

# Navigating Towards Just and Social Urban Transformation - Post UNHA II Reflection workshop

*Workshop Concept Note*

**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

  
**JUSTCITY**

**TRIALOG**

  
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# 1. Background & Introduction

## 1.1 The Urban Dilemma

*The 21st century has been referred to as the first urban century. Today, half of the world's population lives in urban areas, and by the middle of this century, all regions of the world will be predominantly urban. It is estimated that virtually the whole of the world's population growth over the next 30 years will be concentrated in urban areas.*

This urban growth and its promise of opportunities has been faced by two challenges. On the one hand, urban growth must have limits (the sustainability agenda) while on another, it must respond to the questions of human well-being (growth for whom). It is for these reasons that we understand the urban in the realm of economic, environmental, social, and political spectrums. This mixed bag of possibilities is more pronounced in the global South urban areas where economic development is contributing to the rapid spatial and demographic expansion of urban areas, and local government structures are struggling to keep pace, resulting in abuse of human dignity. The COVID-19 pandemic and the current global crises; the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; as well as the food, energy and finance crises, have further exacerbated these urban dilemmas. The Just City concept expresses dilemmas of affirming human dignity and planetary sustainability on matters, such as shelter, solid and liquid waste management, sanitation, etc.

In the just concluded 2nd UN Assembly for UN-Habitat<sup>2</sup> (UNHA II), it was generally agreed that just, healthy, and green urban futures cannot be realized without inclusive, transformative and effective multilateralism, that acknowledges human rights and gender equality, and complements and reinforces national and local efforts towards sustainable development. UNHA II fully acknowledged that special efforts are required to enhance the role of Local and Regional Governments in developing and implementing global agreements with specific attention to five key action areas namely;

- ▶ Universal access to adequate housing,
- ▶ Urban climate action and environmental protection,
- ▶ Urban crisis recovery,
- ▶ Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance, and
- ▶ Prosperity and finance.

Resolutions of UNHA II form the core of the planned workshop.

## 1.2 About 2nd UN-Habitat Assembly

On 20 December 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution A/RES/73/239 decided to dissolve the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Program and to replace it with a United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat Assembly). UN-Habitat Assembly is a universal body composed of the 193 member states of the United Nations and convenes every four years. The UN-Habitat Assembly, as the main legislative body for global urban policy making, convened for its second session from 5 to 9 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya under the overall theme: **“A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises”**.

Amongst the responsibilities of the UN-Habitat Assembly are those that relate to review major trends related to human settlements and urbanization, and ensure the active engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in the Assembly, in its subsidiary bodies and in intersessional meetings. In the ministerial declaration of the 1st UNHA, an important statement was declared on the need of meaningful engagement of stakeholder in participatory and inclusive governance to accelerate the implementation of the NUA. This was cemented by the adoption of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy of UN-Habitat at the 2nd UNHA to strengthen the framework for stakeholder engagement. Trialog, FES, CSUDP and partners have embraced this stakeholder engagement mechanism to infuse evidence and knowledge driven discourse that is anchored on the UNHA II resolutions.



1. *Towards the Just City in Kenya (Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020), pp. 10–13, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/17107.pdf>. See also Susan Fainstein, *The Just City* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).*

2. The UN Assembly for UN-Habitat, as the main legislative body for global urban policy making, convened for its second session from 5 to 9 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya under the overall theme: “A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises”

3. Declaration 9 (i) “Engage citizens, communities and civil society, the private sector, institutions of higher learning and professional institutes, in particular through their role in capacity-building and job creation, and all other relevant stakeholders, including women, children, youth and the elderly, persons with disabilities, local communities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, and persons in vulnerable situations, in participatory and inclusive urban governance”



## Workshop Themes

- UNHA II in general
- Universal access to adequate housing
- Urban climate action and environmental protection
- Urban crisis recovery
- Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance
- Prosperity and finance

### 1.3 The Workshop Setting

The workshop is planned to bridge the outcome of the UNHA II with the Africa Just City Conference that is scheduled for the first quarter of 2024. Convened in a hybrid fashion through a partnership between Trialog, FES, and UN-Habitat, the workshop will draw on relevant knowledge and innovation for critical reflections on the UNHA II resolutions to enhance opportunities for achieving just and social urban transformation.

The outcome of this workshop is expected to, amongst other things, inform content of the Trialog publication as well as constitute a key input into the Just City conference of 2024.



