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MULTI-CITY ACTION PLAN ON HEALTH & LOCAL AGENDA 21

Report on a WHO Working Group

Maribor, Slovenia
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1996

EUR/HFA target 14

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TARGET 14

SETTINGS FOR HEALTH PROMOTION

By the year 2000, all settings of social life and activity, such as the city, school, workplace, neighbourhood and home, should provide greater opportunities for promoting health.

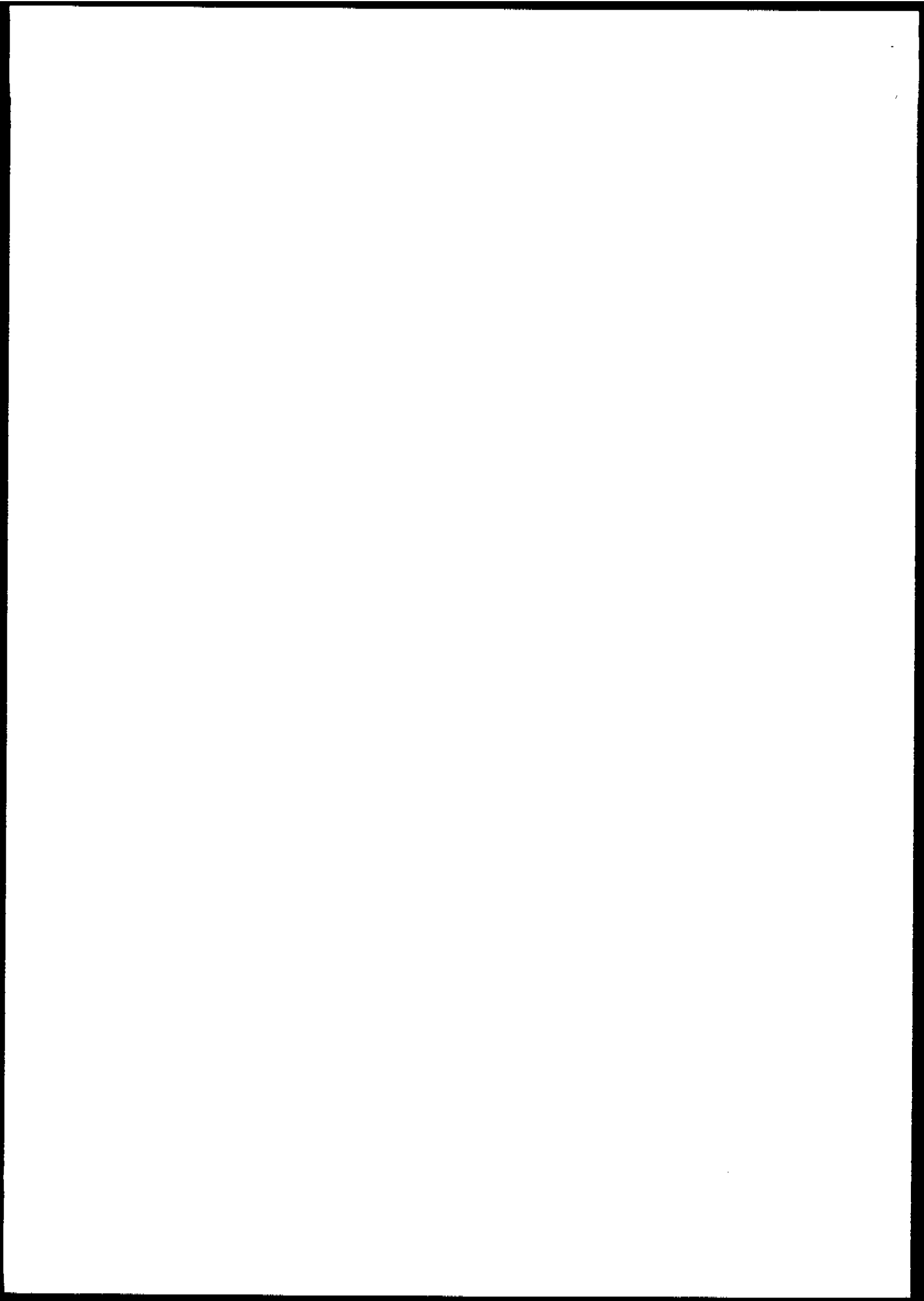
ABSTRACT

Representatives of nine local authorities, along with experts in urban planning and WHO staff, met in Maribor, Slovenia to launch a new multi-city action plan (MCAP) on health and local Agenda 21, led by the WHO Healthy Cities project within the framework of the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign. The representatives described their authorities' current activities in this area; local Agenda 21 planning was usually led by environmental departments, and varied widely in extent. Although health is central to the concern for sustainable development, the health aspects of Agenda 21 were often poorly represented in practice. The participants suggested amendments to the background papers, agreed on the products of the MCAP over the next six months, made an important statement on health and local Agenda 21, and agreed to meet again in Amadora in October 1996.

Keywords

URBAN HEALTH
CITY PLANNING
SUSTAINABILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
CONSUMER PARTICIPATION
EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION

The WHO Healthy Cities Project Office convened this first meeting of the Multi-City Action Plan (MCAP) on behalf of the WHO Healthy Cities project network and the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign.

The meeting was hosted by the Maribor Healthy City project, and was held at the Institute of Informatic Sciences on 1-2 May 1996. Participants were welcomed by the Vice-Mayor of Maribor and also by the Director of the Maribor Healthy City project.

There were 19 participants of whom three were WHO staff and two were temporary advisers. There were 14 representatives from 9 local authorities. The representatives from the participating local authorities included Healthy City project coordinators, councillors and environmental workers. Apologies were received from an additional three local authorities which asked to be part of the MCAP.

Scope and purpose of the meeting

- Establishment of a Multi-City Action Plan within the framework of the WHO Healthy Cities project and the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign.
- Clarify objectives and products for the MCAP over the next six months and for its two to four year duration.
- Exchange participants' views of good practice, ideas and experiences in relation to urban sustainability and sustainable planning.
