



## **SIDE EVENT PROPOSED: NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES: SPAIN AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**DATE:** March 27<sup>th</sup> 2022

**VENUE:** Instituto Cervantes. New York. (211 E 49th St, New York, NY 10017)

**FORMAT:** Face-to-face. The session will be recorded.

**WEB LINK/ACCESS TO RECORDING:** [www.aue.gob.es](http://www.aue.gob.es)

**REGISTRATION FORM LINK:** [bit.ly/NationalUrbanPoliciesHLM](https://bit.ly/NationalUrbanPoliciesHLM)

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

The 2030 Agenda recognized the important role of cities in the global challenges of sustainability by including the specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". It not only recognizes the magnitude of the urbanization phenomenon, but also the key role of cities in the global economy, in mitigating and adapting to climate change, in responsible use and consumption of natural resources, as well as their contribution to social progress and technological innovations. In the same way the New Urban Agenda (2016) reaffirmed this important role of cities in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. The New Urban Agenda is based on five different but complementary instrumental pillars: national urban policies, urban legislation and regulations, urban planning and design, local economy and municipal finances and local implementation and good governance.

The proposed side event wants to focus into the first of them but with an integrated view with the rest: national urban policies (NUP). Where they exist, this NUP plays a very important role in the global process of implementing the NAU, especially when they bet on the location of the possible solutions to the problems faced.

### **NATIONAL URBAN POLICIES IN SPAIN AND IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Spain approved its National Urban Policy in 2019 as a framework document that establishes a range of urban policies of a social, economic and environmental nature, which can be put into practice by any Public Administration and other actors. In a very special way for Local Entities, both in rural and urban areas, which regardless of their size and population seek to improve living conditions by improving the quality of the built environments in which daily life unfolds. It seeks to respond to global challenges from the local.

Latin American and Caribbean region has already completed its urban transition. With more than 80% of its population living in urban areas (as in Spain), it is the most urbanized region in the world, characterized by the emergence of large



metropolitan areas and networks of cities in which rapid urbanization processes have had some negative impacts such as environmental degradation, increased socioeconomic inequalities and territorial imbalances. Their societies are also changing rapidly and the economic, cultural, social and environmental challenges are concentrating mainly in urban areas. The general absence for decades of adequate policies for urban and rural development, territorial and urban planning, the absence of up-to-date and effective regulations and market, financial and real estate dynamics that have fostered inequality and inequity in cities is a reality that we currently want to address with national urban policies. The process of formulating them is relatively recent, but countries such as Ecuador, Honduras and Mexico have taken advanced steps in that direction. They include innovative and committed efforts to address social inequalities, in line with a broader process of strengthening democracy and the emergence of strong and progressive civil society activism.

## METHODOLOGY

The Spanish Government, through the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, held on January 11, 2021 the First Meeting on National Urban Policies Spain-Latin America and the Caribbean in a telematic version. Already then, the value of these policies was highlighted in the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and in accelerating compliance with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, as well as in providing tools to respond to the many needs that arose after the pandemic.

A second edition of this Meeting took place on October 6, 2021, in Seville, making it coincide with the I Urban Forum of Spain, which was already held in person. Through this powerful multilevel governance tool provided by the Spanish Urban Agenda itself, which was attended (in person and only partly online) by more than 600 people and almost 70 Mayors from all over the country, they identified the different problems posed by the implementation of NUP and also experiences were shared, identifying opportunities for collaboration between Spain and the countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The Side Event that is proposed to be organized within the framework of the United Nations High Level Meeting offers an important opportunity to give continuity to these events and delve into the most complex and diverse aspects of implementation at the local level among the participating countries.

During this event, the following issues will be specifically discussed:

- What is the stage of development of the National Urban Policies in each of the invited countries to this side event?



- To what extent do these National Urban Policies constitute a roadmap to jointly address many of the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda?
- How has the pandemic affected its elaboration and development? Have participatory processes been especially taken into account so that society can pronounce itself?
- How does collaboration with other countries allow the identification of instruments, good practices and procedures to achieve effective implementation, fundamentally at the local level?
- Are financing mechanisms for the implementation of local action plans of national urban policies being foreseen or put into operation?
- What improvements are essential in urban environments? To what extent can architecture be a valid instrument to achieve such improvements?