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Chair: Mr. Krapp (Vice-Chair) (Germany)

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In the absence of Mr. Logar (Slovenia), Mr. Krapp (Germany), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 21: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/70/8, A/70/210, A/70/264) A/70/410 and E/2015/72; A/C.2/70/2)

1. **Mr. Clos** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), speaking via video link from Nairobi, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/70/210); the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on its twenty-fifth session (A/70/8); as well as the note by the Secretary-General (A/70/264) transmitting the report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2015/72).

2. He said that the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat had adopted a decision on its rules of procedure, and seven significant resolutions, including on reform of the governance of UN-Habitat as well as on its work programme and budget for the biennium 2016-2017. He drew attention in particular to resolution 25/1, entitled "Contribution of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to the post-2015 development agenda in order to promote sustainable urban development and human settlements", which highlighted the important role that sustainable urbanization and human settlements could play as a key driver of sustainable development in national and subnational development plans; resolution 25/2, entitled "Strengthening national ownership and operational capacity", in which the Governing Council requested UN-Habitat to fully implement the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, enhance the country programme document mechanism, incorporate the work of UN-Habitat into the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and One United Nations initiatives, and support national Governments to encourage local authorities and other

stakeholders to improve the effective implementation of country programmes. Of particular importance was resolution 25/7, entitled "United Nations Human Settlements Programme governance reform", whereby the Governing Council decided to strengthen its oversight role and that of the Committee of Permanent Representatives by requesting the Committee to establish a working group on programme and budget.

3. Highlighting the financial situation of UN-Habitat, he noted that current projections for core income for the biennium 2014-2015 stood at \$55.4 million for non-earmarked income and \$314.2 million for earmarked income. As at 30 June 2015, 88 per cent of the projected non-earmarked income, and 86 per cent of the earmarked income, had been received. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat had continued to implement a strengthened resource mobilization strategy aimed at widening its donor base to include emerging economy countries and to expand its earmarked project portfolio, including through regional resource mobilization action plans. UN-Habitat had maintained a policy of streamlining its administration, since it needed to adapt to available resources. In that sense, it had fully implemented cost recovery, which had yielded \$2.8 million to earmarked projects in 2014, as compared to \$1.8 million in 2013.

4. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which would be held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, continued to be guided by several resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 69/226, as well as by two sessions of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III during the reporting period. That Committee's second session had been held in April of 2015 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, with attendance by more than 800 participants, including representatives of 97 States Members of the United Nations, members of its specialized agencies, and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, 36 side events had taken place.

5. Since the first session of the Preparatory Committee, more than 25 national urban forums had been organized globally, or were being planned. More than 100 countries had submitted or were preparing their national reports to Habitat III, and steady progress was being made in the preparations of regional reports by the five regional economic and social commissions and UN-Habitat regional offices,

with coordination assistance from the Habitat III secretariat.

6. A call for expressions of interest to host Habitat III thematic and regional meetings had been published in January 2015, and four official regional high-level meetings would be held — in the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria — covering all regions. Thematic meetings would be held in Montreal (Canada), Mexico City (Mexico), Cuenca (Ecuador), Barcelona (Spain), Tel Aviv (Israel), Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), and Johannesburg (South Africa).

7. A task team on Habitat III, composed of representatives of 25 United Nations agencies, had finalized a series of 22 issue papers in May 2015, and the subsequent written comments by Member States and stakeholders reflected wide participation. Those papers took stock of and addressed significant urban issues and findings by identifying research needs on housing and sustainable urban development, and had been translated into the six official languages of the United Nations thanks to voluntary contributions.

8. The preparatory process had also mobilized multidisciplinary expertise on sustainable urban development with the creation of 10 policy units, with 20 experts each, selected from nominations by Member States and stakeholders. The recommendations made by those policy units could contribute to the work of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee in preparing the draft outcome document of the Habitat III Conference.

9. The secretariat had mobilized extra budgetary financial contributions for the Habitat III trust fund from some Member States, namely France, Germany, Indonesia, Kenya, Slovakia and Spain. The secretariat had also adopted an innovative approach to mobilizing funds through cash or in-kind contributions from host countries or host cities organizing regional and thematic meetings.

10. He noted that there was a clear interest in ensuring that Habitat III played an important role in making cities and human settlements inclusive, sustainable and resilient, and for urbanization to drive development and wealth. Its preparatory process would continue to be strongly linked to discussions on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the United Nations deliberations on climate change, given the synergies that existed between urbanization,

development and climate change. In the lead-up to the third Preparatory Committee in Indonesia, which would be held from 25 to 27 July 2016, it was crucial to elaborate an action-oriented outcome document of the Conference. He looked forward to the deliberations of the General Assembly at its current session, especially in the Second Committee, on advancing negotiations on outstanding issues such as the rules of procedure of the Conference. He urged Member States to expedite the preparation of their national reports, to contribute to official thematic and regional meetings, and to continue to support national, regional and global preparations for Habitat III.

