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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 31st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 4 November 2009, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Mićić (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Serbia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mićlić (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Agenda item 53: Sustainable development** (*continued*) (A/64/65, A/64/81, A/64/83-E/2009/83 and Add.1, A/64/259, A/64/489, A/C.2/64/9 and A/C.2/64/10)

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1. **Mr. Nhleko** (Swaziland) said that his Government's determination to honour its commitments as a party to the Framework Convention on Climate Change was reflected in action already taken or envisaged, particularly under its National Development Strategy, which included efforts to ensure the sustainable and environment-friendly supply and use of energy for all. It was likewise committed to implementing Agenda 21 and had taken institutional,

regulatory and policy measures to that end. In addition, the Government was seeking to diversify the economy of the country which, having been traditionally centred on agriculture, was particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

2. Swaziland had the advantage of a huge forest resource, which made it a net greenhouse-gas sink, thus enabling it to make a significant contribution to the objectives of the Framework Convention: the sustainability of that resource was therefore desirable both nationally and internationally. He referred lastly to the fundamental changes required from everyone in order for there to be a new political agreement on climate change, favourable to both developed countries and developing countries.

3. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that the very survival of the most vulnerable countries was threatened by climate change, linked as it was to famine, displacement of populations, spread of disease and increased competition for natural resources. Drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions were needed to stabilize the climate. A further increase in the Earth's temperature would not only be disastrous for some individual countries; it would also cause irreversible environmental damage. It was therefore all the more necessary that the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change should result in a fair and effective global agreement.

4. As one of the regions hardest hit by and least responsible for the effects of climate change, Africa required special attention from the international community. It faced serious consequences from the decline in its rainfall and water resources, which it was financially and technologically ill prepared to overcome. The Copenhagen Conference should take adequate measures to help African countries to adapt to climate change and pursue their economic and social development and should reach clear commitments to helping all developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, to meet that challenge.

5. Morocco, for its part, had placed environmental concerns at the centre of its development programmes and had accordingly taken measures to rationalize its water resources, reduce even further its greenhouse gas emissions and develop renewable energy sources, particularly solar.

6. **Ms. Kiziltan** (Turkey) said that responding effectively to natural disasters, such as the two

earthquakes that had struck Turkey in 1999, was a major challenge of the century. Her country had thus played a leading role in promoting simplified entry formalities for members of international search and rescue teams and was also actively implementing the Hyogo Framework of Action, in particular through the establishment of national coordination mechanisms for disaster risk reduction, with special attention to awareness-raising and education in disaster preparedness. Disaster risk reduction needed to be more effectively integrated into sustainable development policies and should form a part of the response to climate change. In the context of the ongoing negotiations to that end, efforts should also be made to promote the use of renewable energy sources: a secure and affordable energy supply was crucial for sustainable development and must be integrated within its three pillars. Investments must therefore be made to develop energy-efficient technologies and non-fossil fuels, combined with policy initiatives and appropriate economic, market and regulatory instruments. She called on regional and international donors and financial institutions to assist developing countries in their efforts to thus build a sustainable future, for which the contributions of the private sector would also be crucial.

7. **Ms. Sriphiromya** (Thailand) said that economic development could be sustainable only if it took into account economic, social and environmental objectives. Pursuit of development along the same industrial path that countries had been following for the last two centuries would lead only to a global environmental disaster. In that respect, the global community seemed to recognize the urgency of adopting a collective response to climate change, allowing for a redefinition of development and competitiveness in terms of green industrial practices, eco-friendly consumption and sustainable production techniques. That shift in perception about development could boost rather than block economic recovery. However, in order for developing countries to make the transition to low-carbon growth, international financial and technological support was imperative.

