

## **Comment from SDI on Draft New Urban Agenda**

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1. There is no specific mention of the role of community-based organisations / slum dweller organisations / organised communities of the urban poor / grassroots communities. This is of course a concern to us at SDI as we see these communities, and their active participation in urban development critical to an inclusive, integrated, resilient, and sustainable urban future - particularly taking into consideration the growing reality of informality in cities of the Global South.
2. Need for specific mention of partnerships between organised communities and local governments. References to “multi-stakeholder partnerships” (par. 139) and other participatory processes should be expanded to include specific mention of partnerships between government and organized communities of the urban poor. In addition, strategies for participation and engagement of communities must be institutionalized and resourced. Investment must be made in organizing communities for effective participation.
3. Discussions around informal settlements and their upgrading - housing, basic services like water, sanitation, and energy - do not make mention of the agency and innovation inherent in urban poor communities - with regards to the use of innovative methodologies, technologies, and finance mechanisms. Language around the co-production of solutions (by both urban poor communities and other urban decision makers) that capitalises on these must be included in the NUA in order to encourage governments to create space for these in national and local policies and implementation strategies.
4. Community-collected data is mentioned briefly in the newest draft of the NUA - a big win for us as we have been advocating for this addition with each revision - but the important role that it plays for cities is not adequately emphasised. Community-driven data collection empowers communities to play an active role in the development of their cities, which is of course key to the creation of truly resilient cities. It also allows for active participation of communities from the beginning of the development process through the identification of development needs and priorities, and through to the monitoring of implementation of strategies.

Involvement of grassroots communities should be mentioned in further references to the use of data in the implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda, particularly in paragraph 91, regarding the use of data for the development of a basic land inventory and in paragraph 143 regarding the monitoring of progress achieved in the implementation of sustainable urban development policies and strategies. Organised urban poor communities should be regarded as invaluable resources in holding governments accountable to their commitments.

Urban development policy and practice must be informed by the uniquely rich information that organized informal settlement and slum dwellers gather through settlement and city-wide community-driven data collection methodologies, including profiling, enumeration and mapping. Data collection serves as a critical tool for the empowerment of these communities, and as a powerful basis from which to enter into partnerships with other key stakeholders, including the State, to set the agenda for development priorities and upgrading needs.

5. While the change from "addressed" to "prevented" with regards to evictions is definitely welcome, there is little discussion (as has already been mentioned) of strategies that cities can implement to prevent evictions. Indeed, the language around the prevention of informal settlements is concerning. At SDI we like to talk about "inclusive" cities as being "slum friendly cities." That is the kind of attitude and those are the types of strategies we want to see the NUA advocating for - ones that create cities that are embracing of informality. This includes the approaches to evictions. What we would advocate for then would be the creation of a holistic approach to evictions that calls for the co-production of alternatives to evictions through active partnerships between organised urban poor communities and urban decision makers, particularly local governments.

The NUA should strengthen its commitment to prevent forced evictions through a call to institutionalize collaborative planning towards eviction alternatives in partnership with organized communities of the urban poor. We emphatically insist that the New Urban Agenda commit to an end to the practice of forced evictions of any kind and for any reason. The co-production of in situ, incremental slum upgrading solutions should be referenced as providing effective alternatives to evictions and as the default approach to dealing with inadequate, unsafe housing, infrastructure and basic services. When this is not feasible, organised urban poor communities should be central to the planning and implementation of the relocation and resettlement process.