

Statement by World Vision International

Honourable Co-Chairs, Member States, and Delegates,

My name is Joyati Das, Senior Director of World Vision International's Global Urban Programmes. It is one of the largest child focused INGOs with a reach of more than 4.3 million children across 90 countries. World Vision is already present in the world's most rapidly urbanising countries and regions. We are also the Co-Chair of the Children and Youth Constituent Group in the General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III.

We commend the New Urban Agenda's focus on justice, safety, sustainability and resilience as a common good that essentially contributes to prosperity, decent and quality life for all inhabitants in the city.

The recognition of children's rights, their right to protection from urban violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination, and full participation in city planning, the provision of safe spaces to learn, develop, and grow in a healthy and stable environment, are essentials for inclusive cities.

With regards to leaving no one behind, the issue of migration and displacement needs to be highlighted strongly in the New Urban Agenda's "principles and commitments" and "call for action". The complex dynamics of rural-urban mobility is presenting new risks to city planning and decision making authorities. Most city governments and local institutions are struggling to deal with the issue and often overlook migrant voices and experiences.

Migrant children are more vulnerable to being exploited as child labourers in the city. Estimates suggest that tens of millions of children, some as young as 5 years old, live or work on the streets of the world's towns and cities. Yet, there is lack of accurate and disaggregated data about this issue at city and local government level.

Data on children's vulnerabilities, well-being and extreme poverty that is experienced in urban slum communities can be obscured by the relative affluence of their neighbouring communities. Local governments must engage in participatory approaches to data collection, working with local institutions and private sector to fill in the data gap issue.

Cities should harness the full potential of technologies where all urban dwellers, especially children and youth, can participate in and interact with data collection and analysis leading to 'smarter' cities for children and youth that are people-centred and reflect the collective intelligence of communities.

We support the New Urban Agenda's commitment to the resilience of cities. However, it fails to define resilience beyond resilience to disasters and climate change and other shocks and stresses. The document needs to highlight the importance of social resilience and resilience to conflict and chronic urban violence. Localised social resilience is critical to leverage and enhance the ability of individuals, especially children and youth, households, neighbourhoods/communities and organisations to respond to shocks and stresses.

We celebrate the promotion of diversity and importance of building social cohesion to contribute to inclusive cities. However, the New Urban Agenda fails to mention diversity in terms of religion and faith, which forms the basis of building inclusive urban communities. We propose the New Urban Agenda strengthens the importance of interfaith dialogue and partnerships to promote peace building in cities, especially for the benefit of children and youth, who are the rightful owners and leaders of our future cities.

Thank you for this opportunity and we look forward to Quito.