



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. FAUZIA FAKHR-UZ-ZAMAN, MEMBER PARLIAMENT OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, ON AGENDA ITEM 57: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II) AND STRENGTHENING OF THE UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT), IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 31 October 2007)

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguishes Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 57: "Implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)"

2. We thank the Secretary General for his Report on "Implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)"

3. The growing importance and urgent need to focus on and address challenges of urbanization has never been greater as it is today, mainly due to the fact that half of humanity by 2007 will be living in towns and cities for the first time in the history and is projected to increase to two thirds by 2030. The estimates indicate that 1 billion people in the developing world are currently living in slums and in cities. This situation should concern all of us.

4. With the increase in the number of people living in urban areas, growth of slums and slum dwellers is accelerating exponentially. The vast majority of these lack safe housing, access to water and sanitation, modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal. Urbanization also brings a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems including in consumption and production patterns. It is a threat to sustainable livelihood of mankind if unchecked.

5. The challenge of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all requires our urgent attention, especially as it is closely intertwined with poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

Madam Chairperson,

6. We have noted with satisfaction the active role being played by UN-HABITAT in assisting Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially Target 10 on water and sanitation and Target 11 on slum upgrading. In this regard, we urge our development partners to provide UN-HABITAT the financial and technical support required due to the growing demands for assistance at both national and regional levels. This Programme plays an important role towards achieving sustainable development. Unfortunately the resources dispensed to the Programme are disproportionate to its task.

7. The Group of 77 and China recognizes that the resource mobilization strategy of UN-HABITAT has resulted in a steady increase in resources over the past six years. Despite this, the continued inadequacy and unpredictability of funding to the Foundation that is attributed to the imbalance

between earmarked contributions as well as dependency on a small number of donors, lessens the ability of the Programme to function as expected.

8. Despite an overall increase of 10 per cent in the total voluntary contributions received by UN-Habitat reaching the level of \$126.0 million in 2006, we have noted with concern that non-earmarked contributions remained at \$10 million mark. The continued imbalance in funding hampers the effective and efficient implementation of the programme according to the national priorities of programme countries. While we appreciate the aggressive fund raising efforts of the organization, which led to multi year pledges totaling \$57.1 million directed towards the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, we have noted that only \$20.1 million were pledged for the Slum Upgrading Facility. We need to address water and sanitation along with slum upgrading targets in an integrated manner, particularly at the implementation level. This holistic approach was called for by the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

9. We commend the countries that have responded to the call and made multi-year pledges, and reiterate our call upon the international donor community and financial institutions to support UN-Habitat, its Slum Upgrading Facility and the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund through increased non-earmarked, predictable and timely financial contributions.

10. In order to revitalize the Foundation, the Group of 77 and China requests the Secretary-General to increase the regular budget of UN-HABITAT, which constitutes only 10 per cent of the total contributions to UN-Habitat at current level. In this regards, we would favourably consider the Secretary General's proposal in the context of programme budge for the biennium 2008-2009.

Madam Chairperson,

11. The G-77 and China also takes note of the various efforts already underway and the achievements made in the 21st session of UNHABITAT Governing Council, including the consensus resolutions on Guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, Guiding principles on access to basic services for all, Urban Youth Development, Women's land and property rights and access to finance, African fund/ financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading. We do hope that the approval of the biennial work programme and budget and the efforts for strengthening the UN-Habitat and Human settlements Foundation will facilitate the overall implementation of the Habitat agenda.

12. The Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 and the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations in support of pro-poor housing and urban development are important developments. We hope that the Plan would lead to coordinated implementation of Habitat Agenda.

13. An appropriate response to human settlements can also be fast-tracked through building adequate capacity at regional and national levels. This can be done partly through sharing of experiences, common regional policy formulation and implementation within the context of the Habitat Agenda and MDGs. In this context, we support the on-going ministerial meetings at the regional level, on housing and urban development. These meetings focus on mainstreaming the urban dimension of implementing the Habitat Agenda and related internationally agreed development goals.

Madam Chairperson,

14. Disasters, be they natural or human induced, considerably reduce the gains made in the area

of human settlements. Whenever they occur, they cause loss of life, destruction of property and human suffering. Due to the invaluable experiences of UN-HABITAT in preparedness and recovery measures, the Group of 77 and China encourages the UN-Habitat to promote the early involvement of human settlements experts in the assessment and development of prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes to support the efforts of developing countries affected by natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies, through its involvement in Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and in collaboration with relevant UN agencies.

Madam Chairperson,

15. Given the challenges faced by UN-Habitat the international community should also give due attention to the continuing challenge of human settlements, including the provision of the necessary means of implementation, through improved quality and quantity of ODA, transfer of technology, capacity building, enhanced market access, increased foreign direct investments to the developing countries and resolving their external debt problems.

16. It is imperative for the international community to support the implementation of the Habitat agenda as it focuses on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and, poverty eradication. The UN-HABITAT and all development partners should play a major role in strengthening the efforts of Governments of the developing countries in sharpening the focus on key determinants to slum improvement, slum prevention and urban poverty reduction.

I thank you.