11. Turning to UN-Habitat activities since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/226, he noted that UN-Habitat had continued to provide information to Governments, United Nations system organizations and other stakeholders on the role of urbanization in sustainable development, as the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals were being developed. He commended Member States for the impressive and ambitious 2030 Agenda, noting that Goal 11, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, set crucial targets for collective action and was critical in the preparations for Habitat III.

12. UN-Habitat had also achieved a number of actions in knowledge management, capacity-building, advocacy and the development of tools, including a gender equality and youth marker which was being used in the programme development and approval process.

13. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat had continued to chair the working group on a new United Nations urban agenda of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, which had been established in July 2014, and had prepared a draft paper entitled “Urbanization and sustainable development: a United Nations system’s input into a new urban agenda” in order to provide a coherent United Nations system position and input to the Habitat III preparatory process. He noted that Urban October had been launched in 2014, starting with World Habitat Day on 5 October and concluding with World Cities Day on 31 October, to emphasize the world’s urban challenges and engage the international community towards the new urban agenda. The aim had been to promote togetherness and harmony, to help make cities and neighbourhoods inclusive and liveable.

In addition, the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2015 had taken place in Milan.

14. Of the recommendations for Member States to consider, he highlighted the request for them to consider the principles outlined in the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, approved by the UN-Habitat Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session; to provide financial support to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary contributions; and to prioritize contributions to the general purpose fund of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, in order to provide predictable multi-year funding.

15. **Ms. Adurthy** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that rapid urbanization in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean posed a challenge to the provision of adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services. That trend, which was expected to continue, and the spread of hunger and poverty from rural to urban areas, made it crucial to build the resilience of cities. As the Sustainable Development Goals were indivisible, the challenges related to human settlements should be addressed in an integrated and balanced manner, taking into account access to transportation, energy, water, health, service delivery and education.

16. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, UN-Habitat would need to reposition itself to undertake its widened scope and responsibilities, and its governance structures should be reviewed in line with its broader mandate.

17. The new urban agenda that would emerge from Habitat III made governance reform especially urgent, and would help to improve the transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat. In that respect, the Group looked forward to swift implementation of Governing Council resolution 25/7, which sought to strengthen the role of the Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives by establishing a working group on programme and budget to increase oversight of UN-Habitat during intersessional periods.

18. **Mr. Minah** (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Africa's rapid rate of urbanization was posing challenges to its policymaking architecture. To cope with that unprecedented trend in Africa and the rest of the world, it was urgent to redouble efforts and increase resources to accelerate

rural development, while also expanding the provision of utilities and services in urban areas.

19. Urban settlements in Africa, in particular, faced many challenges including the effects of climate change, resource depletion, food insecurity, economic instability, unprecedented levels of unemployment, rising crime and urban poverty. In that regard, to enhance social and economic inclusion, informal settlements needed to be upgraded through integrated infrastructures and services that targeted marginalized groups, including the poor, women, youth and the elderly. Urban financing from local and foreign investors needed to be mobilized, and human capital needed to be improved, through equal access to education and health-care services and facilities.

20. To tackle those challenges, Africa would continue to count on support from development partners. In that respect, he welcomed the collaboration between UN-Habitat and the African Union, within the framework of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, and the 2030 Agenda.

21. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that tackling the issue of urbanization required effective means of implementation that reflected the variation in human settlements. For small island developing States, that meant taking into account their remoteness and isolation, even one from another, their dispersed population and different-sized urban areas.

22. Small island developing States attached particular importance to target 11.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely, to significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and to substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to the global gross domestic product (GDP) caused by disasters, including water-related disasters. It was also important to implement resilient climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. To that end, new and existing buildings, transportation lines and utilities must be environmentally sustainable and resilient. Climate change and related extreme weather events had a significant impact on small island developing States, as they halted or reversed economic growth, redirected resources to emergency efforts, overburdened institutions and led to loss or damage of vital communication and transportation infrastructure. Such events threatened to destroy housing in areas where land was already scarce, or to wipe out urban

settlements altogether, as demonstrated in the wake of recent cyclones and hurricanes that had struck some small island developing States. In that respect, robust infrastructure was needed.

23. Such States also faced more traditional concerns, such as limited affordable housing, and grappled with pre-existing social challenges in isolated areas. Goals and targets relating to human settlements should be integrated into national plans and priorities, as appropriate. He also called for genuine and durable partnerships which took into consideration local needs and the regional context. National progress and global partnerships should be assessed in a holistic, qualitative and quantitative manner.

24. In preparing for Habitat III, it was important to help boost developing States' technical capacity in order to help municipalities collect and analyse their own data, and hence improve policy and track progress. Furthermore, the three pillars of sustainable development must be integrated cohesively across urban rules and regulations, urban planning and design, and financing and investment in urban basic services. Cities must be turned into drivers of economic opportunity, while ensuring public and ecological health.

