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## **STATEMENT**

**On Behalf of the European Union**

**By Deputy Minister for Regional Development  
of the Czech Republic**

**Mr. Milan Půček**

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UN-HABITAT Governing Council

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Check against delivery

thus essential prerequisites for improving living and production conditions in developing countries.

5. The urban poor are among those who are most exposed to the impact of the current rising food, energy prices and natural disasters. In this regard intermediate and short term measures need to be put in place to flank the existing long term strategies to help the urban poor notably slum dwellers to get access to basic services and sufficient food.

### **III. Europe's role in the challenges ahead**

6. The European Union believes that finding a path towards sustainable urban development requires the collaboration of all parties at local, regional, national and international levels. In line with the EU commitment under the European Consensus on Development (2005) to promote gender equality and women's rights, it will actively support the participation of women and the integration of a gender prospective and other disadvantaged groups into all forms of collaboration at all levels and policies and fight poverty in general.
7. Poorly planned urban growth presents a significant challenge for the international community. Even in developed countries and countries in transition we see urban sprawl which both competes with agriculture for land and water, and at the same time presents great increases in travel of people and goods.
8. The European Union recognizes that the enormity of the challenge of rapid urbanization demands a higher degree of coordinated action. The problems linked with the higher food prices, lack of drinking water and access to energy, global financial crisis and impact of climate change also elevate need for enhanced discussion among the relevant agencies of UN to tackle these issues.
9. The EU fully shares the broad definition of poverty encompassing various dimensions, besides income, such as access to health and social services,

playing a leading role in bringing about a global and comprehensive climate agreement in Copenhagen in December 2009.

#### **IV. UN-HABITAT mandate**

12. UN-Habitat is the normative advocate and focal energy for human settlement and pro-poor urban development in the UN. It should continue to assist Member States in achieving the goals agreed by the international community, including those relating to adequate shelter and security for all, slum prevention and upgrading along with access to water and sanitation.
13. It is important to underline the importance and the responsibilities incumbent on national governments, as well as the role of local authorities for the proper implementation of the HABITAT programme. A catalytic UN-HABITAT can help to foster the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of human settlements first and foremost by focusing on, developing, disseminating and monitoring well functioning cities' development strategies and practices. Firmly rooted in national and community ownership, private sector actors, civil society, and both local and national governments are all part of an important global architecture within which UN-HABITAT must play its role effectively. For the EU, it is essential that UN-HABITAT's activities and the future strategies be seen and further developed against the background of the ongoing global UN reforms namely the implementation of the System "Delivering as One".
14. The European Union would welcome an even more intense dialogue between UN-HABITAT and other UN bodies on all levels.
15. The European Union takes note of the start of the implementation of the medium term- strategic and institutional plan for 2008 – 2013 approved by the previous twenty-first session of UN-Habitat Governing Council in 2007. The European Union welcomes the long-term vision of sustainable urbanization contained in MTSIP. It can be an effective instrument to support the efforts of