

Chairman

Official Government Representative of The Republic of Ecuador,  
Your Excellencies Head of states, head of Governments, Ministers,  
Distinguish Country Delegates and Participants

Secretariat of UN Habitat

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost let me join the previous speakers to thank the host city Quito, and Ecuador. I am happy to see a city and a country of "Global South" to take on such a gigantic role and challenge in organizing this Habitat III conference. We gathered here this week in this beautiful equatorial capital city. A city with a huge wealth of history and natural beauty. Thank your Ecuador.

Right on the onset of my intervention let me first share the feeling of my delegation, of privilege to be part of this United Nations Habitat III conference, this special conference that has been many years in the making. I say this because I acknowledge that many of us in this room today were not present 20 years ago in the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul (1996), and most of us will probably not be present again in the next Conference in the year 2036. Thus, we have a vital task ahead of us this week, a legacy to create, as the conference aims us to re-think on the planning and management of our towns and cities through the adoption a the New Urban Agenda.

Equally we also aimed for the action-oriented framework to set global standards for achievements in sustainable urban development, taking into consideration our regional challenges in Africa, as well as the specific challenges facing Small Islands Developing states (SIDS), which Seychelles is a proud member of.

Fellow distinguish country participants, in other words our legacy this week is to address the daily demands of our people for housing and other related infrastructure and services. After all we as leaders, we are the ones would have to implement these visions on the ground, and our sons and our daughters will judge us 20 years down the line on this week's commitments to walk the talk.

### Climate Change

As this Habitat III assess the progress made on the recommendations at the previous Habitat II, we take note of the challenges that have hindered its implemental progress. Whilst, we commend the rapid progress and accelerated urbanization of the last 20 years, we cannot help to equally recognise the risks that this urbanization has posed on the world' most vulnerable populations. Our political instincts although paved cooperation for the common good, we also shared the responsibility for our people and the planet we live on.

For me representing a Small Island Developing State I cannot, not join my fellow colleague nations, in highlighting one single most challenge for us SIDS. This is Climate Change. It threatens our very existence as sovereign nations on this planet, let alone the consequences of it onto the housing sector.

Seychelles was swift in the ratifying The Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we were the 16<sup>th</sup> country to do so. By this gesture Seychelles wanted to ensure the

implementation of this Paris Agreement to commence swiftly. As a gesture of this early ratification we were making a call, we want all the governments to take the challenge of climate change seriously and to show continued political will, and fulfill the commitments to achieve the future that we all want to be part of.

In this New Urban Agenda, Seychelles thus, endorses the commitment being made for climate change, especially toward emissions reduction, and more focus on planning for sustainability. Climate change in all its forms is well recognized to be part and parcel of urban policy development, for sustainable development, thus if accomplished I am proud to say that Seychelles will take strong ownership of this New Urban Agenda.

Seychelles is committed in a holistic framework for housing development, orchestrated with good planning practices and placing people at the forefront of sustainable development. In fact such approach has long been recognized by The People of Seychelles. Despite our limitations on financial, human and land resources, Seychelles has adopted a pragmatic and consistent approach to housing development and always keeping housing development at forefront in its national programme.

Special vigour has been placed on long term programmes for appropriate solution in tackling our housing shortages and the standard and quality of houses for our people, especially the low to middle income earners.

Today, about forty years of implementing our social housing programme, the government is not only a facilitator for access to housing, but for every citizen of Seychelles to own his or her own house.

Credible Official Figures shows that in Seychelles over 75% of families own their own houses. This extraordinary achievement in our small country's socio-economic

development is trickling down on all other sectors, be it economic, social or environmental.

Achieving 75% home ownership has not been a simple task and has not happened haphazardly. The progress has been due to the hard work and positive attitude of many men and women living and working in Seychelles. It is also because of the stability, cohesion and confidence that have come from the decades of strong and stable government.

We have in the past focused on the physical planning and capital investment for the housing sector, but as time passes we are realizing that the estates we built over the past years need care and upkeep so that the environment that our population live in remains conducive and healthy. We also have to ensure that these estates continue to serve their beneficiaries within the parameters that they were conceived with, whilst adapting to the changes our society faces. We face challenges in continuing to assist members of our population not yet assisted, but we also face challenges sustaining the environments we have built, in good and healthy condition.

Whilst the Government was facilitating the housing process and providing the right conditions for housing development, on the other hand, the private sector has not been that much forthcoming, not adequately proactive in partnering the government with housing solutions, especially to the low and middle income earners.

We have also other challenges such as we find increasing demand for construction of extensions in already dense estates as families expand. We face social ills which undermine the living conditions and ability of homeowners to upkeep their houses.

Lower income families are having difficulties in keeping the houses they benefited from in good state.

All of these challenges calls for us to have more sustainable mechanisms, and this need to be with participation of the government, beneficiaries, the private financing institutions and the international community in forums such as the UN Habitat, Shelter Afrique and many others . I see all this in the New Urban Agency and thus Seychelles is proud the endorse and to be associated with.

I thank you all for listening and once again a special gratitude goes to our host nation, The beautiful Ecuadorians.

Gracias tenga un buen día