

Shanghai, 1 May 2014

Ambassador H.E. Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya  
Ambassador H.E. Mr. Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary  
*Co-chairs Open Working Group*

Members of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

**Subject: Integration of Sustainable Transport in the post-2015 development agenda**

The discussion on Sustainable Development Goals has come a long way since the concept came up for the first time in the Rio+20 conference in 2012. The sustainable transport community believes that a set of well defined and measurable development goals that address the economic, social and environmental dimension of development can be very helpful in providing guidance to a range of communities working on sustainable development, including the transport community. SDGs if well defined can help to scale up sustainable transport policies, mobilize much needed funding and put in place enabling policy frameworks.

The 7<sup>th</sup> OWG session highlighted the importance of sustainable transport but indicated a preference for mainstreaming transport in a number of goal areas rather than to pursue it as a stand alone SDG. This could place transport in an exceptional position as energy and water, the two other main infrastructure related sectors, based on the Working Paper that will be discussed in the 11<sup>th</sup> OWG session are still considered as separate Focus Areas and thereby likely to be recommended as stand alone SDGs in the final recommendations of the OWG. As indicated in the Results Framework on Sustainable Transport ([www.slocat.net/resultsframework](http://www.slocat.net/resultsframework)) developed by the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) following extensive consultations, the transport community believes that mainstreaming transport in other focus/goal areas is a good way to help scale up the implementation of sustainable, low carbon transport.

There are a number of concerns related to the manner that sustainable transport was included in the different Focus Areas in the Working Document for the 11<sup>th</sup> OWG session. These concerns are also outlined in the three attached policy briefs on rural transport, road safety and sustainable urban transport.

We believe there should be a specific target relating to rural access. 3.3 billion people live in rural areas and in many countries poor access (insufficient roads, trails, bridges and transport services) contributes to extreme poverty and limits people's access to healthcare, education, markets and economic opportunities. We would like to suggest the following reformulation of Target 8g under the Focus area 8 on economic growth, employment and infrastructure: **“Develop sustainable infrastructure accessible to all, with attention to the needs of countries in special situations, and by 2030 provide access for 100% of rural populations to safe sustainable transport”**.

Given the importance of rural roads and transport services for stimulating food production (input provision, access to markets) and reducing food losses, we suggest the following editing of target 2d under Focus 2 on agriculture and food security: “By 2030 achieve access to adequate inputs, knowledge, productive resources, financial services, markets **and sustainable transport** for small farmers and fishers, with a particular focus on women and indigenous peoples”.

Recent research from the Global Burden of Disease shows the extent of the health burden (1.24 million fatalities per year), particularly on young people. As well as being the No.1 killer of

young people aged 15-29 yrs. worldwide it is also the leading killer of boys of younger age groups and has a severe health impact on women. It is a leading cause of disability causing as many as 78.2 million injuries per year according to the GBD. The reduction of road traffic fatalities and injuries has been recognised and included in the Open Working Group's 'Focus Areas' for the Post-2015 Development Goals. Road safety has also been included by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his recommendations to the UN General Assembly on steps to advance the Post-2015 Agenda. The UNGA recently heard calls by Member States for road safety to be included in the SDGs. Currently road safety is included in target 10b under Focus Area 10 on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements. Considering that in several countries the majority of road crashes happen outside urban areas we feel that it is not appropriate to place road safety under the urban Focus Area. We are calling on you to include a dedicated road safety target under Focus Area 3: Health and Population Dynamics, which would read: **Halve the burden due to global road traffic crashes by halving the number of fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 compared to 2010.** This target can be cross referenced when addressing key focus areas such as Urbanisation and Infrastructure. The target is measurable, easy to communicate, inclusive and universal. It would contribute to wider health and sustainable development priorities.

