



**4TH SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM (WUF4)
HARMONIOUS URBANIZATION: THE CHALLENGE OF
BALANCED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Co-Speakers,
Hon. Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, consisting of 79 developing countries covering the African continent and the Caribbean and Pacific Islands, and with an estimated population of 730 million, to participate in the 4th Session of the World Urban Forum with the theme, '*Harmonious Urbanization*'.

This Forum is being held at a historic moment when, for the first time ever, the majority of human beings are living in cities. Urbanization has been an essential part of most nations' development. However, this migration of people has also presented its own challenge – presently, more than *one billion people are urban slum dwellers*, people who live in extreme poverty, people who need our help, and people who need concrete and sustained action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, our world is being affected by great shocks, shocks that require an urgent response and action. These global issues – climate change, the food, commodity, financial and energy crises – have an impact on developed and developing countries – no one is protected and insulated. Furthermore, these global challenges have an added impact on the movement of people to urban areas. Like never before, ***we need political will, good leadership, effective action and dynamic change with a sense of urgency*** – time has come to construct a multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder and all-inclusive approach to these global challenges.

These shocks have the greatest and most severe affect on the poor. To this end, we cannot ignore the plight of the slum dwellers, living already in life-threatening conditions. It is our duty to join forces and build partnerships to improve the lives of the poor – now ***is the time to roll-back the number of slum dwellers in a sustained and permanent manner***, and develop policies and strategic programmes that will not only counter this phenomena with vigour, but will also create cities that can contribute to economic and social development. In this regard, let us continue to build national and local capacities for urban management.

As leaders, we have to provide the democratic space that allows for the inclusion of all people in decision-making, the promotion of democratic principles, human rights, rule of law, and good governance. Let us bring **results and delivery** through change and improved policies, and **create hope and opportunities for people** in the 21st century - only then will we be on the path to '**harmonious urbanization**'.

○ Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ACP Group fully subscribes to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and has as its key objective, the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. Today, we are all aware of the multiple dimension of urban poverty, which are closely inter-linked with the MDGs.

○ Having recognised the importance of sustainable urban development, the ACP Group contributed to a Participatory Slum Upgrading Project (PSUP) in ACP States, which is being implemented by UN-Habitat. It is our hope that, based on the results of the Project, we will be able to expand the scope and coverage to all ACP States in future.



Since my first visit to this great Nation more than 30 years ago, the transformation that has taken place since has been nothing less than a miracle. The receptions and the warm welcomes received during my meetings with Great Leaders such as Huo Guoping, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin, when seeking assistance for my small country, Papua New Guinea which has hosted one of the biggest overseas Chinese communities in the world, has been most reassuring and positive. The most recently retired ^{leader} President Jiang Zemin, is himself the very epitome of change and a great leader and philosopher who speaks, not only his mother's tongue, but also English, Russian, Romanian, and Japanese, to name some.

It is, therefore, fitting that the 4th Session of the World Urban Forum with the theme "HARMONIOUS URBANIZATION" should be held here, because there is ^{so} much the developed world can learn from the Great Leap of the people from their transition from the "commune system" to "Four Modernizations" of Agriculture, Industry, National Defense, and Science and Technology, to their most recent initiative of opening their market ^{for more trade} to the rest of the world — encapsulating the dream of Deng Xiaoping who told his people just 30 years ago "EMANCIPATE THE MIND, SEEK TRUTH FROM FACTS, UNITED ^{TOGETHER} AND FORWARD."