- Develop principles and processes for urban sustainable planning and the integration of health and Agenda 21 planning

TOPICS DISCUSSED

Establishment of an MCAP

The proposal document for the MCAP (POLC.06.03.04.MT1/6) was discussed and minor amendments were suggested. The local authorities agreed to participate in a two year (initially) MCAP. Meetings would be held at least twice a year, with participating local authorities sending one or two representatives. Apart from the local authorities attending the meeting, three more have agreed to take part: Gothenburg, Rotterdam and Bologna.

Member local authorities

Amadora, Portugal	Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic	Bologna, Italy
Dun Laoghaire, Ireland	Geneva, Switzerland	Gothenburg, Sweden
Horsens, Denmark	Maribor, Slovenia	Rotterdam, Netherlands
Storstrøms Amt, Denmark	Turku, Finland	Vienna, Austria

Presentations by local authorities

Nine local authorities described their current and planned activities on health and local Agenda 21. In addition, a written report was received from Gothenburg. The activities undertaken by local authorities ranged from the early consideration of work on local Agenda 21, to the ongoing integration of Agenda 21 issues and health in the development of a municipality or county health plan - and the integration of health into the local Agenda 21 process.

The participants discussed the role of health considerations in local Agenda 21 action plans and agreed a statement on health and local Agenda 21 (included below).

Summary points from local authority presentations are given below:

Amadora

The municipality has signed the Aalborg charter. A local Agenda 21 process has been proposed by the Healthy City project and the implications of this are being considered by the municipality.

Banská Bystrica

The municipality is developing a plan for sustainable development. It has five sections, including one on health and the environment. However, Agenda 21 is not used as a basis for planning. It was felt that WHO support would be critical in increasing the acceptance of the local Agenda 21 process. Easy access to information about local Agenda 21, a short guide book on sustainable development, and some successful case studies would be very helpful to the planning process.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown

Health services are not the responsibility of the municipality but of the Eastern Health Board. The Dublin Healthy Cities project is the only umbrella forum where, at working level, the four local authorities in the Dublin area, and the Eastern Health Board can meet.

Each of the four local authorities in the Dublin area has been given responsibility for part of the area's health plan. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown has been given responsibility for urban ecology and its knowledge and experience will assist the other authorities in this area.