Within the new SDG framework, there are simply too few goals (and too few component targets) to go around. We fully endorse the desire of the OWG to limit the number of SDGs and appreciate the challenges that come with this intention. At the same time we would like to express our concerns that key issues will be dropped out. Spatial issues – resource efficient use of land, and comprehensive community building combining housing, schools, parks, water/sanitation, streets and sidewalks -- are an unnatural fit for any but a stand-alone SDG on sustainable cities and human settlements. Extremely important issues such as transport and resilience have already been cut from the list of possible stand-alone goals; the focus area on sustainable cities remains a vital refuge for these to be addressed. There is a risk that UN member states will focus solely on those SDGs with universal support, such as water and sanitation, health, food security, gender. A stand-alone goal on sustainable cities and human settlements has not yet received the kind of support that other Focus Areas have received. As the transport community we would like to express our strong support for a stand-alone goal to “**build inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements**”. We believe that this is vital to address issues of equity, climate change, and sustainable mobility. It is also an essential part of a successful strategy to mainstream sustainable transport across other possible goal areas as recommended in the 7<sup>th</sup> OWG session.

We are hopeful that the OWG in its further deliberations will see the value of our arguments. The sustainable transport community stands ready to help implement a strong post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Yours sincerely,



Cornie Huizenga  
Secretary General  
Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport

1. African Development Bank
2. African Transport Policy Program
3. Alliance to Save Energy
4. Asian Development Bank
5. Believe Sustainability
6. Corporación Andina de Fomento
7. Cambridge Systematics
8. Center for Clean Air Policy
9. Centre for Environment Planning & Technology Ahmedabad
10. Center for Science and Environment
11. Center for Sustainable Transport Mexico
12. Center for Transportation and Logistics Studies, GadjahMada University
13. China Urban Transport Research Centre
14. Civic Exchange
15. Clean Air Asia
16. Clean Air Institute
17. Climate Focus
18. CODATU
19. Despacio
20. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
21. Dutch Cycling Embassy
22. Ecofys
23. EMBARQ, The WRI Center for Sustainable Transport
24. Energy Research Center Netherlands
25. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
26. European Institute for Sustainable Transport
27. European Cyclists' Federation
28. Fia Foundation
29. First African Bicycle Information Organization
30. Fraunhofer- Institute for Systems and Innovation Research
31. Global Environmental Facility
32. Global Transport Knowledge Partnership
33. Global Urban Development
34. HealthBridge
35. Hong Kong Shanghai Bank
36. Innovation Center for Energy and Transportation
37. Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
38. Institute for Transport Studies
39. Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, UK
40. Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
41. Institute for Urban Transport India
42. Inter-American Development Bank
43. International Association for Public Transport
44. International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives
45. International Energy Agency
46. International Road Assessment Program
47. International Road Federation
48. International Transport Forum
49. International Union for the Conservation of Nature
50. International Union of Railways
51. Korean Transport Institute
52. Ministry of Land Infrastructure Transport and Tourism, Japan
53. Mobility Magazine
54. National Center for Transportation Studies, Philippines
55. Nordic Development Fund
56. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership
57. Rockefeller Foundation
58. Society of Indian Automotive Manufacturers
59. Stockholm Environment Institute
60. Sustainable Transport Africa
61. Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway operation Company
62. The Energy and Resources Institute
63. The European Rail Industry
64. Transport and Environment
65. Transport Research Laboratory
66. Uganda Road Sector Support Initiative
67. United Nations Development Program
68. United Nations Center for Regional Development
69. United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
70. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
71. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
72. United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean
73. United Nations Environment Program
74. United Nations Human Settlements Program
75. University College of London, Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering
76. University of California, Davis, Institute of Transport Studies
77. University of Transport and Communication Hanoi
78. University of Twente-ITC
79. VEOLIA Transport/Transdev
80. Victoria Transport Policy Institute
81. Volvo Research and Education Foundations
82. Walk 21
83. World Bank
84. World Business Council on Sustainable Development
85. World Health Organization
86. World Streets
87. Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy
88. WWF International
89. Youth for Road Safety

**Policy briefing UN Open Working Group 11**  
**Rural access and the Post-2015 development agenda**

**Need for rural access in all countries**

About 3.3 billion people live in rural areas<sup>1</sup>. Despite increasing urbanisation, rural populations are predicted to remain at this level for the next twenty years<sup>2</sup>. Overall, about 30% of these people live more than two kilometers from any road<sup>3</sup>. However, isolation is heavily skewed and the proportion of un-connected communities is much higher in poorer countries. In several countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, 60% of rural people still live more than two kilometres from an all-season road<sup>4</sup>. In some countries, including Ethiopia, Nepal and Papua New Guinea, there are many villages that are more than four hours walk from a road. When rural women, men and children do walk to the nearest road, they may still be many kilometres from the nearest market, hospital, school or economic opportunities. People depend on transport services to reach their destinations. In many rural situations such services are infrequent, expensive and unsafe (and sometimes non-existent)<sup>5,6</sup>.

