanization. But also the development of an enabling institutional environment for the New Urban Agenda to be adopted, planned and executed. It integrates human resources development, institutional change and improvement of institutional, legal and financial frameworks<sup>14</sup>.

In other words, capacity building implies the implementation of a number of activities and programs to support development change intrinsic to the New Urban Agenda ranging from long-term institution building programs aiming at the development of sustainable institutions to on-the-job training and various forms of knowledge and know-how development geared to strengthen human resources, the social capital of urban institutions. But it also includes tailor-made training, peer-to-peer learning and web-based education, action learning, problem-solving education and south-south cooperation.

The need of and the multi-faceted aspect of capacity building has been recognized by bilateral and international development agencies. According to DFID, capacity development refers to the capacity of

individuals, organizations and the broader institutional framework within which individuals and organizations operate to deliver specific tasks and mandates. Capacity development goes well beyond the public sector and includes capacity development in the private sector, civil society and research organizations<sup>15</sup>.

According to OEDC DAC, capacity is the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully. **Capacity Development is the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.** Capacity development refers to the things that outside partners can do to support, facilitate or catalyze capacity development and related change processes<sup>16</sup>. Capacity development is thus more than enhancing knowledge and skills of individuals. It depends crucially on the quality of the organizations in which they work. In turn, the operations of particular organizations are influenced by the enabling environment – the structures of power and influence and the institutions – in which they are embedded. Consequently, capacity is not only about skills and procedures; it is also about incentives and governance<sup>17</sup>.

A review of the last decades of development demonstrated an evolution from a technical view of capacity building that looked at it as practices of transfer of knowledge towards the notion of capacity building as an endogenous process with full ownership of development partners (recipients of capacity building services) and geared to problem-solving and sustainability.

### **3. Urban challenges in a nutshell: the piecemeal of building capacities and competencies**

The Habitat III Conference is scheduled to take place in a crucial turning point of world development. More than 50% of humanity already lives in urban agglomerations and data suggests that during the next 30 years this will increase to nearly 70%. The earth is becoming an urban planet comprised of a network of cities and urban agglomerations of different size, nature and functions that need to be well managed and guided by plans and strong institutions operating within an enabling institutional and organizational environment.

**Urbanization is a transformative force that generates wealth and prosperity, particularly if it is well managed and planned by active public policies that safeguards public interests, preserves its environmental resources, provides opportunities for adequate housing and human development and respects human rights and enhance gender equality. This is the responsibility of urban institutions and the individuals that make them work.** Never before has the capability of individuals and organizations become so critical for the future of a sustainable urban planet.

Cities and urban agglomerations generate an economy of scale bringing together people and economic activities that are the sources of innovation, technological development and social transformations. In order words, the spatial dimension of development matters next to the economic, social and environmental dimensions to produce sustainable urbanization. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly the Sustainable Development Goal 11 reaffirms the role of cities and human



settlements in the Sustainable Development equation. Thus, there will be no sustainable development if cities and human settlements are not able to embark into a sustainable urbanization path, as outlined in the New Urban Agenda under discussion. The knowledge, skills, know-how that are required to planning, managing and guiding cities and human settlements into this path are the piecemeal of capacity building.

Urbanization is not simply a demographic phenomenon. It is a human construct. A driver of economic development and wealth creation *that can potentially nurture solutions to global challenges<sup>18</sup> provided that it is* well managed to harness its potential and mitigate the liabilities it produces such slum formation, urban sprawl and rising inequalities and social-spatial exclusion that affect women in particular. **In some parts of the world, urbanization has become a synonym of slum formation meaning that cities are expanding on the basis of informal land development processes and not on the basis of enacted land use ordinances and adopted urban development plans.** Investments in infrastructure are lagging behind. City and local governments are falling short in their capacity to plan and manage urban growth and absorb it within the rules of law governing urbanization and land use. Associating the growth of slums only to poverty is misleading and not consistent to data from different places showing that informality grows much faster than poverty. Economic growth has taken many out of poverty and yet people resort to slums and informal settlement to resolve their housing problems. The scarcity of affordable housing is one of the deep-rooted causes of slum formation. Policy makers and housing practitioners have not fully understood the functioning of the housing sector and its impact on cities and urban development. This is one of the critical areas that need capacity building.

Furthermore, cities and local governments by large demonstrate weak capacity to levy and collect revenues within their jurisdiction showing a remarkable inability to apply land-based finance instruments and benefit from modern tools of urban land management. If not properly planned, managed, self-financed and guided by transformative policies and innovative approaches, urbanization may produce liability and generate negative externalities that will severely jeopardize human development and the opportunities of future generations. Environmental impacts and climate change are bringing other important elements into planning and management of urbanization, particularly on themes related to greenhouse gas emissions related to building and construction industry and urban mobility, and the containment and expansion of the ecological footprint of cities and urban agglomerations. Well planned and well managed cities are a function of sustainable development which underscores their existing capacity to do so.

