



NEW COMPASSES FOR 2050

**Summary document of the French Partnership
for Cities and Territories (PFVT)
12th World Urban Forum**

2023- 2024

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Actions for Sustainable Cities and Communities"



Editorial

From global goals to local action

Twenty years after the World Urban Forum took place for the first time in Africa, this second edition on the continent will shed a light on the transformative potential of cities and territories, 5 years ahead of the 2030 deadline for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This 12th Forum in Cairo provides an opportunity to adjust the UN SDGs to local contexts, highlighting the urgency to implement local action to reach global goals. This Forum is also an invitation for us all to project ourselves beyond the SDGs, targeting the new urban Agenda deadline set for 2050.

Global agendas are often seen as non-binding and applied on a volunteer basis, without substantial dedicated funds. Yet they remain impactful. They play a crucial role in identifying urban issues and drawing guidelines to address them. They support the implementation of operation tools to open up possibilities to access funding. They also enhance knowledge about urban development while fostering dialogue between many diverse actors, both public and private.

The actions that cities and local authorities undertake are still little promoted in global agendas; yet these actions play for two thirds in the possibility to reach global agendas' goals. Six great challenges lay ahead of this next World Urban Forum: ensuring decent housing for all; supporting adaptation and resilience strategies at the local scale; related to facing climate crisis; entering the digital era; promoting collaboration as a key to connect global goals with local contexts; and structuring funding to implement territorialization.

In these times of change, our strengths rely on both local and global cohesion. If we want to keep the Earth a livable place while acknowledging its limited resources, we must by all means preserve our living ecosystems and environments to be able to co-habit the planet together - relying therefor on common federative narratives that convey hope.

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- Laurent Chambaud, former director of the EHESP French School of Public Health
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Summary

INTRODUCTION

6

COLLECTIVE CHALLENGES

Where do we stand now, 8 years after Habitat III?

8

TAKING ACTION 2050 Guidelines

10

ENTERING RESILIENCE 7 operational recommendations

12

RENEWING The reference frame ahead of 2050

14

Introduction

For the World Urban Forum in Cairo, the French Partnership for Cities and Territories (PFVT) has renewed its commitment to gather French stakeholders involved with the urban field and local actions, in order to come up with strategies and build common narratives to face the crisis and challenges ahead of us.

During the year 2023-2024, more than 120 members of PFVT gathered within five topic-based working groups as part of a co-building process meant for them to bring their contribution to the 12th World Urban Forum. Each group was led by PFVT members and facilitated by FNAU (French network of urban planning agencies). They brought together actors from various professional fields, global experts and young participants, in order to cross their perspectives.

The 2023-24 workshops, named “Beyond the 2030 Agenda”, were organized around five topics:

1. Adaptation strategies to build resilient territories
2. Sustainable and affordable housing
3. Including planetary boundaries to preserve the Earth’s livability
4. The city of Care; tools to use to promote health-friendly and well-being-friendly urban development
5. Rethinking local cooperation through multi-level perspectives

Starting from collective diagnosis, each group developed pathways to try and draw away from “business as usual” solutions. These pathways then translated into guidelines that highlight key sets of action and tools to activate. Lastly, operational recommendations and concrete examples were identified and listed to accelerate territorialization processes and go from words to action.

Added to that, the choice to cross visions and solutions from the North and the South promoted double perspectives on the different challenges. Bringing together these two geographic areas around global collective challenges while considering each specific context has been a way to foster conversations between them and build a shared future. As to the younger participants who were invited to take part, they helped shake perspectives and promote innovation.

We wish to warmly thank all members of PFVT, the great witnesses and the youth, who all came together within those working groups. We also wish to thank more specifically the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Ecological Transition, the Ministry of Culture and the French Development Agency, for their unwavering support.



COLLECTIVE CHALLENGES

Where do we stand now, 8 years after Habitat III?

The World Urban Agenda was adopted in 2016. Despite the significant efforts made to turn our cities and territories into change catalysts, the road toward a full operational implementation of the SDGs by 2030 is still long.

