**Input from GAP Older Persons Constituency members for UCLG Town Halls**

The GAP Older Persons Partner Constituent Group consulted with its membership and received useful input on how they can support and work with governments at all levels to improve their lives and those of others in their communities. It is recognized that the input is quite diverse as are persons 60 and older and may be used in a variety of places not just at the UCLG Retreat. Therefore our input is presented in three categories.

**UCLG and its members Coordination and collaboration with ongoing work with UN bodies**

Civil society organizations have limited resources and are made up largely of volunteers. Members see supporting the work of UCLG members through its Town Hall accessibility caucus as part of their effort to improve the lives of older persons by helping implement existing international agreements such as the Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. Therefore we recommend that UCLG work to ensure congruence with ongoing goals established by the World Health Organization’s Decade of Healthy Ageing, UN-Habitat’s New Urban Agenda, and the High Commission for Human Rights goal of achieving a legally binding Convention on the Rights of Older Persons

Suggestions from GAP Older Persons that fall into this category are:

1. Demand human rights for older persons and the need for a Convention. Question: How can local government and citizens advocate for human rights of older persons to support the work of the UN? What efforts are being made to influence UN member states and governments to recognize and act on the Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General; A/HRC/41/32 Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations system and regional organizations to support States’ efforts to promote and protect the human rights of older persons where they live. https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/OHCHR-Report\_Jun2019.pdf ?
2. Support the need for universal social security and social protection floors
3. Work with the World Health Organization to implement their Campaign to Combat Agism
4. Take a more holistic approach to healthy ageing
5. Ensure security and safety of older persons in communities to protect them from injury, accidents, scams and disaster risks. Question: How can we protect older persons from unnecessary hardship and risk of death from pandemic disease and climate change?

**Re-direct these suggestions to UN- Habitat and forward tested ideas and policy/design solutions from UCLG members to achieve concrete results for older people**

While pioneering local governments can make changes that can improve the lives of persons across the life course, and the lives of older persons in their lived environments, the best gains would be if these types of improvements were universally applied in all communities. Therefore, it is suggested that UCLG members forward evidence from results tested on the ground via civil society to UN-Habitat for recommended regulations and best practices.

1. How can the objective of cost-effective improvements to our public spaces be met to provide higher quality of life, health, resilience, and even survival, particularly for ageing populations? The range of solutions should include both indoor and outdoor spaces, the provision of services (quality drinking water, adequate and affordable shelter, shade, lighting, seating, toilets) and shared and private activities. How can human and soft supports be provided for older persons (especially 75-90 years) to enjoy parks, public services and support social interactions?
2. The UN Habitat Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 on Sustainable Cities and communities has four very clear domains (Reduced special inequality and poverty in communities across urban – rural continuum, Enhanced shared prosperity off cities and regions, Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment and Effective urban crisis prevention and response).
   1. Based on the above, how is UN-Habitat planning to work with civil society organizations and local governments in order to mainstream older persons and ageing into their strategic plans to enhance social inclusion?
   2. What effective methods – best practices can be employed by civil society platforms in order to influence Policy and Legislation, Urban Planning, Good Governance and Financing mechanisms at country and local level in order to implement age-friendly environments without leaving anyone behind?
   3. What are the processes available for fundraising by grassroots civil society organizations in order to increase the voices of older persons on issues of Sustainable Cities and Communities?

**Input for discussions in each UCLG Town Hall**

1. Global Commons:

*This Town Hall will explore and think about local public services of the future and debate around the new essentials needed to transform the relationship between society and the global commons starting from the voices of the people.*

**Question**: What are the public services that older city residents would consider essential for their use for wellbeing, for sharing in the commons, and for navigating between systems of public, private and non-private local government services?

**Discussion point**: One in five or one in six residents are likely to be older adults (60+) in urban environments. Older residents need reliable, safe, affordable and quality services for their wellbeing. (Examples: 1. Life supporting: shelter, security, water, sanitation; 2. Basic essentials: health care, social and support services, accessible environment, access to vital services such as groceries, pharmacies, doctors’ offices, etc.; 3. Quality of life, low or no pollution, green space for their wellbeing, accessible facilities. 4. Services for independence and autonomy: Lifelong learning opportunities, Recreation, Exercise locations, Counselling. Note that all these services are used by residents of all ages. Older residents not only consume services but also contribute to life in the city. They have education, time and energy to provide volunteering and assistance to other residents as well as many work well beyond retirement age. A citizen ombudsman and information service would be a way for everyday communication. Support of The World Health Organization’s Age-friendly Cities & Communities framework, designed by older persons to suit local conditions and needs, would be a useful tool to achieve better support.

