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UN-HABITAT

**Statement by Dr. Anna Tibaijuka  
Under-Secretary-General and  
Executive Director of UN-HABITAT  
at the first session of the Committee of the Whole  
21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Governing Council for UN-HABITAT  
16 April 2007, Nairobi**

**Agenda Item 5: Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

Mr./Madame Chair,  
Excellencies  
Distinguished delegates.

It gives me great pleasure to present, on behalf of the Executive Director, the activities report of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

We have before us, under Agenda Item 5, a very long list of documents that reflect both the number of resolutions that were adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> session, as well as the growing awareness worldwide of the importance of sustainable urbanisation.

Allow me first to refer to document *HSP/GC/21/2* entitled *Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme*.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of what UN-Habitat has done in response to the resolutions of the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council. I should like to introduce this report by saying that the unprecedented number of resolutions adopted at the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council has kept us very busy indeed. Despite the fact that many of the calls for follow-up action remained un-funded, we were nonetheless able to respond, in part or in

whole, by exploiting, to the fullest, our vast network of partners both within and outside the United Nations system.

I should like to draw your attention to the paragraphs of this report pertaining to Youth and to Arctic Cities which are the subject of draft resolutions.

*Distinguished delegates,*

I now turn to document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 1 on the World Urban Forum*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the World Urban Forum was, without a doubt, one of the highlights of 2006. Thanks to the generous support of the Government of Canada, the World Urban Forum has come of age. It has become the spearhead of our global advocacy and outreach. Over 10,000 participants from 156 countries attended the Forum and engaged in effective dialogue on the theme of sustainable urban development. The main conclusions of the Forum include the need for participatory planning and innovative financing to meet the social, economic and environmental consequences of rapid urbanisation. The outcome of the Forum has helped shape the theme and dialogue of this session of the Governing Council, and informed the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

*Distinguished delegates,*

Allow me now to turn to document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 2: Cooperation with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners, including draft guidelines on decentralisation and the strengthening of local authorities.*

Distinguished delegates may recall the dialogue on decentralization organized during the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council, which brought together representatives of both national and local governments as well as other Habitat Agenda partners to exchange views on the "Draft Guidelines on decentralization". As per the recommendation Resolution 20/18, the secretariat undertook an extensive round of consultations with, *inter alia*, the United Nations Advisory Committee on Local Authorities, the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralisation (AGRED), mayors at World Urban Forum and during the AFRICITIES summit, the United Cities and Local Government, the Council of Europe, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

The Draft Guidelines have been finalized and are currently tabled for consideration by the Governing Council. These guidelines represent a major step forward in international dialogue on decentralisation. They tackle one of the key challenges in the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of human settlements related MDGs.

The Governing Council is therefore invited to adopt these guidelines as recommended in *Draft Resolution HSP/GC/21/L.3*, which proposes to provide UN-Habitat with the mandate to further develop tools and indicators to facilitate the application of these Guidelines.

*Mr./Madame Chair,*

Allow me to introduce the document: *HS/GC/21/2 Addendum 3 pertaining to Cooperation with agencies and organisations within the United Nations system, inter-governmental bodies outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organisations.*

This report provides an overview of what UN-Habitat has been doing in the field of partnerships for the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the slum upgrading and water and sanitation targets of the MDGs. I am pleased to say that our long-standing efforts to mainstream the Habitat Agenda are beginning to pay off. Highlights include UN-Habitat's active participation in High-level committees on Programmes and Management, including the Chief Executives Board, and the Executive Committees on Humanitarian, Economic and Social Affairs. A major new development during the reporting period has been the holding of the first Ministerial Meetings on Housing and Urban Development for Africa and for Asia and the Pacific. Together with its long-established counterpart for Latin America and the Caribbean, the establishment of these high-level fora spearhead UN-Habitat's advocacy at the regional level.

UN-Habitat continued to deepen its collaboration and cooperation with non-governmental and community-based organisations, youth groups, women's groups, and professional associations. A new development during the reporting period has been the forging of partnerships with the private sector, as witnessed by the organisation of the First Stakeholders Meeting of the Business Partnership for Sustainable Urbanization, held on Friday, 13 April as part of the events for the Governing Council.

*Distinguished delegates,*

I now turn to document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 4 entitled: Matters arising out of resolutions of major legislative organs of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies.* This document contains an extract of the key preambula and operative paragraphs of the General Assembly at its 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> sessions, the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. I should like to draw your attention to paragraphs 56(h), 56(m) and paragraph 174 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Paragraph 56(h) calls upon Governments to assist developing countries in attaining the water and sanitation targets of the internationally agreed development goals. Paragraph 56(m) recognised the urgent need for the provision of increased resources for affordable housing and housing related infrastructure, prioritising slum prevention and slum upgrading. Paragraph 174 underlined the importance of local authorities in contributing to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. All three of these paragraphs have helped shape the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for UN-Habitat and the Operational Rules and Guidelines of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation.

*Mr/Madam, Chair,*

Allow me to draw the attention of the distinguished delegates to document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 5, the Joint progress Report of the Executive Directors of the UN-Habitat and UNEP.*

The combination of growing awareness of the environmental consequences of rapid urbanisation and the role of cities in mitigating climate change have played an important role

in furthering cooperation between UN-Habitat and UNEP. During 2006 a Joint Operation and Coordination Group was established; it meets once a month to mainstream urban environmental issues and considerations in the work of both Programmes. A tri-lateral Memorandum was signed between the two Programmes and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives for the joint implementation of normative and operational activities on the issues of cities, bio-diversity and climate change.

