Second Committee Statement of Turkey on Agenda Item 21
Implementation of the Outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening the UN Habitat

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to start by expressing our solidarity with the countries affected by Hurricane Sandy. We would also like to express our condolences to the families with loss of life. The impact of Hurricane Sandy once again showed the importance of effective urban planning and building resilience to respond to the natural disasters.

We also thank Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Habitat, Mr. Joan Clos, for being here with us today and for his comprehensive presentation. We welcome his appointment as the Secretary General for Habitat III Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, people living in cities exceed half of the world’s population. By 2050, this rate is expected to reach 70 per cent. Cities have significant role in economic, social and cultural life. As a matter of fact, the 21st Century will be the century of cities and their inhabitants.

Cities are centers of transformation. They will continue to be the main drivers of global economy by their geographical concentration of people, infrastructure, knowledge and resources. Consumption and production patterns are going to be shaped largely by the cities.

Nevertheless, urban populations and activities are increasingly demanding more natural resources.

Unsustainable urban practices are creating polluted environment and affecting biodiversity adversely.

In this context, pursuing “sustainable urbanization” policies is of crucial importance. Building environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive cities needs to be promoted for quality urban areas.
Integrated policies are necessary to plan and build sustainable cities. They should take into consideration resource efficiency, climate neutrality, appropriate infrastructure as well as clean and environmentally sound technology.

As a vital part of integrated urban development policy, empowerment of local authorities is central. Due to their proximity to citizens and inhabitants, local authorities play pivotal role in providing basic services. They must work more closely together with national governments with a view to alleviating poverty and improving living conditions.

Mr. Chairman,

We need to bear in mind that cities are solution partners. They have an important role to play in the Post-2015 development agenda. The international community should carefully take into consideration all urban issues in setting goals and targets for beyond 2015 in line with the Outcome of the Rio+20 Conference.

We believe that the UN Habitat III Conference in 2016 will be a great opportunity to integrate global urban development agenda with Post-2015 development agenda.

Implementation of the outcome of the UN Habitat II Conference and strengthening the UN Human Settlements Programme are among our important issues this year in the Committee. We will also work on the modalities resolution of UN Habitat III Conference. Turkey believes that careful and detailed drafting of the modalities of the resolution will contribute greatly in the success of the Habitat III Conference in 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to reiterate once again that Turkey has announced its commitment to host the UN Habitat III Conference in Istanbul. We believe that this Conference will create new urban policies capable of responding to the current and future urban trends, challenges and opportunities. Turkey stands ready to exert every effort to make this Conference a success.

Thank you.