

Position Paper for the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

The topics presented before the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) are: Strengthening the Pathways for the Implementation of International Standards for Sustainable Urban Development and Financing Technology Transfer in Urban Development. The Kingdom of Bhutan stresses on the urgency of addressing these important matters and all of these through international collaborative work.

I. Strengthening the Pathways for the Implementation of International Standards for Sustainable Urban Development

The reality of insufficient land space pushes all states to do their best on discovering innovative ways of utilizing land supply. Reaffirming this, Gridded Population of the World and the Global Rural-Urban Mapping Project (GRUMP) states that 2.6% of the earth surface is covered by urban cities as of 2015 with about 54% of the whole population living in urban areas and a total of 80% of the Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) being generated by these areas according to the World Bank statistics (WB). These facts make urban cities the focal centers for social, cultural, and economic development. Acknowledging this, E/RES/2014/30 implements the habitat agenda where sustainable urbanization is the primary goal; further explored in E/RES/2015/34 where the role of urbanization is emphasized. The General Assembly then adopted A/RES/70/210 where it established comprehensive, people-centered goals and concrete policies and actions towards sustainable urban development. The Kingdom of Bhutan is guided by these resolutions in constructing guidelines for sustainable urbanization; building cities that are resilient with strong and conducive infrastructures and able to provide for the everyday needs of the concentrated urban population.

Maintaining a forest cover of at least 60% in all of Bhutan's territory is part of its Gross National Happiness; a development concept established within the state during the 1970's and continues to effectively work within Bhutan. This concept promotes socio-economic wellness and conservation of culture and environment through a balanced approach. As a party of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Kingdom of Bhutan also established the National Action Program (NAP) in 2010 to fight land degradation. Last are the promotion of sustainable transport energy and the formation of micro-small-medium industries that endorse a carbon neutral society and renewable clean technology. All of these programs and projects are implemented through A/RES/65/309 "Happiness: Towards a Holistic Approach to Development" initiated by Bhutan.

Through international cooperation, promoting international standards of sustainable urban development is an effective method but not enough to strengthen the pathway to implementation of inclusive sustainable urbanization in every country; there should be a need for feasible and holistic guidelines that would guide every state in implementing policies regarding sustainable urban development. The Kingdom of Bhutan proposes three policies for every state to follow and incorporate in their domestic laws: (1) Harmonization of all policies concerning sustainable urbanization in all developing states: (a) considering their current urban status; (b) and their capability to adopt and implement such policies. (2) Incorporating a balance approach between (a) social development; (b) and economic development; (3) Promoting feasible and holistic development concerning all developing states' level of urbanization. The Kingdom of Bhutan stands firm in its belief on international cooperation and strengthening the implementation of international standards of sustainable urban development through exploring easier and more applicable ways.

II. Financing Technology Transfer in Urban Development

The constant evolving state of our society triggered by globalization forces states and every region around the world to accept that sustainable innovation is the only way to survive and adapt. The General Assembly adopted three resolutions emphasizing on transformative sustainable urban development: A/RES/70/213 focuses on transforming the society from traditional-based economy to innovative industry; this resolution also focuses on the importance and enhancement of conducive technology and its financing; these were further discussed on A/RES/70/207, together with issues regarding the establishment of concrete plans and actions and conservation of sustainable biological diversity. The Kingdom of Bhutan is guided by A/RES/70/198 where sustainable agricultural technology is stressed and the financing technology transfer from developed states to developing states is of great importance.

The Kingdom of Bhutan is an agricultural-based country with about 69.1% Bhutanese people working in agriculture; they practice an old system of farming that is less profitable and inclusive to economic growth. The Kingdom of Bhutan established the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF) in 1985 for the purpose of transforming subsistence integrated farming to commercial farming. Under this are the investment on infrastructure, technology transfer for agriculture extension and input resources such as seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides. Majority of Bhutanese farmers don't have access to cash flow; less than 20% of these farmers have access to credit, and this makes them unable to make their agriculture enterprise into an innovative activity. The Bhutan Development Finance Corporation (BDFC) of 1988 is then established to resolve this problem; this institution focuses on agriculture credit. Group Guarantee Lending Service (GGLS), which is under BDFC, provides loans for Bhutanese farmers and even extends to giving technology and advisory services. Bhutan also established the Microfinance Program to further provide financial aid to small, struggling farmers.

Technology transfer is one of the most significant issues faced by developing countries since this action remain very expensive. The Kingdom of Bhutan proposes three policies because of this: 1) High-ceiling loans that have a low interest and long-term return rates, 2) Promote balance and sufficient financing for technology transfer from developed states to developing and under- developed states, 3) Harmonization of all the policies concerning financial aid from non- governmental and international organization in order to finance technology transfer from developed countries to developing and under-developed countries. The Kingdom of Bhutan will stand on its principle to promote economic inclusive growth to all developing and under- developed countries that rely on an agricultural-based economy.