

## Habitat in Towns: Collingwood World Summit Resolution

September 1 & 2, 2020

We, the participants, gathered virtually in the Town of Collingwood and the broader Southern Georgian Bay area, including Meaford, Grey Highlands, Clearview, the Town of the Blue Mountains, Wasaga Beach and the Counties of Simcoe and Grey, Canada on the occasion of the First Habitat in Towns: Collingwood World Summit, and on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of United Nations, to realize sustainable urban development at the scale of towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities on September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020, express our commitment to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Sustainable Development Goals and thank the Government of Canada, provincial Government of Ontario, and the Town of Collingwood for organising the Summit in cooperation with Urban Economy Forum and UN-Habitat.

While the event was held virtually, we acknowledge we are working on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples throughout Ontario, Canada, and the World, and in particular the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe People, where the Town of Collingwood resides. We are thankful to be able to share in this rich and diverse culture on the global stage as we work together in the spirit of collaboration for a more positive and sustainable future.

Habitat in Towns hosted participants from various sectors, including town, small city, and Indigenous community leaders, private sector, developers, United Nation agencies, academics, municipal associations, community organizations, economic developers, youth and civil society. The joining together of all these sectors at Habitat in Towns is the beginning of an important dialogue that is a critical catalyst in driving the success of our endeavors towards achieving urban sustainability.

We recognize with appreciation the important contribution made by local & Indigenous authorities around the world, and towns and small cities in particular, in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) as an integral part of achieving the SDGs, including the effective partnerships established between UN-Habitat, Member States and local governments in the design, adoption, and implementation of local plans. We acknowledge that towns and small cities, in partnership with Indigenous communities require a dynamic and effective platform to bolster their own voices to work toward sustainable development. We are convinced that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities also have the capacity to lead global initiatives and be proactive enabling spaces to find solutions to our shared challenges.

We recognize with appreciation UN-Habitat's work globally on the application of City Prosperity Index and creation of data repositories to assist local governments in analyzing, planning and monitoring urban policies geared towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The World Summit further acknowledges that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities display considerable heterogeneity within the political and administrative structures of the countries to which they belong.

At Habitat in Towns, we are establishing an international network for town, small city, and Indigenous community Leaders known as the Town Leaders Global Network to work toward achieving SDGs at the scale of towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities, and advancing goals and priorities specific to towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities; we expect that they will subsequently receive more attention and feature more prominently in the economic, social, and environmental agendas of developed and developing countries alike.

We recognize the role Habitat in Towns plays in facilitating the exchange of ideas, lessons learned and current initiatives of towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities seeking to achieve sustainable urban development and SDGs. There are numerous best practice examples that were shared during this Habitat in Towns Summit and are highlighted in this document.

We recognize the Summit as an important global gathering that serves to strengthen the dialogue and exchange of experiences between local town and small city leaders, Indigenous communities, civil society and the general public from all over the world involved in the implementation of the SDGs.

We call upon organizations representing towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to contribute to and work toward the Habitat in Towns' Resolution. These organizations have resources, tools, and best practices to help realize these Resolution.

We also recognize the urgent need to accelerate local, regional, national, and international progress in the adoption of sustainability-orientated policy measures aimed at strengthening cooperation between central and local governments, and via transnational mechanisms.

The World Summit acknowledges that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities are drivers for urbanised development in every country and represent an opportunity to collaboratively consolidate and disseminate best practices and knowledge globally while being effective at the local level.

The Town of Collingwood, as host of the annual gathering of Habitat in Towns: Collingwood World Summit, encourages town and small city leaders, Indigenous leaders, civil society, the general public, and other relevant stakeholders to participate in this ongoing global dialogue.

