



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

**Address to the 2nd Committee of the 65th session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations**

Agenda Item 21

**Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and
strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

By

**Dr. Joan Clos
Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director**

New York – 2nd November 2010

AS DELIVERED

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel honoured to appear before you today, in my capacity as the new Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

You have before you two reports. The first document, A/65/316 is the report entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme” prepared by the Secretary General pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 64/207.

The second document, E/2010/72, is the report of the Secretary General on the “Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda”, which was presented to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2010 and transmitted to this Committee pursuant to decision E/2010/236.

For now, I intend to highlight only the key achievements made since the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 64/207, which are described in more detail in document A/65/316.

During the reporting period, the focus of UN-Habitat’s normative work sought to improve monitoring of sustainable urbanization conditions and trends. It also sought to deepen our understanding of the current challenges of urbanization, focusing on social, political and security consequences of fast urbanization, and also the increasing inequalities emerging from these processes.

UN-Habitat published two major reports. The first was the ***Global Report on Human Settlements 2009***. The second was the ***State of the World’s Cities 2010/2011*** report.

From our analysis, it is clear that future urban policies must address a number of major challenges that are shaping the twenty-first century urbanization process. These include demographic, economic, environmental, spatial and institutional challenges, all of which are fully discussed in document A/65/316.

In light of these challenges, it is important for Governments to assess progress made towards attainment of the Habitat Agenda goals of **adequate shelter for all** and **sustainable human settlements development**. Thus, the convening of a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) would be really very timely.

A very important finding of our analysis that I would like to highlight is about the attainment of the Millennium Development target on slums. Between 2000 and 2010, the lives of 230 million slum dwellers were improved. However, this achievement was not uniformly distributed across regions. As it is well known, the more advanced developing countries made better progress than the poorer developing countries.

In fact, the Millennium Development Goals target of improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 has already been exceeded by an extra 100 million. However, 830 million people still live in urban slums. Current predictions suggest that between now and 2020, the world’s total number of slum dwellers will increase by 60 million. It is therefore clear that Governments need to intensify efforts to improve the lives of slum dwellers and to prevent the emergence and growth of slums. A new framework is needed for these efforts, since the Millennium Development Goals target on slums has already been attained, but the inconvenient truth is that the slum phenomenon is still growing too fast.

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

A number of significant events took place during the last year, all of which helped in advancing our advocacy efforts for the Habitat Agenda.

The first was the fifth session of the World Urban Forum. This was held in Rio de Janeiro in March this year. Over 10,600 people from 150 countries representing all Habitat Agenda partners attended the session. The theme of the fifth session was “The Right to the City – Bridging the Urban Divide”.

The second significant advocacy event was the launching of the World Urban Campaign . The Campaign seeks to help Governments and all Habitat Agenda Partners to move towards more sustainable, smarter, greener and more equitable cities. It calls especially for the private sector to be more involved as a stakeholder.

The third event was the Shanghai World Exposition 2010. The theme of the Expo was “*Better City, Better Life*”. It opened in May and closed just two days ago on 31 October 2010. The theme of the UN pavilion, which was coordinated by UN-Habitat, was “*One Earth, One UN*”. Three million people visited the UN pavilion.

As part of its efforts to promote sustainable urbanization and strengthen the role of local authorities, UN-Habitat focused on strengthening inclusive urban planning, management and governance. Substantive areas of focus included cities and climate change, as well as post - disaster and post-conflict reconstruction and development .

UN-Habitat launched the Cities and Climate Change Initiative in 2009. This significant initiative works with a wide range of external and local partners to produce measurable results. Four initial pilot cities are involved under the Initiative. These are Kampala; Maputo; Sorsogon, in the Philippines; and Esmeraldas, in Ecuador.

UN-Habitat continued its work within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) for humanitarian affairs, as focal point for housing, land and property. The focus of UN -Habitat was to integrate a human settlements perspective into the earliest stages of emergency relief, in order to facilitate transition to early recovery and reconstruction. Every crisis should be taken also as an opportunity to do things better immediately after a crisis, right from the beginning, since it is at that moment that the seeds of recovery are planted.

