Rome Declaration

Adopted by the participants of the Forum "Shaping smarter and more sustainable cities: striving for sustainable development goals", on 19 May 2016 in Rome.

Introduction

By 2050, almost 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas. Cities are playing an increasingly important role in the global economy but at the same time they suffer from the adverse environmental and social consequences of their rapid growth.
It means there is a more pressing need than ever before for cities to tackle poverty, ensure equality, protect the environment, and practice good governance.

As a consequence the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as enablers of sustainable development has become increasingly significant. Cities need to become smarter, with technological solutions deployed to address a wide range of common urban challenges. Smart sustainable cities benefit from improved energy efficiency, reduced environmental pollution, increased social inclusion, and offer businesses a better return on investment, and people a happier and healthier environment in which to live.

In addition, the European Economic and Social committee states that smart sustainable cities are a tremendous source of growth, productivity and employment. This concept should be extended to take into consideration smart lands, islands and communities increasing the opportunity to promote them through better governance and coordination among international, national and regional authorities with a multistakeholder approach.

Transforming cities into smart and sustainable cities can only be achieved through close cooperation and collaboration between many stakeholders: municipalities, governments, international organisations, industry, academia and the communities.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) along with various other United Nations and other stakeholders have been working closely on the role of ICTs and smart sustainable cities through the development of international studies, guidance documents, indicators and standards. Under the umbrella of the ITU-T Study Group 5 on Environment and Climate Change and the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, ITU and UNECE have successfully formulated the following definition for "Smart Sustainable Cities":

> *"A smart sustainable city is an innovative city that uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) and other means to improve quality of life, efficiency of urban operation and services, and competitiveness, while ensuring that it meets the needs of present and future generations with respect to economic, social, environmental as well as cultural aspects".*[1]

Based on this definition and building on previous measurement standards and indicators, ITU and UNECE have also developed a comprehensive list of key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the progress achieved by cities towards smart sustainable city transitions.[i] These indicators are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were approved in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. The UNECE-ITU Smart Sustainable Cities KPIs will help cities evaluate their performance against the SDGs.

Several cities including Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Goris (Armenia), Montevideo (Uruguay), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Singapore and others, are implementing these KPIs to assess the extent of their transition to a smart sustainable city and will set an example for others to follow.

To further increase international cooperation and collaboration, ITU and UNECE and its Real Estate Market Advisory Group (REM) together with various other UN agencies, municipalities, academia, industry and other organizations have launched an initiative called "United for Smart Sustainable Cities" (U4SSC) with the aim to advocate policies that will encourage the use of ICTs to facilitate and ease the transition to smart sustainable cities.

U4SSC will also encourage the integration of ICTs and other means, into urban operations based on the needs of cities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Furthermore U4SSC will raise awareness of the importance of selecting technologies based on international standards, such as those developed in ITU, to ensure

interoperability and the benefits of economies of scale, and avoidance of being locked into proprietary technologies.

Declaration

We, the participants of the [Forum on "Shaping smarter and more sustainable cities: striving for sustainable development goals"](#), (Rome, 18-19 May 2016), express our deep gratitude to the Government of Italy and specifically the Ministry of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce of Rome and Tecnoborsa, for their gracious and excellent hosting of the forum.

We invite national and local governments, international organisations, municipalities, academia, solutions providers and other stakeholders to work together on the implementation of the following priority actions towards achieving smart sustainable cities:

1. **Promote the use of the ITU-UNECE Key Performance indicators (KPIs)** for developing national and local laws, regulations, strategic programmes and plans to support monitoring and review of progress of cities towards becoming smarter and more sustainable. It would also aim at ensuring compatibility of the KPIs with the 2030 Agenda indicators, particularly with Sustainable Development Goal 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

2. **Encourage the adoption of internationally agreed standards** developed through ITU-T Study Group 20 on Internet of Things (IoT) and its applications including smart cities, the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, and other relevant organisations so as to enable the coordinated development of IoT, including machine-to-machine communications and ubiquitous sensor networks to address urban challenges and to provide innovative, resilient smart solutions that leverage digital information while protecting against malicious violations, unintentional damage and natural disasters.

3. **Mobilize expertise and promote knowledge sharing** to enhance cooperation at the international, national and regional levels on the use of ICTs for a smart sustainable world and transfer knowledge and best practices to low-income countries and cities. Part of this advocacy will emphasize the potential of smart sustainable cities to accelerate job creation by enabling new business opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and promoting the integration of ICT into existing urban infrastructure to help tackle the impacts of climate change, improve energy efficiency, promote the efficient recycling of waste, mitigate and respond to emergencies, improve air quality, enhance equitable society, foster smart transportation, facilitate spatial planning, establish a circular economy and in the process expedite the transition to smarter and more sustainable cities.

4. **Enable smart participative governance** to promote a positive and open dialogue between citizens, political decision bodies and urban administrators, based on a two-way citizen engagement approach combining bottom up and top down participatory channels. These smart governance systems will rely on comprehensive and secure online engagement platforms connecting citizens with one another and with decision makers to improve the efficiency of community leadership in smart city transitions.

5. **Foster the harmonization** of methodologies, key performance indicators and standards on performance of smart sustainable cities developed by different stakeholders.

6. **Build capacities** through knowledge sharing and trainings to ensure that urban stakeholders have access to required knowledge and skills to understand and apply the ITU-UNECE KPIs to facilitate the transformation of cities into smart sustainable cities.

7. **Implement pilot** and flagship activities which support the development of Smart Sustainable Cities and contribute to demonstrate feasibility of the ITU-UNECE KPIs.

8. **Enhance** urban planning and design as a powerful tool for managing urbanization to foster urban economic competitiveness, reduce environmental pollution, improve people's lives, increase social cohesion and equality governance (e.g. empowerment of women in cities, child-friendly cities, promotion of disability policies, etc).

9. **Develop a Global Index for Smart Sustainable Cities** based on the U4SSC initiative, which can be used by urban administrators to initiate their smart city transitions and promote urban sustainable development.

10. **Boost U4SSC as a global platform for advocacy** between international organizations, academia, national governments, local authorities, private sector and civil society for the establishment of SSC, by promoting cross-sectoral cooperation at international, national, sub-national and local levels; as well as between different levels of governance, and encourage developed countries to support smart urbanization efforts in lower income countries.

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[i] See also in http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2015/ECE_HBP_2015_4.en.pdf