**The participants of the World Summit are in general and non-binding agreement to the following:**

## On Assessment Tools

1. **Urban Assessment:** towns and small cities require the capacity to harvest and process data. Assessment tools are important in this regard. We underscore the importance of a commonly accepted towns assessment index, supportive tools and practical approaches to enable towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to make contextually appropriate decisions on policy adoption, and assist in tracking changes, whilst systematically documenting and measuring performance. This is fundamental for achieving higher levels of prosperity of place and economic and environmentally sustainable development for all.
2. **Urban Data:** we recognize that an important driver to achieve sustainability is availability of rich local data, both quantitative and qualitative. We can measure progress only with the collection of reliable data.
3. **Assessment Tools and Collaboration:** seek accurate knowledge about the well-being of the residents in towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities and assess their vulnerabilities including those resulting from climate change and pandemics; on the occasion of this summit we recommend UEF to initiate collaboration between UN-Habitat and the Canadian government as well as other governments, non-profit partners, private sector and universities in order to encourage replication.
4. **Economic Recovery to be Expanded to Recognize an Integrated Economy, which Includes Business, Not-for-profits, Government, and Philanthropy:** acknowledge that economic recovery should be planned through a holistic lens, which includes not only economic outcomes, but also environmental, social, and cultural impacts in towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities; incorporating appropriate tools and mechanisms into policies and programs which capture important decision-making criteria such as community engagement, local procurement, social benefit, gender equality, local health and environmental assessment.
5. **Global Monitoring Platform to address Acute Urban Crisis:** support the call for UEF, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, to establish a Global Monitoring Platform to bring together, assess and communicate towns', small cities', and Indigenous communities' CPI results or place standards, including how they can be better prepared to address acute crises and provide best practices in general.
6. **City Prosperity Index:** urge national governments and local authorities to dedicate resources to towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to calculate their place standards or City Prosperity Index assessments and dashboards to measure their overall achievements in relation to the components of sustainable development.

7. **Decision-makers:** help decision-makers steer towns and small cities towards being inclusive, safe, resilient, welcoming, just, equitable and sustainable.
8. **Role of Towns During Crisis & Vulnerability Index:** highlight that while towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities face crises at different scales, and of different magnitudes, their inherent characteristics can also make them the location and/or foundation for remedies to various regional and global crises; the Vulnerability Index is a key tool that can be applied in this context.
9. **Role of Technology:** emphasise the need to incorporate contextually appropriate technology in sustainable town, small city, and Indigenous community development; while understanding the important role technology plays, it is important to ensure the appropriate and safe use of these technologies; ultimately communities' and people's control of technology must be **secured**; towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities thrive on shared knowledge and connections, within the town, small city, and Indigenous community and between networks of towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities; in particular, efforts to provide *internet for all* should be prioritised as a community's access to internet plays a fundamental role in sustainable and resilient development; it is necessary for towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to establish best-practice e-governance, to understand residents' needs and provide accessible services. We support a knowledge architecture with open systems operating seamlessly across regional or area boundaries. For example, SDG Dashboards [not only digital] should be accessible to communities and available on a real time basis.

## On Economic Development, Municipal Finance, and Investment Opportunities

10. **Ability to mobilize local resources:** emphasise that local governments need the powers and capabilities to effectively mobilize local resources, including fair and well-balanced tax systems, ability to leverage community wealth creation, ability to better facilitate asset based community development, systems to bolster community cohesion and communication, support mechanisms for the evolution of resilience of local economies, and prevent capital flight.
  - a. We recognize that there are now 4 key public infrastructure responsibilities municipalities need to manage - water, waste, electricity, and internet/broadband; we encourage provision of systems to help municipalities respond quickly to innovation opportunities; with the dramatic increase in connectivity provoked by COVID19, innovation opportunities will arise quickly requiring rapid responses by public organizations in order to keep pace with business decisions.
11. **Resource Transfers from other levels of Government:** express the need for developing and maintaining robust, resilient, and adaptive resource networks and

supply chains geographically, and across other levels of government to deal with externalities and emergencies.

12. **Global Fund to mobilize investment:** recommend the establishment of a global fund under UEF and UN Habitat in collaboration with the Government of Canada and the private sector for strengthening towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities which could serve as levers to mobilize investments, including social finance in pilots, best practices, and boost solidarity between towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities globally.

