

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Honourable Erna Solberg,
Norway

World Urban Forum II, Barcelona 13-17 September 2004

Excellencies, Honourable participants,

Madam Chair,

**It is a great honour for me to take part in the opening ceremony of
the second World Urban Forum.**

**We have gathered here from all over the world, from all walks of life,
to discuss urban challenges and search for solutions to the issues of
inclusiveness and integration. We are here to exchange experiences,
to form partnerships and alliances, and to gain courage and
inspiration to meet one of the most critical challenges of our time;
combating urban poverty.**

**Cities have at all times been multiethnic and multicultural meeting
places and melting pots. They are “anthills” of activity and creativity.
They are engines of economic growth, origin of scientific
achievements, cultural advancements and social progress. City-life is
in many ways “the good life”. But the world is urbanizing and**

poverty is urbanizing. Most of the slum-dwellers and other vulnerable groups are excluded from “the good city life”. In many western cities we experience that citizens coming from non-European countries have severe difficulties in integrating into the city life. This is not tolerable and definitely not sustainable.

The challenges of managing sustainable urban development and eradicating urban poverty, segregation, exclusion, racism and conflicts are imminent and immense. No country so far has found solutions to these issues altogether.

However, the human right aspect – equal rights to an adequate standard of living - is the basis of our work. In order to achieve this important and far-reaching goal, participation of all is needed. We need the untapped resources and the experiences of women, youth, the poor and the marginalized. We need to develop cooperation between local authorities and civil society, and we need strategies for empowering and enabling all groups to participate in human settlements development.

Good governance and decentralization of authority and resources to local level is a prerequisite for a sustainable urban and human right-

based development. Norway would like to honour the efforts of UN-Habitat on this issue. UN-Habitat is working closely with the local government associations as well as civil society partners. At this World Urban Forum we will benefit from this close relationship. I have no doubt that our partners – all the Habitat Agenda Partners – many of them representing local knowledge based on local experiences – will highly enrich our discussions and later our future decisions.

In particular, I am pleased to see that this time we will be able to follow a Global Youth Congress as part of the Forum. The youth represents the present and the future. We have the responsibility to listen to their voices. We need to give them a say to build a meaningful future.

Human settlements issues are complex and our policies need to be based on holistic approaches involving all stakeholders and partners. The complexity of human settlements development could well be one of the reasons why it has been difficult to achieve recognition of sustainable urbanisation as critical factor for sustainable development in general. I am pleased to report that the latest session

The Commission tabled Document New York is
in C D 1 my initiative: reference the respect.

Not only had he no to the ion The Chair
summary for C D 1 points porta family to
as main feature of the Human Agenda

Maybe the first porta team of C D 1 was the general
recognition that MDG 7, target 11 implies the live
least 100 million slum dwellers by tip of iceberg
and that the target, however considered, is patently eq

At the CSD 1 was also realized that the
security and good governance are cornerstones of improved
framework for human settlements development. In this
Chairman highlights the

Essential security of property to pre-conditions for
people to be able to afford to live in the
in legal recognition of women's rights to both the
and literacy, and their effective role in
progress

empowerment of the poor so that they could emerge from the vicious cycle of the traps of endemic diseases.

Local economic activities need to be supported to build the infrastructure in form of roads, ports, and telecommunications companies.

Current ODA and foreign investment flows are insufficient to meet the need. Neither the public nor the private resources. New sources of financing need to be tapped. ODA

should be used to catalyze the financial strengthening of local governments and to maximize the potential of communities. Major challenges to development planning at the implementation level.

Governments need to take strengthening policies and legislation to harness the potential of the private sector and to develop public-private partnerships.

The major themes of C D 1 were water sanitation and human settlements. Both issues of water and sanitation belong to the core agenda. The C D 1 was therefore important and useful for working in this field.

CSD 13 next priority will be policy session for all policies
the three themes. This session will be even more important for us. Let
me also advise all members of CSD 13 to actively
engage in the process towards CSD 14 to ensure its success. The
successful efforts of Executive Director A. T'hajj ka wong for
the outcome of CSD 12. His commitment needed also
CSD 13.

This Urban Forum can be seen first by the
Council of UN-Habitat that the step in process towards the
Millennium Goals + indicators to achieve sustainable
multicultural urbanization and reduction of urban poverty

Let us remember and let us underline that the urbanization process
and the melting pot of the cities also offer opportunities of breaking
old patterns and encourage initiative and creativity. Let us seize the
opportunities and focus on inclusiveness and integration
I would like to thank the authorities of Barcelona together with the
UN-Habitat for arranging this important event and I look forward to
taking part in the participation
Thank you for your kind attention.