

Season's Greetings from Communitas!

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As the year draws to a close, in the Communitas Secretariat we are reflecting on and celebrating the enormous progress made in 2014 on the journey to a **UN Sustainable Development Goal** (SDG) on Cities & Human Settlements.

Just a year ago, following the **First Experts' Workshop** held at UN Headquarters, we were busy refining **issues papers** and first draft targets alongside lead experts, thematic working groups and the **Communitas Advisory Committee**. The months that followed have been marked by intense technical work refining the successive iterations of our **proposed draft targets**, as well as providing continuous expert and practitioner-led input to the intergovernmental process. Over the year, this took the shape of technical papers, compilations of case studies from practitioners, briefings for UN Members States, direct engagement in all UN SDGs Open Working Group (OWG) sessions, official side events at its fringes, submissions to the successive drafts of the OWG report, as well as active support and mobilisation of supporters to the rich multi-stakeholder campaign for an #urbanSDG. Particularly intense was our engagement in the **7th World Urban Forum**, the **65th UN DPI/NGO Conference** and the **1st Preparatory Committee of the UN Conference on Housing & Sustainable Urban Development- Habitat III**. A detailed account of our activities and outputs is available from the activities section of our website, as well as in our **Interim Report of Activities**, first published in July 2014.

Today, the proposed **SDG11 - Make cities & human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable** - is a loud call from governments, civil society, urbanisation and territorial development practitioners and other stakeholders that now is the time to harness the opportunities for poverty eradication and more sustainable and equitable human development, drawing on urbanisation as a megatrend of the 21st century.

We would like to take this opportunity for most sincerely thanking our core partners - Tellus

Institute, ICLEI, nrg4SD and UN-Habitat; our core funder the Ford Foundation, and each and every member of our multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee for their enthusiastic support and technical input. Thanks to them, Communitas is consolidated as an effective, balanced and diverse coalition providing an integrated practitioners' perspective for advancing just, prosperous, resilient and sustainable urbanisation in the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs.

We would also like to convey a special thanks to all other key players in this field with whom we have been honoured to collaborate closely throughout the year, including the World Urban Campaign, the Group of UN Members States Friends of Sustainable Cities and their Co-chairs Singapore and Sweden, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Global Task Force for Local & Regional Governments for Post 2015 Development Agenda and Habitat III, and all colleagues from UN Major Groups & Other Stakeholders. Our profound admiration and gratitude goes to H.E. Ambassador Macharia Kamau and H.E. Ambassador Csaba Kőrösi for their mastery as co-chairs of the SDGs Open Working Group and their precedent-setting empowerment of UN Major Groups' & Other Stakeholders' engagement in the process. We are in awe at the support provided by the UN Technical Support Team to the process and their ability to incorporate proposals by UN Major Groups & Other Stakeholders as appropriate; and remain deeply grateful to the Division for Sustainable Development of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs DESA and the UN-Non Governmental Liaison Service for their tireless guidance on how to engage in the process and their skillful facilitation.

Much work lies ahead the community of urban and territorial development practitioners in the coming year to contribute to a universal agenda of sustainable human development that can be of true transformative value. The Communitas Coalition will be working harder than ever in this landmark year of 2015, contributing to:

- Framing urbanisation as a catalyst for sustainable human development and for action on key interconnected challenges of the 21st Century within the Post-2015 framework;
- Refining and technically proofing SDG targets on cities & human settlements;
- Accompanying the discussions on the Data Revolution and the crucial need for data disaggregation and recognition of grassroots data collection systems;
- Elaborating proposals for indicators on cities & human settlements, helping streamline language and facilitating 'reality-check' exercises on applicability directly with subnational & local authorities and practitioners;
- Stepping up the definition of Means of Implementation and the elements of the Global Partnership for Action of relevance to this area; as well as enhancing the urban and territorial dimension of the Financing for Development (FfD) process, as appropriate;
- Leading multi-stakeholder dialogues on the question of rural-urban synergies towards the identification of policy drivers for the 'New Urban Agenda' to be adopted at Habitat III; and
- Connecting the Post-2015 and the Habitat III processes as appropriate, in order to accelerate subnational and local implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs.

Please stay tuned for our regular **newsletter** and **headline news**, and be sure to follow us on Twitter **@SDGCommunitas**. We are looking forward to rolling up our sleeves in what will be a particularly busy year, as well as to continuing more fruitful collaboration with many partners and

friends - and to enlarging our list of friends in the coming year!

As 2015 approaches, we hope you will share our optimism and excitement about the prospects for empowering a new urban paradigm in human development for poverty eradication, social justice and sustainability for future generations.

With gratitude and our warmest wishes for a restful holiday.

Season's greetings,

Maruxa, Felix, James and Matt
The Communitas Secretariat



Communitas' ultimate vision is to advance **just, prosperous, resilient** and **sustainable** cities & regions in the SDGs; so that the new overall UN Development Agenda capitalizes on the megatrend of urbanization in order to halt growing inequality and longstanding poverty at the city-region scale within the framework of sustainable development.

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