8. The Government of Thailand aimed to achieve a balanced development strategy and had long been building resilience to external shocks, especially from globalization, in order to ensure balanced economic growth with reasonable quality of life and environmental sustainability. It had started to explore a

move to more bioenergy and alternative energy sources long before the oil crisis, and had biofuel price incentives and marketing campaigns in place, while ensuring a balance between the production of food crops and biofuels. That had helped stabilize Thailand's oil and petroleum imports over the past three years, improve its trade balance, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from the use of fossil fuels, and benefit low-income farmers producing cash crops for biofuels. As developing countries had great potential but limited capacity to tap into renewable solar, hydro, wind and biomass energy sources, more should be done to transfer knowledge, technology and capital for that purpose. Thailand encouraged all countries to contribute to efforts to address climate change on the basis of the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The two Ad Hoc Working Groups established under the United Nations Framework Convention negotiations should be enhanced. Her Government also welcomed the role of the United Nations in strengthening international cooperation on water management.

9. To help improve developing countries' disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures, and in the light of the Asia and Pacific region's particular vulnerability to natural disasters, developed countries should provide technology transfer, capacity-building and financial support. Initiatives such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission had an important role to play in building networks among national early warning systems. Thailand had been involved in strengthening regional disaster resilience, especially through the establishment of the Tsunami Regional Trust Fund of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to set up an early warning system for the region, and invited interested donors to contribute to that Fund.

10. The International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 would be a perfect opportunity to raise public awareness on that issue, recognizing the need for joint private/public sector efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. The Berlin Declaration on Private Donorship for Biodiversity was a valuable initiative.

11. **Ms. Kaludjerović** (Montenegro) said that the multiple current crises demanded a collective, coordinated response from all stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, while an ambitious,

effective and fair agreement needed to be sought in Copenhagen to address the effects of climate change. Montenegro, as a self-proclaimed ecological State, promoted the synergy between development and environment and based its national strategy for sustainable development on the internationally agreed principles, including those enshrined in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Her Government was particularly concerned about sustainable mountain development and had taken specific measures for the development of Montenegro's own extensive mountainous regions, geared to sustainable tourism and biodiversity protection. Her country had also joined others in the region in establishing a network of protected areas and developing biodiversity priorities. It recognized the essential importance of the energy sector for sustainable development, as well as the adverse effects it could have on the environment. While developing countries had a part to play, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in reducing greenhouse emissions and achieving energy efficiency, developed countries were called on to provide leadership and resources to ensure effective adaptation and mitigation measures. Montenegro itself faced significant challenges in its energy sector: it was aiming to achieve the European Union target of a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, in particular by further developing its hydroelectric, solar and wind power potential.

12. **Mr. Lakhal** (Tunisia) said that the necessary collective and holistic response to the challenge of sustainable development required the establishment of a genuine partnership and increased technological, financial and scientific cooperation in a spirit of solidarity. His delegation accordingly supported the proposal for a "Rio + 20" summit on sustainable development in 2012, which would offer an opportunity to take stock of progress and identify ways of securing the participation of the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and young people. Sustainable development was a major national policy choice of his Government, which had long been moving in that direction, even before the 1992 Earth Summit; the environment was a key concern in that policy, as reflected in increased investments in environmental protection, efforts to combat desertification and rationalization of energy consumption.

13. More than 75 per cent of the national territory was at risk of desertification, exacerbated by the effects of climate change. While the African continent was the region in the world most affected, the phenomenon was universal and, for that reason, Tunisia had been among the first countries to ratify the Convention to Combat Desertification and was actively committed to its implementation. Unfortunately, however, funding for that purpose had been steadily declining, owing to increased attention to other issues, in particular the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Tunisia recognized the importance of that issue as well and continued to spare no effort to that end; indeed, efforts to counter the effects of global warming demanded the increased mobilization of the international community. His country was also contributing to international cooperative efforts to promote the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures. In that spirit, it was essential that the upcoming Copenhagen Conference should result in an ambitious, legally binding agreement, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, with a view to a concerted global response to climate change. It should include financial support for the most vulnerable countries, which should complement and not replace funding to combat desertification and poverty, with a view to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

14. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that small island developing States faced specific challenges because of their isolation, small size and vulnerability to external shocks. The Maldives was particularly affected by the threat to coral reefs, which were the lifeline of the nation, being the basis of its two primary economic activities, fisheries and tourism. Increasing climate change would exacerbate that threat. His country therefore sought the support of the international community in stabilizing its economic and environmental conditions, so that it would not have to continue diverting its limited resources away from strategic development. The entire international community had an obligation to address the injustices of climate change, as part of a comprehensive, rights-informed approach to sustainable and just development, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

15. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana) said that Guyana was wholly committed to the pursuit of sustainable development, in particular through efforts to conserve

and use its environment and natural resources for the benefit of its population. However, the impact of climate change, including extreme and unpredictable weather conditions in recent years and the threat of rising sea levels, had made that challenge all the more difficult. Some 90 per cent of the country's population and the bulk of its economic activity were confined to a narrow coastal strip of land about one meter below mean sea level: any rise in sea level would consequently lead to significant economic loss. Indeed, many small island and low-lying coastal developing States would cease to exist without urgent, ambitious and decisive action by the international community to reduce global greenhouse emissions and help those States to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

16. The Copenhagen Conference must reach the necessary agreement to that end and must also ensure adequate financial and technological support so as to benefit from the significant abatement potential of the developing world, especially rainforest countries like Guyana, which needed protection against deforestation. His Government was already developing a strategy to preserve the country's pristine rainforest in return for flows of financing to be used for investments in low-carbon economic activities. The challenges of climate change and sustainable development called for more efficient and effective environmental governance at the global level and a new system of global interrelationships based on social justice and ecological equity. Guyana remained actively committed to those goals.

17. **Mr. Dabiré** (Burkina Faso) said that his country's ecosystem was undergoing continuing rapid degradation owing to the combined effects of population pressure, extensive crop-growing, use of chemicals, accelerated urbanization and pollution. His Government had therefore put in place an environment plan for sustainable development, which included air pollution control, improved sanitary conditions and awareness-raising activities. Burkina Faso remained firmly committed to supporting the international community's efforts to combat environmental degradation, as reflected in its recent hosting in Ouagadougou of the Seventh World Forum on Sustainable Development. He expressed the hope that the deliberations of that Forum would contribute to the success of the upcoming Copenhagen Conference; in particular, developed countries should on that occasion take the courageous and historic decision to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions and provide substantial and predictable assistance to developing countries which, while being the least responsible for pollution, were the primary victims of climate change. He concluded by welcoming the initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to organize in November 2009 a World Summit on Food Security, given that one sixth of the world population was suffering from malnutrition.

**Agenda item 54: 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/64/8, A/64/65, A/64/260, A/64/317 and E/2009/80)

18. **Ms. Osman** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that UN-Habitat played a key role in the pursuit of sustainable development in view of the unprecedented scale and pace of urbanization in developing countries and the concomitant need for additional houses, infrastructure and services. Sustainable patterns of consumption and production were called for, as well as special attention to the urban poor, who were at risk of being further marginalized by the economic and financial crisis.

19. While welcoming the increased resources of the Programme, the Group of 77 and China were concerned about the imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions and dependence on a small number of donors. Funding thus continued to be unpredictable, affecting the Programme's ability to function satisfactorily. His delegation called on the international community to provide predictable financial support for the goals of the Habitat Agenda, in view of its focus on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and poverty eradication.

20. The Group supported moves to mainstream the sustainable development agenda into core development programmes and activities, in particular through the use of a results-based framework. The documents setting out the related action plan marked an important step in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the country level. The Group further supported the regional ministerial meetings on housing and urban development; they in turn needed to focus on integrating the Habitat Agenda and related internationally agreed development goals into national plans and strategies. UN-Habitat and all other

development partners should continue to play a major role in support of developing countries' efforts to provide shelter for all and put in place sustainable human settlements.

