

Prepcom2 - closing statement of EU&MS on stakeholder participation

Madam Chair, Under Secretary General Clos, Excellencies, stakeholders, dear colleagues

The EU and its MS wish to congratulate the co chairs for their able guidance during those 3 days, we would like to thank in particular the bureau member from Germany who guided our passionate discussions of the working group.

While we are happy with the very rich general debate in the plenary, that proved the commitment of all countries and stakeholders for the preparation of the new urban agenda, we cannot hide our frustration that most of the issues under agenda item 5 of the working group were not agreed upon. We are in particular dismayed that the discussions on the modalities for improved participation of stakeholders and local authorities were, once again, postponed to a later occasion. On that matter, madam chair, we collectively failed.

The EU and its Member States consider of outmost importance of ensuring their active participation at all stages of the preparatory process and in the Habitat III Conference, in line with the mandate of the general assembly.

The challenge of sustainable urbanization and creating the new urban agenda are enormous. They will require systemic changes and a transformative agenda that national governments alone will not be able to shape nor implement only between themselves.

We need an open, inclusive consultative and participatory process, that involves stakeholders and local authorities at all levels of the our preparations.

While we do respect the need to look very carefully at procedures, we simply can't afford to have an overly procedural approach and to continue on this path for months and months, discussing between governments alone about if and how stakeholders can participate, and not taking any action on it. We need to make the IMPROVED participation of stakeholders and local authorities a reality.

Madam chair, the EU and its Member States have proposed in the working group to preserve the precedents of the Governing Council of UN Habitat as far as local authorities accreditation is concerned, and of the Habitat II Conference, as far as their active participation is concerned. Those proposals were not even debated. Instead, Madam Chair, we used two hours to negotiate if and how Member States would agree to commit to discuss the issue again at a later stage, in the most unclear manner.

Madam Chair, We are convinced that with this in mind, the modalities of such improved participation would be finally discussed - and agreed on in a progressive manner - as soon as possible. We cannot afford to get into prepcom3 without those modalities, it would send a TERRIBLE signal to them, as it would in particular impede them to participate effectively in the 3rd Prepcom.

Thank you