



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. FAISAL AL-ATHBA,
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA
ITEM 13(d) OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL:
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (New York, 20 July
2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to thank you for according me the opportunity to address the Economic and Social Council on agenda item 13(d) entitled Human Settlements.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General for the documentation availed to us under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the commitments of landmark UN Conferences and Summits of the 1990s, especially Habitat II, the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the reality of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world has continued to be elusive.

The mass exodus to cities and the rising levels of poverty has led to higher levels of urban poverty, the mushrooming of slums and other informal settlement pressure on provision of water and sanitation and other social services.

The lack of sustainable human settlements remains a serious challenge in developing countries. At present one-third of the world's urban population live in slums especially in developing countries. In Africa, an estimated 56% of the urban populations are slum dwellers. This situation will become critical unless drastic measures and the necessary interventions are taken.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to achieve the Millennium Development goal of achievement of a significant improvement in the lives of at least one hundred million slum dwellers by the year 2020, and the relevant decisions taken at Johannesburg with regard to access to clean water, sanitation and adequate shelter, our commitment is required in the following areas; provision of the requisite resources, capacity building, transfer of technology and the creation of an enabling international environment.

Mr. Chairman,

According to the report of the Secretary-General, the level of contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation has increased. However, there was a gross imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions with the non-earmarked contributions accounting for only 25% of the total. This has made the work of UN-Habitat to be supply driven rather than demand/need driven, as should be the case. Further, it has made it difficult for UN-Habitat to plan and implement a focused work programme. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to appeal to developed countries to increase their contributions to the Foundation with emphasis on non-earmarked contributions on a multi-year basis to enable UN-Habitat to plan its work and effectively carry out its mandate.

The Group of 77 and China notes the intention of the UN-Habitat to develop a slum upgrading facility as an innovative way of raising funds for slum upgrading and other human settlements activities. This is a welcome development and call on our partners to support UN-Habitat in this endeavor.

Mr. Chairman,

My Group is encouraged by the progress made by UN-Habitat through the leadership of its Executive Director with regard to the revitalization of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium. In this regard we would like to urge the Executive Director to continue her efforts in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me assure the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) of the support of the Group of 77 and China and call on developed countries to continue to support the Programme for the realization of sustainable human settlements development.

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Thank you.

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