

## Statement on behalf of the Netherlands

Distinguished Co-Chairs, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to take part in the third conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban development, not least because it includes the adoption of the New Urban Agenda. But, let me start by thanking Ecuador and the City of Quito for hosting this conference in such a warm and effective way.

I would like to endorse on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands the statement made by commissioner Ms. Corina Cretu on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to highlight a few dimensions of urbanization that are of particular relevance for the Netherlands in three short comments.

**First**, perhaps the most important element of the Dutch integrated urban development policy is the close cooperation between government, private sector, civil society and academic institutions.

We call it the Dutch Diamond Approach. Local governments play a key role in this because they know what works at local level.

And in this respect the fact that I am delivering this statement in behalf of the Netherlands as mayor of Utrecht and chairman of the Dutch association of municipalities is proof of the importance the Netherlands government gives to this role of cities.

**Second**, 72 per cent of Europeans live in cities. In light of this, European ministers responsible for urban matters adopted the Pact of Amsterdam in May, during the Netherlands' EU Presidency. This formally established the Urban Agenda for the EU. An agenda which – much like the New Urban Agenda at global level – aims to strengthen the urban dimension in EU policies.

The key delivery mechanism of this agenda is partnership – a new type of informal multi-level cooperation in which member states, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders

work together on a specific theme to identify bottlenecks and opportunities in European policymaking.

For example: my own municipality, the city of Utrecht, has joined forces in the Air Quality Partnership with other municipalities and line ministries from different countries, as well as the European Commission. Our aim is to improve air quality in European cities and put the concept of 'healthy cities' higher on the European agenda. Through partnerships like this, the Urban Agenda for the EU can be a key delivery instrument for the New Urban Agenda.

**Third,** Worldwide, 10 per cent of all urban dwellers live in coastal deltas. Deltas are the most dynamic areas on our planet. At the same time, deltas are among the world's most vulnerable regions in terms of climate change impact. And in urban deltas, that impact is magnified by high population density, fragile ecosystems and the concentration of economic assets.

If nothing is done, the number of people annually exposed to flooding will have increased by around 30 per cent in 2050

compared to 2010. To ensure the safety of their populations and economies – while at the same time protecting their natural values – cities in more than 70 deltas around the world must overcome fierce, highly complex challenges.

The Netherlands is well-acquainted with the challenges of living in a delta. Adaptive long-term planning and an integrated climate smart approach are key features of the Dutch way of tackling challenges. And we are keen to share our experiences with urban development. We are one of the founding parties of the Delta Coalition – a group of 12 countries working together on safe and sustainable urban deltas. Bangladesh recently took over the chairmanship.

In the framework of the Delta Coalition, the Netherlands is launching various initiatives to create multi-stakeholder partnerships. One of these is the Human Cities Coalition, in which

22 partners and 140 members join forces to achieve UN Global Goal 11.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our full support for the New Urban Agenda which is the outcome of a unique, inclusive process. The Agenda contains all the elements needed for successful, sustainable urban development and for implementing the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework in a local, urban context. One element I would like to mention specifically are the paragraphs dedicated to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal rights in all fields and in leadership at all levels of decision-making in the process of urbanization. This part of the New Urban Agenda is especially relevant for the overall successful implementation of this agenda.

Mister chairman let me assure you that the Netherlands is committed to turning urban challenges into sustainable urban

opportunities for all, and to implement fully they New Urban  
Agenda.

Thank you.