

Distinguished Chairs, Ministers, Excellences,

Dear Colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Austria.

First I would like to thank Ecuador and the City of Quito for hosting the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, and I also extend my gratitude to everyone contributing to its successful preparation. I am pleased to take part in this historical Conference and look forward to the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, an Agenda with an universal scope on the ongoing urbanization process for sustainable development and its various dimensions.

Austria is in a very privileged situation - there are no gated communities, no gethos - cities are safe for women. Our housing construction remains very stable throughout the last ten years and the energy efficiency nearly doubled since the 1990ies. All these key performance indicators show the effective sector of limited profit housing associations. Approximately 24% of total housing stock and one third of total new construction are carried out by the limited profit housing associations. These limited profit housing associations can contribute to affordable, inclusive as well as energy efficient housing:

Although they are allowed to make profit, most of the profits have to be reinvested into new construction. This low profit distribution to its owners lead to a circle of new construction. Via the cost coverage principle, rents are relatively low.

This system is safeguarded through a strict audit and control regime: supervisory authorities are the provincial governments, also responsible for housing subsidies. Limited profit housing associations get annual inspections and audits by certified accountants, including the entire financial and business conduct. These audits avoid misconduct and spread innovation in this sector. We think, that this system might act as a best practice example and shows, that social housing should not only adress the poorest among us, but also the wide middle class to facilitate inclusiveness and to prevent social segregation.

Let me adress another important issue: The humanitarian concern of protection of civilians against the use of explosive weapons in populated areas gets in the last years increasing attention by non-governmental organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Secretary General of the United Nations and an increasing number of states.

Austria is actively participating in this discussion, having organised a meeting of experts in September 2015 and a meeting of like-minded countries on 4 October 2016 in the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, which formulated a political declaration on this important subject.

Having said that, I believe that we should think globally and act locally. Together we can bring the global New Urban Agenda locally to life. We should not miss this historical momentum, creating a new world, a better world not only for us, but also for our children.