

**Closing Remarks by Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

**Closing Ceremony at the Seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum**

**Thursday 17 October 2019 at SETIA Spice Convention Centre, Penang**

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**Your Excellency, Mr. Chow Kon Yeow, the Chief Minister of Penang and our gracious host of the 7th Asia Pacific Urban Forum,  
Your Excellency, Puan Zuraida Kamaruddin, Minister of Housing & Local Government, Malaysia,  
Honorable Dato Yew Thong Seang, Mayor of Penang Island City Council,  
Honourable Mayors, Governors, local government representatives, Dear Friends,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to speak.

**Your Excellency Chief Minister,**

We are all very grateful for your hospitality and support to make this Forum such a success.

**Ladies and gentlemen**

It has become clear that the Sustainable Development Goals is not only an agenda at the national level, but also for cities. Local governments in Asia and the Pacific are leading the way in advancing towards a more sustainable and equitable future and achieve the SDGs by 2030. In Penang, urban experts and stakeholders have gathered to join efforts to make this possible.

I would like to once again thank our partners at Urbanice Malaysia (on behalf of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing) and the City Council of Penang for their support in hosting this event. Also, a special thanks to our fellow col-leagues in UN ESCAP and the members of the APUF7 Steering Committee for their collaboration which made this event a success.

Throughout APUF, we have seen an abundance of contributions from key stakeholder and constituency groups as well as other urban experts who have voiced their concerns and challenges, but also announced commitments and actions on how to implement sustainable urban development at the local level.

We have learnt that many good practices are emerging in countries and cities on how to take the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda forward. However, in many cases, policy frameworks and an enabling environment to support such initiatives are lacking. Urban and territorial planning, legislations and budgeting and financing systems have yet to adjust to the new policy environment and align with the SDGs.

Moreover, many smart technologies can make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, but they should become available more widely and made more affordable so that they can reach those who have so far been left behind. Again, governments at different levels

need to build partnerships with businesses, the academia and the civil society with this in mind.

If we do not urgently adjust our systems and frameworks, we will continue to lag behind and risk not fulfilling the SDGs by 2030 and the transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda by 2036.

While addressing a wide range of issues including urban and territorial planning, resilience, smart technologies and finance, APUF has also provided valuable opportunities for national and local governments, the academia and civil society organizations to share precious experiences and good practices and learn from each other.

It is now up to each of us to apply what we have learnt and practice this in our local context.

UN-Habitat is committed to take forward the APUF7 outcomes at the Tenth World Urban Forum next year. Once again, I would like to invite all of you to join us in Abu Dhabi from 8-13 February 2020. At this and other occasions, we would like to see the concrete actions and showcase the impact of all initiatives to implement the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs.

Let us walk the talk. Let us keep the Asia-Pacific region at the forefront of sustainable development. I have every confidence that, by working together, we will find innovative and feasible solutions along with member states, partners, and the UN System in advancing for a better life for all in an urbanizing world.