



SIXTY NINETH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE
URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)**

**STATEMENT
BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL COORDINATION BUREAU OF LDCs**

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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of LDCs.

At the outset, the Group likes to commend the Chair and other members of the bureau of the PrpCom for their well-deserved elections. We are confident that under the able leadership of this bureau, the current session of the PrepCom will reach to a successful conclusion.

The Group attaches great importance to the third UN Conference on housing and sustainable urban development, as it relates to some of the key challenges that LDCs are facing. We want substantial preparations in a bottom up approach, that brings to the fore the challenges that the cities are facing in terms health and sanitation; access to food, energy, education and training; and communications and transportation. We want an ambitious, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome that reinvigorates the global commitment to and support for housing and sustainable urban development.

It is remarkable that, only one century ago, a mere 5 per cent of the population of LDCs resided in urban areas, which, according to the World Development Indicators, has reached to nearly 30 per cent. In LDCs, the urban population is growing at an unprecedented rate of 4.7 per cent per year. This implies that the urban population in LDCs will double in less than 15 years.

Rapid urbanization in LDCs has been accompanied by a growing demand for affordable urban land, housing, water and sanitation, health care facilities and addressing a wide range of other vulnerabilities and shocks. However, the demand far outpaces supply of the available facilities. Due to the lack of adequate urban planning and management capacities as well as resource constraints at national and local levels, the rapid pace of urbanization is resulting in the expansion of slums and informal settlements and income inequalities rather than contributing to increasing the wealth of cities.

Besides a number of challenges, urbanization has huge potentials. We must tap this great potential with a view to ensuring greater equitability, economic growth, strengthened social cohesion, improved environmental outcomes and sustainable development. The HABITAT III should aim at streamlining the process of urbanization to promote sustainable urbanization in the LDCs in order to promote socio-economic development of urban dwellers. Well-planned and intelligently designed cities have the potential to improve the lives of half the planet's people today, and 80% by 2030 at a relatively lower rate of resources use. We have taken the dual approach encompassing both urban and rural settlement in the SDGs adopted by the General Assembly.

We would like to suggest the following key priority areas of LDCs in the areas of housing and sustainable cities:

First: We want to make the slum a history. We need to anticipate and plan in advance to prevent further slum-forming urban growth with the aim to develop viable and productive cities and neighborhoods through better urban planning in order to improve living condition and prevent slum development. We need to increase access to affordable housing, land and housing-related infrastructure and basic services while achieving a significant improvement in the lives of millions of slum dwellers.

Second: Appropriate mechanisms should be made available at all levels for capacity building and to ensure direct access and scaled-up financial support for the implementation of urban adaptation, including the development of resilient food safety nets and other social services.

Third: We need to improve the physical infrastructure and to maximize the benefits of economies of scale through better planning, developing a supportive regulatory framework to support individual and private stakeholders' initiatives and ensure equitable development. This can foster public-private partnerships, which are vitally important for LDCs.

Forth : We need to address the mitigation of natural hazards at the city level, many of which are being exacerbated by climate change. The impacts of disasters are far greater in poorly planned and inequitable cities. Urban areas in LDCs, with their high concentration of population, economic activity and poor infrastructure, are likely to face the most severe impacts of climate change.

Fifth : We need to put in place a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder partnership approach that engages Governments, the private sector, civil society, foundations, local authorities as well as regional and global networks of cities. LDCs need significant amount of financial and technical support and technology transfer from the development partners to improve access to land, housing and basic services and capacities of national and local governments and institutions for low-cost building and other utility services.

Finally: I would underscore the need for active participation of LDCs in the Habitat Conference and all its preparatory processes. We need an assurance of financial support from the trust fund of Habitat III for participation of at least two representatives from each LDCs in all future meetings related to Habitat-III.

I thank you all for your kind attention.