

**OPENING ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. ALI MOHAMED SHEIN VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE THIRD
SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM
VANCOUVER, CANADA 19TH JUNE, 2006**

**Your Excellency Stephen Harper,
Prime Minister of Canada,**

**Your Excellency Noli de Castro,
Vice President of the Philippines,**

**Honourable Gordon Campbell,
Premier of British Columbia,**

**Your Worship, Sam Sullivan,
The Mayor of Vancouver,**

**Your Excellency Deputy Secretary General,
Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN HABITAT,**

**Honourable Charles Kelly, Commissioner General
of the Third World Urban Forum,**

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address the Third Session of the World Urban Forum on this occasion of its official opening. On behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and on my own behalf, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency, the Prime Minister, and to the

Government of Canada for extending the invitation to us. I am pleased to have the privilege of speaking to the distinguished delegates at this opening session of the World Urban Forum. I wish to thank the organizers and the people of Canada for the warm reception and hospitality given to us since our arrival at this scenic and beautiful metropolis of Vancouver.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to take this opportunity to commend UN-HABITAT for organizing this Third World Urban Forum to enable our countries from both the developed and developing world, to discuss and sharing experiences on pressing urban issues facing all of us. The World Urban Forum which was conceived by Madame Executive Director as an idea for a common platform for the exchange of various views has now transformed itself into a formidable movement which is gaining momentum with each session, in mobilizing people from of all walks of life in pursuit of the noble objective of sustainable urban settlements. I believe that this great attendance is a heed to its appeal as well as to the motto of the city of Vancouver, - *By Sea, Land and Air We Prosper* – in the quest to be part of this historic movement during the next five days of deliberations of this third session.

The World Urban Forum is more than a conference for exchanging experiences and advancement of collective knowledge on the challenges of urbanization. It is a reaffirmation to our shared destiny and a collective recognition that our world is changing, at a scale, pace and impact which is affecting us at the individual, community, national and global level. This inevitable and encompassing process of change, therefore compelles us to collectively address our options, choices and actions. The Forum is a platform for developing and sharing ideas on these pressing urban issues which require practical solutions. This is the reason my Country The United Republic of Tanzania is one of the countries with a high level and representative delegation here in Vancouver to participate fully in the deliberations of this Third Session of the World

Urban Forum. Let me take this opportunity to thank most sincerely the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT for inviting me specifically to speak at this Third Session from the perspective of the developing countries of the South, in general, and of Africa, in particular.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The City of Vancouver is associated with the noble endeavours for sustainable human settlements. As stated by His Excellency the Prime Minister, thirty years

ago , this city hosted the historic United Nations Conference that brought together global representatives of all stakeholders in human settlements. Although some of our countries, including Tanzania, have more than 75% of their population still living in rural areas, the outcome of that conference was quite important. Notwithstanding the fact that the historical origins of urban centres, in many of our developing countries have colonial roots, we still need to find ways of making human settlements organic and dynamic part of our national landscape and development.

We have come to Vancouver, this time, armed with the experience of achievements as well as daunting challenges. We now know that all the global commitments made over the past three decades, relating to water, health, sanitation, employment, human rights, safety and security, environment, poverty, good governance and many others, would not be tenable, in the long run, if they are not connected to improvement in human settlements. Human settlements, in general and urban centres, in particular, are centres of societal transformation. Improvement in the welfare of our people , and the development of our nations, need to be viewed in context of human settlements. The manner in which our settlements are organized has therefore, a major bearing on the overall outcome of our various development interventions.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all fully subscribe no doubt to the theme of this forum – *Sustainable Cities: Turning Ideas into Action*. Experience, in our developing world, shows that the rural and urban development dichotomy is dysfunctional. The notion of sustainable urbanization, therefore, takes rural and urban to be part of an interconnected system of physical, social, economic and environmental transformation. Since a substantial proportion of our GNP is derived from the added value or assets and production activities in our urban centres, sustainable development can entail fostering of a linkage between rural and urban development.

The issue of sustainable cities, therefore, brings to the fore the overall development challenges of our societies. But it also underscores our predicament as we face the future in a fast urbanizing world. Therefore, all the issues which will be articulated in the dialogues, roundtables, networking and special events in the next few days of this World Urban Forum are very important to us, especially if they succeed to underline their implications in terms of action.

Let me emphasize here that our experience of the past thirty years proves that the people are at the centre of sustainability, from the way they relate with their surroundings in shaping their destiny and the welfare of future generations. Sustainability is therefore a collective endeavour which call upon all of us to be involved, rather than be spectators in implementing this important agenda.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

This World Urban Forum has drawn participants from both developed and developing countries. I believe we are gathered here because we have shared concerns on sustainable urban development which transcend our regional entities and differences in the levels of development. The challenges, confronting those of us in the developing world, tend to be more of downstream nature and associated with poverty. On the other hand, challenges facing developing countries of the North are more of upstream nature arising from relative affluence and its implications. However, in spite of this, there are linkages in our predicament on sustainable urban growth and development.