25. **Mr. Cadena** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that, for his region, it was essential to address the phenomenon of rapid urbanization by developing and implementing effective public policies to prevent social distress, geographic exclusion and environmental degradation across the urban-rural spectrum.

26. Latin America and the Caribbean was among the most urbanized regions in the world, with 80 per cent or more of the population residing in urban settlements, a figure which was expected to rise to 85 per cent by 2030. It was also projected that, by 2025, cities like Lima, Bogota and Santiago would become megacities with a population of at least 10 million. That trend posed unprecedented sustainable development challenges in all human settlements, and required adequate political will and strong commitment from stakeholders at all levels, from local to international. The intergovernmental preparatory process for Habitat III, which his own country would be hosting in Quito in October 2016, hence needed the active contribution of all stakeholders: Member States,

the private sector, policymakers and expert practitioners alike. Recalling resolution 24/14 of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat on contributions and other support to the preparatory process, he encouraged the Secretary-General to seek relevant voluntary financial support.

27. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that there was an urgent need to provide quality basic services for urban populations. The rapid rate of urbanization had given rise to a myriad of challenges, including the spatial segregation of inhabitants, shrinking public spaces, an unbridled speculation in land markets, pressure on natural areas near cities and the spread of informal settlement areas, a trend which tended to hinder mitigation efforts.

28. In that respect, Ecuador recognized the right of its population, particularly the poorest, to enjoy city life, to have access to land, basic services and adequate infrastructure, and to *buen vivir* (living well), in harmony with nature. That required focusing on policies that supported mass-scale urban projects involving water and sanitation, energy, transportation and access to goods.

29. Eradicating extreme poverty was the world's greatest challenge. In that respect, his Government tackled the issue of urban exclusion as a social and economic imperative; spatial urban segregation in particular fuelled the vicious cycle of poverty, and raised the cost of access to basic services, including health services, and to transportation, hence greatly hindering access to infrastructure in cities. In that respect, equal access to urban spaces could only be achieved through effective management of the added value of land.

30. His Government reiterated its invitation to one and all to participate in Habitat III in Quito — the world's first city to be declared a World Cultural Heritage Site by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — as well as in its preparatory activities, with a view to jointly building a new urban agenda.

31. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the quality of economic growth from the rise in urbanization was as vital as its quantitative results. That rapid rise was a welcome trend, as long as the capacity to ensure that cities were inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable could be fully ensured.

Serious social and environmental challenges such as urban poverty, inequality and pollution, and potential vulnerability to natural events and climate change impacts threatened to exacerbate social tensions. Developing countries in particular needed to effectively manage the unequal levels of development between rural and urban areas, which resulted in income gaps and fuelled urban migration.

32. Increased agricultural production in rural areas could make rural-urban migration more manageable, lead to rural employment and ultimately to more inclusive growth. However, the influx of rural populations to cities had created a resource shortage hindering the provision of housing and services for all in cities and leading to the formation of slums. There was a need for affordable homes, as well as for transportation that was adequate, affordable and efficient, so as to contribute to the vibrancy and productivity of cities.

33. Cities needed to be adaptable and resilient to environmental pressures. In that respect, investing in and building sustainable urban infrastructure could help to reduce emissions and prevent future losses.

34. Furthermore, as urban populations became more prosperous and had more disposable income, demand for items beyond basic necessities would undoubtedly rise as well. Consumers and producers alike could thus help cities to promote sustainable development, through awareness of their impact on the environment. Producers could also use technology to address polluting production patterns.

35. His region had been implementing various programmes in cities to tackle economic and social imperatives while improving environmental performance. It had also committed to making cities and urban areas environmentally sustainable while meeting the social and economic needs of their inhabitants.

36. **Mr. Richardson** (Saint Kitts and Nevis), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that while sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter should be a concern for all countries regardless of size or location, developing countries — particularly small island developing States — faced overwhelming challenges generated by the linkages between population growth and the increase in slums, poverty and a lack of access to essential services, including water and sanitation.

37. The United Nations Habitat Agenda should be further amplified and involve all relevant United Nations bodies and stakeholders in coordinating and implementing key provisions to urban development and human settlements.

38. Implementation of the internationally-agreed goals on the provision of adequate shelter for all required an all-inclusive and integrated approach, supported by nationally-owned and -driven policies. Building adequate capacity at the regional levels should also be made a priority, including through the sharing of experiences, common policy formulation and implementation within the context of both Habitat III and the 2030 Agenda.

39. Although UN-Habitat was making commendable efforts to sensitize the international community to the impact of rapid urbanization, more awareness was needed of changing consumption patterns and lifestyles, especially regarding land use and urban sprawl, which were essential to the creation of sustainable human settlements. Urgent attention should be paid to tackle the fact that, by 2030, the majority of the population of the Latin American and Caribbean region would live in urban areas.

