

**Statement by the Ambassador of Pakistan H.E Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad  
Government of Pakistan**

**HABITAT-3 CONFERENCE,  
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**Bismillah-ar-Rahman-nir-Rahim!**

**Excellencies**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Assalam-alaikum, good morning!**

I would like to begin by congratulating the Government of Ecuador for hosting Habitat-III, which will be instrumental in shaping our urban future.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

While the majority of the population in Pakistan still lives in rural areas, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is undeniably an urban one. The population of Pakistan is approximately 185.133 million of which 38.3% live in urban areas. By 2030, Pakistan's population is expected to reach roughly 230 million people with about half of the population living in urban areas. There would be about 17 cities in next 5 to 10 years with population more than one million.

At present, about 54% of Pakistan's urban population lives in 10 major urban agglomerations. Based on these figures, Pakistan's cities will need to accommodate another 45 million inhabitants over the next 15 years. This population growth can be characterized as an 'urban population explosion.'

**Ladies and gentlemen**

The growth of cities combined with rapid urbanization, globalization and climate change increasingly shape today's development agenda. Urban economies of scale and agglomeration have the potential to enhance productivity and raise income levels. Combining economic and social development with financial modeling expertise to build new cities and redevelop existing ones is a must. We need to unlock potentials of our cities.

In 2010 & 2011, it was estimated that cities in Pakistan contributed more than 78% to national GDP. Unequal urban development is creating an underclass of urban citizen with marked and visible disparities between the have and the have-nots. However, cities also contribute to 70% of the greenhouse gas emissions.

Unlike in rural areas, this spatial concentration of poverty in urbanized areas can lead to instability if needs go unmet overtime. Pakistan's urban transformation and sustained economic growth requires institutional reform and better systems of urban management and planning.

The major issues related to land and urban planning like poor maintenance of land records and, regulatory framework have impeded the economic growth of cities and towns and Conversion of agricultural and forest lands into other uses etc. The major initiatives taken in this regard are establishment of dedicated urban planning units at provincial level; digitization of land records; promoting vertical growth of buildings; rationalization of plot sizes, integrated planning at the district level; revision of Building Bye Laws and Town Planning Regulations as well as incorporation of DRR in development projects related to infrastructure, production and social sectors.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Urbanization has the potential to drive the country's productivity and prosperity but it requires addressing critical issues such as rural-urban migration, improvement in service delivery, provision of infrastructure and housing, laws and regulations related to land use planning and zoning,

building codes, solid waste management, climate change adaptation and mitigation to name a few.

The way in which Pakistan's cities and towns develop will play an important part in the achievement of the goals laid out in the "Pakistan's Vision 2025" and the Framework for Economic Growth. Furthermore, with the Government of Pakistan's recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is proactively urging provincial governments and other stakeholders to work together to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, including: Goal 11 that calls for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and for which this Report will be particularly focusing on.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Pakistan, despite challenges of economic depression, natural disasters, terrorism, climate change vulnerabilities and high rate of migration to cities and absence of third tier of government; has largely managed the urbanization challenges and is moving forward to reap the benefits of demographic dividend from the window of opportunity that remains open till 2045. Policies and strategies are being developed and different programs are being implemented by the federal and provincial governments for overcoming the urbanization challenges and increase the growth of GDP from 3.5 percent to 7 percent as committed in Vision 2025. Government of Pakistan is encouraging various programs like Benazir Income Support Program and technical education to create job market for the urban poor.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

By readdressing the way cities and human settlements are planned, designed and developed, the New Urban Agenda will help to end poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions, reduce inequalities, promote sustained,

inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and achieve gender equality. The new Agenda is aligned with our national priorities especially Vision 2025, our blueprint for a future-oriented and growth-centric roadmap for Pakistan and our National Climate Change Policy.

The National Report of Pakistan for HABITAT-III presents the status of implementation, progress and shortcomings in respect of the key areas and indicators and also reviews new challenges, emerging trends and a prospective vision for sustainable human settlements and urban development.

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

Pakistan looks forward to working closely with our global partners to finalize and implement the New Urban Agenda. On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, let me assure our complete support for the successful outcome of this Conference.

Thank you.