21. **Mr. Ström** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, said that sustainable urban development, including an effective response to the social challenges of urbanization, was a prerequisite for achieving the MDGs. Cities were ill prepared to cope with the increasing phenomenon of urbanized poverty, which called for innovative approaches involving all stakeholders. As major contributors of greenhouse gas emissions, they had a key role in climate mitigation and adaptation, entailing more appropriate land-use planning, more accountable urban management, further development of affordable public infrastructure and good urban governance.

22. The European Union therefore supported the intention of UN-Habitat to work increasingly with local urban authorities in support of their efforts to reduce the ecological footprint of cities and improve their resilience to the effects of climate change. Its Cities and Climate Change Initiative was particularly welcome in that regard. UN-Habitat should continue to assist Member States in achieving the internationally agreed goals, including those relating to adequate shelter for all and slum upgrading and prevention. It had an important role in enhancing the living conditions of slum dwellers, which had taken on a new urgency and went far beyond what was required by the MDGs. Its decision to concentrate its work on core focus areas would help it to play a leadership role and act as a catalyst in promoting sustainable urbanization; at the same time, it would strengthen its normative mandate, its contribution to the establishment of best practices and its encouragement of funding of housing for the poor. His delegation stressed the importance in that regard of local ownership, the responsibility of programme country authorities in the implementation process and the need for public-private partnerships and investments in housing and urban development.

23. The European Union supported all measures to strengthen UN-Habitat in accordance with its comparative advantages and limited resources and as a

basis for completing its internal institutional reform. It welcomed the consensus recently reached by the Governing Council of the Programme on the appropriate delivery of basic services: the local authorities had an important role in that regard, in collaboration with other partners. It further welcomed its ongoing governance review and looked forward to seeing the impact of the recent evaluation of the previous World Urban Forums on the next one, to be held in March 2010. The European Union strongly supported the UN-Habitat Gender Equality Action Plan: women were in the majority among the urban poor and faced more challenges than men in the urban context. Similarly, young people had an important part to play in efforts towards sustainable urban development; girls in particular, being especially vulnerable to discrimination, needed additional support to realize their potential as key development partners.

24. **Mr. Bowoleksono** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the political commitment to sustain global economic recovery must be translated into pro-poor policies, such as more efficient housing policies. Housing finance systems and regulatory frameworks should reflect the needs of the poor and low-income groups, including women, and ensure increased access to land and credit and protection from arbitrary eviction. To overcome the challenges related to slums, the poor should be given greater access to credit for obtaining affordable mortgages, following the example of UN-Habitat's urban and rural poor programmes for housing credit. The resources made available to UN-Habitat must be maintained and increased, preferably through multi-year commitments. Furthermore, sustained action was imperative to implementing the Habitat Agenda, and the Programme's 2008-2013 medium-term strategic and institutional plan was a valuable tool to that end.

25. He expressed support for convening a United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016, noting that adjustments would have to be made to the Agenda in the light of the sustainable urbanization and urban development challenges which had emerged since 1996.

26. UN-Habitat's partnership agreements with other United Nations agencies, regional and subregional

organizations and the private sector were helping to raise awareness of housing as a productive sector. The Programme should expand its operational focus to include climate change, in the light of the clear connection between urbanization and climate change. Indonesia would be hosting the third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, focusing on cities and climate change. In the context of urbanization, cities would need to substantially reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, otherwise uncontrolled climate change would have far-reaching, life-threatening consequences worldwide. Social housing programmes would need to be energy-efficient and environmentally sound. In order to adapt to rising sea levels, integrated coastal and ocean management was needed. ASEAN was building its capacity to manage its cities through sustainable city programmes such as the joint UN-Habitat/UNEP Sustainable Cities Programme. Lastly, nations needed to enhance their cooperation with UN-Habitat by reaffirming their commitment to implement the Habitat Agenda, through major investments in housing and urban development, along with measures to control climate change and sustained support for the work of UN-Habitat.

27. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the global and financial crises were having unrelenting negative impacts on CARICOM countries, causing their Governments to experience drastic revenue shortfalls in a short period of time and jeopardizing their policies to provide low-cost, affordable housing for low-income groups. CARICOM countries were also extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, which urgently required a more coordinated and comprehensive response. In that respect, she recognized the important role cities played in helping to bolster mitigation strategies, as well as the heightened need for adaptation strategies in small island developing States to take into account small towns and cities, which were particularly vulnerable. CARICOM thus welcomed UN-Habitat's increased attention to the convergence of the human settlements agenda and the global environment agenda, and the nexus between urban development and climate change in particular, and hoped that focus would be extended to include the

Caribbean subregion as part of a wider strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean.

28. Urban youth development was a CARICOM priority, and there was much scope and need for programme support from UN-Habitat in that area. As the challenges to the sustainable development of small island developing States continued to mount, United Nations development entities must improve their support to those States' national development plans and programmes, and UN-Habitat should strengthen and mainstream its work in the Caribbean as part of wider involvement in those States in that respect. The mid-point review of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for the period 2008-2013 was a good opportunity to ensure that the sustainable development of small island developing States became part of UN-Habitat's strategic focus, as one aspect of the international development agenda related to human settlements. CARICOM welcomed the recommendation made by the UN-Habitat Governing Council to convene a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development in 2016.

29. **Mr. Liu Yuyin** (China) said that the human settlements problem should be addressed within the framework of sustainable development and the international community should make concerted efforts towards the recovery and growth of the world economy in order to create conditions conducive to human settlements development. It should focus on the areas of economic development, social progress, environmental protection and population growth. Furthermore, the issue of human settlements should be tackled in the light of the specific conditions of the countries concerned, which should act within their own capabilities and learn from one another. International cooperation and partnerships for the development of human settlements must be strengthened, particularly through fulfilment of finance and technology commitments relating to developing countries. Resources should be pooled for the comprehensive improvement of habitats, with national Governments leading those efforts while mobilizing broad participation from all of society and integrating resources from all relevant sectors.

30. The Government of China had given priority to human settlements development and had implemented the commitments made at the Habitat II Conference and the special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Habitat

Agenda. It had focused on the integrated and harmonious development of urban and rural areas and on economic growth and social advancement. It had adopted measures to raise people's living standards and build a secure, healthy and pleasant habitat. A number of Chinese projects, cities and individuals had won United Nations habitat awards, and the country had itself started to issue awards for model cities and projects.

31. **Mr. Rupani** (India) was pleased that affordable housing finance systems had been the theme of the recent session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council. As many initiatives launched by UN-Habitat, particularly the experimental reimbursable seeding operations, had the potential to make a real impact, the international community should fully support and finance those efforts. India was also encouraged by recognition in the Secretary-General's report (A/64/260) of the broader need for Governments to adopt proactive housing policies, rather than leaving the sector to market forces. India had taken a number of initiatives to improve housing and habitats in both urban and rural areas, including through its National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, under which data on low-income households were being collected and efforts were being made to provide basic services to the poor, including affordable shelter, water and sanitation. There were also programmes in rural areas to help build and upgrade dwellings for the poor through lump-sum financial assistance. India was developing and promoting cost-effective, environmentally friendly and disaster-resistant housing technologies. Strengthening public-private partnerships was an integral part of India's housing policies and helped to create jobs, especially in construction and for the urban poor. Other initiatives provided gainful employment to the urban unemployed or underemployed through self-employment ventures or provided wage employment. Still others focused on building low-cost sanitation units and creating economic infrastructure. Green building codes and energy-efficient transport options had also been adopted.

32. In the area of South-South cooperation, India had been sharing its experience and know-how in the field of housing development with other developing countries; the international community must provide financial resources to UN-Habitat to further facilitate such cooperation. India was concerned about the severe imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked

contributions to the Programme. Progress must be made towards achieving the goal set out in the Secretary-General's report of stable, predictable funding for UN-Habitat, preferably through multi-year financing.