*The workshop will draw on relevant knowledge and innovation for critical reflections on the UNHA II resolutions to enhance opportunities for achieving just and social urban transformation.*



# 2. The Workshop

## 2.1 Objectives

The objective of the workshop is to provide a forum for critical reflections on the UNHA II resolutions to enhance opportunities for achieving just and social urban transformation. This would further inform and engage in a broader continental perspective in the Africa Just City Conference that is scheduled for the first quarter of 2024.

The workshop will take place during Urban October (26/27 October 2023) in a hybrid format, with about 50 persons targeted.

## 2.2 Outputs

The outputs include;

- Content for Trialog 2024 Publication
- Knowledge papers for the Africa JC conference
- Catalogue of Catalytic interventions
- Collection of complementary tension points and open question for the arenas for discussions (impulse questions, meta-level questions) for the conference

## 2.3 Workshop Design

The workshop shall be organized over two days (26 October afternoon and 27 October morning) with each day's convening covering half day sessions. Each session shall be constituted by three panelists. Each subject matter will be led by a short paper presentation followed by two discussants who provide global and local perspectives on each of the subject matters.

**Day one** will cover the subject matters of:

1. UNHA II in general
2. Universal realization of the human right, adequate housing
3. Urban climate action and environmental protection

On day one, the first panel from the UN-Habitat will discuss the content and inherent intention of the specific resolutions at the end of the UNHA II. This will be followed by two respondents, one from the Global context while another from the national context.

The second panel from JCWG shall engage on the subject matter of universal access to adequate housing basing on the notion of affordability of 'owning' or 'renting', followed by two respondents giving global and local contexts respectively.

The third panel from Trialog shall discuss the subject matter of urban climate action and environmental protection (focusing on climate and environmental justice, vulnerabilities and marginalization), including values at stake in remedying loss and damage) followed by respondents who will discuss the global and local perspectives respectively.

**Day two** will cover the subject matters of:

1. Urban crisis recovery
2. Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance
3. Prosperity and finance

On day 2, the panel from FES on urban crisis recovery will be led by a paper on the COVID-19 pandemic and the current triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; and the need for just, healthy and green urban futures that reinforces national and local efforts towards sustainable development.

The second panel led by UN-Habitat will be on localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance and shall discuss the subject matter of acting local to go global through localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance, followed by respondents who will discuss the global and local perspectives respectively.

The final panel on prosperity and finance will interrogate why productivity of Africa’s cities have not “taken off” in productivity terms and what is needed to transform “African towns” into thriving urban economies that build on the priority of supporting local innovation.

## 2.4 Workshop Program

Time (EAT)	Event/Activity	Moderator
<b>Day 1 (October 26, 2023)</b>		
14:00 – 14:15	<b>Welcome and Introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bastian Schulz – Country Director, FES-Kenya</li> <li>Oumar Sylla – Africa Regional Director, UN-Habitat</li> </ul>	UN-Habitat, FES, Trialog
14:15 – 15:15	<b>Session 1: 2nd UN Habitat Assembly for UN-Habitat Outcome</b> <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutinta Munyati – UN-Habitat</li> <li>David Dodman - IIED/IHS</li> <li>Dr. Musyimi Mbathi - University of Nairobi (UoN)</li> </ul>	George Wasonga
15:15 – 15:30	<b>Break</b>	
15:30 – 16:30	<b>Session 2: Universal access to adequate housing</b> <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prof. Alfred Omenya – Executive Director, Eco-Build Africa</li> <li>Joseph Schechla - Habitat Internal Coalition</li> <li>Arch. Florence Nyole – President, Architectural Association of Kenya</li> </ul>	Dr. Steve Ouma
16:30 – 16:45	<b>Break</b>	
16:45 – 17:45	<b>Session 3: Urban climate action and environmental protection</b> <b>Panelists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vincent Möller - Free Hanseatic city of Bremen</li> <li>Muyiwa Adegun - FUTA, Akure</li> <li>Susan Ekoh - IDOS</li> <li>Gesa Schöneberg – Alliance Foundation</li> <li>Aaron Acuda – IIED</li> <li>Kai Klause - Misereor</li> </ul>	Franziska Laue
17:45 – 18:00	<b>Wrap Up</b>	FES, Trialog



