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Main theme: *the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda*, with following sub-themes:

   a. making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda;
   b. stakeholders accountability in public governance for development;
   c. creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda.

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The **post-2015 development agenda needs to be localized** in order to identify and address inequality among and within countries and result in more targeted interventions. UN-Habitat agrees that clearer responsibilities for and empowerment of local governments and partners will galvanize efforts to achieve the new development goals.

UN-Habitat also believes that in addition to the above, another reason to localize the new Development Goals is the **increased levels of urbanization worldwide**. Unlike when the Millennium Declaration was agreed among Member States in 2000, the majority of the world's population lives since 2008 in urban areas and it is estimated that by 2050, over 70% of the world population will live in towns and cities. This creates a new scenario where increasing demands and complex conditions existing in today's towns and cities need to be acknowledged and urgently addressed by national governments and multilateral institutions. The challenges facing cities – e.g. demographic explosion, institutional incapacity, fiscal constraints, increasing segregation, and climate change – urgently require solutions tailored to the specificities of each location. For instance, it is worth noting that while 800 million people are living today in slums and other informal settlements, it is estimated that as many as 60% of all urban dwellers will be by 2030 under the age of 18. This has critical implications for public governance as a more inclusive approach is required in order to respond to the needs of informal settlement dwellers and the increasing urban youth.

As we now leave in an urban era, **towns and cities can and need to play a catalytic role in achieving the new Development Goals**. National governments require an

adoption of an urban paradigm shift that deals with the cities in a holistic manner and not in a sector-wide approach, identifying good practices and developing performance monitoring and evaluation systems also for towns and cities. Strategies for localizing the Goals require the local governments' leadership and contribution, including from women leaders, capacity building and a conducive urban legislation. In the different phases of localization, UN-Habitat recommends assessing the needs of decentralization of governance (as said in E/C.16/2013/2, para. 38), however this assessment should also include the specific conditions and needs of towns and cities. Many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have developed decentralization policies and programmes as part of broader strategies to establish effective local governance and local development processes but they have often not been fully implemented. In addition, some decentralization policies have been prioritized by national governments including with human and financial resources but no attention has been given to the specific needs of towns and cities.

UN-Habitat advocates for an **urban paradigm shift** that should be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda. It believes that **sustainable urbanization can be a source of development** and understands that well-panned and governed cities can generate economic growth and social welfare. This shift positions the urban public space as the backbone of the city and the key for economic performance and inclusivity, with good urban planning and effective law codes and regulations as paramount to help achieve resilient and low-carbon development. Specific regulations are required to facilitate a sustainable urban development, for example with inter-ministerial national urban policies and governance arrangements that allow for planned city extension and infill. Another important focus should respond to the increasing need to examine and support inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms to ensure responsiveness and shared service delivery as numerous cities expand beyond their administrative boundaries.

This paradigm shift places the people, the city-dwellers - particularly the poorest and most vulnerable – as the primary protagonists in the pursuance of the right to decent living conditions for all. Responding to the specific needs and challenges of towns and cities goes in line with the value proposition of **the transformative government** where the needs of the citizens and businesses are put at the heart of public policy in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government. Social accountability and e-participation are complementary features that should help to significantly improve public governance in post-2015, not only in policy development but in planning, implementation and accounting for development results. UN-Habitat believes that there is an urgent need to integrate the sub-national governments, including towns and cities, as promoters of social accountability processes as these governmental actors are the ones with higher interaction with citizens and civil society. Consistent with the Busan Global Partnership on Aid Effectiveness, local governments need to be supported to

assume more fully, roles above and beyond service delivery to enhance participation and accountability at the sub-national levels.

In order to address the current human development challenges, achieving **a functioning multi-level governance framework** should be a global development goal. An adequate distribution of competencies amongst government levels is required responding to the specificities of each country and following the subsidiarity principle, after which capacities and resources at the local levels have to be secured. This will directly respond to the needs of local ownership, participation and accountability. Through a functioning multi-level governance framework, the global development challenges can be more effectively and comprehensively addressed: urbanization, basic service delivery, growth and employment creation, inequalities, environmental sustainability, food security and conflict.

Urbanization presents an opportunity to solve many of the challenges confronting human development and public governance, but this requires adopting **a proactive approach**, acknowledging the needs of towns and cities and tackling their challenges in a holistic manner in the new Development Goals. This will help move beyond the limiting sector-wide approaches, avoiding piecemeal problem solving and advance a responsive and accountable public governance.

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