

**Statement by State Secretary Lukáš Parížek on behalf of the Slovak Republic**

Madame Chair,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be present at this Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and declare Slovakia's commitment to the New Urban Agenda. I am strongly convinced that this agenda will guide, ensure and implement global, regional, national and local actions for a sustainable urban development and housing for the next 20 years.

I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Ecuador and its People for the warm welcome and hosting of this Conference. Slovakia, as a member of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of Habitat III, wants to express appreciation to all actors contributing to the successful preparation of the outcome document of this conference. In this regard, I salute the tireless efforts of Mexico and Philippines who co-facilitated the final negotiations leading to the agreement on the New Urban Agenda.

After milestone agreements' reached in Sendai, Addis Ababa, New York and Paris in 2015, UN Habitat III represents one of the first major steps towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs - namely SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

In this regard, allow me to bring a few complementary remarks:

From this unique place, I would like to stress the importance of regional cooperation. Cities need to work together to create and use existing networks to effectively deliver on the New Urban Agenda. Very often, regional structures serve as the link allowing translating global policies into national, tailor-made actions. There are two inspiring examples of such an approach that I would like to share:

- 1) First, is the Urban Agenda for the European Union adopted earlier this year by all the EU member states. It represents a new participative way of action to tackle the challenges of European cities through partnerships in the fields of environment, transport, employment, and others. Moreover, Slovakia currently coordinates the pilot partnership for housing.
- 2) Second, is the Geneva Charter on sustainable housing adopted by the UN Economic Commission for Europe last year. The adoption of this Charter showed once again the relevance of regional structures to agree on common and shared principles of housing policies such as environmental protection, economic effectiveness, social inclusion and participation, and cultural adequacy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We may speak of this Conference as a historic moment for future of our cities. But what really makes today's conference historic is our commitment to implement and honour the outcome document. If we fail to implement our commitments, everything else is just a talkshop. As Commissioner Cretu said earlier today, we need to enhance our efforts on good urban governance. Cities are hubs of economic activity, cultural exchanges and social opportunities. They must be supported through innovative policies and out of the box approach. It is also important to stress the role of youth and innovation in the new design and concept of smart cities.

By adopting the New Urban Agenda, we agree on the importance of making cities and urban spaces inclusive, green, human and smart. The principle "to leave no one behind" on one hand and urban policies on the other, need to be linked with the objective of reducing poverty, enhancing equality, prosperity and affordable housing for all people.

We all are urban actors and the New Urban Agenda recognizes the individual role of each and every actor and our common responsibility to make cities and human settlements fit for purpose and fit for our future.

Many thanks for your kind attention!