## On Local Resource Development for a Sustainable Future

13. **Important Local Resources:** agree that local Governments and private and non-profit sectors should value, monitor and sustain all resources such as water, biodiversity, green spaces, trees, land, knowledge, data and culture (including oral traditions and intangible heritage). It should be remembered that citizens are also a resource, including those typically not included such as youth.
14. **Local Authority Accountability:** affirm that local governments should be responsive to their citizens and current contexts, transparent in their deliberations, and accountable for their actions including through regular meetings and reporting; also through building of public trust via meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and accountable governance within their functional and financial systems and local government autonomy.
15. **Civic Economy:** call for towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to support collaborative, emerging, social and circular economies, and economic activities that create diverse local and indigenous employment opportunities that appropriately support well-being across people's life courses and are inclusive of all community members – and, in developing countries, to support the transition from informal to formal economy; in addition, local authorities can introduce policy incentives to support a just transition to clean energy, while building urban resilience to climate change.
16. **Rural and Urban Linkages:** emphasise that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities play a key role in connecting urban settlement areas and rural spaces, as these are inextricably linked economically, socially and environmentally and cannot be adequately dealt with in isolation from one another; recognition of this urban-rural continuum also highlights how partnerships, collaboration and unity in action can yield dividends for all people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background or whether or not they live in urban or rural areas.

17. **Cultural Diversity & Heritage:** emphasise that cultural heritage and local knowledge must be preserved and integrated in urban planning activities, and town, small city, and Indigenous community strategies for social cohesion and equitable local development; recognize the benefits from collaboration and partnership with local and Indigenous communities and residents, whilst also considering the impact of gentrification including displacement of inhabitants, discriminatory behaviour by people in power, and focus on spaces that exclude low-income individuals and marginalized communities.
18. **A Proactive approach to Environmental Challenges and Climate Mitigation and Adaptation:** national governments in partnership with local authorities, Indigenous Peoples, private sector investors and international organizations should drive policies that incentivize individuals, not-for-profits, households and businesses to invest in fossil-free climate mitigation and in strategies and policies that promote climate adaptation and resilience;
- a. recommend that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities invest in climate resilient infrastructure and adjustments to our built environment, including transportation systems, which can withstand climate-related impacts and shocks;
  - b. recommend provision of new resources through an intermediary financing institution that can leverage a concessional loan from the World Bank Group, or a concessional fund;
  - c. recommend that local authorities introduce policies to ensure that their lower income communities have access to modern energy services, including clean energy, to help tackle energy poverty; international cooperation can help towns bring energy access to their communities by providing them with financial resources, policy incentives, capacity building assistance and institutional support;
  - d. ensure local access to clean and efficient household cooking solutions, as more than three billion of the world's poorest people depend on firewood and other biomass for cooking; towns, small cities, and indigenous communities would then be able to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women and protect the environment;
  - e. Towns in low- and middle-income countries will be home to increasing numbers of climate migrants and refugees who will be in need of not only short-term humanitarian assistance, but also infrastructure, skills training for employment, and services like housing and healthcare; local authorities can partner with international humanitarian organizations with the goal to provide for the short-term needs of climate migrants and refugees, and to empower them to move towards self-reliance;
  - f. recommend that governments provide incentives to landlords so renters who typically are lower income earners are not paying for higher energy costs due to their buildings not being retrofitted; attention should be paid to all housing stock and all buildings regarding ways to make them more affordable, more comfortable and with lower carbon emissions.