A mild use of the frameworks compared with the opportunities at hand

Although the SDGs may seem too sectorialized and unequally implemented, they do provide opportunities to develop a common language that some actors (public and private) have been increasingly using to guide their action. Yet despite their global acknowledgement, the SDGs still need to be more interconnected with local and national urban agendas and with the New European Agenda. Building a culture around the SDGs and more knowledge about European agendas would foster the development of a common ground and the implementation of projects in line with environmental and social priorities, with financial support solutions also in line with a logic of eco-conditionality.

Strengthening local and national political actions through federative collective narratives

If local and national authorities commit to using the SDG reference frameworks as real guiding and assessment tools rather than solely as a communication mean, they will work in favor of more coordination and cohesion to articulate the many different national reference frameworks. We need strong political willpower to trigger and support inclusive solutions that get all local stakeholders involved: local authorities, civil society, citizens, the youth, academics and private companies.

A lack of shared indicators to be addressed

In France, as in many other countries, opportunities exist to support better data access better improve the monitoring of progresses made to reach the set goals. But while some indicators are well documented, others, like those related to the environment and to social and gender divides, need to be strengthened. If we support the production and use of such data, not only will we be able to assess progresses more precisely, we will also anticipate better on the needs and challenges that cities face, with local policies more suited to local contexts to tackle environmental, social and economic issues.

Project funding is complex and dependent on interconnections

We must by all means support effective activation of national and global funds at the local level to ensure that actions fit local contexts. We also need to rethink funding strategies so that they don't only guarantee access to these resources, but so they also get used in a fair and efficient way, supporting concrete local implementation of the SDGs at small scale to foster effective and emancipatory change in citizens life.



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TAKING ACTION

2050 Guidelines

Adapting to +4°C: Regreening, Renewing, Preserving



With local territories being now under the increasing pressure of climate hazards and crisis, we have no choice but think about adaptation at least as much as about attenuation. In France as in countries from the South (Benin), adaptation works hand in hand with smart urban densification, flexible public policy, bioclimatic architecture and systemic integration of nature-based solutions (NbS). Protecting the populations (especially vulnerable people living in informal neighborhoods from the South) and fostering the strength of public areas supports the development of more resilient urban systems while contributing to anticipate on risks to come – promoting thereby purposeful urban planning strategies.

Affordable and sustainable housing for all



Housing is a fundamental right. The globalization and financialization of the housing crisis are leading us to refresh our way of thinking about the housing sector as a whole. The improvement of housing access and of housing conditions tap into at least 10 of the SDGs. There are many different urban housing forms, based on diverse economic modalities to adapt to various local contexts. But in European cities (in France) like in Africa (Madagascar), one common lever is to learn about how to better deal with and manage what's "already there" (buildings, infrastructure, etc.). Challenges related to adaptation, sustainability and access call for us to activate some levers starting now: reform of land ownership regulations; solidary housing funds; inclusion of informality to urban strategies; urban recycling; mutualization of areas and spaces; etc.

The City of Care: a holistic approach to health



The health sector is at the crossroads of topics as diverse as health supply, water management, ways of life, climate change and social inequalities. As such, it calls for particular attention from leaders in Europe and in Africa (Senegal). We need to think about health as a whole, in line with the "One Health" concept connecting human health with animal and environmental health. Making health systems more resilient while limiting their exposures to pollution and environmental nuisance is crucial, and so is the need to advocate for mental health and to fight health, environment and territorial inequalities, especially when it comes to accessing basic needs.

Solidarities: structuring cooperation between vital forces



Rethinking cooperation implies to get past geographic and administrative divides to build collective actions. By activating networks and diverse kinds of partnerships (multi-scale, urban-rural, cross-border, South-South, North-South), we promote the mutualization of knowledge and tools and thereby strengthen local capacities to face global pressures while giving back an important role to mid-level cities. Because it actively involves local stakeholders, this way of doing supports adaptability, reciprocity, and eco-conditionality, for human-size projects to develop on more resilient and inclusive territories better equipped to face the future.

