



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. MITRI INTHUSUT, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SECURITY OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III) (QUITO, 17 OCTOBER 2016)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Allow me to first express the Group's appreciation to the Government and the people of Ecuador for hosting the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and for the warm hospitality extended to us here in Quito. We wish the Conference a great success.
3. The Group would also like to thank the co-facilitators for the negotiations of the draft outcome document of Habitat III, Her Excellency Lourdes O. Yparraguirre, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations in New York and Mr. Dámaso Luna Corona, Adjunct Director General for sustainable development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, respectively, to the Secretariat of Habitat III, for their tireless efforts, and our gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General of the UN-Habitat and through him to UN-Habitat for their continuous technical support to the process.
4. Habitat III is the first intergovernmental conference to take place after the historic year of the adoption of the outcomes of four major conferences related to sustainable development. The Conference shall contribute significantly to our efforts towards the effective management of the challenges of rapid urbanization, and provide an opportunity to promote a positive, mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings, across the human settlements continuum.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The issue of human settlements and of housing and sustainable urban development is intrinsically linked to the core interests of the Group of 77 and China within the sustainable development domain.

6. In fact, the Group are the main sponsor of the "Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the UN-Habitat" resolution that is adopted every year by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

7. We reaffirm the principles of Habitat II, including Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. We further reaffirm the Right to Development accordingly with the Declaration on the Right to Development, in particular for developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The Group of 77 and China reiterate our unwavering commitment and participation in the Habitat III process actively and constructively, particularly the negotiations of the New Urban Agenda. We understand that the new Agenda to be adopted this Thursday is a delicate compromise. We thank development partners for working with us in order to reach a meaningful outcome which will guide us towards sustainable urbanization and human settlements in the next twenty years.

9. We look forward to adopting the New Urban Agenda which in our view is focused, forward looking and action-oriented by giving adequate emphasis to implementation. The new Agenda also strikes the technical and political balance and is inclusive, building on the open-ended consultative meetings, conclusions of the Policy Units, and the Regional and Thematic meetings of the Habitat III. Allow me to highlight the Group's views on the New Urban Agenda as follows:

10. First, 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 poverty eradication, economic growth, social inclusion, poverty eradication and environmental protection.

11. Second, the new Agenda is comprehensive, seeks to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development and reflects cross-cutting issues such as people-centered approach, age and gender-responsive, planet sensitivity, climate change, culture and cultural diversity, sustainable consumption and production patterns and resilience. Moreover, issues concerning poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, adequate housing, urban-rural linkages, territorial planning, integrated long-term approach to planning, urban governance, road safety, and diversity of human settlements are recognized.

12. 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 founded on relevant outcomes and international agreements including the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Paris Agreement, among others. The 2030 Agenda, including its Goal 11, shall contribute to our efforts towards the effective management of challenges, and provide an opportunity to promote a positive mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings across the human settlements continuum through innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development.

13. Fourth, the Group is of a firm belief that the role of international cooperation and commitment of developed countries are crucial in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, in particular official development assistance, technology transfer or capacity enhancement as means to support national efforts and capacities of developing countries to deal with human settlements and implement the new Agenda. Existing gaps in capacities between developed and developing countries must be acknowledged.

14. Fifth, in implementing the New Urban Agenda, we stress the particular attention that needs to be given to addressing the unique and emerging urban development challenges faced by developing countries, especially countries in special situations, in particular, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States as well as specific challenges that many middle-income countries face, conflict and post-conflict countries and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation. Different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect of national policies and priorities must also be taken in account.

15. Sixth, a strong organizational machinery for implementing the New Urban Agenda and issues related to sustainable urban development and human settlements must be put in place. The role and expertise of the UN-Habitat which is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, should be emphasized. The Group remain firmly supportive of enhancing the effectiveness of the UN-Habitat, in both its normative and operational work which include providing capacity development and tools to national, sub-national, and local governments in designing, planning, and managing sustainable urban development.

16. We look forward to the recommendations of the independent assessment and the two day High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly during the seventy-first session where the issues of the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positioning of UN-Habitat will be discussed.

17. Last but not least, on follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda, 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 General Assembly, ECOSOC, the High Level Political Forum and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review cycles, as appropriate, taking fully into account any existing mechanism of Habitat I and II, the UN-Habitat Governing Council for instance.

Mr. Chairman,

18. These are some of the highlights which the Group deem important. The Group are of a firm belief that sustainable urban development and human settlements can be a key driver of sustainable development in national and sub-national development plans. We are guided by a vision of cities and human settlements characterized by quality of life, equity, sustainable environment and an inclusive economy, ensuring cities and human settlements as a positive force for achieving sustainable development.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.