

**Preparatory Committee 3 (PrepCom 3) of Habitat III
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**Statement by
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Excellencies, Hon'ble head of Delegations, Members of delegations, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Republic of Indonesia for hosting this PrepCom3 session of Habitat III. I congratulate UN-HABITAT for their stewardship in the preparatory process of the Habitat III Conference scheduled in October.

This platform provides an excellent opportunity to share the vision of the Republic of India on the New Urban Agenda, and also learn from the experiences and new initiatives of other Nations. **This event is particularly important in view of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 and the opportunity to develop the new urban agenda in line with the broader goals and commitments.**

India is gradually making the shift from 'rural ' to 'urban' and is at the crucial stage in its urban transition. **In 2011, it was 31.2 per cent urban and 377.2 million people lived in urban India.** Thus it crossed the threshold of 30% level of urbanization, a stage from where urban population growth begins to accelerate. Fuelled by this natural growth and migration, in India, the towns and cities are growing faster and currently about one-third of the population resides in urban areas and in between 2015 and 2030 it will add 165 million people more to its urban base (United Nations). **Also, Urbanization has made significant contributions to India's economic growth and poverty reduction – contributing close to 60% to its gross domestic product (GDP) a figure which would grow to five- fold by 2030.**

India explicitly recognizes this role and importance of urbanization and cities in the process of its socio-economic transformation, and therefore affirms its commitment to the larger goals of urban equity and eradication of poverty; inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all; productivity, competitiveness, diversification, innovation; and urban resilience.

The Urban Change on which India is moving ahead is driven by several levers-

- Urban policy with the principle of **cooperative federalism**
- **Harmonizing agglomeration economies** with the promotion of compact and cluster urban development
- Harnessing **Rural-urban Continuum**
- Inclusive urban development, universalization of basic services, social cohesion, and reducing working poverty
- Promoting the **centrality of sustainability in urban policy**
- **Empowering municipalities** and other local level institutions
- **Strengthening the housing finance system** in the country
- Robust urban information system

The Hon'ble President of India, in his address to the Joint session of Parliament on 9th June, 2014 had announced **“By the time the Nation completes 75 years of its Independence, every family will have a pucca house with water connection, toilet facilities, 24x7 electricity supply and access”**.

Building on this dream, the Government of India is developing an enabling framework for planning, developing, governing and managing the urban areas, in a systematic manner through various policies and programs. A number of urban missions have been initiated such as:

- **Housing for All (Urban) which envisages 20 million houses by 2022** through a set of policy initiatives and action interventions in urban areas. Similar mission for **rural areas has also been taken up.**

- **The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)**- for 500 cities of above 100,000 population aiming to create infrastructure and provision of better services to the people
- **The Smart Cities Mission**- which envisages development of **100 smart cities** to enhance the quality of urban life and to provide a clean and suitable environment.
- **Swacch Bharat Mission** which seeks to create a **Clean India by 2019**.
- **Heritage City development and Augmentation (HRIDAY) Programme** to support core infrastructure aimed at **revitalization of heritage sites** and nearby areas.
- **The National Urban Livelihood (NULM) mission** envisages **citizens** to be adequately **skilled to gain beneficial livelihoods** and also to contribute to the economy.

Such specific urban development related Missions are further supported by special programmes such as **Make-in- India, Digital India, Skilling India , Start Up India** etc. Together all these aim to reinvigorate and re-energise the cities as engines of economic growth and empowerment.

The Nations’ vision of transformation set out by the President of India is reflected in the views of the **Hon’ble Prime Minister when he said that “Cities are not just centres of economic growth; our cities have the capacity to mitigate poverty”**.

Urban governance has been identified as a critical area for comprehensive development/implementation of these missions. **A strengthened Municipal System envisioned through legal provisions with appropriate and adequate powers**, functions and financial autonomy including planning mechanisms has helped in making the cities self-governing entities, **with community participation** and accountability through public disclosure guiding their governance.

