

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov
Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations
at the Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
(Habitat III)
17 October 2016, Quito, Ecuador**

Thank you Chair,

It is a great honour for me on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan to be at this historic and memorable United Nations Conference ~~on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which will also be transformative in charting the growth of cities in this century.~~ I therefore thank the Government of Ecuador most sincerely hosting this phenomenal gathering with such generosity and warm hospitality.

~~As the world ratio of urbanization, today,~~ Kazakhstan has more than half of its population living in urban areas, ~~reflecting a new trend of expanding areas around major cities in the country.~~ Over time, the boundaries of cities are expanding, ~~accommodating newly arriving migrants.~~ Therefore, President of my country H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev in his addresses to Nation ~~(2012, 2014)~~ mentioned that Agglomerations are the foundation of the knowledge-based economy of Kazakhstan. Their creation and development are an important challenge given the vast territory of our country and its low population density. The largest cities of Kazakhstan, Astana and Almaty, Shymkent and Aktobe must become contemporary urban centers driving economic growth.

Thus, Kazakhstan is wisely coping with three processes- the natural growth of the urban population, rural-urban migration and reclassification of rural districts into urban. This has been done through improving the efficiency of management in growing cities through construction of affordable housing, health and educational service, job creation, diversification and transformation of the economy, access to

technologies, productivity, and infrastructure and transport development, environmental protection, and energy-efficient waste processes technology. Permit me to now elaborate on Astana, ~~recognized as the cityscape of this century and capable of withstand the test of time,~~ is a symbol of security and prosperity, freedom and progress.

Constructed only 19 years ago, it has grown from a town to city and has become one of the world's most architecturally interesting and unique urban centers. It has already hosted important international fora, such as the ~~Triennial~~ Congress⁵ of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the Summits of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the seventh Astana Economic Forum, ~~which is the "Asian Davos"~~, and many others.

~~Astana is a bold and dynamic city that has already achieved remarkable heights of success and is striving to conquer new peaks and make a name for itself worldwide.~~ We are proud that Astana is hosting the international specialized exhibition, EXPO 2017 on the theme – the Future Energy. The EXPO, ~~which is being held for the first time in Asia,~~ will showcase new sources of renewable energy relevant for both the developed and developing worlds. ~~The Expo marks a new stage in the development for Astana and Kazakhstan, and our city will be judged by the long term impact regionally and globally.~~

The EXPO site will have a life long after the exhibition closes. We hope that it will host an International Centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under the auspices of the UN. The site will also be the home of the new Astana International Financial Centre, which is being developed along the lines of its counterpart in Dubai, ^{Hong Kong, Singapore} With its modern buildings and infrastructure, this vibrant Financial Centre will be a permanent home for high-tech firms, research centers and academic institutions. It will operate on English Law with English as the

official language of the Centre, ~~[focusing on investment, development of securities market, achievement of its integration with international capital markets, development of markets of insurance, banking services and Islamic finance market in the country.]~~ Astana wants to demonstrate on how we power our world, and use green technology and fiscal governance with social accountability to find solutions to the major challenges of this century.

~~[Clean and safe water is a crucial and cross-cutting issue at the heart of all cities and Astana is setting in place mechanisms that ensure efficient water management, with inclusive and sustainable financing mechanisms to meet water-related goals at the local and national levels. Indeed food, water, energy and nuclear security will be the pillars of Kazakhstan's advocacy when it takes is place on the Security Council for 2017-2018, and commitment will continue into the future.]~~

~~[We encourage platforms to ensure the participation of the most vulnerable groups, women and youth, as part of a vibrant civil society in all domains of governance. Astana runs on transparent mechanisms, the rule of law and good governance that promote human rights and dignity for all. Astana, as a place for science and Research and Development, will also use the Digital Revolution to bring forth the competence and cultural techniques to counteract social polarization and segregation.]~~

Our second city, Almaty hosted the First UN Conference on Landlocked Countries and gave the birth of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action. Kazakhstan which is the largest landlocked country in the world has become a landlinked country, bringing new life to its cities and thus greater prosperity to ~~our~~ ^{the} ~~populations,~~ ^{of other countries} In 2017, Almaty will be welcoming some of the finest young athletes from around the world for the Winter Universiade, which Almaty has the honour and responsibility of hosting.

We also are aware of the transnational and alarming threats of terrorism and climate change, and addressing them requires common action. Good strong cities also promote regional development. We hope to set up in Almaty, our second largest city, a UN Regional Hub aimed to get all countries together work on approaches of sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, early warning, disaster risk reduction and resilience building – the hallmarks of model cities.

Kazakhstan is committed to leaving no one behind. We therefore stand ready to implement the New Urban Agenda as the new trajectory for humankind, making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

(including LDC, LLDC, SIDS.)

Thank you!