

The potential of cycling in the New Urban Agenda - Zero Draft Analysis

European Cyclists' Federation / World Cycling Alliance

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Introduction

Habitat III is the 3rd conference of the United Nations for housing and sustainable urban development. The Habitat conferences take place every 20 years and the next one will be in Quito, Ecuador, October 17-20, 2016. In this event, representatives of UN member states and stakeholders will come together to discuss and finish the final version of a document called the "New Urban Agenda" which will contain a series of principles and guidelines to work towards more sustainable cities.

This document can have a real impact on how cities will be shaped from now on and cycling has a real potential in many ways to create more sustainable cities.

European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and World Cycling Alliance (WCA), together with its Brazilian member **Bike Anjo**, analyzed the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and reflected on where and how cycling is referred to, and what is still lacking in the vision of how cycling can contribute to sustainable urban development. In **Annex 1** is a complete list of specific text changes and recommendations in the Zero Draft.

You can find the Zero Draft document from Habitat III here: <https://www.habitat3.org/zerodraft>

1. General analysis of cycling in the New Urban Agenda

- **Cycling is present and there is no turning back.** The work done by many organizations around the world on cycling promotion is definitely reflected in the Zero Draft and we are happy for that.
- **Cycling is so much more than transport** and this should be translated into the New Urban Agenda, linking to basic rights to the city, local economy, health, environment, and social inclusion, among other benefits of cycling.
- **People-oriented cities are key** to the New Urban Agenda, guaranteeing that we are not talking about cars, buses and bicycles, but drivers, passengers and cyclists.
- **"Sustainable transport" should always be emphasised** instead of just "transport", so as to not confuse with old models of transport policies, such as road infrastructure for cars.

- A New Urban Agenda **has to enhance the reduction of car usage** and establishing the necessary tools for that, such as reducing parking space, congestion charge schemes, and pedestrian streets, among others.
- **Road and public space safety** needs to be more present if we want to guarantee quality of life for people and a healthy environment in cities.

2. Where is cycling present in the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda

The Zero Draft already shows the potential of cycling on sustainable urban development in many ways:

- Puts **people in the center** of the vision for cities (para. 5 (a)), highlighting that cities should be shaped for the quality of life of people and not for machines and technology.
- Understands the **need for safe, comfortable and efficient street networks** for walking and cycling as a means to **enhance economic productivity and local economic development** (para. 51).
- Brings **cycling promotion in the overall urban planning strategies**, with the outcome of **improving quality of life and social cohesion** (para. 101).
- Confirms the **need for a massive increase in walking and cycling, as well as public transport** (para. 112).
- Fosters **compact and well-connected networks**, proposes the **integration of mobility plans to overall urban planning and multi-modality**, which are key elements for increasing bicycle usage (para. 113).
- Determines the support to cities to **develop financing instruments for cycling lanes**, although it needs to include sidewalks and charging individual motorized vehicles as one of the instruments of financing (para. 118).

3. Where cycling is missing in the Zero Draft of the New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda, despite what is mentioned above, did not get the whole picture of the potential for cycling to achieve sustainable and inclusive cities. These following points are where the Zero Draft can be improved upon from an active mobility perspective:

- It shows the challenge of funding city projects, but does not set **financing standards for sustainable mobility instead of for financing motorized private transport**, e.g. establishing congestion charge to fund bicycle infrastructure, instead of funding more roads and highways for cars (paras. 7 (c), 118 and 125-149).
- The bicycle is a powerful tool to achieve **social inclusion and eradicate poverty** by giving access to public services and jobs through a low cost and clean transportation mode, but the NUA lacks this connection in the section called "Leave no one behind, urban equity and poverty eradication" (paras. 20-24).
- **Quality space for cycling and walking**, such as bike lanes and sidewalks, must be highlighted as a basic infrastructure for all so as to focus on accessibility and not only on transportation (paras. 25 and 26).

- Adequate housing and shelter must be well-served by public transport, but it should also be in central locations in order to **reduce travel demand** and **integrate active mobility into housing approaches**, e.g. commercial and public facilities in walking or cycling distances (paras. 30, 100 and 111).
- **Bicycle lanes are also public spaces**, as well as other infrastructure that promotes the safety and quality of bicycle travels (paras. 36 and 56).
- **Traffic is also a major issue for safety in cities** and **road safety** towards more vulnerable groups, such as pedestrians and cyclists, must be considered as measures for urban safety (para. 39).
- **Cycling is good for economic growth and local economy**, as it can improve connectivity and strengthen territorial linkages for more job opportunities, gives easy access to local services and goods, can **contribute strongly to tourism** and is an important tool for a **more efficient supply chain in urban logistics** (para. 45, 47-49, 53, 61, 64 and 113).
- **Cycling contributes to a healthy society** and **gives access to health and education facilities** by connecting areas that lack public transport and also serves as a feeder to the transit system (para. 55).
- **Increasing cycling has a huge impact in improving air quality** as it is a clean means of transportation (para. 69).
- **Cycling creates new consumption and production patterns**, with smaller circuits between producer and consumer and more efficient urban logistics, neutralizing the emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants (para. 74).
- **Cycling can deliver to the decrease of 2 °C** in the global average temperature with a possible reduction of 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in transport sector by 2050 by shifting towards a low-carbon energy system (para. 77-78).
- **Cyclists should participate actively in stakeholder engagement processes** as they have a broad view of streets and can deliver relevant inputs to urban mobility planning (paras. 85-95).
- A **sustainable urban mobility plan must go through policies to reduce car usage**, such as reduction and regulation of parking spaces and congestion charges, among others (para. 112).
- **Data on cycling and walking is key** to emphasize a sustainable urban mobility system and convince citizens of its importance (paras. 161-163).

