

Delivered

**Statement by Mr. Abdalla Abbas Hamad
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Plenary Meeting
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III (PREPCOM 2)
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Madame Co-Chairs,

The Executive Director of UN-HABITAT,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentleman,

At the outset I would like to associate our delegation with the statement made by His Excellency the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We wish to commend the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and both Co-chairs for their able leadership of the preparatory process of the Habitat III conference.

We share the view of Dr. Joan Clos confirming that *"the conference is a unique opportunity for rethinking the urban agenda in which governments can respond by promoting a new model of urban development able to integrate all facets of sustainable development, to promote equity, welfare and shared prosperity."*

Habitat III offers an exceptional chance to advance a shared viewpoint on human settlements and a renewed political commitment towards advancing sustainable urban development.

We should ensure that we seize this opportunity and create even further the global awareness and make urbanization one of the pillar issues within the Sustainable Development Agenda. Sustainable urban development should

be given due consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda while ensuring that the policies are action oriented, realistic and implementable by governments and by all the Habitat agenda partners. In this manner HABITAT III will become an important platform to implement this new urban agenda.

If we get our cities right, with human beings at the center of our concerns, they can become an important development solution - environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive.

The preparatory process towards Habitat III provides an excellent forum to unite the global community, through an exchange of dialogues about the progress made since Habitat II in 1996 and Istanbul+5 in 2001, and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Your Excellencies , ladies and gentleman,

The Kingdom of Bahrain fully supports the preparatory process that is in place for the conference. Bahrain supports this at international level as well as at the national level in particular through the process of finalizing its National Report which will highlight the achievements made since Habitat II and the constraints and challenges faced in this process.

Without going into too much detail at this point in time allow me Madame Co-Chair to just highlight a few of the main achievements. Under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister, the Government of Bahrain has consistently pursued a policy which has enhanced the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the MDG's. An overriding concern for the government has been and continues to be putting the Bahraini citizens at the center of development through pursuing inclusive economic and social policies. This has led to the achievement of most of the objectives of the Habitat Agenda and the MDG's. It is in recognition of this that HRH the Prime Minister of Bahrain was awarded the 2006 Special Citation to the Habitat Scroll of Honor.

As regards shelter, over the last few decades government has provided on average more than 65% of the citizens of Bahrain a housing service and in its government programme of 2015 – 2018 the government is committed to continue to pursue this policy of providing social housing to citizens with limited income as is also as provided for in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Other milestones include the provision of sanitation and potable water to 98% of the population, and 100% Primary and Secondary school enrolment.

As a token of its commitment for advancing sustainable urbanization and sustainable development, I am pleased to mention two important initiatives.

Firstly the Kingdom of Bahrain and UNHabitat will re-launch His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa UNHabitat Award to respond to the New Urban Agenda at Habitat III. The award is meant to support initiatives at city level that promote the innovation for sustainable urbanization. Secondly, the Kingdom of Bahrain is hosting from 5-7 May 2015 the High Arab Forum on Sustainable Development which is organized by ESCWA, UNEP and the League of Arab States.

The Forum will provide a platform for discussing progress made in the Arab region towards the achievement of the MDG's and providing a regional dimension for the preparatory process for the SDG's. The outcome and recommendations of the Forum will form the Arab region's input to the discussions of the HLPF and the 70th session of the UNGA next September.

During the forum, UNHabitat is organizing a side event, titled ` Towards more inclusive, integrated, resilient and sustainable cities in the Arab region' with the following objectives. Firstly; To exchange regional views on the new urban agenda for sustainable urbanization post-2015 and regional preparations for Habitat III. Secondly; To Enhance the role of municipalities and local governments in advancing inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities in the Arab region. And thirdly; To discuss the implementation mechanism for urban SDG's in particular SDG11 in the Arab region.

The Kingdom of Bahrain looks forward to actively participate in the forthcoming preparatory process for Habitat III and the conference itself.

Thank you Madame Co-Chair.