National guidance has recently been produced on how to develop local Agenda 21 plans. Dublin has started the process. Dublin has signed the Aalborg Charter.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown has recently produced a draft local Agenda 21 plan. It has no specific section on health and Agenda 21, but it intends to work on developing a health aspect. 60,000 copies have been circulated to households for comment. The municipality is expecting a lot of comment on the draft plan and sought guidance on how to manage the process.

The municipality is setting up an environmental forum and reviewing the master plan for the county. This will incorporate the principles of Agenda 21, will increase recycling and initiate an environmental audit of county activities.

Geneva

The municipality has signed the Aalborg Charter. Little progress has occurred in the development of a local Agenda 21 plan which is the responsibility of the environmental department. The Healthy City department (in the health department) is hoping to stimulate some local Agenda 21 activity.

Gothenburg

The municipality has signed the Aalborg Charter and has initiated the local Agenda 21 process. There is a coordinator located in the Environmental Office. Intersectoral collaboration occurs both at municipal board level and at local level. Public meetings, vision workshops and seminars have been held. There is an Agenda 21 newsletter but, it has been difficult to interest the local newspapers. There is no overall city plan, but consideration is being given to integrate the city health plan, the environmental policy and the 'comprehensive plan'.

Horsens

The municipality has incorporated Agenda 21 into its Healthy City plan. There will be fourteen public meetings - one in each of the districts of Horsens to discuss the plan. Businesses, politicians and citizens are represented on the local Agenda 21 board. There is a local Agenda 21 newsletter, and the media are regularly involved in Healthy City activities.

Maribor

Present at the Aalborg conference and has signed the Aalborg Charter, but this has yet to be ratified by the city council. The Healthy City project includes activities aimed at reducing pollution and increasing recycling and sustainability is featured in the Healthy City plan. The Environmental Protection Agency of the municipality is preparing a 20- year strategy covering six areas: potable water, waste water, air pollution, noise pollution, solid waste and soil care.

The municipality is starting its local Agenda 21 process in June 1996 as a joint project of the Maribor Healthy City project and the Environmental Protection Agency of the municipality with collaboration at municipal board level and local level. A coordinator and a working group has been nominated and the work on the Maribor Health and Ecological City map has been started, which will incorporate the local Agenda 21 process into the city health profile which will be presented to the city council in late October 1996.

Storstrøms Amt

This county has had a long involvement in sustainable development. As a member of ICLEI, it was able to contribute to the development of Chapter 28 of Agenda 21. The county was represented at the Rio conference where it received an award from the UN.

Its sustainability activities are led from the department of technology and environment of the county with three project staff. However, the activities are guided by the "Green Council" an advisory body with twenty one representatives of which two are from the municipalities and two from the county. The project leads seminars on sustainable development and community participation in both county departments and external agencies.

There are many activities which inform the public by demonstrating and encouraging the principles of sustainable development. Community participation is an important part of the projects, and a number of supportive networks have been set up (e.g. Green Schools, Eco-households, Eco-passport, Eco-tourism).

The county is developing a local Agenda 21 plan, which builds upon and integrates the experience gained from its projects. It acts as an umbrella for activities from other county departments. The local Agenda 21 process is closely related to the project activities. There is a 20-30 year vision, but the strategy will be implemented in three to five year action plans. Supportive structures and tools are devised for its implementation. There are internal links within the county, including with the health department and social services department, links with external agencies, business organizations and non-governmental organizations, and there is regular input from the public.

Storstrøms County is a member of the Danish national Healthy Cities network, and until now the Healthy City project has had no direct involvement in the local Agenda 21 process, and health has not yet been incorporated into the plan. Ideas and proposals that combine health and Agenda 21 are expected to emerge from the autumn of 1996 and onwards. Health is an issue in the ongoing development of the new master plan 1997-2008.

Turku

The municipality is starting its local Agenda 21 process. It is being led by the environmental department. It is not an intersectoral activity at present, but the plan covers several communes and discussions involved several environmental departments and non-governmental organizations. They are seeking indicators to monitor activities. The five to ten year plan will be launched in June (for public comment) and implementation will start in 1997.

Vienna

The Healthy City project has always been involved with urban planning. The Healthy City project is based in the health department, and local Agenda 21 is the responsibility of the environmental department. Little local Agenda 21 activity has been noted.