19. **Sustainable Affordable Housing:** acknowledges that sustainable and affordable housing for all plays a crucial role in community well-being, and sustainable economies; encourage all levels of government to work together to establish clear plans for ensuring the delivery of sustainable affordable housing, including a diversity of built forms, have zero carbon or negative carbon footprint, and tenures that appropriately address the housing needs of all their residents throughout their life courses;
- a. UEF in collaboration with UN Habitat and Summit participants will work toward establishing a clearinghouse of best practices, housing strategies and successful innovation; the Urban Land Institute could be considered as a potential collaborator to help in this regard;
  - b. Identify the bottlenecks and/or barriers within our towns and small cities regarding the housing crisis and develop the resources, tools, policies and construction practices along with technologies that need to be developed in order to help support and fast track scalable approaches for attainable housing for a low carbon future.
20. **Connecting Innovative Towns and Innovation Districts:** acknowledges Innovation districts as catalysts for sustainable economic development that integrate environmental and social considerations in the urban context; recognizes the need for research and dissemination of findings between Innovative Towns and Innovation Districts in larger urban centres; encourages the strengthening of initiatives to establish geographic areas for knowledge-intensive innovation in cities and towns and support 'Collaborative Leadership Networks' that can respond more nimbly than centralised authorities.
21. **Interaction between Local Authorities, Business, Not-for-Profits and Community:** emphasise the importance of local authority support for local businesses and communities, which can help towns and small cities build resources, capacity and resilience, through appropriate support for local initiatives, and vice versa, including sharing of challenges so business, not-for profits and community members can also help find solutions.
22. **Public and Private Sector Interaction:** emphasise that interactions ultimately need to lead to decisions; in this time of contradictory economic sustainability, finding a balance that brings together and binds the private and public communities will be critical; this balance needs to be defined on a local level with policies that encourage citizen participation and ensure that the effectiveness of communication channels and messages reflects the styles and systems familiar to both private and public sector organizations; creating policies that encourage citizen participation in major decisions will become increasingly important as the complexity of these decisions grows; municipalities need to define ways that work for their citizens in terms of getting their voices heard and having them "sit down at the table" to help find a balanced approach to these complex issues at the local level.

23. **Gender and Sustainable Development:** ensure gender sensitive planning for sustainable urban development and support from local governments for female leadership and entrepreneurship; this is especially important during times of economic hardships, but gender mainstreaming should become the norm.
24. **Role of Business to help grow a Caring Community:** develop practices and systems that challenge local private businesses and business organizations and networks, such as Chambers of Commerce, to play their part in the sustainable development of towns, small cities and Indigenous communities, celebrating successes, and fostering a culture of caring and working toward a resilient and sustainable community.

## On Community Engagement for Sustainable Development

25. **Citizen Diversity and Creativity:** highlight that elected officials in towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities are more closely connected to their residents than central government representatives, and can therefore acknowledge, develop, promote, and invest in citizens' creativity while respecting the cultural diversity of their identities, and build on the added value this represents for local cohesion; opportunities for inter-cultural dialogue and exchanges should also be provided.
26. **Importance of Diversity for Decision Making:** emphasise the importance of creating welcoming communities and empowering opportunities for all people regardless of income level, ability, gender identity, race, age, ethnicity, religion, or sexual identity, to play an active role in the local community, through appropriate community driven engagement practices; collaboration between government, business and not-for profit organizations is key.
27. **United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People:** towns and small cities acknowledge and respect the dispositions of United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in their consultations and decision making process, in particular for development projects related to land use.
28. **Women and Youth:** recognise that equitable, inclusive and prosperous towns, small cities and Indigenous communities need to harness the full potential of all citizens – including all genders and non-binary people, children and youth; this is especially important as the world grapples with the effects of the global economic and financial crisis that has resulted in climate change, food insecurity and widespread unemployment among women and youth; education and lifelong learning are key to empowerment and active participation, and the role of educators in both formal and informal education is crucial.



29. **Women Representation and Leadership:** call for policies to enhance gender equality, equity, prosperity, and representation of women in towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities, including initiatives to support women's leadership, noting that towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities of the future will comprise a majority female component, especially among people older than 60 and even more so among those older than 80 years.
30. **Education and Training Systems and Youth Leadership:** call for better alignment of educational and training systems, including easily accessible safe spaces, to take account of the current and future needs of young people, promoting transferable skills including digital and media literacy, creative thinking and problem-solving, in order to empower children and young people to become active citizens and take a lead in the development of sustainable solutions; this also requires genuine open and inclusive dialogue between youth and town, small city, and Indigenous community leaders, policy makers, and decision-makers.

