



HABITAT II

Ten Good Policies for Better Cities

Welcome the opportunities provided by the growth of cities, but combat inequality and environmental degradation. Otherwise the cost of cities will outweigh their benefits.

Release the energies and tap the resources of people and businesses, but don't leave everything to markets. Governments must coordinate the actions of others, monitor, and correct abuses. Freedom to build must be balanced by a duty to protect the interests of others.

The best way to protect the interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged people where government resources are scarce is to attack supply constraints -- especially in the supply of land and finance -- on a very large scale. Use positive measures, such as guided investments, rather than negative ones.

Strengthen the economic, political and civic institutions of the city. Establish open, transparent and accountable government. Create an enabling framework for civic action and respect non-governmental and community-based organizations as independent expressions of civic society. Always involve women.

Maximize the use of public-private partnerships to draw in additional resources and capacities, but don't confuse "private" with "commercial." All partners must receive benefits from their participation. The public sector holds a fiduciary interest in the future for all citizens.

Concentrate on scaling-up successful ideas, attitudes and approaches, not just projects and programmes. Use scarce public funds to lever additional resources from larger structures and institutions on a sustained basis. Strengthen links between formal and informal structures.

Increase local control over resources with accountable structures and transparent performance monitoring. Public policy can make a difference, even when resources are scarce. Strengthen government capacity, but don't see urban management as a panacea.

Don't take on too much: focus on a few key cross-sectoral issues such as urban poverty, the "brown agenda" and supply constraints. Lay down time-bound goals and strategies to address them. Maximize the flow of information and learning.

Don't divorce shelter and human settlements from wider economic, political and social policies. Adopt a holistic approach.

Make policy according to the local situation, not imported models or ideologies. Global market economics does not supply all answers to problems of equitable and sustainable human settlements development.