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Statement by Germany on April 16th, 2015

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Honorable Co-chairs, Secretary General, Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Germany aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. Let me also highlight the German position regarding crucial issues for Habitat III and to emphasize key elements for the New Urban Agenda.

In Germany, we have no megacities and there is a different urban dynamic to what is found in many other countries, urban development is very present on the political agenda.

Currently, our parliament is dealing with a motion addressing the international dimensions of urbanization and the chancellors' Advisory Panel on Global Change is working on a flagship report on the topic. Germany will actively support the Habitat III process.

There is an urgent need for us to respond to the dynamics of urbanization and at the same time make the most of the many opportunities that future-oriented urban development offers for sustainable development. Let me highlight our priority issues in this regard:

1. Urban frameworks are key to ensuring accountability and responsibility for policy development and implementation at the national level.
2. At the local level, urban planning and good governance are crucial prerequisites for successfully addressing the needs of residents so as to make cities livable.
3. At the same time, ensuring access to basic services and infrastructure is a fundamental requirement if everyone is to have a decent life.
4. Multi-level partnerships and long-term activities are crucial in order to curb climate change and increase resilience to its impacts.

Since the adoption of the Leipzig Charter on sustainable European Cities eight years ago we are working to reach these objectives. The experiences gained in this unique international process can contribute to Habitat III.

The New Urban Agenda presents a key opportunity for solidifying the sustainable development goals and carrying them further towards implementation. The New Urban Agenda has to become truly results-oriented and geared towards implementation.

- We need an agenda that puts people at the center and is geared towards the vision of a “livable city for all”.
- We need an agenda that promotes integrated approaches and incorporates rural-urban linkages.
- We need an agenda that recognizes, enables and empowers local authorities as key actors for sustainable development. They will be the main implementers of the New Urban Agenda and should have a voice in the Habitat III process. The local level is where sustainable development approaches - and our new Sustainable Development

Goals - are best put into action. This is especially relevant for climate change adaptation measures.

- Finally, the responsibility for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda lies with different groups of actors at different levels. Therefore, we need an agenda that fully recognizes, mirrors, and further develops the Global Partnership that we are advocating in the Post-2015 agenda process.

In the coming months, the content of the New Urban Agenda will be discussed. But let us not forget the following: Habitat III can only be successful if the New Urban Agenda is implemented with a view to having a sustainable impact. Yet, to ensure this, the evident gaps in capacity, knowledge and financing at the local level need to be addressed. For the long-term success of Habitat III, what is needed is a concrete, concise and focused political outcome document with clear targets and indicators. And a review process that ensures continued mobilization and commitment at the highest levels.

To conclude, let me emphasize once again the importance the German government attaches to the Habitat III process. We are fully prepared to continue our support. I would like to call upon all of you for your active political and technical support in the Habitat III process and your commitment in developing and implementing the New Urban Agenda!

Thank you very much!