**Undeniably, the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda will depend largely on the skills and capacity of urban stakeholders to understand urbanization, transform propositions into actions, develop and make use of tools and knowledge to guide cities towards a sustainable future.** But this is not sufficient if the institutional and organizational environment as well as the urban governance systems with its rules, norms and incentives is not developed along with the strengthening of the capacity of individuals and cadres.

While national governments are ultimately responsible, local stakeholders will be at the centre of implementing the New Urban Agenda and the Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders, such as local government officials, local politicians, technical cadres and civil society is sine-qua-non condition for the paradigm shift proposed by the new international agendas. The role of capacity building is to enable all of the different groups of urban stakeholders to actively contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and to help make the New Urban Agenda a reality.

The multidisciplinary character of urbanization calls for the integration of urban planning and design, urban finance and legislation in order to produce planned urbanization that generates wealth and prosperity. Research, new knowledge and approaches to achieve better and feasible urban solutions are needed and therefore universities must join the capacity building efforts. **A holistic view to urbanization calls for an integrated approach requiring different disciplines to work together to ensure that they are synchronized to enable urbanization to become a driver of urban prosperity** where no one is left behind. Urban stakeholders should have the right skills to work in such environment.

Different stakeholder groups have also differentiated capacity needs that need to be identified and responded adequately. For example, local governments require technical skills, ability to connect different areas of urban development and manage conflict resolution between interests and demands on location and land use. The ability to forge partnerships and mobilize all urban stakeholders is critical for a safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable city. Civil society organizations, on the other hand, need the technical skills, knowledge and the ability to meaningfully participate in decision making while exercising their rights and press for safeguarding the public goods. The private sector should have the capacity to participate in urban development and to contribute where they are best in terms of innovations, technology, finance and management tools. Universities should play their role in the development of knowledge, practical skills and competencies required to understand and manage urbanization within a dynamic and volatile environment. But also have the ability to play an active role as a stakeholder in sustainable urban development.

The need to harness evidence-based and well-informed policies and urban strategies to sustain the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, in tandem with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the need to develop capacity to collect, retrieve and analyze data disaggregated by sex and age. This is a key competence for the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is also important to consider capacity building at the national level. While cities and regions may have considerable devolved powers, there is a need for national approaches to manage urbanization spatially in the broader territory in order to enable villages, cities and metropolitan regions to play their role as key forces of national and local development. National urban policy identifies development priorities, gives guidance on territorial development and enables better coordination and locational decisions on public and private investments. Capacity building is needed in order to develop and strengthen the ability of national institutions to implement the New Urban Agenda through national policies and strategies.

## **4. Capacity Building Propositions for Habitat III and the New Urban Agenda**

### **4.1. Capacity building is integrated into the implementation arrangements of the New Urban Agenda and focuses on its core elements**

Reversing the predatory path of urban development and guiding cities to move from unplanned and informal urbanization modes towards a planned and sustainable urbanization model requires robust capacity and institution building. This should develop capacities to develop and implement integrated urban development approaches that link rules and regulations, urban planning and design and urban finance, with housing development and the provision of serviced land placed at the center of the new strategy. The adoption of the New Urban Agenda must incorporate capacity development actions leading to establishing and/or strengthening local capacity to plan, execute and manage its implementation which should ultimately bring urbanization to a planned city development pathway and ultimately curb informal land development processes and slum proliferation.

### **4.2. Capacity building to support evidence-based policy making and implementation**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda require national and local data collection, retrieval, maintenance, analysis and reporting. This will lead to monitoring and development of indicators to assist in implementation and public policy assessment. This should create the basis for evidence-based and well-informed decision-making on urban development policies if this is accompanied by training, technical assistance and institution building programs. The type of skills, knowledge and institutional set-up that exist today are inadequate in most places in the developing world and needs to be strengthened and/or developed from scratch. Innovative approaches should be adopted combining the use of e-learning and online platforms backed by ICT solutions to gain scale and wide dissemination. Specific challenges needs to be considered. Gender equality, for example, will require data collection disaggregated by sex and age which is sine-qua-non condition to mainstream gender into the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

### **4.3. Partnerships amongst knowledge-based institutions and capacity building organizations must be strengthened through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

