

Agenda Item (21)
UN-habitat
Statement by Japan(New York, 1 November)

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to thank the Under Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dr. Joan Clos for the presentation this morning.

Mr. Chairman,

More than half of the world's population today lives in cities and urban areas, and the world's urban population continues to grow. The challenges which cities and urban areas are facing demonstrate to us how even the smallest concerns of daily life have direct linkage with global sustainability.

It is with this in mind that we are to decide this year upon the modality of the third World Conference on UN-habitat to be held in 2016. To this end, we should gather our wisdom, based on our experiences and lessons learned from Habitat II as well as the Rio+20 last June, so that upcoming conference can be both meaningful and productive. My delegation also hopes that the conference will be conducted in the most effective and efficient manner.

As we agreed in Rio, "if they are well planned and developed, including through integrated planning and management approaches, cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies". Therefore, we need a holistic approach to urban development that includes government, local authorities and the private sector and that includes considerations from economic, social and environmental aspects. Furthermore, as we tackle the unique challenges that cities face, human security is best suited as a guiding principle, as my delegation believes that it is important that each individual be given the opportunity to manifest his or her potential to the fullest and participate in building a better society.

Mr. Chairman,

Even if we were to build an excellent city, the fruit of development could disappear in an instant or if not, still severely disrupted as we have just experienced here in

New York if we were not well prepared for natural disasters. We witness such examples throughout the history of mankind. Japan has intimate experience with this issue, not only from the Great East Japan Earthquake that struck our country last year, but also from innumerable other disasters throughout our history. It is from these experiences that we know, that the incorporation of measures toward disaster reduction are absolutely indispensable as we consider what it means to achieve sustainable development and to build cities that will survive the test of time. Japan believes that it is our duty to share our experiences and lessons learned from the disaster with the international community and to promote building resilient society and mainstreaming disaster reduction into international development agenda. It is from this point of view that Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Foreign Minister of Japan, announced its commitment to implement cooperation on future cities as one element of Japan's "Green Future Initiatives" on the occasion of Rio+20.

The Government of Japan is advancing the "Future City" model of urban planning which includes state-of-the art environmental sustainability, strong disaster resilience and superb livability. We are confident that our efforts can contribute to planning and building cities all over the world. As part of these efforts, we will be hosting an international conference on "Future City" in Japan next year. We are also committed to inviting 100 experts in the field of urban planning from developing countries every year for the next three years, to show our successful examples of "Future Cities".

Cooperation on disaster reduction is meant to raise awareness in this field and support the building of resilient societies. Japan has experienced many disasters but we have always recovered from them. We shared our lessons learned and efforts in this field with the international community at "the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku", which we hosted in the affected area of Japan in July. At the conference, we committed to providing assistance of up to 3 billion US dollars for developing countries in the field of disaster reduction. As further contribution, we have already announced our intention to host the third United Nations Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we strongly hope that our various efforts, which I have mentioned today, can make an important contribution for the third World Conference on UN-habitat. Japan, as a constant member of the Governing Council of UN-habitat since its establishment, is committed to engaging actively in the discussion toward a successful

conference.

Thank you.

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