BRIEFING NOTE
THE 100 CITIES INITIATIVE
OF THE WORLD URBAN CAMPAIGN

A. INTRODUCTION

The first Steering Committee meeting of the World Urban Campaign (WUC), held in Barcelona 12-14 October 2009, recommended the establishment of a Sustainable Cities Advisory Commission and that the concept, scope and methodology for the proposed 100 Cities Initiative be launched at Fifth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF5).

An Expert Group Meeting was held on 26-28 January 2010 in Nairobi gathering 21 experts both experienced and knowledgeable about best practice systems and the use of the new media. They reviewed the 100 Cities initiative concepts and objectives, selection criteria and process. They also selected a core set of 21 cities from a broader list of cities proposed by the WUC Partners.

The 100 Cities Initiative was launched in Rio de Janeiro at WUF5, on Tuesday 23 March featuring 12 pilot cities committed to the initiative:

1. Livingston, Guatemala
2. Medellin, Colombia
3. Makati, Philippines
4. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
5. Alicante, Spain
6. Philadelphia, USA
7. Pushino, Russia
8. Rabat, Morocco
9. Rybnick, Poland
10. Sao Jao da Barra, Brazil
11. Vienna, Austria
12. Rosario, Argentina

The 100 Cities website, hosting information on pilot cities, was also presented at the launch of the World Urban Campaign on Friday 26 March at the WUF5 closing ceremony. Additionally, the Mayor of Alicante, Mrs. Sonia Castedo Ramos, presented her city’s commitment to the Initiative and to hosting the 100 Cities Summit in April 2011.

At the fourth Steering Committee meeting of the World Urban Campaign held in Alicante, Spain on 30 May-2 June 2010, WUC Partners reviewed the initiative and made recommendations on the way forward. They requested the establishment of a working group for the organisation of the 100 Cities Summit.

B. THE 100 CITIES INITIATIVE CONCEPT

Two of the key challenges of any campaign are: (a) being able to reach out to a critical mass of people who matter; and (b) identifying who those people are.

In the case of the WUC the primary client and beneficiary are both cities. However, cities are complex organisms and no single social or political entity can claim that they represent a city in its entirety. For this reason, the 100 Cities Initiative is conceived as the vehicle that can reach out to a broad cross-section of actors and constituencies that help shape the policies of a city.
The 100 Cities Initiative is designed as an experimental phase lasting 12 to 18 months to test how best to appeal to and mobilize people, communities, municipal officials, service providers, and the political leadership of any city. It does so by encouraging these actors to tell their story on how they are contributing to a better and more sustainable city. After this initial test phase to culminate in a 100 Cities Summit, the initiative would be opened to broader participation by all cities committed to open learning and sharing.

The intention is to make full use of the new media and encourage people to submit their stories in the most creative and innovative manner possible.

The 100 Cities Initiative is about “living practices”. Living practices are holistic and forward looking. They provide dynamic learning opportunities and are organized around principles of sharing and structured learning through partnering. The processes and outcomes of living practices will be documented, reported and measured over time. The major characteristics of living practices can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Looks forward at current and future challenges;
- Involves multiple actors and the community in a spirit of sharing and learning;
- Focuses on problem-solving especially for yet to be resolved issues and challenges;
- Uses a story-telling format to facilitate periodic updates by multiple actors using multiple media;
- Employs tools and metrics for benchmarking and assessing process and progress;
- Recognises and rewards sharing and learning;
- Supports story telling in local languages and relies on a “champion” to extract lessons learned.

Living practices are not intended to replace “best practices”, rather to build on them and to provide a user-friendly and cost-effective way for their continuous updating for learning purposes.

The 100 Cities Initiative works according to the following paradigms and milestones:

- ‘100’ represents a working number and a starting point for the Initiative.
- The cities will interact amongst each other leading up to the summit, generating a critical mass of knowledge.
- This knowledge will be consolidated immediately before the summit, yielding a collection of living practices and launching a global message.
- A strong basis of cooperation between local authority and civil society actors is a selection criterion for the initiative.