Rural isolation makes it extremely difficult to access medical facilities, education, employment and markets. Older persons and people with disabilities may be effectively imprisoned by the lack of roads and transport services. Ending rural isolation can be achieved by ensuring rural communities are linked to markets and services by appropriate infrastructure (rural roads, trails, bridges) that has adequate transport services. Rural people in low and middle income countries require passenger and freight services that are affordable, safe, accessible, convenient and appropriate.

Agriculture, forestry, livestock and fisheries are often central to rural economies, employment and income-generating opportunities. Rural markets are vital to access agricultural inputs and bring products to the urban supply chains. Adequate roads and transport services that allow essential inputs and the marketing of products are vital for rural economic growth, enhanced agricultural production and reduced food losses. Evidence from countries around the world indicates that food production increases and poverty is reduced when transport can reach village communities<sup>7</sup>.

Appropriate rural access is a key gender and equity issue. Women's timely access to maternal and peri-natal health care is crucial. Poor rural access disproportionately limits girls' access to education and women's access to markets, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Improved rural transport services increase the access of women, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups and enhance their contributions to equitable economic development.

In richer countries, most rural communities are already connected to the road network (or waterways), but a key issue can be whether there are appropriate transport services to enable access to economic opportunities and essential services. There may be need for sustainable rural transport services to reduce car dependency and provide essential access for older persons and people with disability.

**Rural access target and indicators within the proposed infrastructure goal (Focus area 8)**

A post-2015 rural access target is extremely important in order to focus national and international attention on ways of improving access for rural communities. Implementation progress can be measured by indicators, but a specific target is crucial to galvanise action. A rural access target fits

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<sup>1</sup> UN-DESA estimates the current rural population is 3.3 billion and will remain so until 2035. About 40% of the projected 8.3 billion world population will be rural in 2030. Source: <http://esa.un.org/unup/CD-ROM/Urban-Rural-Population.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank rural access index data: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/rural-access-index>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Improving Rural Mobility. World Bank Technical Paper 525.

<sup>6</sup> Rural transport services indicators: Final Report, August 2013. International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD). Available at: [http://www.ruraltransport.info/RTSi/resources/project\\_outputs.php](http://www.ruraltransport.info/RTSi/resources/project_outputs.php)

<sup>7</sup> For example, see: <http://www.ppiaf.org/freighttoolkit/knowledge-map/rural/>

well within the Focus area 8 on economic growth, employment and infrastructure. This should be cross-referenced in the goals relating to sustainable agriculture and food security (Focus area 2) and eradicating poverty (Focus area 1) which include targets relating to access to markets (2d) and eradicating extreme poverty (1a). The rural access indicators will be valuable for measuring progress towards these targets.

The proposed target, based on the existing OWG wording of target 8g could be: “Develop sustainable infrastructure accessible to all, with attention to the needs of countries in special situations, and by 2030 provide access for 100% of rural populations to sustainable transport”<sup>8</sup>.

This rural access target can be measured straightforwardly by two process indicators, relating to the infrastructure and to the availability of sustainable transport services. These will be relevant and measurable in countries of all income levels, but their developmental importance will be greatest in lower and middle income countries. The first indicator is based on the rural access index developed by the World Bank that is an established IDA indicator that measures access in terms of infrastructure (motorable roads)<sup>9</sup>. The second indicator, which is also measurable, assesses the proportion of the rural population with access to transport services. While the target will be universal and relates to access for 100% of rural people, countries will be able to define appropriate access in the context of their own economic and geographic situations (a guiding framework will be available).