33. **Ms. Khamati-Kilonzo** (Kenya) said that, against the backdrop of the global and economic crisis, the global housing crisis was getting worse, especially in the developing world, and the right to adequate shelter was becoming more difficult to ensure. It was estimated that two thirds of the world's population would be living in cities and towns by 2050. It was thus urgent for the international community to address the challenges of urbanization, including the growth of slums and other informal settlements. In addition, climate change had serious implications for human settlements and sustainable urbanization. Many major cities were highly vulnerable to climate change because of their coastal location, for example, or poor planning. The human settlements agenda and the global environmental agenda were indeed converging with cities at the nexus of climate change adaptation and mitigation, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. In that respect, cities had a critical role to play in addressing climate change.

34. Providing adequate and decent housing in a sustainable environment was a critical component of Kenya's "Vision 2030" plan, which aimed to improve the quality of life for all Kenyans. Indeed, the country's urban areas had suffered from poor planning, which had led to the proliferation of informal settlements with poor housing and little or no infrastructure services. To respond to Kenya's rapid urbanization, the Government was undertaking drastic reforms for improved urban planning strategies. Despite the global financial and economic crisis, it was implementing an ambitious programme aimed at producing 200,000 housing units annually by 2012. Other initiatives included building national urban planning capacity, implementing a national decentralization and devolution policy, promoting capacity-building for the building industry, improving access to finance, promoting low-cost housing, and introducing legislative and regulatory reforms. Nevertheless, in the light of its limited resources, the Government had identified key sectors, including housing and infrastructure development, for investment by the private sector and foreign investors. It was making optimal use of the resources available, in partnership with financial institutions, to develop and



encourage housing projects for middle- and low-income populations, but such endeavours would also need support from development partners. A project to upgrade Nairobi's Kibera slum was an example of what could be accomplished by Governments working with UN-Habitat and other development partners to construct decent, low-cost high-rise housing units. Her delegation noted the progress cited in the Secretary-General's report and encouraged further progress towards implementation of the medium-term strategic institutional plan for 2008-2013, affordable housing finance, South-South cooperation in human settlements and global and regional consultative processes. UN-Habitat must be adequately supported through financial and other resources; she thus urged those Member States in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the UN-Habitat funds, activities and projects, and urged donors to scale up their support to its normative and operational activities.

35. **Mr. Lee** (Singapore) said that, as cities were already responsible for 75 per cent of global energy consumption and 80 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, a concerted effort must be made to strike a balance between economic growth, environmental protection and high quality of life for urban dwellers. There was a need to build cities that were not just liveable, but also sustainable. Although the global financial and economic crisis presented new challenges to implementing the Habitat Agenda and Governments might be tempted to see sustainable development as an unaffordable luxury, the crisis should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen sustainable development efforts, for example by boosting resource consumption efficiency.

36. Singapore had decided to pursue long-term economic growth and environmental sustainability by upholding three principles: maintaining an integrated planning approach to align energy, transport, industry and urban planning policies for a long-term view of its needs and circumstances; promoting economic growth and a sustainable living environment in a pragmatic and cost-effective manner with a view to adopting long-term measures, even if they entailed short-term costs; and adjusting to new technologies and the global environment, by building up its capabilities and testing new technologies in areas such as land-use planning, water technologies, vertical greenery, green buildings and solar energy. It had backed up those principles with good governance and sound policies, such as the World

Bank — Singapore Urban Hub project launched in June 2009, which would leverage the Bank's global knowledge and Singapore's recognized experience in urban management and finance to provide quality advice and technical assistance relating to global best practices on urban challenges. Singapore had hosted the World Cities Summit in June 2008 and would be hosting the second Summit in June 2010, which would focus on building liveable and sustainable cities. Singapore believed that countries could form global partnerships to develop innovative prototypes for sustainable cities, and in that respect, had been jointly developing the Tianjin Eco-city with China, which it hoped would serve as an example for other such environmentally friendly, socially harmonious and resource-efficient cities in the future. Urban sustainable development would require collaborative innovation in the development of cities, involving the public, private and people sectors, and collective efforts from both developed and developing countries.