We believe that the New Urban Agenda is on the right track and we see a clear presence of active mobility in its Zero Draft. ECF, WCA and its members will continue to cooperate with this process and show that cycling is a key component of sustainable and inclusive urban development.

ANNEX 1 - Specific text suggestions and recommendations for cycling to reach its full potential in the New Urban Agenda

Overall text suggestions:

- Focus on inclusiveness and access related to transportation (“right” to mobility - access to the city).
- Whenever the means of transport are listed put them in the following order: “walking, cycling and public transport” as to set the necessary order of priority when dealing with accessibility.
- Whenever transport is mentioned, it should be mentioned as “sustainable transport” or “sustainable means of transport” or even “sustainable mobility” as in the following paragraphs: paras. 54, 114, 117, 118
- Transportation and housing come together when looking at reducing the demand for travel (which is only specifically mentioned in para. 113). Paras. 30, 51, and 111 should all mention reduced travel demand
- In several places where there are references to infrastructure add “and services”.
- We suggest using the generic term “safe access” rather than “access” whenever it appears in the Zero Draft in order to distribute the need for safety throughout the text.

Specific text revisions:

- Para. 5 (k) - Change to “Promoting planning and investment for safe, sustainable urban mobility systems, **including walking, cycling, mass transit, and technology systems**, that link people, places and economic opportunities. **Transport should not pose a public health threat for people in terms of traffic injuries, polluted air, or hindering physical activity.**”
- Para. 7 (c) - Financial systems should recognize sustainable standards and priorities, e.g.: funds for bicycle infrastructure instead of highways and bridges.
- Para. 17 - Add “congestion” to the list of issues.
- Paras. 25 & 26 - In these paragraphs it is mentioned “mobility” and then “transportation”. This is vague and at the same time repetitive. In the second part (in “transportation”) it focuses on the transport and not on the “accessibility infrastructure”, such as quality sidewalks and signalization.
- Para 30 - Include “walking and cycling” to: “...basic infrastructure, **walking and cycling** infrastructure, and services like sanitation systems, and public transport, as well as livelihood opportunities...”
- Para. 36 - Include cycling lanes: “Public spaces, which consist of open areas such as streets, **cycling lanes**, sidewalks, squares, gardens and parks, must be seen as ...”
- Para, 39 - Emphasize that safety is not the same as security by changing to “attractive public places where it promotes the sense of belonging from children to elderly, for men and women”. And with “transportation” include “safe and good quality infrastructure for walking, cycling and use of public transport, as well as policies to promote traffic safety for pedestrians and cyclists.”

- Paras. 47-49 - In section about "Inclusive and sustainable urban economies" include "cycling logistics as a form of inclusive and local economy and for reducing travel demand".
- Para 51 - This paragraph is quite important and mentions public transport twice in a confusing way and then brings in walking and cycling. We should make the connection between "**reduce travel demands**" with "more sustainable modes of travelling, such as walking and bicycling" and integrate this with a cost-effective public transport system.
- Para 53 - Emphasize that this "transport needs of the poor" should be 1) sustainable means of transportation; 2) seeking to reduce the distances and need for transport.
- Para. 55 - Include promotion of active mobility: "Availability and universal access to adequate and quality social infrastructure and facilities, **such as health and education facilities and promotion of active mobility**, among others, is fundamental to building a healthy society ..."
- Para 61 - Promoting local economy and cycling economy, public spaces and cycle logistics should be included.
- Para 64 - Promoting local economy, cycling economy, cycle logistics (often part of the informal sector).
- Para. 74 - Add "the necessity of creating smaller circuits from producer to consumer, reducing the needs of transportation and its impacts, as well as promoting more sustainable means of transporting goods and services".
- Para 100 - There is a link between compactness and public transport. We need to emphasize that compact cities means walking and cycling distances (to promote active mobility).
- Para. 101 - Include health: "promoting walkability and cycling towards improving the overall quality of life, **health** and social cohesion"
- Para 112 (c) - Change the order to "A massive increase in walking, cycling and public transport" so as to set the necessary order of priority when dealing with accessibility.
- Para 112 (c) - Include the outcomes of this goal: "to bring real positive impact in the health of citizens, reduce air pollution and congestion, and increase social inclusiveness and accessibility to the city for all".
- Para 112 - An extra point (d) is necessary to mention "through: (d) instruments to disincentivize the use of car in order to reduce its negative impacts, such as air pollution, congestion costs, etc."
- Para. 113 - Add "including a density-based fair distribution of diverse services across cities, which will minimize demand for travel, **as well as use sustainable modes of transportation for these services and goods**".
- Para. 118 - Correct the term "cycling lanes" (incorrectly referred to as "lines" in the text) and include "sidewalks".
- Paras. 125-128 - This section does not offer much concrete action and should focus on changing current financing patterns (examples: congestion charges, fiscal incentives, using national funds for active mobility infrastructure, etc.)