

**22nd GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED
NATIONS SETTLEMENT
PROGRAMME (UN HABITAT)
TWENTY SECOND SESSION, 30 MARCH TO 03
APRIL 2009 NAIROBI**

ADDRESS BY:

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**HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN**

March 30th, 2009.

has reduced the economic development of this country to lowest possible level, making the resulting POVERTY the most fertile ground for terrorism.

3- 3- RAPID EXPANSION OF URBAN POPULATION:

Speedy and big scale returning of Afghan refugees from neighbouring country, increasing rate of rural urban migration resulted in 5-6% annual increase of urban population during the past 7 years, thus resulting in acute shortage of basic urban infra-structure, in particular high Shortage of urban housing. The shortage of planned housing resulted in tremendous and uncontrolled expansion of un-planned informal settlements in all urban centres. Today over 50% of urban population in Afghanistan lives in unplanned informal settlements. Moreover, areas with planned housing are still short of some essential urban services.

4- ABSENCE OF SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL ATTENTION TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT BY DONORS:

During the past seven years the international donor community invested about 10 billion US \$ in the development projects in Afghanistan, however only about 2 % of these funds were allocated in the urban sector, this is the equivalent of about 5\$ per capita of urban population.

TO BE ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE DIRE SITUATION OF THE HOUSING PROBLEM, FOLLOWING ARE SOME FIGURES ON THE STATUS OF HOUSING IN AFGHANISTAN:

- ⇒ The number of houses destroyed in the 30 years of Conflict is well over one million, out of which about 30% or over 300,000 were in urban centres.
- ⇒ To accommodate 2.3% estimated annual natural Increase of Urban population, more than 20,000 new houses are needed annually.
- ⇒ More than 70% of over five million returnees from neighbouring countries had settled in the urban centres.
- ⇒ More than 67%, of population of Kabul the capital city ,which is about 180,000 household's lives in informal settlements, 50% of all urban population live in informal areas.
- ⇒ In Kabul, about 1.67 families live in one housing Unit.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

IN RECOGNITION OF THE DIRE STATE OF THE HOUSING AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS' SITUATION, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN WORKING TIRELESSLY TO PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WHICH INTER ALIA EMPHASISES THE IMPORTANCE OF NON DISPLACEMENT AND NON EVICTION OF COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS OF AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT GENERALLY

Madam President!

I would like to command the support of UN-HABITAT for its invaluable contribution in the process of Afghan National Development Strategy in Urban Sector and its continued support to the Afghan government in its efforts to improve the quality of life in various urban centres' in Afghanistan.

Also, I would like to thank and express the gratitude and appreciation of my people and my government to agencies such as The World Bank, USAID, KFW, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in funding several of these upgrading projects of informal settlements. Despite all these efforts, we still need to speed up the HOUSING FINANCE efforts to be able to solve the important issue of HOUSING SHORTAGE.

A GROUP OF EXPERTS PROVIDED BY THE UN HABITAT, WORLD BANK, USAID, ETC; ARE HELPING AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IN THE PROCESS OF FINALISING POLICIES ON URBAN SETTLEMENTS, THE FORMULATION AND SUBSEQUENT ADOPTION OF SUCH A POLICY ON UPGRADING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS WILL PROVIDE FOR A NATION WIDE APPROACH TO THIS ISSUE AND WILL HARMONIZE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTS IN THESE SETTLEMENTS

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE PROPOSED ACTIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TAKE, WITH THE SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, WITH REGARDS TO PROVISION OF NEW AND ADDITIONAL HOUSING STOCK, PROMOTE NEW GROWTH CENTRES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

THROUGH THE NATIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMME ADDRESSES THE HOUSING NEEDS IN AFGHANISTAN, BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

- PROVISION OF LAND AND BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENABLE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS DELIVER HOUSING OUTCOMES WITHIN AFFORDABLE LEVELS
- Using the sale income of government land in high cost areas to cross subsidize the infrastructures of low cost housing.
- MAKING AVAILABLE MORTGAGE FACILITIES TO THE AVERAGE BUYER AND IN THIS RESPECT THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN has inacted new laws in the area of housing mortgage, land ownership dispute resolution, and setting up special housing schemes for special purposes outside main urban areas.

THESE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF WHAT MY MINISTRY IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN.

I would like to assure the present gathering that my country has not been affected by the international mortgage crisis; because we never had an active mortgage system. My ministry with the help of local and international partner was able to prepare a LAND MANAGEMENT LAW and MORTGAGE LAW last year and both these laws are now active since October 2008.

Needless to say, the proposed programs and projects need sufficient financial assistance from our development partners and in this connection I am pleased to report that we are discussing the provision of long term soft loans from some Arab countries. The main problem is IMF conditions on my government not to take loans. We hope before the end of current year, IMF will left this restriction. However, we would like to ask other donors too to contribute in this sector.

I would like to report that the government of Afghanistan will utilise the ISLAMIC FINANCE SYSTEM to ensure that the average buyer of the house is able to obtain housing finance at reasonable terms.

EXCELLENCIES, HONORABLE GUESTS!

I WOULD LIKE TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT DUE TO LONG ERA OF FIGHTING AND NEGLECT, THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ENVITRONMENT HAS DETERIORATED AND DOWN GRADED TERRIBLY. THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN IS SENSITIVE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IS TRYING TO TAKE ALL MEASURES TO ENSURE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PLANS ARE DRAWN UP WITH DUE CONSIDERATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADING AND PROTECTION.

FIND SUSTAINABLE WAYS TO RESOLVE OUR LOCAL PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF SHELTER AND GOOD ENVIRONMENT. I AM PERSONALLY AVAILABLE AND LOOK FORWARD TO INTERACTING WITH PARTICIPANTS OF THIS AUGUST SESSION AND HOPE TO PERSUADE FURTHER INTEREST AND INVESTMENTS IN THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE AFFORDABLE SHELTER IN AFGHANISTAN

I STILL REMEMBER THAT I HAD PRESENTED A MUCH LONGER LIST OF PROBLEMS IN MY ADDRESS TO THE WORLD-FORUM 3 IN VANCOVER, BUT I ALSO EXPRESSED THAT WE AFGHANS ARE NOT WORRIED BECAUSE WE ARE SURE THAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY IS WITH US AND WILL HELP US TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS.

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED SUFFICIENT ATTENTION IN SOLVING THE URBAN PROBLEMS SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, WE ARE STILL SURE OF THE SINCERITY OF WORLD COMMUNITY IN HELPING US, ONLY WE WERE CONVINCED THAT SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF 30 YEARS WAR REQUIRE LONGER TIME THEN OUR EXPECTATIONS.

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE MY APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO UN HABITAT FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS GATHERING AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSIONS IN THE COMING DAYS, THANK YOU ALL FOR GIVING ME YOUR KIND ATTENTION.