*Distinguished delegates,*

The document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 6* is devoted to “*Energy Consumption and Human Settlements*”. This document was prepared pursuant to the contribution of UN-Habitat to the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on water, sanitation and human settlements. In recognition of the important contribution of UN-Habitat in linking the local dimensions of water and sanitation to the global agenda on sustainable development, the Commission on Sustainable Development decided to focus the agenda for its 15<sup>th</sup> session on the issue of energy and human settlements. The document provides a compelling argument for action at the international, regional, national and local levels to address the issues of access to energy by the urban poor. It highlights the fact that lack of access to modern energy supply by the majority of the urban population in rapidly urbanising countries is a major contributing factor to the vicious cycle of poverty, to poor environmental health and to environmental degradation. In recognising the fact that cities account for the bulk of green house gas emissions, it highlights the role and contribution of effective urban planning and management and the use of renewable energy in reducing the ecological footprint of cities.

The Governing Council may wish to recommend that the Executive Director forward this document to the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development for further consideration and follow-up action.

*Mr./Madame Chair,*

I should like to draw your attention to the document *HSP/GC/21/2/ Addendum 7* entitled “*Guiding Principles on access to basic services for all*”.

This document addresses one of the key determinants of urban poverty reduction and the attainment of the MDGs. Improved access by the urban poor to basic services is a key entry point for MDG Target 11 on slum upgrading. It is also a direct means of attaining MDG Target 11 on water and sanitation. The document is based on the in-depth analysis of best practices covering the sectors of water, sanitation, waste management, energy, transport, health, public safety, education and social welfare. Lessons learned from these best practices have been translated into seven principles pertaining to governance, participation, partnerships, decentralisation and the role of local authorities, pro-poor policies, environmental sustainability, and affordability.

The report contains a series of recommendations, including the development of a set of guidelines, which are also the subject of a draft resolution.

*Distinguished delegates,*

The document *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 8* responds to the request by the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council in its resolution 20/15, to undertake “*An independent evaluation of the performance and impact of the Habitat Programme Managers.*”

The findings of the independent evaluation are quite compelling. On the positive side, the presence of Habitat Programme Managers has contributed significantly to mainstreaming the Habitat Agenda at the country level, in promoting the normative contribution of UN-Habitat to national development plans and strategies, and in integrating shelter and urban poverty issues into multilateral programming, including Common Country Assessments (CCAs), United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), and, where relevant, national poverty reduction strategies.

The key areas of improvement identified by the independent evaluation include, inter alia, the need: to anchor the presence of Habitat Programme Managers with the elaboration of a multi-year country programme document comprising both normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat; to enhance the role and contribution of Habitat Programme Managers through comprehensive training support; renew the Memorandum of Understanding with UNDP and to ensure balanced and sustainable funding of the Habitat Programme Managers through cost-sharing mechanisms between member States, UNDP, the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and UN-Habitat’s global programmes.

I should like to add that the recommendations of the independent evaluation of the Habitat Programme Managers have been duly integrated in the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013.

*Mr./Madam Chair,*

Before I turn to the last two documents before you, allow me to draw your attention to the unedited advanced draft of the 2007 issue of the Global Report on Human Settlements which has been distributed for your information as document *HSP/GC/21/INF.10*. The report is titled “Enhancing Urban Safety and Security”. The theme of “urban safety and security” encompasses a wide range of concerns and issues, especially when viewed from the “human security” perspective. These range from basic needs such as food, health and shelter, through impacts of technological failures and natural disasters, to collective security needs such as protection from urban terrorism. The report focuses on three major threats to the safety and security of cities that are: (i) urban crime and violence; (ii) insecurity of tenure and forced evictions; and (iii) natural and human-made disasters. The report highlights concerns and issues that can be addressed from a human settlements perspective, through appropriate urban design, planning, management and governance policies and strategies. It analyses world-wide conditions and trends with respect to these threats to the safety and security of urban residents. It pays particular attention to the underlying causes and impacts of these threats, as well as to the good policies and best practices that have been adopted at the city, national and international levels.

With your indulgence, I would like to point to a few of the salient findings contained in this report:

- Over the period 1980-2000, total recorded crime rates in the world increased by about 30 per cent, from 2,300 to over 3,000 crimes per 100,000 people. Over the past five years, 60 per cent of all urban residents in the world have been victims of crime, with this figure reaching 70 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- It is estimated that at least two million people in the world are forcibly evicted every year. Evictions are most prevalent in areas with the worst housing conditions; women, children and

- other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are most negatively affected by evictions; and evictions invariably increase, rather than reduce, the problems they were aimed at "solving."
- Between 1974 and 2003, 6,367 natural disasters occurred, causing the death of 2 million people and affecting 5.1 billion people. A total of 182 million people were made homeless, whilst reported economic damage amounted to US\$1.38 trillion. 98 per cent of the 211 million people affected by natural disasters annually from 1991 to 2000 were in developing countries.

Distinguished delegates.

The last two documents before you are *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 9* containing the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the inter-sessional period, and *HSP/GC/21/2 Addendum 10* which contains the draft resolutions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

I should like at this juncture to congratulate the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for having guided us through a total of eight regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting, not to mention numerous working group meetings, both formal and informal, for the excellent work they have done.

Mr./Madam Chair.

This concludes my introduction of Agenda Item 5. I thank you for your kind attention.