40. Implementation of the Habitat Agenda required promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, while taking into account the economic and social needs of developing countries.

41. Development partners must provide the financial and technical support needed to address the growing demands for assistance at both national and regional levels. In addition, more predictable and reliable funding was needed for the operational activities of the United Nations in general, and of UN-Habitat in particular. The continued unpredictable funding created an imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions, and fostered dependency on a small number of donors, thus hindering implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In his region in particular, the Habitat Agenda must continue to provide the requisite financing for pro-poor land and housing, for environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services, and for excellence in disaster and risk management.

42. **Mr. Devanlay** (Observer for the European Union), said that the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on

cities in the newly adopted 2030 Agenda demonstrated strong political recognition of the relevance of the urbanization challenge, and would help to achieve many of the other Sustainable Development Goals.

43. The European Union and its member States were strongly committed to the preparations for Habitat III, as cities and urban development played an increasingly important role in the region's policies, both within and outside the Union. In that context, he drew attention to the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, which contained basic principles of integrated participatory urban development. The European Union was also working on its own urban agenda, while also contributing to efforts for the new urban agenda at the global level.

44. Discussions with other partners and involving all stakeholders, especially local authorities, would be important in shaping the new urban agenda, which shared the aspirations of the local authorities of all countries and their peoples. Those discussions should firmly anchor issues of human settlement and urbanization within the 2030 Agenda.

45. Implementing Habitat II and work towards Habitat III could not be done by Governments alone, and the new urban agenda could neither be defined nor implemented without the inclusive participation of and cooperation with local authorities and civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations involved in many aspects of urban development at all levels, as well as the private sector. Indeed, inclusive and improved modalities to address the active participation of stakeholders and local authorities in the Habitat III Conference and its preparatory process should be defined.

46. Lastly, the pending procedural aspects of the preparations for Habitat III should be resolved so that substantial discussions could take place and yield a solid outcome document.

47. **Ms. Seow** (Singapore) said that Sustainable Development Goal 11 could be harnessed as a catalyst towards implementation of the other Goals. The city-State of Singapore had recently been ranked among the most liveable high-density cities, which it had achieved in spite of resource constraints. That was thanks to its holistic approach to planning for sustainable development, and a series of initiatives, which included its vision towards a more liveable and sustainable future, its liveability framework, which

incorporated a long-term perspective, as well as dynamic urban governance that embraced the principles of integrity and focused on the well-being of the population.

48. Her Government shared its urban planning experience with other developing countries, had forged partnerships to address common challenges faced by cities around the world, and was also committed to supporting other developing countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through a new sustainable development programme.

49. Her Government was making use of technology to tackle some of the new challenges posed by urbanization, for example, to explore the use of subterranean space, as well as through the use of a collaborative data platform and three-dimensional models with information on buildings, land and the environment, developed by the national research foundation. That platform could be used by the business, private and government sectors, as well as by research agencies and the general public.

50. In the context of preparations for Habitat III, Singapore believed that the new urban agenda should be based on three goals: a high quality of life, a competitive economy and a sustainable environment. Those could be achieved through integrated master planning and dynamic urban governance. That new urban agenda must build strong synergies with Goal 11 and all other relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

51. Lastly, she urged the Committee to resolve the main outstanding procedural issues it faced in preparing for Habitat III, so that it could focus discussions on the new urban agenda and on substantive issues moving forward.

52. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that problems stemming from the increase in urban populations worldwide posed a challenge to sustainable development as a whole. The inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 11 in the 2030 Agenda would help mobilize efforts by all stakeholders at all levels to find appropriate long-term solutions.

53. Considerable progress had been made in the preparations for Habitat III, which would address plans for urban development in order to transform cities and other settlements into poles of environmental, economic and social sustainability.

54. Urban development policy priorities in the Russian Federation included ensuring affordable, high-quality housing, a welcoming urban environment and an effective network of utilities and other services, as well as establishing a flexible settlement pattern that would reflect the diversity of lifestyles practiced across the country. All of those priorities were in alignment with Goal 11.

55. Certain special-purpose federal programmes had proven effective means of implementation, including a housing programme and a programme to increase the sustainability of housing, vital infrastructure and key facilities in earthquake-prone regions. Another such programme, which was supported by grants and urban infrastructure development subsidies, aimed to provide affordable, convenient housing and utilities services to Russian citizens.

56. The Russian Federation believed in a central role for UN-Habitat, which coordinated intergovernmental human settlements activity within the United Nations and provided Member States with necessary expert and technical support.

57. Noting the results obtained from reforms to strengthen UN-Habitat, he particularly welcomed the decision of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to establish a working group on programme and budget that would develop recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the work of the UN-Habitat secretariat during intersessional periods.

