



INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. THANAVON PAMARANON, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE WRAP-UP AND CLOSING OF THE HABITAT III OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS (New York, 29 April 2016)

Madame Co-Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to first express our satisfaction for a very productive and informative five-day Open-ended Informal Consultative Meetings which we found the presentations and the exchange of views fruitful.

Madame Co-Chair,

The Group wishes to highlight the following points in addition to our intervention on Monday:

- The outcome document of Habitat III must address the multi-dimensional challenges of urban development in order to improve the lives of slum dwellers, provide access to basic services, including infrastructure services.
- Sustainable urban development and human settlement require transformative policies at multiple levels of governance. It requires a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach that engages all relevant stakeholders. In this regard, the Group calls for new modalities of interaction and cooperation between and among nations at the international level, as well as between central and local governments at the national level, in order to fulfill their respective roles as governmental stakeholders in global efforts on sustainability. Other non-state actors such as the private sector, civil society, foundations, academia, regional and global networks of cities also play important complementary roles in ensuring the sustainable development of cities which are responsive to the needs of their citizens.
- At the local level, city planners should tackle urban development challenges through inclusive policies that favor people-centered approach and participatory decision-making that include the disadvantaged and marginalized members of society. Sound institutions and mechanisms to empower and include various urban stakeholders are essential to ensure dynamic urban governance that is responsive to the community's needs.
- Sustainable urban planning remains an essential element for enabling cities to play their role as catalysts of growth and sustainable development based on balanced territorial development where cities are articulated as inseparable parts of the overall socio-ecological entity. An integrated, long-term planning approach will offer the basis for deciding between immediate needs and broader public goods in the pursuit of sustainable development, which supports decision making regarding resource allocation to relevant sectors.
- Inequalities remain the greatest challenge for sustainable urban development. It is therefore important to promote sustainable development policies that prioritize provision of affordable housing, infrastructure, and slum upgrading. National urban policies should aim at ensuring that the benefits of public investments reach all city dwellers. It is also pertinent that urban economic

development strategies support the strengthening of informal economy, acknowledging that the majority of the workforce in most developing countries and the emerging economic power is engaged in the informal sector. Urbanization policies should contemplate people-centered and planet-sensitive approaches based on social inclusion.

- It is also critical to adopt an integrated long-term approach to planning and development of sustainable human settlements aiming at improving the quality of living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers and to enhance rural-urban linkages, in the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

- A focus on the integral and sustainable management of the territory, promoting equitable growth of regions and reinforcing links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas, should be taken into account.

- We would like to underline the importance of considering disaster risk reduction, resilience and the impact of climate change on urban planning. Making human settlements resilient is at the core of achieving sustainable development. At the same time, we must harness the opportunity they represent to shift the development paradigm towards a low-carbon trajectory, given their central role for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- The need for developed countries to fulfill their commitments to support developing countries efforts through innovative modalities for the provision of the necessary means of implementation, including resources utilization, capacity building, knowledge-sharing, financing, and technology transfer, as well as the creation of an international enabling environment for sustainable development.

- The importance of the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system and other relevant institutions in human settlements to support developing countries. We think there is a need to strengthen the UN-Habitat for supporting the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

- The Group is of the view that the right to development is an inalienable and fundamental human right which places the individual at the centre and as a beneficiary of development. Hence, it is recommended that the right to development is at the centre of human settlement.

- On the follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda, we think that it is important to include the review of the global progress in the implementation of the Agenda as part of the integrated and coordinated follow-up process to United Nations conferences and summits, aligned with the General Assembly, the ECOSOC, the HLPF and the QCPR cycles, as appropriate, taking into account any existing mechanism of Habitat I and II.

- As for the zero draft to be released by the first week of May, it should contain a political declaration, principles and values as guidelines, and concrete program of action. Since the time-span is for 20 years, we think it will be useful to have a roadmap, and clear indicators to measure the implementation, based on the common principles and their contextualization to the local conditions.

- Last but not least, we think it is crucial to ensure the effective and timely participation of member states at all stages of the preparation of the substantive content and outcomes of Habitat III.

Madame Co-Chair,

Habitat III will be the first intergovernmental conference to take place after the historic year of the

adoption of major outcomes and international agreements related to sustainable development. We believe that the Conference shall contribute significantly to our efforts towards the effective management of the challenges of rapid urbanization, and provide an opportunity to promote a positive, mutually reinforcing relationship between cities and their surroundings, across the human settlements continuum. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to participating in the Conference and the process leading up to the Conference actively and constructively.

I thank you.