Introductory Statement by Dr. Joan Clos

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

(c) Preparations for the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF6).

Agenda Item 5 (c)

HSP/CPR/43/5
Nairobi, 15 December 2011
Madam Chair,

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to brief you on progress made in preparation for the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF6), since my last statement at the 43rd CPR Regular Session in September.

As reported earlier, the Financial Agreement for the expenditure of USD 2.5M from the host country was signed with the Region of Campania and the Universal Forum of Cultures (Naples) on 10 June 2011. This fund is being granted by the EU to the Region of Campania for WUF within the overall preparatory process for the Universal Forum of Cultures to be held in Naples in 2013.

The budget of USD2.5 million is USD800,000 short of the USD3.3 million that had been agreed earlier with Bahrain. The shortfall was mainly to have been used to sponsor participants from LDCs. In the current budget, only 50 people have been provided for whereas we had budgeted for 250 people in line with the previous WUFs. Raising funds to cover this shortfall is critical and urgent. I will therefore appeal to Member States in a position to do so formally to support the Forum financially, especially for funding of participants from LDCs.

The Conference Agreement was signed between the Government of Italy and UN-Habitat on 9 September 2011 along with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on security.

Some political changes in the host country have slightly affected the speed of work because we are made to understand the principal parties with whom we had signed the agreements have been changed. I am personally in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Italy through the Embassy here, to get confirmations of these changes in order to recommence our joint preparations.

Excellencies,

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to you and your colleagues in New York, for transferring our invitation letters to your Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Each invitation was accompanied by the First Announcement Brochure which gives the usual basic information that member states and partners require at this stage. In addition, invitations, which are more elaborate on the substantive content, are being prepared for the focal point Ministers. These will refer to the contents of the first letter, and introduce the new priority areas of UN-Habitat. These will have been dispatched by the end of this week.

Invitations, addressed to 75 heads of UN Agencies including the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the United Office at Nairobi (UNON) were dispatched yesterday. These letters to heads of UN Agencies not only urge them to attend the WUF itself, but to be part of a Inter-Agency High level meeting, to which I am personally inviting them, as a drive to better achieve the key objectives of WUF and make their attendance more meaningful.

Distinguished Delegates,

I am very pleased to inform that the call for applications for networking events was opened on the website on 2 December, and will be closed on 10 March 2012. In addition, the call for applications for
training proposals also opened on 2 December, and will be closed on 1 March. This will provide the required time for all partners to submit their proposals and we rely on Members to refer their country partners to this fact for earlier preparations.

Preparations are in-progress to launch e-debates by end of February, which will serve as a runner up for the Dialogues during the Forum week. These e-debates enable people to virtually attend and participate to the discussion and the outcome will be fed into the main Dialogue sessions. As soon as the e-debate is ready to be launched, it shall be brought to your attention at least 2 weeks in advance, to enable you mobilize your partners.

I am also pleased to inform you that we are in touch with a couple of private sector concerns who have already expressed interest to partner with us in giving the Forum Exhibition a thematic approach. Additionally, the process of identifying speakers and panelists at key events of the Forum will start shortly. I invite members to support us in this process. We shall as usual be guided by regional balance, partner categories and gender in selecting this special group of participants at the Forum.

*Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,*

We will be closely working with this Committee to prepare WUF6, and I am grateful for your active participation in the meeting of the Working Group for Planning held two days ago on this topic. The Secretariat is guided by your wise inputs into the preparations and also the overall quality of the Forum’s concept paper. Given the growing complexity of the Forum and its significance for our advocacy initiatives we need to ensure that the role of the CPR is strengthened in guiding the process. I also understand that the Working Group was informed of the progress we are making to respond to the Governing Council Res 23/5. The Forum now forms part of our advocacy, outreach, and communications initiative.

Lastly, *Excellences*, I would invite you to frequently visit our Forum website at: [www.unhabitat.org/wuf](http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf) to keep you updated on the progress of preparations, as we plan to open booking of exhibition space and the online registration during the first quarter of the next year.

I thank you for your attention.