

CLOSING STATEMENT

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Senior Hector Cuervo, Presidento do Instituto de Planificacion Fisica (IPF), Senors e Sinores,

It is my privilege, honour and great pleasure to have this opportunity to make the closing statement on behalf of UN-HABITAT and my own behalf at the end of these last five wonderful days in the great country of Cuba. As many of you may know, the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, Prof. Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka was scheduled to be with us here in Cuba, but due to urgent and indeed very pressing demands, she regrets sincerely that she could not be with us. May I, your Excellency, Snors e Senores, register her apologies to the Government of Cuba, the people of Cuba, the participants and the organizers. Mrs. Tibaijuka would have indeed enjoyed her visit to this great City, La Habana in a great country. We all miss her contribution in this conference.

Senors e Senores, in the last six days, we have come together as a family since we last met in Alexandria, Egypt, two years ago. Many things have happened to each one of us, but one thing remains: we are a family, and as family members we have common desires and goals. We have gathered in this great city to share our experiences and achievements towards the realization of these desires and goals. Thanks to the people of Cuba, the Government and the people of Cuba and special appreciation to the Mayor of La Habana, the citizens of the city and the organizers of this conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, each and everyone of us will leave L a Habana with indelible memories. Memories of great people with a great sense of nationalism and patriotism. The Cuban experience in the implementation of Local Agenda 21 is a manifestation of your patriotism. You own the process and it is clear that you have, even before this conference, gone a long way in

mainstreaming the principles of stakeholder participation, priority setting action planning and strategic interventions.

To the participants from some 35 countries and representing about 80 cities from all corners of the globe, and several representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations, Havana 2005 is surely not just another trip away from home. We have all been challenged to “think globally and act locally” but, I say, Think globally in order to effectively act locally. You have been challenged from the time you were preparing your city/country statements, through the incisive plenary presentation and your frank and honest group discussions. You shared common trends, identified areas requiring support from various levels, local and eternally and discussed means of support including your own contribution. One can only conclude that this has been a rich and most informative conference out of which we can all conclude that we understand the concept of mainstreaming.

Ladies and gentlemen, we from the UN family, UNDP, UNEP and UN-HABITAT, have indeed benefited much from the discussions. This conference has been another opportunity for us to demonstrate our togetherness in evoking our separate mandates to deliver strategic support towards the alleviation of poverty and in line with the Millennium Development Goals. In the Sustainable Cities Programme, UNEP and UN-HABITAT work together and the team-work you have witnessed here today between Mr. Tim Karsten (UNEP) and Mr. Ole Lyse (UN-HABITAT) is a vivid affirmation. Those of us who work directly with you at country level where we interact with government officials, local institutions and civil society, are here to confirm our continued engagement.

The Regional and Technical Corporation Division of UN-HABITAT exists to serve you. The Regional Offices in Rio, Fukuoka and Nairobi are the natural conveyors of the normative outputs through several programmes including the Sustainable Cities and Local Agenda 21. Cities and urban conglomerates are the areas of focus for the undeniable fact that majority of the population of the world will soon be urbanized and for countries in the developing world majority of these new comers to the city, there will be no shelter, services nor institutional framework to receiver them and avail to them basic services for livelihood. Our various programmes, as some of you know are targeted to address these – the City Without Slums Programme in seven countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, the Cities Alliance initiatives focusing on City Development Strategies (CDS) and citywide

Slum Upgrading, copious Capacity building Programmes in housing policy development and implementation, disaster prevention and management programmes, and the continuous monitoring documentation and dissemination as Best Practices, are in house initiatives to respond to the local level needs.

Regional offices and the global programmes work together for you. We need each other to meet your needs and that is why working together is not an option.

To the sponsors, this conference, I believe has demonstrated to you that your support has been put to a profitable use. Your tax payers funds have not been wasted. Allow me at this juncture to single out the Dutch and the Belgium support which among others has enabled us to gather here in La Habana. We are all indeed very grateful and we wish to assure you of our resolve to guarantee most effective use of the resources you provide. We look forward for continuous and increased support.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I should now conclude my closing remarks by, once again by thanking the people and the Government of Cuba and you participants by wishing you a good time in Cuba and a most useful conference on mainstreaming the EPM at local and global levels and trust this meeting in La Habana has achieved this objective. Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you all.