



HOUSING AND LAND RIGHTS NETWORK

Habitat International Coalition

A Tool for Evaluative Habitat III Reporting: Responding to the Need for Implementation Reports

For 40 years, the progressive spirit and achievements of two generations of Habitat Agendas have aimed to improve the living conditions of human settlements in all habitats of the planet. However, it remains difficult to tell how and to which degree the world has reached that objective without evaluating those outcomes. The Habitat Agenda's implementation commitments never have been properly monitored or evaluated. As we move toward the putative renewal of that global agenda in 2016, a further iteration also cannot instill confidence as meeting current priorities and expectations without first reviewing the implementation of foregoing Habitat II commitments.

In order for the Habitat III processes and the stakeholders to maintain some measure of integrity and coherence with the bi-decennial policy, both the processes and contents of Habitat III preparations, including—and especially—national, regional and global Habitat III reports should reflect an evaluation of performance of those commitments and the instructive lessons learnt. However, since 1996, UN Habitat programs, related forums or annual reports have not aligned with, related to, or recalled Habitat II commitments. That is despite Istanbul+5 explicitly reaffirming them and assigning monitoring-and-evaluation responsibility to UN Habitat through a Habitat Agenda Task Manager System.

Periodic conferences, including World Urban Forums, have showcased existing practice and political discourse, but have never sought to promote, support or assess implementation of the Habitat II commitments. The UN development system concentrated more on the MDGs, but those minimum development goals lacked alignment with commitments of Habitat II. The current Habitat III process should have begun with a conscientious review of the Habitat Agenda's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainable outcomes, as HIC has advocated since 2013.

The 2014 Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation of UN Habitat also omitted a review of the UN specialized organization's implementation, monitoring or stewardship role vis-à-vis the Habitat II Agenda, or its functions related to the triple UN Charter-based purposes (i.e., forward development, peace and security and human rights). Amid some excellent work in the field, UN-Habitat is otherwise identified with the Washington Consensus among IFIs, quite distinctly from other UN Charter-based specialized organizations, which struggle to remedy the negative consequences of economic globalization. The diverse global crises of recent years should have informed UN-Habitat leadership's approach to Habitat III as an opportunity to address some of the worst forms of global policy and practice affecting human habitat. Habitat II governmental Partners already had committed to maintain a just macroeconomic order, protect the environment, ensure gender equality, prevent and remedy forced evictions, and fully and progressively realize the human right to adequate housing in the form of the Habitat Agenda at Habitat II.

In light of these and other repeated commitments of states and governments in the Habitat Agenda of 1996, Habitat International Coalition and its Housing and Land Rights Network (HIC-HLRN) have proffered methods, tools, models and capacity development on how to achieve the indispensable evaluation of Habitat II commitments and apply its lessons to Habitat III.

A Tool for Evaluative Habitat III Reporting

HIC-HLRN has promoted an alternative approach of reporting processes for two main purposes: (1) to enable a critical analysis of past performance of Habitat II by country and region as a knowledge base for deliberation and (2) to reconsider and/or improve upon the principled Habitat II commitments for the coming period 2017–36. The resulting evaluation tool seeks to serve evaluative Habitat III reporting, the Policy Units and ensuing negotiations to fill gaps, correct foregone assumptions and address those issues that have emerged in greater relief since the last Habitat Agenda.

This Tool for Evaluative Habitat III Reporting, creates an opportunity for the evaluator to learn about the applicable human rights norms and obligations and where to find them in the various sources of international law. Reviewing the Habitat II commitments against the states' human rights obligations calls for evaluation of efforts to ensure security of tenure, including land/agrarian reform efforts undertaken such that promote the social function of land/property and integrate diverse tenure arrangements within the state's land administration. Also, this approach calls for the needed review of the prohibited practice of forced eviction within the country, as most states already are required to report on five-year cycles under their prior human rights treaty obligations.

The HLRN Habitat III reporting tool facilitates this inquiry in the form of a customized Excel file containing three columns, beginning with the set of six broad themes and corresponding questions from the UN-Habitat reporting guidelines, paralleled by two columns of pre-existing reporting criteria: Column 2 contains the corresponding Habitat II commitments, summarizing their content and citing the paragraphs where they are located in the Habitat Agenda. Column 3 contains the state’s human rights obligations with their citations as they relate to each of the cited Habitat II commitments and, correspondingly, to the issues and questions posed in the UN-Habitat-proffered guideline. The tool is organized as follows:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
I. Demographic Issues and Challenges for a New Habitat Agenda Specific questions:	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations
II. Planning Specific questions:	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations
III. Environment and Urbanization Specific questions:	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations
IV. Governance and Administration Specific questions:	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations
V. Urban Economy Specific questions:	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations
VI. Housing and Basic Services	Related Habitat II commitments	Sources & standards of corresponding human rights state obligations

In addition to the specific questions that the UN Habitat reporting guidelines posed under each of the headings, the HIC-HLRN method also introduces some salient issues that were omitted from the “standard” guidelines, but arise from explicit Habitat II commitments, or hold particular relevance in the present generation of policy formulation, such as:

- **Describe the integrated planning provisions for balanced rural and urban development, particularly considering current and anticipated patterns of housing, labour, energy, water, transport, and developing and sustaining city-region food systems.**
- **What is the prospectus of the population, ethnic, religious, cultural, language, income and other diversity questions that will affect human settlement development for the coming bi-decennial, including any forms of discrimination, polarization or social integration dynamics?**
- **What is to be done to ensure the optimum degree of capacity and effective stakeholder participation in the various spheres of planning?**
- **What provisions exist to support local economic development, including the social production of cities/human settlements?**
- **How has the state aligned the urban and rural economy with national development policy?**
- **What measures have been taken to realize resource sharing and social function of the economy, including via land-value sharing, *plusvalía*, etc.?**
- **Describe any emerging or anticipated priorities and challenges in ensure equitable economic performance of the cities/human settlements in your country.**

Applying the tool is an exercise in two parts: An “Evaluation” part and a “Looking Forward” prospectus. The “Evaluation” part integrates the Habitat II Agenda commitments with the actual organization of the selective criteria of UN Habitat-proffered national reporting guidelines. It calls for a thoughtful review of what standing Habitat II commitments were fulfilled by central government, local authorities and governments (including major cities) and other subnational governmental structures. It also calls for illustrations of efforts by Habitat Agenda Partners through a participatory evaluation effort, the findings of which should reveal the challenges experienced and lessons learnt through success or failure of those efforts.

The “Looking Forward” section aims to identify the needed elements of the New Habitat Agenda that reflect the priority commitments of various spheres of government to achieve the bundle of habitat rights guaranteed by, and binding upon states, as well as recognize emerging rights (e.g., energy, land, transport, a collective right to the city, etc.) as well as techniques and concepts further developed in theory and practice since Habitat II, such as social production of habitat, the social function of land an property, regulation of real-estate markets, integrated systems of diverse tenure arrangements and land adjustments, as well as the binding and declaratory legal norms developed since 1996.

Many of these Habitat Agenda essentials remain neglected in the draft Habitat III outcome document and negotiations.

For an example evaluative reporting for Habitat III, please see: [Housing and Land Rights in India – Status Report for Habitat III](#).

For more information, contact: hlrn@hlrn.org and contact@hlrn.org