1. Trust and Government.

*This Town Hall will cover how to reinvigorate trust between people and government. It will also cover how to repurpose public institutions to foster solidarity and ensure that they co-create with people on their everyday priorities while maintaining a global vision; are able to govern during emergencies and that they strengthen international co-operation.*

**Question**: What are the key elements that build trust in government among the diversity of older persons in a population and what are the negative elements that breakdown trust because these affect successful inclusion, solidarity and continuous public co-operation and input?

**Discussion point**: Trust is hard to build, especially once it is broken. Trust implies that older persons must be valued as much as other segments of the population. They may be the people who have lived longest in the city. Trust is broken when (1) promises to older people are not kept (2) when services for older people are unfairly resourced and delivered (3) when accountability is not transparent and fair across all sectors of the population. Trust is built when (1) Older people are consulted on all matters (not just for ageing issues). (2) When visions, plans and budgets are publically provided in relationship to outcomes (positive – greater engagement and participation, longevity, better health utilization. Negative - ageism, poverty, disadvantaged, illness or higher death rates). 3. Each year’s achievements must be shared and celebrated and failures (poor results, delays, incompletions) should be corrected with public input for the next year.

1. Caring Society

*This Town Hall will bring to light the main elements of a caring society, firstly going over the relationship between care and local public service provision. It will also cover the issue of human mobility and building communities that ensure all are cared for and protected. The issue of future work will also be key as changes in production and consumption are brought about.*

**Question:** “Caring” can be seen as both an inappropriate as well as a legitimate goal for societies. Many older persons want correctly to be seen as rights holders not simply as beneficiaries of other people’s definition of “care”. They often provide care to others in their families and in their communities whether in paid or unpaid positions. What are key ways in which housing, neighborhoods and cities can exemplify a caring society for older persons and appreciate the caring work that they themselves offer?

**Discussion point**: Older persons should be considered a “keystone species” because they have a disproportionate impact on society and shape the lives of others and themselves through caring whether paid or unpaid. They (mostly women) have provided care for their parents, their children and their spouses in addition to themselves. Besides, they have cared for neighbours and friends with visits, food and telephone calls and have returned from retirement to play key roles in providing hospital care during the pandemic. The commodification of care, the lack of standardization and monitoring of high-quality care, the affordability and accessibility of care have all made care a major issue for older persons. Older persons should be cared for as past and present carers, both mentally, physically and even socially. When care is needed, they should be provided with the care that they require in their homes, without having to lower their quality of life, by moving into a room shared with others in a care home. The need for care alone should never force older persons to give up the way of life enjoyed by others or their earlier selves. The provision of care services should not be a legitimate rationale for lowering the standards of housing and the lived environment. Local governments should have a “duty of care” objective or the responsibility for ensuring the adequate provision of care for all residents. Support should be given to universal health care coverage and a decent social protection floor.

1. Climate and culture

*This Town Hall will cover the relationship between climate and culture and focus on the social side of the climate crisis. Issues such as climate justice, displacement and resilience will be covered in light of the Stockholm +50 process to achieve a healthy planet for the prosperity of all.*

**Question**: The relationship with environment and culture is built throughout life. Since around a fifth of urban populations are likely in the not distant future to be older persons, sustainable development culture and climate mitigation is not possible without the involvement and engagement of older people. How can older persons, working with their local governments, be involved from design through implementation in the plans and policies to make this a reality?

**Discussion point**: Over sixty years and more of their lives, older persons have been considered perpetrators, victims, beneficiaries and also activists in the face of the existential threat of climate change. It is time to mobilize older persons to ensure a future for the species. It is important for local governments to consider older persons as repositories of traditional knowledge and practical experience, as change agents and as partners. Older persons can only be helpful if they are provided with the information and the tools in accessible formats to enable them to work with local governments and the power of being at the table. Older persons take personal action in their own lives (recycling, composting) and also work as environmental activists with their peers and with other generations to build a culture of sustainable development. Nelson Mandela was able to activate people through the Elders Program and others succeeded through initiatives such as Greying Green.