58. Adopting the amendment to rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, whereby an elected member of the Bureau could be replaced by a representative of the same country without holding additional elections, would also help to increase the efficiency of UN-Habitat.

59. Lastly, he noted the importance of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning as a framework for developing national policy on human settlements.

60. **Mr. Rodrigues dos Santos** (Brazil) said that urban expansion had become much more relevant to developing countries, especially in South America, where it was estimated that more than 90 per cent of the population would live in cities by 2050. In that context, integrated urban planning was essential for cities to fully play their role as drivers of sustainable development in all its dimensions. Accordingly, his

Government's urban development policies focused on social and economic inclusion, and on environmental sustainability. It had forged and implemented policies that were participatory, while investing in public policies for the disenfranchised, to the benefit of all.

61. Governments had acknowledged the need for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, Brazil had fully supported the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. Many of the solutions to the challenges of sustainability, inclusion and sustainable growth could be adequately and effectively addressed only at the city level, with engagement and participation from local authorities, civil society and other stakeholders.

62. Habitat III was of crucial importance, providing an opportunity to place cities at the centre of collective efforts to build a new development paradigm. The draft resolution to be adopted at the current session should define modalities for the participation of civil society and local government in both the preparatory process and in the forthcoming Conference itself, as those played a key role in discussions on urban settlements. Indeed, the future of cities and their inhabitants could not be discussed without their full and adequate participation.

63. **Ms. Onishi** (Japan) said that her Government attached great importance to ensuring that human settlements were inclusive, safe and resilient, including to natural disasters. Her Government was proud that the outcome of the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which it had hosted in Sendai in March 2015, included the concept of building back better, based on Japan's hundreds of years of experience grappling with severe natural disasters. Furthermore, as the host to the UN-Habitat regional office for Asia and the Pacific, in the city of Fukuoka, her Government was committed to engaging constructively in the preparatory process for Habitat III, including through the submission of an interim national report and its technical input to the Habitat III policy unit.

64. The Habitat III Conference and its preparatory process should set an example as regards full accountability, and reflect enhanced inclusiveness,

efficiency and cost-effectiveness, without an increase in the planned budget.

65. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) said that, much like the rest of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, Colombia was experiencing accelerated urbanization; it was estimated that by 2050, nearly nine out of ten of Colombians would live in cities. In the light of that trend, the issue of human settlements was a crucial aspect of the new sustainable development agenda, and the matter of sustainability should be underscored. The Committee must therefore consider the challenges that cities and urbanization posed, integrating the three dimensions of development, as well as the relationship between rural and urban areas.

66. In addressing sustainable urbanization, it was important to recognize the interdependence of cities and rural areas, as actions which touched on consumption, production, pollution or water use in cities, for example, had a direct impact across the urban-rural spectrum. Accordingly, rural infrastructure and services should be strengthened in order to achieve sustainable development in cities and rural areas alike.

67. Although cities provided great opportunities, they also greatly contributed to global problems such as environmental degradation, climate change and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. Financing for the development of urban infrastructure should thus be taken into account when addressing environmental sustainability.

68. As mentioned in the Medellín Declaration, adopted at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum, held in Colombia in April 2014, equity was a moral imperative and crucial to achieving social justice. One of the main challenges was to bridge the gaps between rural and urban areas in particular. For Colombia, which was building a society of peace, the new urban agenda must include measures to eliminate the physical, behavioural and communications-related factors that generated social exclusion, in order to achieve true equity.

69. **Mr. Kaswan** (India) said that as one of the fastest-growing large economies and a rapidly growing urban society, India had consistently stressed the importance of a holistic and forward-looking approach to urbanization. If managed well, such an approach could be transformative in achieving and advancing sustainable development. Accordingly, cities and urban areas needed to be addressed from a broader

socioeconomic perspective, acknowledging the organic linkages that existed, particularly with semi-urban and rural areas. In that respect, a focused rural development strategy was a clear imperative in managing the challenge of urbanization.

70. The overall approach to sustainable urbanization must be broad, inclusive and address the challenges of creating and managing sustainable cities in both developing and developed countries. In developed countries, that meant managing existing urban settlements, particularly through policies that mainstreamed sustainable consumption and production patterns. Cities in developed countries must lower their ecological footprint, invest in renewable energy and renovate infrastructure.

71. Meanwhile, the foremost challenge for developing countries, which were experiencing rapid urbanization at very low per capita income levels, was to provide urban citizens with access to essential public services and jobs, while striving to minimize environmental pollution. The foremost need in developing countries was for enhanced investment in infrastructure such as roads, water, sanitation, electricity and basic services including public transportation, schools and affordable health care. Overall, urban development needed to be integrated into larger socioeconomic planning.