Capacity building for the New Urban Agenda should be part and parcel of its implementation at the local level and strengthen the capacity of cities, local governments and local authorities to plan, manage, and implement sustainable urban development policies, programs and projects. It should draw on the expertise, know-how and institutional capacity of a wide range of institutions that have the proven ability to assess training needs and competence gaps in the urban sector and that are capable to design and deliver educational and training products for direct application. In order to bring capacity building to the desired scale and results, it should foster partnership to achieve the strengthening of the capacity of implementing agencies. Partnership amongst universities, national and international training institutions, government schools and public administration institutions as well as NGO's must be constructed as part of the New Urban Agenda. Such partnership should make use of training of trainers approaches as well as collaborative in-situ problem-solving training and education. This will foster cross-fertilization and propel endogenous processes to sustain national and local implementation. The funding of the New Urban Agenda should incorporate capacity building activities.

#### **4.4. New Curricula for the creation of a new generation of urban practitioners should be supported by the New Urban Agenda**

New competencies to face urban development challenges in an integrated manner must be developed and supported by university curricula aiming at the creation of a new generation of urban professionals who are capable to understand urbanization in development contexts and work in a multidisciplinary context that includes but not limited to disciplines such as social sciences, cultural heritage, urban economy and real estate market.<sup>19</sup> This is in line with the deliberations of university and researchers meetings at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum (2014). Evidences from this meeting demonstrate that universities are undertaking innovative initiatives worldwide that connect them with local communities and city governments. This hands-on-the-problem approach generate external curricular activities and provide for direct engagement of students and academic staff in problem-solving and implementation. This is certainly a very positive development that should lead to applied urban research, integrated curricula and in-situ capacity building. The New Urban Agenda should encourage, promote and facilitate the development of new curricula in the various fields that have direct interface with urbanization. This is critical for the formation of a new generation of urban managers. The UNESCO-led Decade for Education on Sustainable Development and the global action program on Education for Sustainable Development adopted by a large community of universities worldwide, the UN-Habitat Partner's University Initiative (UNI), and the UNEP sponsored Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) are examples of this global effort that should be supported institutionally and financially by the means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

#### **4.5 . As means of implementation, the New Urban Agenda should adopt innovative and transformative capacity building strategies to establish the institutional and human resources basis for its implementation.**

The rise and advance of ITC technologies during the last two decades since Habitat II enabled the development of several platforms for online education and capacity building. Universities, training institutions, governments, regional development banks such as IADB-Inter American Development Bank and ADB-the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, UN-Habitat and bilateral development cooperation institutions have embraced the technology and have made use of web-based applications to disseminate methods, tools, best practices, online courses, discussion threads and publications on various focus areas of urbanization.

Knowledge acquired from projects and lessons learned have also been made available in web portals to improve the quality of development assistance of these institutions. The strengthening of capacity of partner institutions to implement programs have also been done through these methods. Massive Open Online Courses-MOOCs, webinars, global urban lectures series, podcasts and e-learning products have made a revolution in the packaging and delivery of knowledge, training and information to a wider public. This has been further transformed by mobile telephone and online applications which brought information and knowledge to the finger tip of users worldwide. However, this is still fragmented and without the depth and the focus which now can be given by a New Urban Agenda. The results have also been mixed. However, there is absolutely little doubt that this will further evolve and should become an important means to make knowledge and information available for all which is per se one step in the capacity building process.

The UNCC-Learn Platform, the One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership, illustrates well this trend. It is a good example about how knowledge, training modules, resources and a network of institutions are assembled within a one-window shop concept and made accessible to the global community. The advance and consolidation of smart cities strategies and the establishment of networks of smart cities goes hand-in-hand with this technology development which should further strengthen the information and knowledge-based economy in cities and urban agglomerations. The economy of agglomerations provides a unique concentration of service providers, users and beneficiaries which triggers innovation and diversity and cost-effective service provision. Local governments are increasingly making use of these services and technological solutions in order to improve quality and efficiency of public services as well as to increase dialogue with the citizenry and exercise transparency in local governance. The New Urban Agenda must adopt a strategy that promotes and supports innovation in capacity building and the use of the ICT technologies to bring it to scale.

In addition to this, other innovative initiatives such city labs and peer-to-peer learning workshops are being designed to solve a particular problem in a given city, taking advantage of best practices and knowledge and practice exchange between teams of experts and senior executives and decision-makers from different cities; forms of south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation in the urban sector have flourished as well; professional planning associations are promoting accreditation programs and refresher courses to fine tune the capacity and ability of their members. On-the-job training and modular education have also been widespread. The New Urban Agenda should support the establishment of a global vehicle for developing and strengthening capacity for sustainable urbanization where knowledge, skills, methodologies, state-of-the-art tools and best practices can be accessed.