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

UN-Habitat also carried out a number of activities to assist Governments to review their land and housing policies and to implement land and affordable housing programmes.

Through the Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat facilitated a network that includes most of the important actors in the land sector. UN-Habitat has successfully influenced the overall housing reconstruction strategy and the policy approach to land -related challenges in Haiti.

Another significant development was the launching of the second phase of the Participatory Slum Upgrading and Prevention Programme in three African countries. In Bangladesh, UN-Habitat supported the implementation of the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction. It is the largest urban poverty reduction initiative in the country, and one of the largest in the world.

Madam Chairperson

UN-Habitat carried out both normative and operational activities as part of its on-going contribution towards the realization of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals on sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

We published the third ***Water and Sanitation in the World's Cities*** report, titled ***Solid Waste in the World's Cities***. I am pleased to inform you that this report has recently won the International Solid Waste Association Publication Award 2010. UN-Habitat supported water, sanitation and solid waste projects in 20 developing countries in three continents.

Madam Chairperson

UN-Habitat accelerated its work on improving human settlements finance systems. In its catalytic role, UN-Habitat facilitated cooperation between domestic banks, local authorities and urban poor organizations to mobilize and package domestic capital, public investment and community savings for slum upgrading. This was pursued through two pilot programmes, the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations (ERSO), and the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF).

During the reporting period, ERSO catalytic loan transactions of close to 2.8 million US Dollars were completed in five countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, which are mobilizing around 500 million US Dollars of investment.

Madam Chairperson

“Excellence in Management” is one of the focus areas of UN-Habitat's Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for the period 2008 to 2013.

During the reporting period, a joint review of UN-Habitat's governance structure by its Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and its Secretariat was initiated and is still on-going.

An important aim during the reporting period was to achieve resource mobilization targets set for non-earmarked and earmarked funding. For non-earmarked funds, 20 million US Dollars was received in 2009, representing 93 per cent of the set target. For earmarked resources, 126.2 million US Dollars was received in 2009, representing 126 per cent of the target.

New multi-year agreements were negotiated and signed with the Governments of Norway, Spain, Sweden and the UK, achieving longer term commitments from key strategic development partners.

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

I took up the position of Executive Director of UN-Habitat two weeks ago. I am still in the process of getting to know the organization. But I can tell you that it is my intention to build on the gains achieved by the former Executive Director, Ms. Tibaijuka, in order to transform the UN-Habitat Secretariat into a centre of excellence. I can only do this under your support and guidance, as well as that of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat will continue to prioritize core activities of its mandates - those activities that Governments consider to be important. These include: first, promoting sustainable urbanization; second, slum prevention and upgrading through effective land and housing policies; third, improving access to drinking water and sanitation; fourth, promoting effective and sustainable financing of cities; fifth, mainstreaming gender and promoting partnerships; and sixth, promoting global awareness of urban conditions and trends through evidence based global monitoring.

If UN-Habitat is to continue to be internationally relevant, it also has to respond to emerging urban challenges. In responding to the major global trends and challenges that I highlighted at the beginning of my statement, my preliminary assessment suggests that UN-Habitat will need to prioritize the following areas: first, promoting a new role for urban planning in developing sustainable cities and towns - a planning for the twenty-first century, which is not the planning of the 1980s; second, promoting the role of cities in climate change, focusing on urban-based mitigation and adaptation efforts, including in the areas of energy consumption as well as sustainable urban mobility and transport, bearing in mind the huge contribution of cities in developed countries to greenhouse gas emissions; third, responding to natural and human-made disasters, with the aim of facilitating transition to early recovery and reconstruction; and fourth, promoting and enhancing the role of local authorities, focusing on municipal finance.

Finally, a new economic appraisal should be developed in order to better understand the urbanization process. The evolution in time of urban capital assets and their contribution to the economy of a nation, as the added value that urbanization generates, are very powerful forces in both developed and developing countries. It is not by chance that the recent financial crisis was based on the burst of the housing prices bubble.

I thank you for your kind attention.