**INPUT FOR THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CLIMATE CHANGE:** **ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**I – SDG Cities Based: the path for sustainable cities (Santos City)**

[Brazil’s Federal Constitution](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm) covers two major principles or values: economic-social development combined with the preservation of environmental quality. The alliance of these principles is a necessary condition for tackling the main environmental, social and economic problems arising from life and coexistence in urban spaces.

The search for better conditions in the planning of the urban environment guarantees quality of life for the population, through the creation of “sustainable cities”, which aim, for example: a) creation of “green spaces”, such as parks or squares; b) improving urban mobility, with actions to reduce greenhouse gases and combat global warming; c) adequate use of urban infrastructure, d) planning public transport or encouraging the use of alternative transport, e) solid waste disposal and recycling, through encouraging the creation of cooperatives, e) land management, f ) saving water and energy; g) reduction of pollution, h) use of renewable and/or recyclable materials; i) installation of appropriate enterprises and/or buildings, with water reuse programs; j) activities aimed at environmental education, including encouraging conscious consumption, among other public policies that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Such an ideal urban configuration is not possible to obtain and defend without the efficient and effective participation of society, since the same Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 determines that it is the responsibility of both the Public Power and the society to respect and preserve the environment (as per article 225).

Therefore, for there to be the possibility of offering tools aimed at mobilizing towards more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable Brazilian cities, society's participation is necessary, and to do so, quality information is needed, which leads to more efficient management. democracy of urban spaces, through the participation of society not only in the elaboration of public policies, but also in the supervision and implementation of their mechanisms.

Nowadays, we address as an example the City of [Santos](https://www.santos.sp.gov.br/static/files_www/files/portal_files/dossie_ods_2023_completo_digital.pdf) that uses the SDG as a tool for urban planning (SDG 11) and as an action against climate change (SDG 13). They address their actions publicly and its possible to monitor on the website. As a form of accountability, we suggest the monitoring of UNDP and UNEP on these actions and the spread of the results.

As a matter of praxis, using the information obtained on the website, we found [Santos climate change action program](https://www.santos.sp.gov.br/static/files_www/files/portal_files/hotsites/pacs/plano_de_acao_climatica_de_santos_pacs_sumario_executivo.pdf), including Climate Governance and Institutional Arrangements as a procedure of constructing those actions SDG 16 orientated, as an action the nature-based solutions (NbS) to increase urban resilience and an Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approach to adaptation to effects of climate change.

Information is a condition and tool for raising citizen awareness about sustainability, as it gives the possibility of creating efficient practices for the best use of urban spaces, combined with quality of life and preservation of the environment. In this sense, information can be considered as a **catalyst for popular mobilization**, as it allows citizens to have the basis to participate with quality in issues involving primary interests, such as an ecologically balanced environment.

**II - Information for society´s participation**

Following the example on the first topic and considering that society's progress has been notable in terms of knowledge of individual and collective rights in addition to civic duties, granting them the effective right to participation[[1]](#footnote-1) to take an active stance in favor of the defense and protection of the ecologically balanced environment is SDG 16 oriented approach.

This system also includes the use of urban spaces, bearing in mind that the citizen starts to worry about the ecologically balanced environment to give it the correct sustainability, in accordance with what prescribes various international regulations and national ones. However, for quality inclusion in this debate, the population must be adequately informed.

The right to participation therefore presupposes and the right to access to information were written as one of the main objectives of the [National Environmental Policy](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l6938.htm) (Law no. 6,938/81, article 4, item V and article 9, item XI) demands it.

This is a basic principle of the Brazilian democratic regime, as well as being essential for the active and efficient participation of the society in the quest to gain its citizenship in the defense and protection of the ecologically balanced environment, through the “formation of public awareness about the need for preservation environmental quality and ecological balance” (according to article 4, item V, of the National Environmental Policy).

On the international scene, the right to information is expressly addressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in article 19: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

Subsequently, the Stockholm Declaration (1972) also highlights the importance of disseminating information, scientific research, and the free exchange of experiences for education and ensuring access for developing countries to environmental technologies (Principles 19 and 20).

In this same reasoning, the Rio de Janeiro Declaration (1992) brings the obligation of States to notify in cases of disasters and other emergencies that may cross borders, as well as the obligation to provide information on activities potentially causing environmental degradation; the right to information before public authorities, in addition to the duty of States to make information available to society, bearing in mind that “environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens” (Principles 10, 18 and 19).

The 2030 Agenda establishes several targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus on improving the availability of information to stimulate actions for the next 15 years in crucial areas for humanity and the planet. Take, for example, SDG 16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, which ensure “public access to information”, in addition to protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (target 16.10).

In this way, with information in hand, citizens can contribute to sustainability, in an effective vision of participatory management of urban space, as being informed enables them to interfere in public life, as they will be aware of the need for environmental protection to obtain quality of life as they change their own behavior.

The right to information became an instrument and mechanism for obtaining and defending democratic participation, as it will act as a catalyst for popular mobilization, by providing a basis for citizens to get involved with quality in issues that encompass primary interests, such as ecologically balanced environment and fundamental individual rights, such as property and socio-environmental function.

Therefore, for better resolution and management of environmental problems, including regarding the allocation of property, there must be cooperation between the State and society, carried out through various incentive programs as the private sector fulfills, as their alleged to compromises with their ESG approach as a form of corporative responsibility.

Here we found a need to improve as the [ABNT PR 2030](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzTu_sMzboc) provides the path for an **ESG** orientated by the sustainable development goals. The need for **disclosure of data and private actor’s procedure on analyzing that data** need to be open for external audition as it matters not only for the sustainable report itself, but as a tool of road mapping and backcasting the 2030 Agenda. Disclosing it’s a mandatory path to achieve 2030 Agenda.