#### **4.6. The New Urban Agenda should promote a global capacity building program targeting different urban stakeholders and urban institutions**

The successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda depends on the availability of institutions and individuals with the cutting-edge knowledge and skills on various disciplines related to housing and urban development. Different types of individuals such as practitioners, technical cadres, managers, senior executives and policy and decision makers must be considered. But also different types of institutions such as local governments, civil society organizations, NGO's, community-based organizations, higher education institutions, training institutions, association of municipalities, government schools and public administration institutes, centers of excellence should all be considered both as providers as well as recipients of capacity building services. All urban actors of society - public, private, and non-governmental should be involved in a participatory manner<sup>20</sup> in the efforts of making cities work for sustainable development.

Urban stakeholders constitute a force that shapes the urban fabric, its socio-economic structure and its changing heritage, determining the new dynamics of urbanization. These urban stakeholders are local governments, civil society organizations, academia, private sector and habitants of the city, including slum dwellers and new migrants to cities. Special attention should be given to involving the most vulnerable populations such as the slum dwellers, elderly, women and children, and to ensure that cities are inclusive and safe places. The recognition of a diverse citizenship base with a stake in the

process of urbanization, calls for more inclusive training programs, in line with the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Declaration, which recognizes *education as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development and emphasize the potential of ESD to empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies and values required for addressing global citizenship*<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, the Goal 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals refers to all learners acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

#### **4.7. Capacity building must be part and parcel of policy making and implementation in the New Urban Agenda**

At the early stage of the cycle of policy making not only problems but capacities and competencies in the different sectors should be assessed in order to define needs and gaps. Knowledge gaps, pitfalls in competences as well as institutional-related performance shortcomings and individual-related performance deficiencies need all to be mapped<sup>22</sup>. This will help identify weaknesses that may jeopardize the success of the policy under consideration. The New Urban Agenda should promote the common practice of Training Needs Assessment at the forefront of policy development as a way to ensure that people and organizations are adequately prepared to perform effectively in the design, planning, implementation and management of programs and public policies.<sup>23</sup>

It has been recognized that scarcity of qualified human resources at all levels - policy, managerial, and technical has been for long one of the main obstacles to the improvement of cities and human settlements<sup>24</sup>.

This challenge has become even more pressing since Habitat II as a result of several global developments, namely: decentralization and devolution of responsibilities to local governments; the unprecedented scale of population increase and urban growth leading to demographic and social pressures at the local level resulting into unmet demand for housing, infrastructure and public services; increasing informal urbanization and uncontrolled land occupation generating slums, vulnerabilities and life threatening situations to be dealt with by local governments. The pressure is at the local level where the capacity is weak both institutional and of human resources. Thus, strengthening the capacity of local governments is about making cities work for a sustainable urban planet as advocated by the New Urban Agenda which makes capacity building a must in the new generation of urban policies

#### **4.8. Capacity building should be result-based and be assessed and monitored in order to anticipate the changes of urbanization**

The world is urbanizing and this trend will continue for the years to come. The process is dynamic and consequently solutions and tools that are relevant in 2016 may need to be revisited in the future, whether it remains relevant and responsive to the changes occurring in the social, economic, environmental and spatial dimensions of urbanization. A capacity building action plan must be reviewed regularly, at least every five years, to ensure that it continues to be relevant, demand-driven and uses the state-of-the-art knowledge, tools and methodologies. Besides that, training impact assessment and training-related development outcomes must be monitored, assessed and reported. It takes time to change attitude, develop in-depth understanding of problems and learn from the application of new methods and approaches. Follow-up on training outcomes and measuring its impacts on public policies, organizational efficiency and effectiveness in decision making and

improvements in the quality of policy decisions take time but should be part of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

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<sup>3</sup> GA Resolution 66/288, annex

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<sup>7</sup> The Habitat Agenda, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, <http://www.un-documents.net/hab-ag.htm>, accessed on 21st April 2016

<sup>8</sup> The Civil Servant College

<sup>9</sup> Ruijsink, Saskia; Pennink, Carley, Hans Teerlink (2012). Are we making cities work? The Impact of 50 Years of capacity building for housing and urban development. Rotterdam: IHS-Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies.

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<sup>17</sup> OECD (2006). The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice

<sup>18</sup> Urbanization for Prosperity, UN-Habitat 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council. Nairobi, 2015

<sup>19</sup> IISD Summary Report of the Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF7) - "Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life. Medellin, April 2014. , April 2014. <http://www.iisd.ca/WUF/WUF7/>, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016

<sup>20</sup> World Urban Campaign, "The City We Need". <http://unhabitat.org/the-future-we-want-the-city-we-need/>, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016

<sup>21</sup> Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development

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