Using planetary boundaries to promote safer and fairer environments



With 2030 coming ahead, we need to accelerate the transition toward new economic and development models, especially in already developed countries from the North. This change cannot only rely on the concept of "sustainable development", which is in fact limitless. From now on, the transition must aim for a carefully calibrated balance within a safe and equitable space, defined by the Donut¹ model, consisting in a compromise between planetary boundaries and basic human needs such as health, housing, education; etc. Drawing up local diagnosis would help foster the transition toward regenerative models, stressing the importance of preserving natural local resources. Just as important is the need to promote connections between local territories to turn cooperation into a resilience driving force to face climate crisis. This shift of paradigm relies on the capacity of all stakeholders (including the population) to make the planetary boundaries framework their own.

1 Raworth, Kate (1 May 2017). "A Doughnut for the Anthropocene: Humanity's Compass in the 21st Century". *The Lancet Planetary Health*. 1 (2)

ENTERING RESILIENCE

7 operational recommendations

Recommendation 1

Equipping the concept of planetary boundaries with a set of tools to be included to local policy

Mines Saint-Etienne (engineering school) and Epures (Saint-Etienne urban planning agency) partnered up to implement the planetary boundaries framework locally, applying it to a local project and its urban document in the Sud Loire region. Their goal was to analyze the situation in this specific area through the lens of planetary boundaries and identify action opportunities based on the available resources.

Recommendation 2

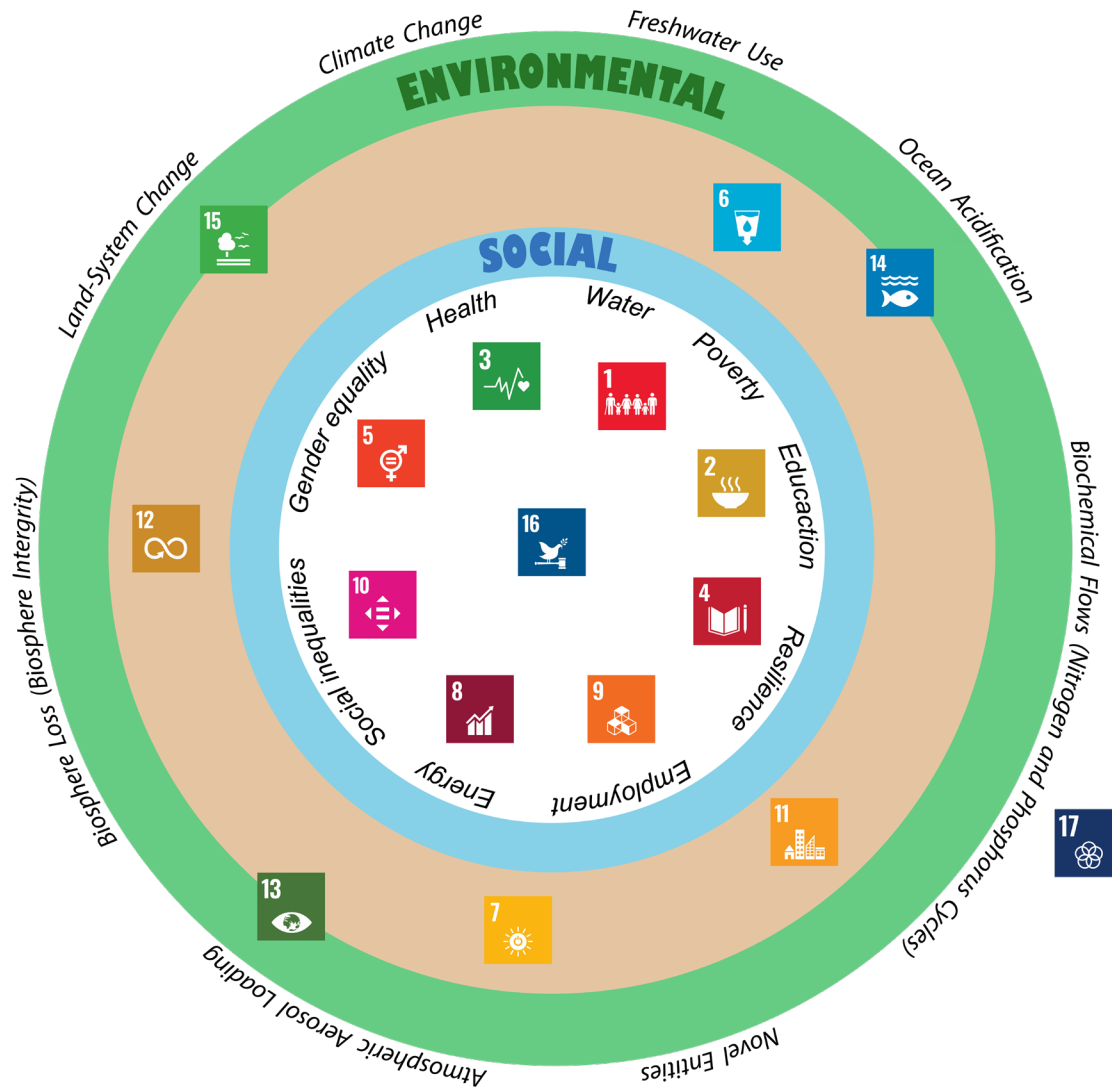
Making affordable housing a collective fight to support inclusivity and inspire decision makers to see informality as a strength

