



2011 U-City World Forum

Congratulatory Remarks

By Dr. Joan Clos

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Honourable Do-youp Kwon, Minister of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs,

Honourable Young-gil Song, Mayor of Incheon Metropolitan City

Honourable Mayors,

Delegates from Korea and from all over the World,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Annyoung-haseyo, yeo-ro-boon (Good morning, everyone)!

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to be with you today to address the 2011 U-City World Forum.

The Forum's vision - defining the concept of the city of the future, which is capable of enhancing the quality of life of the world's urban population and contributing to sustainable development, is one of the main challenges that all countries face today. I therefore would like to congratulate you for taking up this important challenge. UN-HABITAT, the UN agency tasked to deal with urbanisation issues, can certainly make valuable contributions and stands ready to work with you.

We live in an age where the world's population will have grown to 7 billion by the end of this month and where more than half of them live in towns and cities. Projections indicate that this will increase to two-thirds in just over a generation from now. How we manage this rapid urbanization will be the key to our very survival and prosperity.

One of our new top programme priorities at present is promoting a new way of urban planning. In recent years, there has been a realization that urban planning in many parts of the world,

especially in developing countries, is not equipped to deal with current urban challenges.

In promoting new urban planning, UN-Habitat has turned its focus to prevention of both slums and urban sprawl. And we are also promoting improved access to basic urban services, including sustainable water and sanitation, energy and transport.

The new approach that we are promoting emphasises: (1) preventive planning; (2) planning at the scale of the problems; and (3) planning in phases, beginning with ensuring adequate physical access and basic urban services, especially water and sanitation, linking planning with financial capacities.

Combined with modern technologies, better urban planning can solve most of the problems that we are facing, and lead the cities to prosperity. Cities are generators of wealth and employment, incubators of innovation and creativity, and provide the best opportunities to improve livelihood. Cities give great economies of scale and opportunities for efficiency to infrastructure development.

In this regard, I sincerely welcome the establishment of the U-City World Forum, which seeks to serve as a bridge among innovative leaders and institutions from both public and private sectors working to gather creative solutions to address urban challenges. Sharing and exchanging technology, experiences and expertise on better urban planning and management through global networks such as the U-City will benefit cities all over the world and contribute significantly to sustainable urban development.

I would like to stress that the challenges facing cities are numerous and daunting, and no entity, public or private, governmental or non-governmental, academic or practitioner, can face these challenges alone. I welcome all those who are committed to turning ideas into action to join us in our quest for more sustainable urban development. Together, we can conceive

how to turn our cities, the greatest achievements of human civilisation, into better cities for the future.

I wish you all a most successful discussion at the Forum and expect to meet you again in the future – hopefully at the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Kamsa-hamnida (Thank you)!