

12:39 PM – 12:44 PM
Wednesday, 17 September 2014

STATEMENT BY **ETHIOPIA**

Statement By H.E. Ato Hailemeskel Tefera, State Minister for Urban Development, Housing and Construction of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). September 17, 2014. New York.

**Co-Chairs ,
Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director UN HABITAT,
Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Representatives of International organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, my delegation would like to congratulate you and other members of the bureau on your election to preside over this meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

My delegation also expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT for the outstanding leadership of the organization and for his tireless efforts to keep Habitat high in the global development agenda.

Co-Chairs,

We are having this meeting at a propitious time. This year marks the final stretch to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs and the final preparation towards the formulation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In all this co-chairs , our deliberation could not have been more timely in reflecting upon the implementation of urban development goals of the MDGs and the issues that we need to carry on board in the new global development goals and in that of Habitat III.

The Government of Ethiopia believes sustainable urban development can be achieved across the nation by provision of Housing through combined government intervention, private sector efforts and peoples participation . In this process, the demand and supply gap is getting minimum from time to time. Upon the implementation of Integrated Housing Program more than 310,000 housing units have been constructed of which 200,000 transferred to the target groups. The program is successful in slum upgrading, creation of jobs, income distribution, decent housing ownership, capacitating domestic construction industry as expected during formulation. Currently, we are closely working on a new comprehensive Urban Housing by which all income groups within the urban system are targeted. It is also understood Housing identified as one of the issues that emerged due to the rapid and continuous economic development registered for the last 10 years.

Ethiopia is in the process of preparing the cities prosperity index and national report on Habitat by setting up a national committee. The continual and substantial movement of people from rural villages and homesteads to urban villages , small , medium , and large towns, and to the capital city , and the resulting rapid urbanization are all necessary to support the development of industrial' manufacturing and service sectors . In this context, my Ministry is working hard to exploit the opportunities while tackling the urban challenges throughout the urban development process.

It goes without saying that one of the challenges surrounding housing is shortage of financial resources. In order to provide affordable and ensure demand-driven housing, we have established a housing saving scheme that targeted different income groups. Accordingly, from 10-40% saving scheme has been designed with close to 1 million urban dwellers in Addis Ababa become beneficiaries of the programme. A proportional amount of loan therefore has been allocated by domestic financial institutions for 15-20 Years with minimum interest rates.

Ethiopia also believes that the societal change that accompanies the agricultural to industrial transformation can only be accomplished successfully with careful and meticulous advance planning that addresses all aspects of the transformation simultaneously. It is for this reason that the Ministry has developed the Ethiopian Cities Prosperity Index - ECPI with the aim of building the framework and lay foundations in our towns and cities and the construction industry to achieve the country's vision and for its continuous advancement. As a result, the Ethiopian Cities prosperity initiative building green growth, resilient and well governed cities 2013/14 -2025 report has identified the following nine pillars.

- 1) Policy ,research and leadership development
- 2) MSE development and urban productivity
- 3) Urban good governance
- 4) Infrastructure and services
- 5) Housing development and management
- 6) Construction industry development and management
- 7) Urban planning and land management
- 8) Environment and sustainability
- 9) Inclusive and safer cities developement

The report will be endorsed soon by the Government and used as a road map to govern our future cities.

Co-Chairs

We all agree that we have made progress to adress the challenges surrounding urbanization over the last decades, but we also agree that much still remains to be done if we are to ensure sustanable urban development and affordable housing.

As the Secretary-General of the Conference rightly pointed out in his opening remarks, the progress of MDGs has rather been mixed; there has been a decline in poverty but also there has been a rise in the number of urban dwellers. We need to exert more efforts to tackle these and other challenges such us climate change to ensure sustainable future for the generations to come. The support and cooperation of the international community in this regard is extremely critical.

I thank You.