



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MRS. CHULAMANEE CHARTSUWAN, AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND CHARGÈ D' AFFAIRES, A.I. OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE HABITAT III INFORMAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS: (NEW YORK, 18 MAY 2016)

Madame Co-Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Allow me to first express the Group's appreciation for convening the first Informal Intergovernmental meeting pursuant to General Assembly Resolution A/70/210. We would like to commend the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the HABITAT III, under your able leadership, for its efforts in preparing the comprehensive zero draft of the New Urban Agenda and for releasing it in a timely manner. The Group shares the view that the New Urban Agenda should be concise, focused, forward looking, and action-oriented by giving great emphasis on implementation.

We also thank the local authorities associations for their contributions made at the Informal hearings earlier this week. The Group finds the discussions and exchange of ideas rich and we shall take them into consideration, as appropriate.

Madame Co-Chair,

The Group would like to reaffirm all the agreed principles on Habitat II, including Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and the Twin Goals of the adequate shelter and sanitation for All.

The Group would like to emphasise that the New Urban Agenda is an agenda for cities and human settlements. Urban and rural areas are not only interdependent and mutually supportive, but are also important engines of economic growth, poverty reduction and environmental protection. Our preliminary views on the zero draft are as follows:

First, the Group is of the view that the zero draft is a good starting point for the deliberation process. The document is comprehensive and covers focus areas of the UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2014-2019. We appreciate it that the zero draft seeks to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development and that cross-cutting issues such as people-centered approach, planet sensitive, climate change, culture, and resilience are reflected in the document. Moreover, we are pleased to see issues concerning poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, adequate housing, urban-rural linkage being highlighted and the diversity of human settlements are recognized.

Second, the document reflects the broad perspectives from extensive consultations in the process leading up to the Habitat III Conference by taking into account inputs from broad regional and thematic consultations, policy recommendations elaborated by the policy units, and comments from States and stakeholders at the Open-ended informal consultative meetings in New York last April. The inclusive process has resulted in the richness and perhaps the complexity of the document. In our view, the outcome document must strike the technical and political balance which will be a challenging task ahead of us.

Third, we welcome the references and clear interlinkages of the New Urban Agenda to the agreed outcomes of the new sustainable development framework. It is of utmost importance to advance towards an inclusive agenda to be founded in relevant outcomes and international agreements including the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, among others. The 2030 Agenda, including its Goal 11 on

making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, shall contribute to our efforts towards the effective management of the challenges, and provide an opportunity to promote a positive mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings across the human settlements continuum.

Fourth, we are of the view that areas that could be strengthened and elaborated further in the zero draft include actions on: urban expansion; people-centered urbanization; improving housing for the poor; improving sustainable mobility and road safety; impact of climate change; education for jobs; economic growth with the emphasis on energy, transport, infrastructure and interconnectivity; narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas in basic services; strengthening institutions; efforts to enhance global partnership to implement the New Urban Agenda; the balance of urban and rural and the concept of the “high quality of life”; the balance between urbanization and human settlements; international cooperation and commitment of developed countries, for instance in climate finance; urban economy, both informal and formal sectors, etc. We are guided by a vision of cities characterized by quality of life, sustainable environment and an inclusive economy, ensuring cities are a positive force for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Essential to this realization is the need for the foundational principles of integrated planning and urban governance with integrity in the way we plan, develop, and manage sustainable cities.

Fifth, the outcome document must emphasise the importance of the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system and other relevant institutions in human settlements to support developing countries. A strong organizational machinery for implementing the New Urban Agenda must be put in place. The Group remains firmly supportive of strengthening UN-Habitat, and welcomes inclusion of the specific details of strengthening as captured in some sections of the zero draft.

Sixth, on follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda, on the one hand, we think that it is important to include the review of the global progress in the implementation of the Agenda as part of the integrated and coordinated follow-up process to the United Nations conferences and summits, aligned with the GA, ECOSOC, the HLPF and the QCPR cycles, as appropriate, taking into account any existing mechanism of Habitat I and II. On the other hand, we must respect the integrity of the Habitat III process.

Madame Co-Chair,

The Group of 77 and China would like to stress the importance of human settlements and its direct impact on achieving sustainable development, especially in developing countries. Our approach to urbanization and human settlements should enhance the Right to Development accordingly with the Declaration on the Right to Development, in particular for developing countries.

The role of international cooperation is crucial in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, technology transfer or capacity enhancement as means to support national efforts and capacities to implement the New Urban Agenda.

International cooperation should focus on how to enhance the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in particular in developing countries. Acknowledging the existing gaps in capacities between developed and developing countries, the international community should provide means of implementation regarding finance, technology and capacity building, knowledge sharing, and technical assistance to developing countries.

Madame Co-Chair,

The issue of human settlements and strengthening UN-Habitat are intrinsically linked to the core interests of the Group of 77 and China. Suffice is to say that the Group is the main sponsor of the *Implementation of the outcome of the*

United Nations Conference on human settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN-Habitat that is adopted every year by the General Assembly.

We wish to assure you of the commitment of the Group of 77 and China in the preparatory process for the Habitat III Conference with the aim to reach a meaningful and ambitious outcome. This we believe will provide support and assist in resource mobilization in particular to developing countries, to enhance a truly global partnership.

Given the high importance the Group attaches to the New Urban Agenda, I am pleased to inform that delegations of Colombia, Jamaica, and Kenya will be supporting Thailand as the coordinators of the Group of 77 during the preparatory process leading up to the Habitat III Conference.

Madame Co-Chairs,

The Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support to the Government of Ecuador as the host of the HABITAT III Conference as well as to the Government of Indonesia as the host of the third session of the HABITAT III PrepCom. We are confident that both countries shall spare no efforts in ensuring a good preparation and organisation for a successful conference.

I thank you.