- Proportion of the rural population living within two kilometers of a road, motorable trail or other appropriate infrastructure providing all-year access (desired achievement: 100% achievement of national access targets, monitoring the poorest and remotest quintiles).
- Proportion of rural population living within 30 minutes’ walk of appropriate transport services (desired achievement: 100% achievement of national access targets, monitoring remotest quintile).

### **Rural access target/indicators within the proposed agriculture and food security goal**

Given the importance of rural roads and means of transport for stimulating food production and marketing, and reducing food-chain losses, it is important to include rural transport at the target level within the agriculture and food security goal. The current target d) could be slightly modified to read: “By 2030 achieve access to adequate inputs, knowledge, productive resources, financial services, markets and sustainable transport for small farmers and fishers, with a particular focus on women and indigenous peoples”.

Specific mention of transport within this target will help national authorities and international agencies to plan measures to improve rural access. The two rural access process indicators proposed can be used to help measure and monitor the achievement of this target.

### **Measurement and monitoring**

While the indicators are measurable, there will be need to develop and test standardised data collection and reporting mechanisms that will use appropriate survey techniques and GIS technologies. The development of national and international road safety statistics illustrates well how this might be achieved<sup>10</sup>. International stakeholders interested in the validation and monitoring of the indicators include the World Bank, ADB, DFID, GIZ and SLoCaT. AFCAP2 and ASCAP are major rural transport research programmes, funded by DFID, and due to start operations in July 2014, that have indicated interest in supporting the piloting of the rural access indicators.

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<sup>8</sup> It may be appropriate to add ‘and ICTs’. Access to energy, water and sanitation are covered in other focus areas.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank: <http://go.worldbank.org/EVPZQJ2I0>

<sup>10</sup> The World Health Organisation worked with national authorities to agree international/national frameworks and consistent methodologies for capturing road accident data, calculating statistics, aggregating results and reporting findings. See: [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2013/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/)

## **Policy briefing UN Open Working Group 11** **Road traffic injury and the Post-2015 development agenda**

The reduction of road traffic fatalities and injuries has been recognised and included in the Open Working Group's 'Focus Areas' for the Post-2015 Development Goals. Road safety has also been included by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in his recommendations to the UN General Assembly on steps to advance the Post-2015 Agenda.<sup>11</sup> The UNGA recently heard calls by Member States for road safety to be included in the SDGs.<sup>12</sup> As recognised in the 7<sup>th</sup> OWG Session, safe and sustainable transport is vital for health, economic development and poverty eradication. It has cross cutting benefits, building on MDG progress in promoting health, protecting the environment and enabling people to access education, employment and services.

**A Post-2015 target for reducing road traffic fatalities should be situated within a Health Goal as suggested by the UNSG and cross referenced when addressing key focus areas such as Urbanisation and Infrastructure.** The target is measurable, easy to communicate, inclusive and universal. It would contribute to wider health and sustainable development priorities.

### **Road traffic injury: a global public health crisis**

Recent research from the Global Burden of Disease shows the extent of the health burden, particularly on young people.<sup>13</sup> As well as being the No.1 killer of young people aged 15-29 yrs. worldwide it is also the leading killer of boys of younger age groups and has a severe health impact on women. It is a leading cause of disability causing as many as 78.2 million injuries per year according to the GBD. The burden on health systems particularly in low and middle income countries is unsustainable. This crisis is preventable but requires global support and coordination for low and middle income countries to reverse the trend of rising. Coordination between health and transport sectors is essential.

### **A Post-2015 target for road traffic fatalities**

Process indicators and proposed targets by country income cluster have been submitted to the Open Working Group in the Partnership for Low Carbon Transport (SLoCAT) Post-2015 Results Framework. This also outlines implementation and enabling measures in line with the Global Plan for the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety.<sup>14</sup>

The proposed target by 2030 is to halve the burden of global road traffic crashes from the 2010 baseline in the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013.

