



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOURAD BENMEHIDI,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM
21, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE UN CONFERENCE
ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II) AND STRENGTHENING OF
THE UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT), AT THE SECOND
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (New
York, 31 October 2012)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the G77 and China on agenda item 21: Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat III) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The Group thanks the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/67/263 as well as his note on Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda contained in document A/67/316.

We also thanks the Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat,

Dr. Joan Clos, for the presentation he made.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China stresses the important role that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme plays in supporting developing countries, in addressing their human settlements and urban challenges, and in the overall pursuit of sustainable development.

We are facing an unprecedented demographic shift, as the world is becoming rapidly predominantly urban. The majority of people are already living in urban areas, and 6 out of every 10 people are expected to be residing in urban areas by 2030. Over 90% of this growth is expected to take place in developing countries.

Already, over 800 Million people are slum-dwellers, living in sub-standard conditions. In the absence of effective urban planning, one of the most significant challenges today and in the next few decades is how to address the housing, water supply, sanitation and other basic needs of the rapidly urbanizing population. Climate change and other negative environmental trends also pose challenges to sustainable urbanization. Moreover, cities consume most of the world's energy and contribute about 70% to greenhouse gas emissions, yet cities in the developing world lack the capacity to formulate and implement climate change measures and to build the necessary resilience for effectively responding to climate change-related and other disasters.

Sustainable urbanization was one of the key priorities of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and the outcome document of the conference recognized that, if well planned and developed, cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. The document also called for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements, and stressed the need to strengthen the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including the active involvement of all relevant UN entities, and with the overall aim of achieving sustainable urban development. In this regard, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme already plays a key role in coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and could play a stronger role in coordinating sustainable urban development activities within the United Nations system.

Since his appointment, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat has undertaken an organizational review, as recommended by Member States and development partners, to ensure that UN-Habitat is capable of delivering its mandate in a more effective and efficient manner. We are, however, concerned that the programme is not being provided with the necessary core resources to support countries to respond to the enormous urban challenges they are facing. We, therefore, reiterate the continuing need for adequate and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation so as to ensure timely, effective and concrete global implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

We urge the international community to give due attention and support to achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda, including through financial support on a predictable basis, given its focus on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and, poverty eradication. The Group looks forward to creative discussions with a view to significantly improving the lives of slum dwellers as per the Millennium Declaration, and to addressing persistent and new and emerging issues.

The G77 and China welcomes the resolution adopted by the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT at its 23rd Session, held in April 2011, in response to this challenge, by which Governments, Regions and Local Authorities was invited to enumerate their slum population and to set voluntary and realistic national, regional and local targets for slum improvement to be attained

by 2020. The Group requests that UN-HABITAT and developing countries be provided with the necessary financial support to achieve these objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

The General Assembly, last year in its resolutions 66/207, decided to convene a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III), and to consider before the end of 2012, the scope, modalities, format and organization of the conference in a most efficient and effective way.

We welcome the appointment of the Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dr. Joan Clos, as the Secretary General for Habitat III and to act as the focal point for the United Nations system, and we request the United Nations Secretary-General to extend support to the Secretary General of the conference.

We also request the United Nations Secretary-General to provide all appropriate support to the work of the preparatory process and conference, including keeping the resource needs of the secretariat of the conference under review.

The Group of 77 and China encourages the Secretary General of the conference to look for innovative ways of supporting the preparatory process and the conference in a most efficient and effective way, while also ensuring effective contribution from, and the active participation of, all national and local governments and other Habitat Agenda partners, at all stages of the preparatory process and in the conference.

The Group urges international and bilateral donors, and other countries in a position to do so, to support the preparatory process and the conference through voluntary contributions, and also to support the participation of representatives of developing countries in the regional and international preparatory process and the conference itself.

Thank you