



THE GROUP OF 77

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Talaat,

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Republic of Kenya, and the Permanent Representative to UNEP, UN-HABITAT, and UNON, and Chairman of the Group of 77 and China Chapter in Nairobi, at the 56th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements

Programme

(UNON, Nairobi, 8th April 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

Executive Director of UN-Habitat,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I wish to begin by welcoming the remarks delivered by Mr. Joan Clos, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat. In particular, I echo his emphasis on the importance of the next session of the Governing Council, which is the last ahead of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the progress in the implementation of the six year strategic plan, for 2014-2019, and the Work Programme for the biennium 2014-2015. We also

commend the efforts exerted towards adoption of results-based management principles, and achieving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

In this vein, we emphasize the importance of the focus areas identified in the strategic plan including urban legislation, urban planning, urban economy, urban basic services, housing, slum upgrading, risk reduction, research and capacity development. We recognize that cities that are well planned and developed, can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies.

It is important to also highlight the need for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements, that provides for affordable housing and infrastructure, and prioritizes slum upgrading. It is important to work towards improving the quality of human settlements, including the living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers, in the context of poverty eradication, so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility.

an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements has to be further promoted, including supporting local authorities, increasing public awareness, and enhancing participation of urban residents in decision-making.

It is also critical to promote sustainable development policies, that support inclusive housing and social services; a safe and healthy living environment for all; affordable and sustainable transport and energy; promotion, protection and restoration of safe and green urban spaces; safe and clean drinking water and sanitation; healthy air quality; generation of decent jobs; and improved urban planning and slum upgrading. We believe that UN-Habitat must strive to align its strategic objectives with national development priorities.

We underline the importance of considering disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate risks in urban planning. We recognize the efforts of cities to balance development with rural regions. In this context, we welcome the outcome of the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan (from 14 to 18 March 2015).

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of the G77+China welcomes the effort of the secretariat in preparation for the 25th session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, which coincides with the process of Intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development agenda, for which it is expected to provide some useful input. The chosen theme of the upcoming session of the governing council and its two sub-themes: are very important and relevant to the discussions taking place leading to the adoption of the Post-2015 development agenda in September this year.

We also welcome the ongoing preparations for the Second meeting of the Preparatory Committee of Habitat III (PrepCOM II), which is an important meeting, that shall build on the results of PrepCOM I, held in New York last September, and will discuss important issues including the substantive preparations of the Habitat III conference, as well as engagement of stakeholders in that process.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of G77 and China welcomes UN-Habitat's efforts in including human settlements as a standalone goal in the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); as envisaged in the proposed goal 11 titled "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

We believe this is an essential step that enables the effective management of the challenges of rapid urbanization, and provides an opportunity to promote a positive, mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings, across the human settlements continuum.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China commends the ongoing efforts of the co-facilitators of the informal consultations of the UN-Habitat Governance review process. We also welcome the positive dialogue taking places between the various regional groups, with a view to adopt the necessary measures, to strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and representation of the UN-Habitat and make it more fit for purpose to deliver its mandate ahead of the Habitat III conference.

Mr. Chairman,

While we remain concerned about the financial situation of UN-Habitat, we encourage the Executive Director, to continue his efforts for implementation of the Programme's Resource Mobilization Strategy, as well as outreach efforts to widen the donor base, in addition to the ongoing process to increase the overall efficiency of the program.

It is also important to continue and expand the efforts, to raise awareness of the relevance of the work of the Programme, its unique expertise and its ability to deliver results, while highlighting the impact of the programme's activities.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