72. While cities accounted for only one third of India's population, urban areas generated more than two thirds of the country's domestic national product and accounted for 90 per cent of government revenue. It was therefore vital for investment in cities to generate results on multiple levels, including through the provision of basic infrastructure and services. To that end, India had launched an initiative to build 100 so-called smart cities, where inhabitants would be happier, healthier and wealthier and would rely on information technology to improve efficiency.

73. **Mr. Kedar** (Israel) said that his Government was committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11, and had begun to address inclusiveness in urban development and sustainability. To that end, it had a series of pioneering initiatives in place to engage residents and leverage their input to improve urban life. His Government had recently hosted, in Tel Aviv, the first in a series of thematic meetings which would contribute to the new urban agenda to be agreed at Habitat III. An urban forum would also be launched in

late November 2015, within the framework of the Akko Convention on Urbanism, with a view to promoting urban inclusiveness by bringing together relevant Government ministries, municipalities and local government, academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in a multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary environment. That heeded the call by UN-Habitat for Member States to develop and implement national urban policies. The outcomes of those two processes would prove useful in guiding the Committee's work towards Habitat III.

74. **Ms. Xie Zhengwei** (China) said that unremitting efforts in the area of human settlements had produced positive results, but that cooperation nevertheless needed to be strengthened. In implementing the 2030 Agenda, the international community must make detailed preparations for Habitat III.

75. The issue of human settlements was ultimately a development issue; countries must therefore address it at its root by promoting economic growth, eradicating poverty and reducing the wealth gap. At the same time, urban sustainable development capacities must be strengthened by coordinating their economic, social and environmental aspects. As urban and rural development were interrelated and complementary, urbanization was an important way to address urban-rural integration. Efforts should be made to enhance the scientific planning of the size and layout of cities, urbanize the rural population in an orderly manner, improve infrastructure and public services, narrow development gaps between urban and rural areas, and achieve inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

76. Cooperation should be strengthened on the issue of human settlements, and the international community, particularly developed countries, should create external conditions conducive to the economic and social development of developing countries. Specifically, developed countries should fulfil their promises in terms of finance, technology, human resources, the opening-up of markets and debt reduction, in order to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to address human settlements and achieve the relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda. However, the human settlement strategies and priority areas determined by each country on the basis of its national conditions and capacities should also be respected.

77. The Government of China, the most populous developing country, regarded human settlements as an

important issue for people's livelihoods. The largest and fastest urbanization in the world had taken place in China over the previous 30 years, and the improvements in human settlements were plainly visible. Between 1978 and 2014, the number of officially designated cities had grown by 460 to 653, and the rate of urbanization had increased by 36.85 per cent to 54.77 per cent, while the urban population had grown by 580 million. Her Government was engaged in a major effort to promote a new type of urbanization, more rapidly address the housing difficulties faced by middle- and lower-income families, improve urban infrastructure construction and management, and promote the construction of eco-cities. Steady progress in such measures would significantly improve the quality of people's lives, as well as their level of sociocultural development.

78. Her country had always supported the work of UN-Habitat, and cooperation between the two had borne remarkable results. Since 2013, China had worked with UN-Habitat on several initiatives relating to World Cities Day, and, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and relevant countries, looked forward to participating in planning for a successful Habitat III in 2016.

79. **Mr. Bunnag** (Thailand) said that, in the light of Thailand's densely populated capital city, Bangkok, where 9.4 million of the country's 64 million inhabitants lived, addressing urbanization and human settlements would be crucial to achieving sustainable development. Habitat III would provide a unique opportunity for renewing strong commitments to the new urban agenda with a view to making cities and human settlements safe and resilient, and harnessing the positive force of urbanization for sustainable development. That agenda should be implemented in an integrated way with the 2030 Agenda, taking into account relevant linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development, on the one hand, and human settlements, on the other.

80. The new urban agenda should aim to ensure adequate and affordable housing for all. In that respect, his Government sought to empower communities and enhance their participation in urban governance, leading to grassroots-level initiatives such as community urban planning or micro-financing for development, which helped to raise the standard of living. Moreover, urban resilience in the face of climate change and disaster risk should be improved.

Accordingly, his Government had a disaster management system in place, which provided local training courses. Climate change adaptation and mitigation must start from urban areas, and a green mindset should be inculcated, so as to enhance the capacities of local municipalities in particular. In that context, his Government had a plan in place to achieve a low carbon society. Lastly, in order to ensure that all residents had access to public transport, his Government had plans to integrate public transport with non-motorized transport, which in turn would provide access to opportunities, services and public goods. He noted that a common ticketing system had been introduced in Bangkok for all modes of public transport, from land to water and rail, to promote urban compactness and the connectivity of urban systems.

81. Sustainable urbanization and human settlements would be most successful when all levels of Government had shared goals and policy frameworks. In that respect, addressing the gap between development policy and practice at the local and national levels was key. The new urban agenda must involve a holistic approach to urban development.

