

Czech Republic: Statement of H.E. Ms. Karla Šlechtová in plenary, Habitat III

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Chairpersons, Ministers, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- First, I would like to commend the Government of Ecuador and the city of Quito for hosting this very important global event. It is only for the third time that the world has gathered to consider and debate a collective approach to current trends impacting towns, cities and other urban areas. And high expectations for this conference are due also to the fact that it is following a series of fruitful 2015 global high level events on sustainable development.
- Second, I appreciate the effort of all main actors – co-chairs, Bureau members, co-facilitators and other negotiators – resulting in successful and consensual final draft of the “New Urban Agenda”. This document is a very good basis for our next steps because now it is time to go further and to implement all these visions, goals and commitments.
- Countries all over the world face similar challenges in the fields of housing and urban development and strengthening mutual learning and knowledge sharing should be the way to achieve effective international cooperation. Therefore, I really hope that the “New Urban Agenda” will be progressively implemented with strong support from the Governments all over the world. At least it will be the case of the Czech Republic. We are prepared to strive for efficient implementation of the “New Urban Agenda”, including participating in the European Union activities as one of its Member States, or and take our part in activities carried out by United Nations agencies and programmes.
- Further, I would like to stress the importance of strong relations and synergies between the “New Urban Agenda” and the “Agenda 2030” and underline that all relevant analyses and reporting on both global documents should be carried out “hand in hand”, in order to stimulate as much synergy as possible. It is essential that this process of reporting and monitoring incorporate the views of national, sub-national and local governments, as well as the UN system.
- I welcome that the “New Urban Agenda” will be periodically reviewed at national, regional and global levels, to track progress, assess impact and ensure the effectiveness of the implementation. I stress the word “regional” in this regard – for the Northern part of the world it means the Committee on Housing and Land Management of the Economic Commission for Europe, which has been dealing with housing and urban issues for 70 years. I am strongly convinced that the effective cooperation of all five UN regional commissions would bring new ideas into the implementation of the global “New Urban Agenda”. The Czech Republic is prepared to actively participate in such cooperation.
- In countries all over the world, new technologies influence many spheres of our lives, including housing markets. In many cities, more and more residential apartments are being used for short-term accommodation of tourists, instead of long-term permanent housing of tenants. Housing and tourism thus have become closer than ever before; economically as well as socially. We can expect that this so called, “shared” or “collaborative” economy is going to affect urban economy much stronger in the near future, using cheap and globally available mobile technologies. We should be prepared for these phenomena, be open, flexible and able to anticipate possible developments. We – national Governments – should ensure that these innovations work in favour of people and development of prosperous, inclusive and healthy cities with affordable housing for all – citizens as well as visitors.
- I am proud that my country had an honour to host the biggest preparatory event on the path to Quito. In March this year, regional conference “European Habitat” attracted about 4 thousand people not only from the given region – Northern hemisphere – but from countries all over the world. “Prague Declaration”, as an outcome from this event, served as one the most important inputs for the “New Urban Agenda”, together with declarations from other regional and thematic preparatory meetings organized in various parts of our planet.
- I would like to mention, that the Czech Republic strongly supports the EU Urban Agenda, which is the main delivery mechanism of the New Urban Agenda at the European level. We are going to co-lead the partnership on Urban Mobility and are active in Partnerships on Affordable Housing and Air Quality.
- To conclude, I would like to emphasize that being obliged to do something is very different from wanting to do it. Therefore, let’s really want to implement the “New Urban Agenda”; don’t consider such implementation as an obligation. As for the Czech Republic, we really look

forward to participate in all relevant international activities implementing our goals and commitments included in the “New Urban Agenda” for next 20 years.

- Thank you for your attention.