



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 and UN-HABITAT and Chairman of the Group of 77 and China Chapter in Nairobi, at the 25th Session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Program for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat)
(UNON, Nairobi, 17th April 2015)

Mr. Chairman,

Excellency Ministers,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

At the outset I wish to welcome the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the work programme of the United Nations Program for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat). We also commend the program's efforts in advancing the implementation of the outcomes of the Governing Council at its previous sessions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China emphasizes that management of sustainable cities and human settlements constitutes a major developmental challenge. The recent demographic trends and rapid rates of urbanization are constantly placing tremendous pressure on cities especially in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also remain concerned about the persistent stark inequalities of the current situation in many developing countries where we have a high proportion of world population still living in informal settlements which co-exist with modern cities and state-of-the-art urban centers.

Mr. Chairman,

We recall the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which recognized that well planned cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. Indeed, cities can play an ambivalent role in facing global challenges. For whereas they may seem to replicate and accentuate certain problems, cities also provide a privileged and immediate locus for finding solutions. Sustainable urban planning remains an essential element for enabling cities to play their role as catalysts of growth and sustainable development.

We believe that inequalities remain the greatest challenge for sustainable urban development. In this vein, it is important to promote sustainable development policies that prioritize provision of affordable housing, infrastructure, and slum upgrading. National urban policies should aim at ensuring that the benefits of public investments reach all city dwellers. Urbanization policies should contemplate people-centered approaches based on social inclusion and the right to the city as fundamental principles.

Mr. Chairman,

It is also critical to adopt integrated approaches to planning and development of sustainable human settlements aiming at improving the quality of living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers and to enhance rural-urban linkages, in the context of poverty eradication, so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility.

We underline the importance of considering disaster risk reduction, resilience and the impact climate change in urban planning. In this context, we welcome the outcome of the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan in March 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

Sustainable urban development and human settlements require transformative policies in a multi-sectorial, multi-stakeholder approach. In this regard, we call for new modalities of interaction among nations at the international level, as well as between central and local governments at the national level, in order to fulfill their respective roles as governmental stakeholders in global efforts on sustainability. Other non-state actors also play important complementary roles.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of G77 and China reiterates its support for the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which includes a standalone Goal on human settlements; Goal 11 to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”

We believe that having a standalone goal shall contribute decisively to the success of the Third conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which will be the first global conference to take place after the adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We believe that Goal 11 and its 7 targets shall contribute to our efforts towards the effective management of the challenges of rapid urbanization, and provide 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 emphasizes, however, that one of the most critical constraints remains the provision of adequate financing. In many developing countries the capacity of the Government is constrained by the low level of revenues. In this regard, we reiterate the need for the developed countries to fulfill their commitments to support developing countries efforts through the provision of the necessary means of implementation including resources, capacity-building, and technology transfer as well as the creation of an international enabling environment for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

While we remain concerned about the financial situation of UN-Habitat, we encourage the Executive Director, to continue his endeavors for the implementation of the Programme’s Resource Mobilization Strategy, as well as the outreach efforts to widen the donor base. We also encourage the Executive Director to advance the ongoing process to increase the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the program activities based on results-based management principles.

It is equally 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China is set for fruitful engagement during the 25th session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, which coincides with the process of Intergovernmental

negotiations on the Post-2015 Development agenda. The chosen theme of the governing council and its two sub-themes on rural-urban linkages and the contribution of the UN-Habitat in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, are very important and relevant to the discussions taking place leading to the adoption of the Post-2015 development agenda in September this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China also commends the efforts exerted in preparation for the 25th session of the Governing Council in order to reach consensus on the UN-Habitat Governance review process. We hope that the positive dialogue which took place among the various regional groups, would eventually lead to the adoption of 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 in the context of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and ahead of the Habitat III conference.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