82. **Mr. Andambi** (Kenya) said that, in Kenya, urban areas were home to more than 30 per cent of the population, a figure which was expected to rise to 50 per cent by 2030. Those areas accounted for a substantial portion of physical, financial, intellectual and technological capital, and urban-based economic activities accounted for the bulk of the country's GDP. To address some of the social, economic and environmental challenges that rapid urbanization posed, his Government had established 47 counties with autonomy to design and implement programmes addressing specific local challenges related to land use planning and secure land tenure. Moreover, its Vision 2030 aimed to build secure, well-governed, competitive and sustainable urban areas and cities to help achieve national development goals across all 47 counties.

83. In that regard, his Government also provided necessary incentives to the private sector, which actively participated in partnerships with the public sector with a view to providing affordable housing for the low-income population in particular. In addition, appropriate and affordable building technologies were in place to address supply-side constraints.

84. As a national organizing committee was set up to prepare for Habitat III, involving representatives from all stakeholder institutions and Habitat Agenda partners, it was hoped that challenges such as weak urban planning, poor urban management and land regulation could be addressed in the context of implementation of the new development agenda.

85. **Ms. Al Ateibi** (United Arab Emirates) said that over the previous decade and a half, the population of her country had tripled, and most of that population lived in cities. Clean energy was essential for ensuring that urban growth did not harm the environment. Measures taken to promote sound energy and water consumption in her country had initially raised costs by up to 5 per cent, but as the market for new products and services had developed, the new approaches were starting to become cost-effective. The United Arab Emirates was a member of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, and would be hosting the first Habitat III preparatory meeting on renewable energy in early 2016.

86. The United Arab Emirates saw public-private partnerships as the best way of ensuring adequate financing for achieving the targets for sustainable cities under Sustainable Development Goal 11. Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, widely considered to be the most sustainable city in the world, was the centrepiece of her country's strategy of creating an attractive investment climate for innovative technologies in the areas of energy, water, waste disposal, transportation and housing. Minimizing the kind of risks that might deter investors should be a focus of the new urban agenda that would be approved at the Habitat III Conference.

87. Urban infrastructure was one of the priority areas of her country's development assistance programme. Over the previous decade, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development had provided close to US\$ 50 billion to finance over 100 infrastructure projects in approximately 40 countries. The United Arab Emirates was looking forward to hosting the 2020 Dubai World Expo, which would have the theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" and would be an unprecedented milestone in promoting public-private partnerships for sustainable living.

88. **Ms. Prizreni** (Albania) said that extensive policymaking was key in planning and building a better urban future for current and future generations,

especially in developing countries. Her Government had undertaken new administrative and territorial reforms to better address the issue of territorial cohesion, including by recognizing the role of small and medium-sized areas in the context of overall national development and by promoting cooperation between cities and regions. The reforms also aimed to provide equal opportunities for people in urban and rural areas, and to improve the management of natural resources while protecting the soil and green areas. Those efforts had been guided by the principle of reducing the number of municipalities and local units, in order to enhance their efficiency in delivering services to communities and in collecting taxes. Savings could then be reallocated to new social and economic services benefiting all the country's population. Another principle was to make rural areas as liveable as possible in order to prevent the desertification of landlocked areas, with the help of private-public partnerships. The reforms also aimed to effectively respond to the rural to urban population movement, and ensure smooth integration, taking into account social and economic development concerns; they were people-centred, focusing in particular on the empowerment of youth, women and girls, and aimed at social inclusiveness, particularly of vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities, through laws providing the necessary infrastructure, facilities and job opportunities.

89. The growth in Albania's urban population posed new challenges, including in relation to sustainable growth, urban identity, national real estate market dynamics, and tensions between protecting cultural heritage and advancing urban development.

90. Lastly, the implementation of a geographic information system was playing a key role in urban management, helping not only to analyse the country's urbanization in economic, social and environmental dimensions, but also to manage the financial consequences of natural disasters, address overpopulation and better manage transport, education, health care and employment.

91. **Ms. Teh** (Malaysia) said that her country was committed to implementing the two main objectives of the Habitat Agenda: ensuring adequate shelter for all and sustainable settlements in an urbanizing world. The key to successful implementation of development plans was friendly, effective and efficient local governance. In that respect, her Government was

strengthening engagements with local authorities and stakeholders at the grassroots level; reviewing national urbanization policy to promote affordable housing, sustainable infrastructure, liveability, urban resilience, as well as efficient public transportation and other low-carbon initiatives; and expanding public transport networks in line with an initiative to promote low-carbon cities.

92. Her Government would be hosting the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, reflecting its commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The Forum should lead to more research and knowledge exchange, and promote a multi-forum debate on sustainable urban development. In closing, she called for meaningful international cooperation in order to help developing countries make strides towards making sustainable human settlements a reality for all.