This view creates a *sui generis* PPP (Public Private Partnership) that could be monitored as its goals are achieved or progress. The information provided by subnational actors need to be added by the private actor’s actions so the human right to access information fulfills its main objective to create an environment of social participation on the path of sustainable development objectives.

**III – Examples of democratic management in São Paulo/Brazil**

In the City of São Paulo, some programs were implemented aiming at interaction between the State and society about the urban environment, through the creation of transparency and information granting mechanisms, based on the appropriation of governance instruments, so that can achieve (and, subsequently, defend) the broad participation of society regarding environmental protection.

Take, as an example, the electronic channels called: “Infocidade”, “Observa Sampa”, “São Paulo Aberta” and “Planeja Sampa”.

“Infocidade”, created by the Municipal Department of Urban Development, makes data about the city of São Paulo available to the population, with indicators that make up the updated collection of information (tables, maps and graphs) made available by the secretaries of each City Hall, with topics such as: demography, water supply, work, transport, maps of social equipment networks, among other essential urban topics.

The “Observa Sampa” website brings performance indicators from the São Paulo State City Hall and georeferential data from the city, as well as analyzes and evaluations to be used for public policies with the purpose of promoting popular participation through the monitoring of such policies. through the provision of information on technical studies carried out by City Hall, capable of measuring the quality of life of São Paulo residents through access to essential social equipment.

On the other hand, “Planeja Sampa” has the main objective of transforming São Paulo into a transparent and participatory city, through the creation of mechanisms to listen to the population, such as Councils, hearings, and public consultations, in addition to the classic electronic channels (including the social media).

This instrument also has as a priority the combination of municipal goals with the Municipal Organic Law and the Multi-Year Plan, so that the population can have access to management and verify whether campaign promises are fulfilled within the allowed budget. It is also possible for **citizens to contribute to selecting priority areas of action for next year**, through an online public consultation. For example, in 2015, residents voted as a priority to create housing units, the possibility of increasing selective collection, revitalizing squares and sidewalks and paving.

Projects to make these deficient areas viable are available and can be followed by the population and used as a tool for see the horizon of the 2030 Agenda as São Paulo has it on [report](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/English_Report%20of%20Localization%20of%20the%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals.pdf) on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, self-claiming as a “City of the World” with an own systematization of the indicators available for monitoring. We can see a SDG 17 orientated action here.

Finally, “São Paulo Aberta” aims to promote actions and activities for a government open to popular initiative (through the articulation of transparency, access to information, new technologies and integration of public policy), as the platform allows online interaction between citizens and City Hall providing a clear action based on SDG 16.

The examples cited demonstrate the attempt to manage the city of São Paulo (capital of one of the largest Brazilian states) in accordance with the priorities brought by the population, complying with criteria of justice, social equity, and environmental quality.

**IV – Information as the basic premise for Road Mapping and Backcasting: A Positive Reflex of the Human Right to access information.**

[**The Age of Sustainable Development**](https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.7312/sach17314-014/html)[[2]](#footnote-2) established two major instruments to achieve goals on the 2030 Agenda. The 1) Road Mapping; 2) Backcasting. As we can see from the examples above the map to sustainable develop trespass mere technical manage and provides the essentiality of the information as we need to achieve the year of 2030 with the necessary basis to backcast and evaluate the path we fallowed.

As the human right access to information provides the necessary transparency on the public and private sectors as a matter of governance, the evaluating process could be more accurate as the actors on this global governance approach provides data to be analyzed. The concept of smart cities relies on this approach and the positive reflex relies on the dynamics of the receiving/provider aspect of the information itself and could be seeing as examples of SGSs 16 and 17 that path the goals to achieve an environmental of disclosing information.

Protocol of acquiring data, managing, and analyzing could be implemented as the growing need of transparency is achieved by the access of information from the participation of civil society on this game change experience of Climate Crises.

The examples presented on this input should be consider as a form of mirroring the practices noticed, considering that policies should be established as 4-dimensional tools, not only seeing spaces and actions static on time, but the time to accomplish them on a dynamic point of view.

The complex of actions needed to achieve SDGs should be addressed as a need to prioritize polices on the “road mapping” approach, and this approach need to be data-based. From the perspective of this input the goals focused on climate change actions need to prioritize adaptation measures and the human right to access information is the base premise for it.

**V – Conclusions**

Providing adequate information allows one to acquire a sense of responsibility, awareness and knowledge about civic rights and duties, including respect and defense and preservation for the environment, in addition to the understanding necessary to carry out the “power-duty” of acting in favor of the environment as SDG based approach.

The information is absorbed by the population which based on the knowledge acquired has the potential to use a certain property for the benefit of the society, that contributes to the formation of a common sense in favor of the environment, achieving reflexively the goals presented and the human right to a right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment (UN Human Rights Council resolution 48/13).

Information is a two-way process that the provider and the receiver synergy present the possibility to transform the behavior of both parties. Using the human right to access information as a transforming tool for police inclusion is a way to achieve concrete actions non-State based and a way to capillaries environmental policies, focusing on climate adaptation and mitigation.

This input presents examples of approaches as Santos and São Paulo Cities formulates and implements the 2030 Agenda as objectives to be achieved with the participation of the population as a policy makers and inductors. The key to achieve is disclosure, and it must be a participation of the private sector as ESG followers.

1. Whether through public hearings, consultations, class entities, legal or popular mobilization. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. SACHS, Jeffrey D. **The age of sustainable development**. Columbia University Press, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)