

BRAZIL

Mr. President,

Distinguished Authorities,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This moment is the result of an enormous and successful effort by the international community, and, therefore, it is a moment of great satisfaction and celebration. The negotiations that culminated in the New Urban Agenda, which we will approve in this Conference, demonstrated the great challenge that the world has faced in order to provide adequate living conditions for all city's and general human settlements' residents. Our peculiarities, however, did not prevent us from reaching an agreement seeking to reinforce the importance of treating the issues that have come to light due to the world's rapid urban transformations, in particular, the accelerated process of urbanization that marks entire developing regions. The New Urban Agenda, therefore, asserts that this development be accomplished from a perspective of sustainability and human rights.

The New Urban Agenda is part of a context of major international agreements on development, which have marked the beginning of the XXI century. This Agenda, that is broad and ambitious, comes to add to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Addis Ababa Action

Agenda on Financing for Development; the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; all approved last year. Brazil has actively participated in the elaboration of these historical landmarks and here states its commitment to the effective implementation of the provisions set by the New Urban Agenda, which we aim to approve.

Brazil's engagement throughout the whole preparatory period was based on a national mobilization marked by the broad participation of local governments and civil society. Our National City Council that counts with the representation of these actors had a fundamental role in the elaboration of the national report, result of two national seminars and a public online consultation, which mobilized the segment linked to the urban theme.

The success of the negotiations is the result of a process of long debates in which the differences between countries came as an incentive to exchange experiences and perceptions, rather than to create obstacles to the achievement of consensus. We would like to congratulate all the countries, local governments and representatives of civil society here represented, and emphasize the importance and satisfaction of taking part in the approval of an international document of the magnitude of the

New Urban Agenda and one that reaffirms the concept of "right to the city". Present in the City Statute since 2001, the "right to the city" comprises more than just the sum of rights, but also the commitment made by the public power to provide to all city residents the access to services and to adequate living conditions, as well as the possibility of participating in the definition of their own courses. Cities have always brought with them the promise of prosperity and hope for a better life for all those who live and may come to live in it. The right to the city is the commitment made by governments and society to ensure that this dream does not turn into a nightmare for many.

An important inseparable component to the right to the cities is the right to health. Sustainable cities will only be achieved if we work together and in an intersectoral way for the development of health promoting activities that are sustainable in a political, social, cultural, economic and environmental dimension. Health should be understood not only as the absence of disease, but also, and mainly, from its social and environmental determinants, because the conditions in which people live and work directly affect their health problems and risk factors. Brazil defends the universal access to health and public policies that consider health in its design to the full exercise of the right to sustainable cities.

In this context, we need to promote and support territorially articulated urban interventions, notably in the areas of housing, urban infrastructure and sanitation, accessibility and mobility programs. It is important to have an integration between programs and actions from different policies, especially those pertaining to educational, health and environmental issues, seeking to ensure the right to cities that are composed of resilient and inclusive spaces.

Today, most of Brazil's population lives in urban areas, the result of an intense migration from the countryside to cities that began in last century's 50's and that increased in the following decades. Stability was only reached at the end of the century, making Brazil one of the countries with the highest urbanization rates in the world, higher even than many developing countries. From approximately 35% in the early 50's, Brazil currently has nearly 85% of its population living in urban areas.

The accelerated demographic transition imposed equally rapid transformations for Brazilian municipalities, both in terms of wealth and opportunity generation, with the industrialization and modernization of the economy, as well as with the introduction of challenges and problems in a scale that was still unknown for us. Unplanned urban growth, alongside of the proliferation of informal settlements and the lack of

mobility services and adequate sanitation, came to be a reality in Brazilian cities.

The needs that were presented, and presented in great speed, forced the government to adapt itself to the dramatic social demands. Among the failures and successes of our public policies, we are confident to say that Brazil has developed innovative and bold urban practices, especially considering the context of a developing country with scarce resources. Brazil is one of the few countries that has in its governmental structure a Ministry of Cities aimed specifically to develop the coordination between federal, state and local governments within a framework of a national urban policy. The territorial dimension of the country and its great social needs drive us to seek creative and often times unique institutional solutions.

In the housing sector, we have a few decades of debt in terms of public financing with emphasis on serving the population with the lowest incomes. This started to be effectively addressed in 2007 with the Growth Acceleration Program, in its urbanization axis of Slum Upgrading that benefits more than 2 million families, with an investment of U\$ 8.5 billion. In 2009, another great milestone achieved in the area of housing was the creation of the My House, My Life Program that sought specifically to

provide housing for low-income families. This program benefits approximately 4.4 million families that reside in urban and rural areas in all Brazilian states, distributed in 5,363 municipalities, or in other words, 93% of all national territory. In 2016 alone, the construction of 255 thousand housing units were authorized, totaling an investment of U\$ 8.75 billion. The commitment of the Brazilian government is to expand the program and perfect it in the coming years. We are aware of the existing challenges, and the Brazilian government is pursuing to mitigate the housing deficit, which is currently of 6 million residences, according to calculations for the year of 2014.

In addition to the housing issue itself, innovations were developed in the field of construction quality improvements; accessibility and urban mobility were extended, as well as traffic safety, land regularization, risk mitigation and access to sanitation, all actions that are strongly encouraged by the Government. The Ministry of Cities also supports the elaboration of plans and projects, and offers training and capacity building programs for local agents, which benefits, above all, the administrations of small and medium sized municipalities. As an example, we can mention the Ministry's webpage called "Capacities", which provides free training in

various dimensions of urban planning, contributing to the improvement of local actions.

We have recently organized two important international events of great relevance: the 2014 World Cup and the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, in August of this year. On both occasions, Brazilian cities were the stage of these great spectacles. They were great challenges that demanded transformation and adaptations, and they showed that we have in fact learned a lot and are now confident that, besides the success and beauty that these events displayed, we have also gained an urban legacy of great endurance for the people of Brazil.

Even though cities occupy only 0.5% of this planet's territory, they contain more than half of the world's population, concentrating the many sustainability challenges. Our commitment to sustainable development, which includes the environmental, economic and social dimensions, refers us to pacts assumed through the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We are aware of the great challenge that we will face with the still immense needs and expectations of our people not only in terms of development, but also of freedom and emancipation of the burden of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities.

It is Brazil's great satisfaction to take part in this historic moment, in the same way that it has participated decisively on the previous editions of the Habitat conferences, in Vancouver in 1976 and Istanbul in 1996. Twenty years have passed, but the challenges are still present. Our experience with international cooperation in the most differentiated international forums and with countless partners have produced important results. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen these cooperative bonds, in their different modalities. The New Urban Agenda assigns special importance to the mechanisms of knowledge exchange between the countries. We are eager to deepen our learning of what has been done by other countries and equally share our own knowledge and technologies in the field of urban and housing development.

Finally, we would like to thank all those that have worked hard so that this Conference could come to life, with this level of competence and broad participation. We would like to specially thank the Habitat III Secretariat, the government and the people of Ecuador that have spared no efforts so that we could all feel at home in this beautiful city of Quito.

Thank you very much!