93. **Mr. Adejola** (Nigeria) said that the rapid rate of urbanization was unsustainable and required an urgent and immediate response. UN-Habitat was instrumental in addressing urban challenges such as youth unemployment and gender issues, and in helping to empower all people and improve their standard of living. His country, Nigeria, had a national plan in place which gave due consideration to women, youth and other vulnerable groups. It was also undertaking a national urban review in preparation for Habitat III.

94. It was imperative to work towards a new urban agenda and adopt innovative approaches to eradicate slums and build access to key services. That would require the participation of Government, business leaders, and civil society.

95. **Ms. Sandiuk** (Ukraine) commended the work of UN-Habitat in promoting sustainable urban development and human settlements, which was crucial for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To that end, one of the greatest achievements of UN-Habitat had been the approval by its Governing Council of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, as well as the adoption of a resolution on UN-Habitat governance reform, which provided for the establishment of a working group to oversee programme and budgetary matters. Her Government welcomed the efforts to address the financial situation of UN-Habitat, including the introduction of enterprise resource planning software, a resource mobilization strategy to widen the donor base and measures to reduce the core deficit.

96. Her Government viewed urbanization as one of the most significant global trends shaping the twenty-first century, and had been striving to turn her country's urban sector into a sustainable living environment for all. Nevertheless, those efforts had been obstructed by the Russian Federation's treacherous aggression against Ukraine, causing damage and destruction of infrastructure in its eastern regions of Luhansk and Donetsk. Against that backdrop, once peace and full sovereignty could be restored to Ukraine over the Donbas region and Crimea, a top priority for her Government would be to ensure that the millions of affected persons could return to their normal lives, to restore destroyed towns and villages, and to promote the development of economic and social infrastructure. Ukraine called for the cooperation of all international partners to support those efforts.

97. **Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) said that integrated and complementary efforts among all partners for sustainable development were needed in order to achieve inclusive, just and safe human settlements that were resilient, sustainable and helped to improve quality of life, eradicate poverty in all its dimensions and achieve the three pillars of sustainable development.

98. In the context of consultations and inputs in preparing for Habitat III, special attention should be paid to the most vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, women, children and adolescents, the elderly, local communities, rural migrants, displaced persons and indigenous persons. Preparations towards that Conference provided an opportunity to explore possible joint public-private activities, develop an effective food security system, amplify the role of small and medium-sized companies, and build national capacity for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data in order to adequately draw up and implement public policies.

99. He urged Member States and other partners for sustainable development to actively contribute to the preparatory process for Habitat III, including through voluntary financial contributions.

100. **Mr. Ashraf El Nour** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)), recalling the enhanced interactions between UN-Habitat and IOM over recent years, noted, in the context of ongoing discussions on Habitat III, that the new urban agenda should recognize

migration as a key driver of cities' growth. In that respect, cities should include migrants when planning for and managing the challenges posed by increases in population and in diversity.

101. One lesson that could be drawn from the IOM Conference on Migrants and Cities, held in October 2015, was that cities were well-placed to play a central role in the planning and provision of policies on migration and urbanization. Participants had highlighted the role that international organizations such as his own could play in assisting local authorities at the policy, research and operational levels.

102. He drew attention to the World Migration Report 2015, entitled "Migrants and Cities, New Partnerships to Manage Mobility", which offered practical examples of the symbiotic relationship between migrants and cities.

103. Migrants must be recognized as a category of individuals with specific needs, who could also be agents of development, as long as there were policies in place to protect their rights and empower their full participation. They significantly contributed to the economic, social and cultural development of both their home and host societies. Nevertheless, they faced certain challenges such as discrimination, xenophobia and a lack of access to employment, housing or social services. In that respect, there was an ongoing need for policies that promoted migrants' integration into local communities and tackled the rise in discrimination, xenophobia and racism. Local authorities, which had first-hand experience with migrants, could help to significantly change the narrative and improve national public perceptions of migration. Habitat III was an opportunity to promote a new model of urban development that integrated all facets of sustainable development, of which migration was a key component.

104. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was regrettable that the representative of Ukraine had raised matters that bore no relation to the Committee's agenda. Nevertheless, the unfounded accusations that Ukraine had levelled against the Russian Federation compelled him to note that the events of the past two years in Ukraine had been the result of that country's policy of transforming events in the Maidan into a revolutionary movement. Since the agenda item currently before the Committee was on human

settlements, he wondered whether it was part of Ukraine's urban planning to organize the burning of a trade union building in Odessa on 2 May 2014, where more than 100 innocent people had lost their lives; or to unleash bulldozers to prevent law enforcement from carrying out their duties, as members of the Maidan movement had done in Kiev; or to conduct air strikes on the central square of Luhansk in July 2014, killing innocent civilians. All participants at Habitat III would no doubt be very interested to hear about such innovative, even revolutionary, urban planning methods.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.