

Esteemed Madame co-chair, national delegates and respected colleagues -- good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is José Siri and I represent the United Nations University International Institute for Global Health. I speak today as a member both of the scientific community and of the global community of stakeholders whose lives will be touched by decisions made in the shaping of HABITAT III.

Beyond any doubt, the New Urban Agenda will be greatly affected by the contributions of scientists, researchers and academics. Collectively, we seek to provide governments, policy-makers, communities and society itself with a better understanding of the natural world, and of the limitations and opportunities inherent in its multidimensional interactions with humanity. This understanding is made concrete in the generation and assessment of scientific solutions to human problems, based on current knowledge and the forecasting of future possibilities.

Progress in all domains of sustainable urbanization will require substantial innovation in science and technology, a much better interface between scientists, decision-makers and communities to identify feasible and appropriate solutions, and a much greater appreciation of the complexity of urban problems, including the potential for unintended consequences to arise from poorly informed decisions. With the application of scientific and technological knowledge and creativity in a genuine exchange of ideas, the scientific community is well-placed to help generate sustainable solutions to the problems faced by people in cities and human settlements around the world.

As a health scientist, I want to draw particular attention to the critical nexus between health and sustainable urban development. Human health should be understood as both an input to sustainable urban development, and a primary outcome of that development. We applaud the effort that has gone into the elaboration of issue papers and policy units, but note that health has not so far been considered in a comprehensive, integrated way. We urge all member states and

stakeholders involved in the HABITAT III process to advocate for a more complete consideration of the interactions between health and urbanization.

In this vein, allow me to draw attention to the new global science initiative on “Health and Wellbeing in the Changing Urban Environment: A Systems Analysis Approach,” co-sponsored by the International Council for Science, the InterAcademy Medical Panel and the United Nations University.

In closing, I would also like to align myself with the General Assembly of Partners, which includes researchers and academics among its constituent groups. We urge you to recognize their important work, which will include the elaboration of a set of common positions to help constitute the New Urban Agenda, with a focus on key principles and thematic areas, as well as the proposal of a set of prioritized, actionable, evidence-based recommendations for urban interventions, which will assist stakeholders at all levels in the tasks of monitoring and implementing this agenda.

Thank you for your time.