

It was a pleasure to spend the week here with you. In the last meeting in Alexandria I only had the opportunity to spend one day and I only got a taste of the wealth and diversity of your experiences. This year I was able to get much more in terms of first hand experiences and to see the rich interaction amongst regional groups and globally.

As we urbanize more and more, local issues are evolving into global issues, so if we want to successfully address local environmental issues we have to address global issues and vice versa. Some of you have already been working on this link and have much to share with your colleagues. We (UNEP and UN-Habitat) also have much more to do to help better develop these linkages so we will have to, over the next couple years in SCP and LA21, evolve as well to provide the necessary support. This means new support for networking, sharing lessons of experience with global mechanisms and capacity-building on global instruments.

One of the ways UNEP is doing this is in the area of climate change where we are co-sponsoring with ICLEI and Metropolis a meeting of cities at the COP/MOP for Kyoto. Another example is that we are organizing a meeting for later this year on urban environment and poverty. Among other things in this meeting we will discuss how we can integrate lessons of experience from EPM and things such as CDS into PRSPs and other national development plans and strategies.

Though we had rich discussions, you have also heard many

presentations and at this point in the week you don't need another one so I will just close with a few words of thanks.

I first want to thank my colleagues in UN-Habitat. Over the past two years our cooperation in SCP and LA21 has grown considerably and this is due to a desire on both our parts to assist local authorities to make the right choices for sustainable development.

I want to thank The Netherlands Government for their continued support and guidance to SCP and to the Belgian Government for their support to LA21.

I also thank the City of La Habana for its hospitality and warmth. It is always a pleasure working here in Cuba and in particular to have the support of so many interested in local governmental management.

And finally I take this opportunity to thank you all on behalf of UNEP for your participation in this meeting. Your participation and reflections are of course critical to the continuing development and evolution of the SCP. I hope as well that it has met your expectations and provided you with additional tools to accomplish your work.

Thank you and good afternoon.