Time (EAT)	Event/Activity	Moderator
<b>Day 2 (October 27, 2023)</b>		
<b>10:00 – 10:15</b>	Welcome and Introduction	FES, Trialog
<b>10:15 – 11:15</b>	<p><b>Session 4: Urban crisis recovery</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bastian Schulz – FES, Kenya</li> <li>• Sam Olando – Pamoja Trust</li> <li>• Rose Lukalo – Independent Media Consultant</li> <li>• Adriana Allen - University College London / Habitat International Coalition</li> </ul>	Eva Dick
<b>11:15 – 11:30</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<p><b>Session 5: Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaia Neal Aggarwal – UN-Habitat</li> <li>• Dr. Steve Ouma Akoth – Kenyatta University, Kenya</li> <li>• Florence Syevuo - SDG Forum, Kenya</li> </ul>	Titus Kaloki
<b>12:30 – 12:45</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>12:45 – 13:45</b>	<p><b>Session 6: Prosperity and finance</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eric Kingori - Finance and Investment Lead, SUED-Kenya</li> <li>• Jamil Shamji - Kisii Municipal Board</li> </ul>	George Wasonga
<b>13:45 – 14:00</b>	<b>Wrap Up and Outlook</b>	FES, Trialog

## Panelists Briefs:

### Panel Description

#### **1. UNHA II in general (UN-Habitat)**

The UN-Habitat Assembly, as the main legislative body for global urban policy making, convened for its second session from 5 to 9 June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya under the overall theme: “A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises”. A set of resolutions emerging from the UNHA II require concerted efforts amongst governmental and non-governmental actors to realize them. The session shall discuss the content and inherent intention of the specific resolutions at the end of the UNHA II. This shall be followed by two respondents, one from the Global context while another from the context of Kenya.

#### **2. Universal access to adequate housing (JCWG)**

The right to adequate housing and shelter is embodied through several core elements, namely: legal security of tenure, including protection against forced evictions; availability of services (safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking and lighting, refuse disposal, waste management, recycling); affordability; access to housing finance; accessibility; habitability (providing physical safety, adequate space and protection from the elements); location (in relation to employment opportunities, health care, schools, childcare centres, resilience and disaster risk reduction, transport, and security); and cultural adequacy. The session shall engage on the subject matter of universal access to adequate housing, followed by two respondents giving global and local contexts respectively.

#### **3. Urban climate action and environmental protection (hosted by TRIALOG)**

On 17 November 2022, the Egyptian COP27 Presidency with the support of UN-Habitat convened the first-ever Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at a UN Climate Change Conference of Parties, focusing on housing, urban development, multilevel action in relation to climate change therefore underscoring the role of cities in responding to the climate change. The session shall discuss the subject matter of urban climate action and environmental protection (focusing on climate and environmental justice, vulnerabilities and marginalization), followed by respondents who will discuss the global and local perspectives respectively.

#### **4. Urban crisis recovery (FES)**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the current global crises; the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution; as well as the food, energy and finance crises, have clearly shown that just, healthy, and green urban futures cannot be realized without inclusive, transformative and effective multilateralism, that acknowledges human rights and gender equality, and complements and reinforces national and local efforts towards sustainable development. The session shall discuss the subject matter of urban crisis recovery with focus on justice for the ‘invisibles’ as defined through the work of FES on Just Cities.

#### **5. Localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance**

Today, the world is off-track in the implementation of the global agendas on sustainable urbanization, including several targets of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on ‘Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’. Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) have been deployed as mechanism to provide evidence-based transformative actions at local and national levels towards meeting the global agenda. This session shall discuss the subject matter of local actions to global impact through localization of the SDGs and multilevel governance, followed by respondents who will discuss the global and local perspectives respectively

#### **6. Prosperity and finance**

Most recently there has been a debate, largely among international economists, about why Africa’s cities have not “taken off” in productivity terms and what is needed to transform “African market towns” into thriving urban economies with a greater share of manufacturing. At the same time various issues concerning inequalities between and within cities have become more obvious, as there is clearly a lack of debate regarding the interconnectedness of rapid urbanization (SDG 11), political developments, growing inequalities (SDG 10), changes in the world of work (SDG 8), gender injustices (SDG 5), environmental aspects including climate action (SDG 13) and [the transformative value of just and sustainable urbanization](#). This session shall discuss the subject matter of prosperity and finance within the context of urban productivity, followed by respondents who will discuss the global and local perspectives respectively.