Some of the key benefits accruing to cities and communities participating in the 100 Cities Initiative includes:

- Exposure to a global network of partners that are promoting more enabling policies and leading edge practices in sustainable urban development;
- Recognition at national and international levels as a city or community committed to innovation and change;
- Insights to new public-private partnerships and models for investment;
- Opportunities to learn from a large number of cities and communities engaged in green economic development opportunities, technologies and know how;
- Access to a vast array of tried and tested tools, methods and approaches for effective urban planning and management and sustainable and resilient housing and urban development.
C. COMMITMENTS AND CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE 100 CITIES INITIATIVE

Any group or entity, such as a street, neighbourhood or district association or municipal authority can post a story as long as they abide by a few simple “commitments”. These commitments also serve as criteria to ensure that the story is real and verifiable and contributes to policy development and dialogue.

- **Commitment 1**: The author or initiator of the story invites other people/stakeholders to give their view so that the story is being shared and is freely open to the public for scrutiny and commentary. This includes the designation of a “champion” or “learning partner” (see below); and
- **Commitment 2**: The story will be updated at least twice a year.

The 100 Cities Initiative, as part of the World Urban Campaign, encourages viable partnerships among local, state and national governments, civil society, and the private sector. Additional partners are encouraged to join the initiative at any point in the process.

The story can focus on a policy, a programme or a project and should support, to the extent possible, as many of the seven principles of the World Urban Campaign described below.

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**Principles of the Campaign**

Sustainable urbanization is understood by all partners as a process which promotes an integrated, gender-sensitive and pro-poor approach to the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainability. This integrated approach further requires that investments be made in new forms of technology and inclusive governance. More specifically, the principles of sustainable urbanization involve assurances of:

1. **Accessible and pro-poor land, infrastructure, services, mobility and housing**;
2. **Socially inclusive, gender sensitive, healthy and safe development**;
3. **Environmentally sound and carbon-efficient built environments, including the use of appropriate technologies**;
4. **Participatory planning and decision making processes**;
5. **Vibrant, resilient and competitive local economies promoting decent work and livelihoods**;
6. **Conditions of non-discrimination and equitable rights to the city**; and
7. **Governance structures that will empower cities and communities to plan for and effectively manage adversity, resilience and change.**

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D. CITY CHAMPION OR LEARNING PARTNER

Each city shall designate or have its “champion” or “learning partner” in the form of an institution, organization or individual with knowledge of both the city and the challenges facing that city. The champion, ideally a WUC partner, would operate on a voluntary basis and abide by four commitments:

- To look at the city story, its updates, blogs and commentaries and provide a one-page analytical review, twice a year. The report must give perspective on the seven principles.

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1 These principles were adopted by the Steering Committee of the World Urban Campaign at its second meeting in Paris, December 2009.
of sustainable urbanization. This review would also focus on lessons learned, pointers for the future, and possible synergies with other cities and partners;

- To agree to the public sharing and scrutiny of the review;
- To be selected or openly acknowledged by the city or community;
- To solicit, where appropriate, national government engagement and support in the spirit of promoting knowledge management as part of the World Urban Campaign.

The criteria for identifying and selecting a champion will vary from city to city. The core characteristic is a balance between objectivity and proximity. On the one hand, the “champion” should undertake an analytical review from a critical distance. On the other hand, such a review needs to be conducted with a good understanding and knowledge of the city and the context in which it operates. It would therefore be preferable for the champion to be a “citizen” of the city and that he or she belongs to a Habitat Partner organization, institution or association. A city champion should be responsible for no more than one city.

The most important benefit is that the champion will ensure the extraction of lessons learned of potential benefit to his or her own city and to other cities and communities, and to help verify that progress has been made on the city’s living practice.

E. THE 100 CITIES SUMMIT

The first 100 Cities Summit will be hosted by the City of Alicante, Spain in April 2011, shortly after GC23. Three preparatory meetings are planned, starting in September 2010.

The Summit is being designed as a Learning Event, preceded by on-line fora and followed by demand driven events such as specialised symposia, seminars and workshops, databases, etc. It will serve as the test bed for the experimental phase of the Initiative before it is opened to all cities. The design of the Summit includes he active participation of the media in all aspects of its preparation and delivery.

Special attention will be placed on the issues raised during the 5th session of the World Urban Forum, namely bridging the urban divide and the right to the city.

The Summit will serve as a means and an incentive for up to 100 cities to not only submit their stories but also to update them and to initiate dialogue on policy development and lessons learned with local stakeholders, and to begin to do so with other cities.

All cities are invited to participate as long as they comply with the commitments of the Initiative and the principles of the Campaign.

The initiatives to be highlighted during the Summit will be selected by an independent commission.