## On Urban Resilience and Building Back Better

31. **Economic development in the Energy Sectors:** agree economic development and innovation should promote new business opportunities in sectors including renewable energy, conservation, climate resilient infrastructure, electric mobility, public transportation and low carbon initiatives; this should emphasise that post COVID19 development strategies should focus on reducing environmental footprints, promoting low-carbon and climate resilient infrastructures and services, meaningful access to nature, renewable energy, conservation, electric mobility, and affordable and clean public transportation for town residents.
32. **Create Regional Task Group and Learning Platform to Explore Social Finance and New Approaches to Social Investment:** create Social Investment Strategy templates or other resources to support socially responsible businesses with triple bottom lines (i.e. B-Corps and social enterprises), community bond development, a community foundation, and social infrastructure in the not-for-profit sector; there are natural area community boundaries that allow towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to work regionally to achieve scale.
33. **Community Foundation and Investment Fund for Local Business:** recommend establishing community foundation and investment funds for local governments to utilise in order to support local businesses and social enterprises during times of economic hardships so they can pivot to become sustainable local engines of prosperity, including the sharing of templates and best practices.
34. **Community Health:** recognise that a healthy community supports quality of life and well-being, nourished and nurtured by an interrelationship between the built environment and nature that can facilitate social, psychological, physical, spiritual and cultural development for all individuals and the community alike; we therefore,

encourage all towns, small cities, and Indigenous communities to adopt systemic approaches to support a sustainable and healthy future.

35. **Performance-based and Participatory Budgeting for Town Self-reliance:** highlight that forms of performance-based and participatory budgeting that acknowledges equity and equality are effective tools to help towns and small cities to become more self-reliant; create a regional platform to support learning, knowledge exchange, and include concerned citizens, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations; identify common data points that reflect a healthy, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

## The Town of Collingwood

36. **Support of Government:** recognizing that the Town of Collingwood exhibits the characteristics to be an international pioneer in sustainable town development initiatives; we encourage the Ontario Provincial Government, regional governments and Canadian Federal Government to support the Town of Collingwood as an SDG Town Pioneer; we believe the Town of Collingwood is a world-class destination that can pioneer and share sustainable town development initiatives based upon global best practices; Collingwood will engage surrounding towns, communities, and local Indigenous peoples in southern Georgian Bay.
37. **International Network for Town Leaders:** express the desire to promote further collaboration with groups such as Scotland's Towns Partnerships, and commit to establishing the Town Leader Global Network to work toward achieving SDGs at the scale of towns, small cities, in partnership with Indigenous communities and advance goals and priorities specific to them; expects that towns, small cities, and Indigenous Peoples' communities will subsequently receive more attention and feature more prominently in the economic, social, and environmental agendas of developed and developing countries alike.
38. **Town of Collingwood as an SDG Town Pioneer:** emphasise that the Town of Collingwood should identify 10 key collaborative projects with the Provincial and Federal government, civil society and other relevant sectors and organizations for sustainable town development; we therefore welcome national and international advice, expertise and investment in the Town of Collingwood to create practical local examples for a sustainable and replicable approach to sustainable urbanisation.

\* Town of Collingwood and other organizations in this summit promise that all Summit participants will receive links to relevant information arising from the Summit and maintain links and collaboration with these and future participants. We agree to call on these and more to meet 2 years from now, Sept 1, 2022, for an update on steps taken, and progress made by all.

\*\* This resolution was drafted and discussed with Habitat in Towns participants and is a main output of the forum. **The participants of the summit are in general in support of the above non-binding agreement.**

\*\*\* We encourage towns throughout the world to join Habitat in Towns and organize sessions throughout the year for Habitat in Towns to establish an international scale of town leadership in every continent and country.

\*\*\*\* The wording “Indigenous communities” in the dispositions of the *Habitat in Towns: Collingwood World Summit Resolution* aim to promote partnership and collaboration between local authorities and local Indigenous governments; and does not intend in any way to present these communities at the same jurisdiction level as towns and cities; and it is recognized that these Indigenous communities evolve & exist in the broader demographic & legal context of “Peoples” as recognized by the signatories of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.