Introductory Statement by Dr. Joan Clos

Executive Director’s Informational Briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives

(b) Developments at the 66th Session of the General Assembly.

Agenda Item 5 (b)

HSP/CPR/43/5
Nairobi, 15 December 2011
Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

The Secretary-General’s reports on the Implementation of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and Strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) were discussed at the Second Committee of the 66th Session of the General Assembly under Agenda Item 20, on 1 November 2011. They provided a comprehensive review of efforts to implement the outcome of Habitat II and to strengthen UN-Habitat, and discussed convening of a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) in 2016.

UN-Habitat’s progress in a number of substantive areas since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 65/165 was presented, underscoring the importance of Habitat III in 2016, pointing to new challenges such as the demographic and economic dominance of cities and the rapid spatial expansion of urbanized land as compelling reasons to convene the conference. Additional global trends that make a strong case for the conference were cited, including growing concerns on issues such as climate change, globalization, transnational migration, urban safety and security, increasing urban poverty and the proliferation of slums, the changing roles of public, private and non-governmental actors, and the significantly increased frequency and intensity of natural and human-made disasters and their impact on urban populations.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

The draft Resolution was tabled by the delegation of Argentina on behalf of Group of 77 and China, and the informal consultation was facilitated by the delegation of Mexico at the Second Committee. The draft resolution, which was approved by the Second Committee without a vote on 6 December and then forwarded to the General Assembly (A/C.2/66/L.36), will be circulated to the members of the CPR after today’s meeting.

According to this draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to convene, in 2016, a third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanization that should focus on the implementation of a “New Urban Agenda. The scope, modalities, format and organization of Habitat III will be decided with the General Assembly during 2012. During the discussion of the resolution, the representative of Mexico, who facilitated negotiations, stated that “the draft sketched the elements of an innovative preparatory process”.

I would very much like to thank all member states that assisted UN-Habitat in supporting the negotiation process in Nairobi, New York and their respective capitals, and look forward to continued cooperation and guidance.

I thank you for your kind attention.