AUDeG, the urban planning agency in French Guyana, started a study about spontaneous urban development using recent satellite imagery. The work was led in concertation with various local stakeholders involved with housing policy, to evaluate spontaneous urban development – constructions built without urban permits – and to develop public policies that include informal development strategies.

Recommendation 3

Choosing One Health and health-friendly urban development as leading principles of public policies

EHESP (the French School of Public Health) provides guidelines to help build urban planning strategies that compose with health-related topics, insisting on solutions such as developing urban parks to improve the quality of life and to adapt to climate change.



Recommendation 4

Rely on nature-based solutions (NbS) to promote resilient and regenerative territories

NbS provide sustainable solutions which aren't too hard to implement and which allow for affordable ecological restoration actions. In Bresil for instance, Instituto Terra, initiated by photographer Sebastiao Salgado and his wife Lelia Deluiz Wanick, reforested the Rio Doce valley. On top of showing how reforestation can restore a damaged environment, this action also provided economic and social opportunities for the long run.

Recommendation 5

Turning the digital transition into an opportunity to build fair and inclusive cities and territories

The "People-centered smart cities" program was initiated by UN Habitat to provide guidelines and is meant to be presented at its next general assembly. It aims to identify common principles to make local authorities and local actors more involved with digital transition solutions that fit local contexts, promote human rights, foster socio-economic cohesion and support access to basic needs while limiting environmental imprints.

Recommendation 6

Supporting local authorities to apply the SDGs locally and strengthening interconnections to facilitate knowledge exchange and cooperation

URBACT is a European program that helps European cities share about their urban policies using concrete local projects, and develop their local strategies to address collective issues while capitalizing on good practices. The Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) helps local authorities develop and assess their projects based on a set of indicators that draw from the SDGs and from global and local agendas.

Recommendation 7

Making uncertainty a part of urban planning strategies through flexible regulation and flexible funding tools

The French Agency for Ecologic Transition (ADEME) developed TACTT (adaptation pathways to climate change for territories), a program meant to be a supporting guideline for local territories to set up "A to Z" adaptation solutions to climate change, ranging from vulnerability diagnosis to policy and strategy monitoring, and in accordance with the specific temporality of each action.



RENEWING

The reference frame ahead of 2050

Our challenge today is to expand the 2030 Agenda and articulate the SDGs within new collective narratives. New political frameworks and methods are needed to nourish these narratives, and for everyone to make those topics their own and take action. New reference frameworks are necessary, among which one to “compose with” planetary boundaries to make sure our world remains livable; one to use the “donut” economy model to “answer basic human needs”; and one to promote cultural transformations and a shift of economic model to include the positive and negative externalities commonly known as “spillover effects”.

