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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

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SECOND COMMITTEE
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Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank the Secretary General for his report on the Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and strengthening the UN-Habitat. India associates itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the G-77.

Mr. Chairman,

With more than half the world's population now living in urban areas, urbanization and its socio-economic linkages have come to occupy the center stage of the sustainable development agenda.

The global urban population is likely to increase to 70% by 2050 with developing countries accounting for most of the change. By the middle of this century, developing countries are also projected to double their present urban population.

Such demographic dominance of urban areas in developing countries entails new challenges for governments and policy planners.

In the months and years ahead, global efforts to combat poverty, promote inclusive growth and reduce environmental stress will increasingly be determined by the efforts we put in to integrate urban development into our larger socio-economic planning. The RIO+20 Summit held in June this year has given us a clear direction on how to make urban living a sustainable option, and we must take it forward.

Mr. Chairman,

Being a founding member of UN-Habitat, India values its partnership with the organization. Our delegation welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for the period 2008-2013, particularly the focus on pro-poor housing as well as basic infrastructure and services.

In this context, we urge upon all entities to contribute to further capitalization of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation so as to enable UN-Habitat to provide more financial and seed capital support for slum upgrading and prevention.

We are happy that the global community has achieved the MDG target of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers well before time. This is very encouraging. We need to continue with our concerted efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the last few decades, India has seen massive shift in its population from rural to urban areas. Presently, Indian cities and towns constitute the world's second largest urban system and contribute to half of our GDP.

Within the next two decades, we are poised to have over 590 million people living in urban areas, producing more than 70 per cent of GDP and accounting for 70 per cent of the new employment created. This growth in urban economic activity, however, requires infrastructure support such as power, telecom, roads, water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and mass transportation.

We are committed to meeting these expectations, and seek a holistic and integrated solution to urban issues.

Our National Action Plan on Climate Change comprises a National Mission on Sustainable Habitat as its key component. The Mission looks to promote energy efficiency as a core component of urban planning and urban renewal. Initiatives launched under this Mission serve to advance improvements in energy efficiency in buildings, solid waste management and a modal shift to public transport.

The Government of India, in its 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-2017), recognizes the challenges and opportunities of urbanization. We have undertaken several initiatives to cater to the needs of the urban poor.

In 2007, India launched the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy - an initiative to promote sustainable development of habitat in the country with special attention to urban housing.

An important element of this policy- the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission- seeks to integrate the development of infrastructure services in cities. Other programmes such as the Basic Services to the Urban Poor and the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme are initiatives for slum dwellers and the urban poor.

An urban poverty alleviation program called the "Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana" provides gainful employment to those in need through self-employment ventures and opportunities for wage employment.

The National Urban Sanitation Policy, launched by the Government of India, seeks to transform urban India into sanitized and healthy cities.

India has also been actively promoting affordable rural housing through programmes like the "Indira AwaasYojana", which provide financial assistance for

construction and upgradation of dwelling units for the poor with special attention to their basic sanitation needs.

Mr. Chairman, providing clean and healthy living environment in urban areas is a pressing challenge today, especially in developing countries where environmental sustainability and growth must go hand in hand. In my own constituency Unnao, in India, we are facing a severe water and air pollution from industrial activity. We remain committed to addressing them in a holistic and sustainable manner.

Mr. Chairman,

The outcome document of United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The Future We Want", commits to the promotion of an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements. With the overall aim of achieving sustainable urban development, the document stresses on the need to strengthen mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the UN-Habitat Agenda. We must now singularly focus to implement these commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the progress made in the preparation for the third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable development - Habitat III.

We fully support the demand for enhanced budgetary resources for UN-Habitat. The recent financial crisis cannot serve as an excuse for donor countries not to fulfill their financial commitments.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to highlight India's efforts in sharing its experiences and knowledge in housing technology, particularly in field of cost-effective, environment friendly and disaster resistant construction, with fellow developing countries within the framework of South-South cooperation. These initiatives could be further strengthened through triangular cooperation.

I thank you.

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