Discussion of background paper

The background paper (POLC.06.03.04.MT1/7) was well received and small amendments were made. Several local authorities would like the paper to be produced as a book for wider circulation. A "thinner" version for "busy" decision makers was suggested. Several participants agreed to consider supporting the translation of the document into a local language for other interested cities and local authorities in their country.

Urban planning

The participants discussed the background document (POLC.06.03.04.MT1/8) on the urban planning process and suggested amendments which will be incorporated in time for the next meeting.

Draft book: *City planning for health and sustainable development*

Participants were presented with the outline of this book and they discussed its role, style and content. A questionnaire was distributed to the participant local authorities requesting information on the potential audience and their needs.

Collection of case studies

Local authorities will be asked to provide case studies on activities related to health and local Agenda 21. The format of the request for case studies needs to be agreed, but will involve asking initially for short outlines of potential case studies, to be followed up by the commissioning of a selection of fuller case studies. These case studies would be chosen and interpreted for their generalisable use. They should be presented in a standard format.

Other products and activities suggested

- A short publication describing how to undertake the integration of health and local Agenda 21 planning using the book "Twenty steps" as a model. Suggested title: "Twenty one steps towards health and sustainable development".
- A resource guide for cities to include an annotated bibliography, materials for teaching and for presentations. (The resource guide could be developed using multi-media technology and produced as a CD-ROM.)
- Development of a proposal to the EU for funding products and processes integrating local Agenda 21 and health issues - to be discussed further at Amadora.

Lisbon conference

WHO Healthy Cities project office will request a workshop (and offer to lead it) on health and Agenda 21 at the second European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign at Lisbon in October 1996 (Storstrøms County had already proposed such a workshop to the conference organizers). If this is agreed, the participating cities will support the workshop.

Statement on health and local Agenda 21

The following statement on health and local Agenda 21 was agreed by local authorities represented at the meeting:

- Human health and wellbeing is central to concern for sustainable development.
- Achievement of sustainable development requires attention to economy, environment, social, demographic and health issues and the full involvement and participation of local communities.
- Agenda 21 provides a framework for achievement of sustainable development in which a concern for human health is a central part.
- The WHO health for all strategy shares the principles and objectives of Agenda 21 and provides the most appropriate additional guidance for the implementation of the health components of Agenda 21.
- The urban planning process is a key instrument to achieve sustainable development.
- The creation of local Agenda 21 action plans is an essential step towards the creation of healthy and sustainable cities. The creation of such plans should be a concern of all local authorities.
- A concern for human health should underlie the creation of local Agenda 21 action.
- Local Agenda 21 action should address the health components of Agenda 21.

We recommend that:

- All cities and local authorities should ensure that a concern for human health is central to action which they take on local Agenda 21;
- Networks, local authorities and other participants in the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign are asked to consider this statement and to contribute their experience and support to ensure that local Agenda 21 action plans take appropriate consideration of human health.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND AGREEMENTS

- 1) The statement on health and local Agenda 21 will be taken, for its consideration, to the coordinating committee of the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign, 13 May 1996.
- 2) All participating local authorities should join the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign.
- 3) The proposal document for the MCAP will be revised.
- 4) The background document on health and local Agenda 21 will be revised and sent out to participants in June.
- 5) A framework for the collection of case studies will be prepared and circulated to participants for comments and for their contributions.
- 6) A framework for the collection of resources and tools will be prepared and circulated to participants for comments.
- 7) The book on city health planning will be prepared in time to incorporate comments before the next MCAP meeting.
- 8) WHO Healthy Cities project office will request a workshop (and offer to lead it) on health and local Agenda 21 at the second European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign at Lisbon in October 1996.
- 9) The next meeting of the MCAP will take place in Amadora on 4-5 October 1996, at the invitation of the Mayor.

Annex 1

List of working papers¹

- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/1 Provisional List of Working Papers
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/2 Scope and Purpose
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/3 Provisional Agenda
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/5 Provisional List of Participants
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/6 Proposal for a Multi City Action Plan (MCAP)
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/7 Background Paper
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/8 The Urban Planning Process: A Key Instrument to Achieve
Local Sustainable Development
- POLC.06.03.04.MT1/9 Questions for MCAP Participants

¹ Copies of these papers may be obtained from the WHO Healthy Cities project office.

Annex 2

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