37. **Mr. Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that, as Member States sought to further strengthen UN-Habitat's work programme, they should be mindful of the more than one billion persons currently living in slums in the developing world, estimated to reach 1.4 billion by 2020. That population should be ensured adequate and accessible housing, including through special financing mechanisms and pro-poor market stabilization measures geared towards ensuring housing ownership and property titles among lower-income segments of society and improving conditions for attaining the MDGs. Population growth and the unparalleled scale and pace of urbanization, especially in developing countries, would require a rapid response by Governments to provide affordable, sustainable housing. The housing sector was important to the overall health of the economy and in that respect the public sector had a key role to play.

38. The Government of Brazil had created a Ministry of the Cities to combat social inequalities and increase access to affordable housing, sanitation and transport. The rapid, unplanned urbanization in Brazil had left 6.6 million families without shelter, more than 10 per cent of urban households without access to drinking water, and almost half without sewage services. That situation required strong commitment at the national level, but also more and improved international cooperation. The Government had launched a programme for accelerated growth aimed at promoting economic

growth and social inclusion through investment in infrastructure, logistics and energy infrastructure and in social and urban development. A major priority of its urban development pillar was projects for slum upgrading, particularly in metropolitan areas, with a focus on climate change mitigation, reduction of the environmental impact of urbanization, and urban integration with transport infrastructure. Brazil looked forward to sharing its experiences with other Governments, civil society and stakeholders at the fifth session of the World Urban Forum, which Brazil would be hosting in March 2010, with the theme of bridging the urban divide. To strengthen the coordination of public policies in the housing sector in accordance with the UN-Habitat Agenda, international cooperation, adequate policy options and, most importantly, the right kind of financing resources, provisions and instruments were urgently needed. In that respect, he hoped for greater involvement in the UN-Habitat work programme of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other actors, including the private sector.

39. **Mr. Al-Alawi** (Bahrain) said that, in line with its practice of working systematically in partnership with United Nations bodies and institutions for the achievement of comprehensive social, economic and cultural development, his country had launched the Shaikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Habitat Award with the aim of promoting initiatives and innovative solutions for sustainable development. It had also contributed support for the publication of *The State of the World's Cities 2008/2009*, the theme of which was harmonious urbanization. It firmly believed that urban planning was essential to ensuring a safe and sustainable living environment for low-income earners and to preventing chaotic urban expansion, an approach underlined by the theme of World Habitat Day 2009, "Planning our urban future". On that basis, it had elaborated a 20-year national strategy consistent with the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Millennium Development Goals, the intention being to raise the living standards of its citizens.

40. Additionally recognizing the need to preserve cultural heritage and identity, Bahrain had recently implemented various housing and amenities projects and sought to improve town and village living conditions to cope with the needs of its fast-growing population. Some villages had been rebuilt as model areas equipped with all the health, education and public

services essential to modern society and approximately US\$ 26 million was annually budgeted for the continuing implementation of a programme for the renovation and reconstruction of dilapidated housing. Also under way was a feasibility study for an affordable smart building project with specifications and standards geared to the country's climate and environment.

41. Concerted multilateral action in the spirit of shared responsibility was essential to meeting such modern-day challenges as the financial crisis, epidemic disease, diminishing food security and climate change. The grave impacts of those challenges were most felt by the developing countries, which had least contributed to their creation. Itself a small island developing country, Bahrain was concerned by the critical threat that climate change posed to peace and security in the developing world. It consequently supported the Cities and Climate Change Initiative and the World Urban Campaign established by UN-Habitat and furthermore endorsed the recommendation, set forth in paragraph 84 of the Secretary-General's report (A/64/260), concerning the need for all stakeholders to be involved in the endeavours to achieve sustainable urban development. Support and encouragement were vital to enabling UN-Habitat to address the challenges resulting from rapid and chaotic urbanization, in which context the convening of a United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016 was likely to be worthwhile.

42. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that his country's commitment to the work of UN-Habitat was demonstrated through its hosting of the eighteenth session of the Assembly of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in July 2009. That meeting had concluded with a declaration appropriately highlighting the decline of available resources for housing and urban development due to the global economic crisis and had recommended the mapping of natural disaster risk and vulnerability as a way to implement collective measures for disaster prevention and mitigation. The Assembly had also supported the preparation of the first UN-Habitat regional report on the state of Latin American and Caribbean cities.

43. Jamaica, together with Antigua and Barbuda, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago, were current beneficiaries of Phase I of UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in the African, Caribbean

and Pacific Group of countries and efforts were being made to operationalize that programme in Jamaica. While his Government appreciated the work being undertaken in the subregion, UN-Habitat should seek to further engage countries in addressing the needs and concerns that had multiplied with the onset of the financial crisis. Of particular concern was the shortfall in resources for housing and urban development. The international community should thus increase resources to enable UN-Habitat to better implement its mandate. Financial investment in the urban poor in developing countries was of benefit to the entire international economic system.

44. **Mr. Gotta** (Ethiopia) said that the Government of Ethiopia had developed and started to implement a national urban development programme in 2006, which had helped to reduce poverty, create urban jobs and improve livelihood, form fixed capital, promote investment in housing and upgrade slums. The Programme was also geared to contributing to the MDGs and targets of halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1.23 a day and the percentage of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water, in addition to significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers. A major component of that Programme related to integrated housing with a view to reducing urban poverty and unemployment, providing adequate housing, reducing slums, implementing urban upgrading, and enhancing the capacity of the construction industry. Those efforts aimed to create 200,000 jobs, construct twice as many houses and support the creation of 10,000 small construction enterprises. The Programme's other component related to micro- and small-scale enterprise development, which aimed to create 1.5 million jobs. The Government had also provided small-scale enterprises with various support services, and the Government had launched a major integrated urban infrastructure programme in 19 urban centres. Those efforts clearly demonstrated the Government's commitment to achieving sustainable urban development. The Government of Ethiopia had also put in place several policies to encourage private-sector investment in housing, which had been delivering encouraging dividends, and would redouble its efforts to provide adequate housing and related infrastructure. However, mobilizing affordable housing finance and innovative technology to build low-cost housing was a major challenge, and his Government called on UN-Habitat to explore ways in which countries could improve

access to the requisite financing and technology, including through the dissemination of global best practices. Lastly, Ethiopia supported the Secretary-General's call for convening Habitat III in 2016, and the call for adequate, stable and predictable funding, preferably through multi-year financing.

45. **Mr. Adekeye** (Nigeria) said that, as part of his Government's efforts to address the problem of affordable housing finance, Nigeria had hosted the second African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development in Abuja in July 2008, with Millennium Goal 7, target 11, as its theme. That Conference had provided guidelines for housing, slum upgrading and urban development. The Government had sought to tackle that challenge through partnerships with the private sector by offering land at subsidized rates to its citizens and issuing bonds for social housing providers, ultimately benefiting citizens. Innovative financing mechanisms like UN-Habitat's experimental reimbursable seeding operations and Slum Upgrading Facility and programmes which facilitated the delivery of pro-poor affordable housing finance systems should be supported. The experimental reimbursable operations in particular had to disbursed soft loans to interested organizations and bodies in some developing countries.

46. The World Urban Forum remained a strong platform for Member States and other habitat partners to exchange ideas and best practices on shelter and sustainable urban development, and should improve its partnership with the private sector. As a new strategy was required for the realization of the Habitat Agenda's twin goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world, the Government of Nigeria endorsed the proposal to convene Habitat III in 2016, which would provide an appropriate forum and opportunity for taking stock of the implementation of the Agenda, while also laying out strategies for the future.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*