- **Fatalities target:** By 2030, reducing the number of people killed on the world's roads to less than 620,000 per year from the 2010 baseline of 1.24 million per year.
- Fatality targets by country income cluster (the Results Framework also includes injury and economic targets by income level). Reduce road traffic fatality rates by 2030 to:
- < 4 per 100,000 population in high-income countries (baseline of 8.7 in 2010 )
  - < 7 per 100,000 population in middle-income countries (baseline of 20.1 in 2010)
  - < 12 per 100,000 population in low-income countries (baseline of 18.3 in 2010)
- **Serious Injuries:** By 2030, reduce the number of people seriously injured on the world's roads to less than 6,200,000 per year from the 2010 baseline of 12.4 million per year.
  - **Economic Impact:** By 2030, reduce the global economic impact of road crashes to less than 1.5% of GDP per year from the current 3% of GDP per year

<sup>11</sup> See for example Co-Chairs Summary for OWG 7 [http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2958co-chairs%20summary%20bullet%20points\\_owg7%2020%20Jan.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2958co-chairs%20summary%20bullet%20points_owg7%2020%20Jan.pdf); And UNSG 'A Life of Dignity for All' section 87 'Improve Health' <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/A%20Life%20of%20Dignity%20for%20All.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.makeroadssafe.org/news/2014/Pages/UNroadsafetydebatehearscallforpost-2015action.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd/publications/policy-report/transport-health-global-burden-disease-motorized-road-transport>

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed outline of targets, indicators and implementation measures see [http://www.slocat.net/sites/default/files/u10/draft\\_sustainable\\_transport\\_results\\_framework\\_owg\\_7\\_input-jan\\_3\\_0.pdf](http://www.slocat.net/sites/default/files/u10/draft_sustainable_transport_results_framework_owg_7_input-jan_3_0.pdf)

### **Road safety and sustainable development**

Together with mass transit systems, safe walking and cycling networks can create a cascade of health benefits: better pedestrian safety, improved physical activity and improved urban air quality. This would also assist in achieving a proposed Post-2015 target of bringing urban air pollution within WHO limits for an additional 1.5 billion urban residents by 2030.<sup>15</sup>

### **An agenda for health, education and the eradication of poverty:**

Low- and middle-income countries account for the majority (90%) of 1.3 million annual road traffic fatalities which are the No.1 cause of death for young people. The GBD 2010 Study and the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013 confirm the divide between developed and developing countries on road injury. In Australasia, Western Europe and North America road deaths were reduced by between 13% and 43% during the GBD period. They rose dramatically in SE Asia (66%), Central America (33%) and West Africa (112%) during the same period.<sup>16</sup>

Road traffic injuries place an immense burden on health-care systems, diverting financial and human resources from other priorities. In many low and middle income countries road traffic injury accounts for a large number of trauma admissions, as much as 60% in some countries.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, because of the severe and long-term nature of the injuries incurred the costs of treatment are often very high.

Road traffic injuries weaken economic growth and the costs are borne disproportionately by the poor. The World Bank has estimated the cost of road traffic injuries at US\$100bn, a figure that represented 80% of OECD aid in 2009. Research has shown that a majority of urban and rural poor households with members suffering road traffic injury were not poor before the loss of a wage earner. And there is a devastating impact on education with hundreds of thousands of school-age children in low and middle-income countries losing their right to an education every year due to road traffic injury.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See OWG 7 TST Issues Brief Sustainable Transport  
[http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2634Issues%20Brief%20on%20Sustainable%20Transport\\_FINAL\\_21\\_No\\_v.pdf](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2634Issues%20Brief%20on%20Sustainable%20Transport_FINAL_21_No_v.pdf)

<sup>16</sup>[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2013/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/en/)

<sup>17</sup>Commission for Global Road Safety. Safe Roads for All: A Post-2015 Agenda for Health and Development.  
[http://www.makeroadssafe.org/Documents/mrs\\_safe\\_roads\\_for\\_all.pdf](http://www.makeroadssafe.org/Documents/mrs_safe_roads_for_all.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

**Policy briefing UN Open Working Group 11**  
**Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements: Sustainable Mobility and the Post-2015 development agenda**

After ten hearings from March 2013 to February 2014, the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group (OWG) issued a list of 19 'focus areas' from which member states will probably derive 8-12 SDGs. On April 18, the Co-Chairs of the OWG reduced this list of "focus areas" to 16. In all iterations of these working documents, a focus area on "inclusive, safe sustainable cities and human settlements has remained. Focus areas on water and sanitation, health, food security, gender seemingly enjoy universal support among member states as measured by their OWG testimonies and other public statements. A stand-alone goal on sustainable cities and human settlements has not yet received the kind of support that other Focus Areas have received.