Acknowledging planetary boundaries and spillover effects as a new methodological framework ahead of 2050 can help foster change about how countries approach the SDGs.

Spillover effects refer to the impact that a country may have on another’s capacity to reach the SDGs. Rich countries, even if they do well with socio-economic development, often trigger negative impact for the development of countries from other regions of the world. The EU for instance is responsible for a great deal of greenhouse gas emission outside its boarder, yet it tops the SDG Index. This is why cities have to take into account the side impact of their activities on neighboring areas and regions when planning their cooperation strategies.

If we include the concept of planetary boundaries more to our reflections, we could set up frameworks allowing for more balance between socio-economic goals and environmental priorities. This could help also preventing possible contradictions between the various SDGs themselves and ensure a systemic approach to environmental sustainability. If leaders choose to use planetary boundaries as a key landmark of their decision-making processes, they can become more able to assess their action based on their environmental impact. Strategies are currently being developed to adapt these concepts to local contexts.

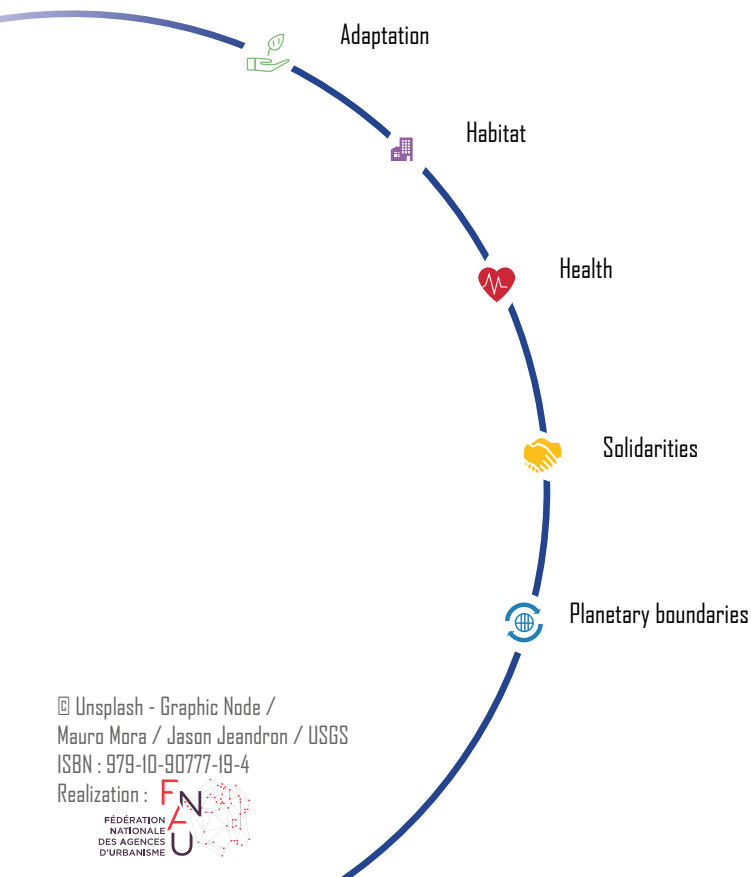
The first step here is to assess how specific areas put pressure on planetary boundaries and how they do answer or not the needs and aspirations of its citizens and stakeholders; and to question these area’s local public policies through this lens. This way, local authorities can evaluate their policies based on global ecological constraints, encompassing at once direct (local energy consumption) and indirect imprints (for instance good imports impacting another area of the planet).

Such strategy could lead to revising some global legal regulation and strengthen the programs and strategies needed to reach the SDGs.





Launched in June 2011, the **French Partnership for cities and Territories (PFVT)** is a platform supported by the French Ministries of Europe, Foreign Affairs, Culture, and Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion. The PFVT is a multi-stakeholder partnership and think-tank meant as a hub to exchange and showcase the expertise of French urban development actors on an international scale. It involves almost two hundred organizations reflecting the diversity of France's urban expertise, helping to build a shared French vision based on exchanges and innovative, sustainable experiences. <https://www.pfvt.fr/>



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Realization : 
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