The linkages extend from the cities in the developed world such as Vancouver to the suburban settlements in the developing countries including our own city of Dar es Salaam. In the developing countries, our livelihoods, our mobility, our capacity to harness opportunities and to transform our cities into engines of economic growth are also influenced by what happens in cities of the developed countries. But I also believe that any situation in which an average of 72% of the population lives in slum settlements, has an affect on the wellbeing of cities in the developed world. Urban poverty in developing societies can contribute to the negative repercussions of illegal migration, limitations of international trade and investments, compromises in human security and exacerbation of environmental degradation.

This sense of a shared concern prompted world leaders to commit themselves, in the Millennium Declaration, to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, and to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015. But I should point out that the targeted 100 million slum dwellers is only one tenth of the projected population that will be in slum settlements by 2020. Necessary and urgent remedial measures need to be taken. Since as it should be noted the challenge is not only to improve the lives of those already living in existing slums through slum upgrading and other measures, but also to prevent the formation of new slum settlements.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our experience in implementing the Millennium Development Goals has once again brought to the fore the critical importance of financial resources. It is estimated that to achieve target 11 of Goal 7 of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, it will cost between US \$70 billion and US \$100 billion, over a period of 17 years. This is in contrast to the current combined overseas development assistance, public and private investment set aside for low income housing and related infrastructure in developing countries which is estimated at less than US \$4 billion.

This grave situation has been underscored by Heads of State and Government, who at the World Summit in 2005 where in paragraph 56(m) of the summit outcome they recognized the urgent need for the provision of increased resources for affordable housing and housing-related infrastructure, prioritizing slum prevention and slum upgrading, and for encouraging support for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation and its slum Upgrading Facility.

Support for the Human Settlement Foundation to enable it carry out its mandate cannot be overemphasized but this facility, which was established in 1974 by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3327, at its 29th Session is important and it has a crucial role to play. However, for more than thirty years, this facility has not been capitalized to able it to assist member states in developing pro-poor housing finance institutions. It is not farfetched to say that the proliferation of slum settlements and the difficulty of achieving target 11 of the Millennium Development Goals arise from the failure by this important global facility to carry out its mandated functions.

Since we are all here, at this World Urban Forum, to deliberate on strategies for promoting sustainable cities, it is my earnest hope that in the spirit of Millennium Development Goal 8, on the global partnership for development, concerted efforts will be made, and measures taken from now on to consolidate this and similar facilities. It is through such mechanisms that some of our countries can be able to establish pro-poor housing finance institutions and scale up the necessary interventions for promoting sustainable urbanization.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe our shared concern on sustainable urban growth and development, also, underscores the need for an institutional infrastructure, at a global level, to sustain and propel forward the sustainable urban development agenda. At this moment in time, when we are moving towards amore urbanized world, the UN-HABITAT, which come out

of the Vancouver Conference, needs to be strengthened and consolidated more than at any other time, in order to implement the human settlement agenda and guide the world through this historical transformation.

Sustainable urbanization is rated as a top priority in all countries of Africa. At their Summit in 2003, our Heads of State and Government adopted a decision to promote the development of sustainable cities and towns. African Ministers responsible for housing and urban development have established a standing organ, AMCHUD, to follow-up on this decision. The Ministers also agreed, at a special conference in Nairobi two months ago, to develop a framework for the implementation of slum improvement and upgrading. They have committed themselves to work closely with their counterparts in Latin America, through MINURVI, and in the Asian-Pacific region. Mayors of African cities are expected to meet in Nairobi in September this year, under the auspices of the "Fourth Africities Summit", to address some of these concerns within the framework of building coalitions for the implementation of the MDGs.

All these efforts are more than expressions of commitment and declaration. In my own country, the United Republic of Tanzania, a number of concrete initiatives have been taken to rectify the inherited relationship between rural and urban areas and to promote sustainable urbanization. Concerted steps have been taken to fully implement the Habitat Agenda and subsequent global commitment on human settlements. These include the review of policies and legislation on land and human settlements, and the launching of human settlements programmes and projects. All these initiatives have been implemented through domestic resources as well as through collaboration with international partners including UN-HABITAT. We are now in the fourth generation of local government reforms in which we are trying to consolidate the principle of good governance, transparency, accountability and local empowerment. At his inaugural address six months ago, H.E. Jakaya M. Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania included as a top priority in its development agenda in the next five years, the need to ensure that our urban areas do not become unplanned, unregulated and poorly serviced concrete jungles.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to end my remarks by underscoring, once again, the need for promoting sustainable cities. We live in a fast urbanizing world which may soon have a dominantly urbanized population. We need, therefore, to marshal our collective commitment, mobilize our energy and resources, and develop an appropriate and robust institutional infrastructure. It is my hope that this commitment will come out of this Forum

and make us all live up to the spirit of its theme -- *Our Future: Sustainable Cities
– Turning Ideas into Action*.

After saying all this, I wish the Third Session of the World Urban Forum
successful deliberations and conclusion.

Thank you all for your attention.