

**REMARKS BY HON. DENIS. ST. E. KELLMAN, M.P. –
MINISTER OF HOUSING, LANDS & RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
BARBADOS AT A PLENARY SESSION OF THE THIRD
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND
SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)
October 17th – 20th, 2016**

Mr. Chairman,

I bring greetings on behalf of The Right. Hon. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados and Minister with responsibility for Planning and Urban Development, on the occasion of the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and wish to convey his best wishes for a successful Conference.

It gives me great pleasure to address this plenary today and to extend my gratitude to the Government and people of Ecuador for their gracious hospitality and to UN-HABITAT for this eagerly anticipated Conference.

My country, Barbados, has been in the forefront of championing the cause of Small Island Developing States for over twenty years having hosted the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994. This resulted in the Barbados Program of Action which laid the foundation upon which we have built up to the SAMOA Pathway.

Our continued commitment to this process was evidenced in the re – convening of a National Habitat Committee. The Committee, under the slogan “*Barbados Together...Towards a New Urban Agenda*” has, for the past two years, been actively raising awareness of this very important process, culminating in this Conference. There was a National Consultative process which brought Barbadians, regional and international stakeholders together to offer their vision of “a new urban agenda”. Some of the issues raised to be addressed within our Plan of Action include transportation and mobility, housing for an aging population and the use of public spaces.

Barbados also hosted the Second Regional Expert Group Meeting jointly organised by the Habitat III Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Office for UN HABITAT in collaboration with the Barbados Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development. For two days, delegates from Barbados, Central America and the Caribbean discussed their views on urbanisation and its accompanying challenges, the achievements and shortcomings of the region since Habitat II and articulated their vision of our cities twenty years into the future.

Barbados looks forward to engaging in meaningful dialogue on the development and implementation of a Plan of Action. We eagerly anticipate engaging our development partners to discuss the special challenges faced by Small Island Developing States such as vulnerability to natural hazards like earthquakes, land - slides, hurricanes and coastal inundation as a result of climate change. We call on the United Nations, through the offices of UN-

HABITAT and UN-OHRLLS to do even more, to ensure the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda, through effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, particularly for Caribbean SIDS such as Barbados. Furthermore, we also ask for your full support in bringing together, the Ministers of the Caribbean, with responsibility for Housing and Urban Development, to discuss the implications of, and implementation of the New Urban Agenda for Caribbean SIDS, building on the work started at the Second Regional Expert Group Meeting in Barbados.

Linked to these issues, is also the need to strengthen the areas of planning and urban design. Barbados is in the advanced stages of amending its Physical Development Plan. This Plan seeks to plan for a sustainable resilient island through the adoption of strategies with a specific focus on the implications for new development and infrastructure within risk - prone areas.

For the Government of Barbados, safe, adequate and affordable housing for its citizens remains a priority. As we look towards the future, it is recognised that a comprehensive assessment of our housing stock must be undertaken. There is also a need for more efficient data collection which will allow for the production of housing statistics to inform empirically based decision making. Building capacity in these two areas will assist our policy makers in assessing the demand for housing and in turn assist in the development of appropriate projects.

Such is the commitment of Barbados to the implementation of The New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals that recognition of these agendas has been given to them in the most recent version of the Barbados Growth and Development Strategy.

My government has adopted the principle of a green economy and has commenced the transitioning which is seen as pivotal in reducing the vulnerability of the nation to economic and natural shocks, as it charts a more sustainable path for the benefit of current and future generations of Barbadians.

Mr. Chairman, I commit my Government to continuing to work with our local, regional and international partners to ensure that Barbados remains on the path of sustainable development.

Thank you.