In pursuance of the principle of cooperative federalism, the Central Government has devolved higher share of central taxes (42 percent) to the states and recognized the role of Urban Local Bodies by making them financially empowered, by increasing their share of Central taxes up to 5 percent. This would strengthen the city-level infrastructure and services to the citizens and thereby portray their own distinctive priorities and goals in developing and implementing the Urban Agenda.

Further, the rapid growth of cities has resulted in developments spill over beyond their peripheries, resulting in spontaneous and often unregulated growth in the peri-urban areas. There is need to develop a symbiotic and ecologically sustainable rural urban continuum. **The National Rurban Mission** has been launched to fulfil this goal. This Mission is aimed at making the villages smart by creating Rurban clusters through the application of Urban Planning concepts for development of infrastructure and basic services.

As described by our Hon'ble Prime Minister - 'Rurban is when the city meets the village'- Development should be such which has the soul of the village, but the facilities of an urban city.

The convergence of aforesaid missions not only promotes integrated planning across various programs and schemes but also strives for achievement of incremental and qualitative improvements in the living conditions.

India is conscious of the key global developments such as the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in September 2015, and the Climate Change Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in December 2015 while addressing the challenges of New Urban Agenda.

India's Intended Nationally Determined goals (INDC) submitted to United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) centres on India's policies and programmes such as launching of the

International Solar Alliance, Namami Gange Mission – an integrated mission to conserve the National River Ganga and its tributaries and also to **implement the low carbon development strategies. Technology Sub-Mission under (Housing for All- Urban) has been launched to facilitate use of sustainable construction technologies** and adoption of improved layout designs and building plans suitable for various geo-climatic zones.

The India National Report presents an assessment of the country's urban sector and gives a brief account of the state of urbanisation, challenges and complexities, opportunities and initiatives, strategies and a prospective vision for the New Urban Agenda. The report outlines Urbanization Trends in the country; Developments and Challenges in the spheres of Urban Land, planning and infrastructure, Housing and basic services, Urban Environment; Governance and Financing System of Urban Local Bodies; Urban Initiatives and a perspective vision for the New Urban Agenda providing the direction to meet the aspirations and needs of the future generations.

While broadly welcoming the New Urban Agenda we also have the following observations:

- **The New Urban Agenda should not be seen as ‘one size fits all’ package of legally binding commitments** and should instead take into account the different political and socio- economic factors as well as the applicable laws of the land in different countries.
- In the spirit of SDGs, **the new urban agenda should be global and aspirational in nature** and should try to catalyze and incentivize better urban policy through sharing of development experiences.
- The housing finance system and the adequate financing provisions for Urban Infrastructure and services have been incorporated in the outcome document.
- Universal access to adequate, inclusive and quality public services, social infrastructure and facilities have been accepted and suitably incorporated as recommended.

- It is also recommended that the document, mostly broad in its scope and content, be edited as appropriate to maintain its focus as directly related to the mandate of the UN Habitat.
- The rights and needs of specific segment of population such as the refugees have been modified by adding '**taking into account national circumstances**'. This is the correct approach as such rights need to be addressed where applicable as per the laws of the land so as to address the legal systems in different countries.
- Formulations relating to right based approach should be framed in consistency with international instruments. Articulation of new rights and hitherto unknown phrases, are best avoided.
- The right to city which does not have a universal definition and application in all countries but in context of the Fundamental Rights to the Constitution of India which mandates Right To Life , there may be no new formulation of different rights and obligations.
- The concept of right to adequate housing for all is multi-dimensional and has implications that would vary depending on the context, and as such may need to reflect reaffirming the global community's commitment for ensuring affordable housing for all with a component of improved quality of life.
- We would like to recommend that "standardisation of housing designs and typologies which are modern, eco-friendly and cost effective for faster and quality construction of houses" be added.
- India is in favour of a strong component on means of implementation in the outcome document.

Our delegation will provide additional views as necessary on specific parts of the outcome document as the negotiations proceed.

We once again thank the Republic of Indonesia and the UN-HABITAT for this opportunity to share the emerging vision of India for a new urban agenda, and I would like to convey India's support for the forthcoming Habitat-III Conference at Quito.

Thank you.