Vital spatial issues – resource efficient use of land, and comprehensive community building combining housing, schools, parks, water/sanitation, streets and sidewalks -- are an unnatural fit for any but a stand-alone SDG on sustainable cities and human settlements. Extremely important issues such as transport and resilience have already been cut from the list of possible stand-alone goals; the focus area on sustainable cities remains a vital refuge for these to be addressed. **A stand-alone goal to "build inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements" is vital to address issues of equity, climate change, and sustainable mobility.** It is also an essential part of a successful strategy to mainstream sustainable transport across other possible goal areas as recommended in the 7<sup>th</sup> OWG session.

While most UN member states agree that urbanization is an important global trend, there has not been agreement on how to address it in the SDGs. The debate around "inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements" revolves around whether the issue would be better served by a stand-alone goal (achieving sustainable cities and human settlements) or by targets integrated into the other non-urban goals (as yet unarticulated).

The proposed goal "build inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements," meets the UN criteria for a goal. It is action-oriented, concise, easy to communicate, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable. It is also critically important in a transformational agenda for sustainable development, and growing in relevance. Global urbanization is an undeniable megatrend. Today, 5 of 10 people live in cities and by 2030, 6 of 10 people will live in cities with the remainder residing in smaller human settlements. *Moreover, unchecked, the world's cities are expected to more than double in physical size by 2030.*

A goal to "build inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements" embodies a people-centered approach that catalyzes and reinforces strong linkages between urban and rural places and integrates the provision of public and private goods systematically and efficiently. Potential targets that a sustainable cities and human settlement might encompass, illustrating action orientation, global nature and universal applicability include:

1. Providing access to affordable and accessible transport for shorter, safer and healthier commutes;
2. Enhancing urban planning that promotes youth participation, gender equality, compact cities and healthy rural settlements;
3. Strengthening resilience to reduce the loss of lives, assets, housing and

- infrastructure to natural disasters;
4. Preventing slums by ensuring equitable access to affordable, durable housing, basic services and land tenure security; and
  5. Ensuring access to public space for safe, connected communities and public services.

The absence of a stand-alone goal on sustainable cities and human settlements in the SDG framework would entirely neglect the key issues of the built environment: resilience, urban planning and sprawl, slums and affordable housing, public space, and transport and access for all to employment, education, health, food, and opportunity.

Failing to focus on the built environment or resilience through a stand-alone goal on cities would also undermine efforts to achieve other goals: if we don't get cities and human settlements right and set the stage for future growth, it will be extremely difficult – and prohibitively expensive – to address other key issues such as water, health, gender, education, and employment.

Some have raised concerns that a stand alone goal on cities and human settlements will diminish support for rural areas, but a focus on sustainable cities and human settlements will strengthen rural-urban linkages. Cities can provide ready markets for rural agricultural producers and support rural economies. Cities can provide rural areas access to critical services such as hospitals and schools. Moreover, when they succeed in limiting urban sprawl, sustainable cities can allow nearby agricultural land to remain intact, strengthening the health of rural areas, overall food security, ecosystem services and resilience.

Spatial issues cannot be mainstreamed under other SDGs. Among all the other constituencies supporting the other likely SDGs (e.g., water, health, food security and gender), there is not a single viable proposal for spatial systems and their important components (e.g. thoughtfully coordinated and designed housing, transportation, public space, and related service delivery). With cities set to more than double spatially by 2030, the manner in which they expand cannot be haphazard. Space-blind goals, targets and policies are not going to work. Sustainable service delivery and sustainable development depends on getting the built the environment right in human settlements, both rural and urban. A stand-alone goal to “build inclusive, safe, sustainable cities and human settlements,” is vital for effective progress on sustainable development.