

**Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
7th session**

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Constituency : France, Germany, Switzerland

**Common Statement on Sustainable Transports, Sustainable Cities and
Human Settlements in the Post-2015 Agenda**

Honorable co-Chairs,

Your Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the constituency shared by Germany, Switzerland and France.

Urbanization is undoubtedly one of the most important global trends of the 21st century, impacting all aspects of sustainable development: environment and energy, social, cultural, economic and institutional aspects. Today, already half of the world population is living in urban areas. From 2000 to 2030, the urban population is expected to double in developing countries. To this date, 3 out of 5 people will live in urban areas.

This exponential and **unprecedented rapid growth raises major opportunities and challenges** for sustainable development, both economic, social, environmental, energy, cultural and institutional.

- Urban issues finally encompass a broader agenda: poverty reduction. Nearly 860 million people in the world (one in three urban dwellers) live in informal settlements. They are estimated to be 2 billion in 2030.

- The dynamics between rural areas and urban areas are crucial, whether to prepare a sustainable urbanization, reducing inequalities and ensuring food security for all. We can not oppose any more urban and rural development which are inextricably linked.
- Cities generate a major ecological footprint, consuming energy and resources, and producing 70% of greenhouse gas emissions. Major contributors to climate change, cities are also particularly vulnerable to its consequences, including rising sea levels, since the majority of megacities are located in coastal areas.

But urbanization also provides **great opportunities for change**. Cities are hubs of prosperity and growth, places where 80% of global activity is concentrated and innovation and creativity take shape. An enormous source of prosperity and development lies in the physical density and connectivity potential of cities.

As acknowledged by the Rio+ 20 outcome document 'The Future We Want', well managed cities can promote access to services and local economic development while contributing to a more sustainable development.

Urbanization is thus an inevitable and irreversible process and cities are the place that crystallizes challenges as well as solutions for a sustainable development. It is thus crucial to take into account urban development as a prerequisite for the achievement of the future objectives of sustainable development.

Sustainable city and more broadly human settlements, including transports, should thus find an important place in the post 2015 development agenda. We would like to highlight in particular **3 overarching principles** :

- Firstly, recognize the **critical role of local authorities**. Sustainable urban development cannot be achieved without **strong local and regional authorities and the engagement of civil society**. Indeed, these are the legitimate and relevant level of political responsibility to carry a territorial development strategy based on participatory decision making allowing a people-centred approach. In that regard, democratic local governance, a specific process to each society based on transparency and accountability, is crucial for development. It is a prerequisite for the legitimacy and effectiveness of public policies. Democratic governance is based on capacity building and participation of all stakeholders starting with the inhabitants themselves in the development and implementation of public policies. Local and regional authorities should therefore be targeted by the new agenda and see their financial capabilities and project management developed.
- Secondly, the importance of adopting an **integrated approach to urban development**, taking into account sectorial and spatial inter-linkages. In seeking the establishment, through enhanced access to infrastructure and services, it should result in more compact and inclusive cities, promoting social cohesion, better integrated and connected, and resilient to climate change. This planning process should certainly be based on a multi-level governance and support in particular the urban/rural linkages and the strengthening of secondary cities.
- Thirdly, the strategic importance of strengthening environmental sustainability, and the resiliency of cities in particular regarding climate change. Urban planning must address these challenges with a comprehensive approach to develop improved energy efficiency, waste management, infrastructure and sustainable and resilient transport as well as early warning systems. It should also support the resilience of territories, the preservation of

biodiversity and green spaces in the city and air pollution reduction. Support initiatives of local and regional authorities for mitigation and adaptation to climate change will be crucial.

Based on these principles, Germany, Switzerland and France would like to support the integration of **3 priority areas of action** in the post 2015 agenda :

Firstly, in order to **support environment friendly, resource efficient and resilient cities** as well as protect biodiversity, develop of green spaces, fight climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, the following measures should be promoted: land and resource efficiency in buildings and infrastructure, waste management, access to modern energy for more people, energy efficiency, and the development of renewable energy in cities. Sustainable access to ecosystem services should also be promoted while ecosystems need to be safeguarded. Further universal and affordable access to sustainable and low-fossil-fuel transport needs to be enhanced, to stimulate growth and enable inclusive development.

Secondly, fostering **socially inclusiveness** through the reduction of slums and access to decent housing, basic services and infrastructures for all. Particular attention should be paid to access to water, drainage and sanitation to build on the efforts made in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and the recognition of the right to water and sanitation as a human right. Universal and affordable access to sustainable transport should also be supported particularly through coordinated urban and transport planning, so that the different living and working areas are effectively connected. With regard to slums, priority should be given to prevent the development of new slums and to *in situ* upgrading in existing slums, building on participatory processes. A key to support inclusiveness is to

reinforce land tenure security by taking into account the diversity of rights, including users' rights and traditional modes of regulation, promoting participatory processes. A specific attention should be paid to the equal access of women to land. Cohesion and social inclusion implies, moreover, to ensure security for all in their living space, another major challenge to be included in the future agenda.

Thirdly, **promoting a fair and balanced local economic development and the attractiveness** of cities and territories by fostering a favorable environment for economic activities and innovation, aiming for a better integration of the informal sector and supporting the local production and consumption of sustainable products and services. It is also crucial to support urban revitalization, heritage promotion and the development of culture, which are strategic elements to strengthen the identity and attractiveness of urban areas as well as social cohesion.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the involvement of local and regional authorities, as well as the civil society including private sector, in the definition as in the implementation of the future global sustainable development agenda. In this context, I wish to emphasize the need to consult the Global taskforce of local and regional authorities for the post 2015 agenda to define sub-national targets, as we encourage such an exercise. We cannot move forward the future agenda without the full participation of local actors. Their experience is irreplaceable and their action is decisive.

I thank you for your attention.