Resolution 24/5: Pursuing sustainable development through a new urban agenda

The Governing Council,

Recalling the targets set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 and the target agreed in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 65/165 of 20 December 2010, by which the General Assembly supported the dissemination and implementation of the international guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services for all adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in its resolutions 21/3 of 20 April 2007 and 22/8 of 3 April 2009,

Recalling Governing Council resolution 23/17 of 15 April 2011, which encourages Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to consider seriously increasing urban density through intensification of land use, as part of improved urban planning, so as to promote development patterns that allow housing for all, increased job opportunities and reduced urban sprawl, as well as to reduce infrastructure investment costs, the ecological footprint of urban centres and demand for transport and energy use, and to overcome a growing social divide, spatial fragmentation and the resulting inefficient land use patterns,

Recognizing paragraph 135 of the Rio+20 outcome document entitled The Future We Want, in which governments committed themselves to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements, and also committed themselves to promote sustainable development policies that support inclusive housing and social services; a safe and healthy living environment for all, particularly children, youth, women, elderly and disabled; affordable and sustainable transport and energy; promotion, protection and restoration of safe and green urban spaces; safe and clean drinking water and sanitation; healthy air quality; generation of decent jobs; and improved urban planning and slum upgrading,

Taking note of the Nairobi Declaration of the fourth session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, adopted on 23 March 2012, by which African Ministers responsible for Housing and Urban Development committed themselves to, inter alia, strengthening and developing transformative national urban policies and adopting strategies for realizing smarter and more sustainable urban development through reconfiguration of space, infrastructure and flows in new urban development and retrofitting existing cities, resulting in compact, mixed use, high density development that is walkable and bicycle friendly, and transit oriented,

Also taking note of the Rabat Declaration titled Making Slums History: a worldwide challenge for 2020, adopted on 28 November 2012, through which participants committed themselves to supporting, through the inter-governmental bodies of the United Nations, the adoption of a global goal of halving the proportion of people living in slums between 2015 and 2030, as part of the overall formulation of the new Sustainable Development Goals and of the outcome of the Habitat III Conference,

Considering the Executive Director’s report to the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council, HSP/GC/24/…. titled Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme: progress report of the Executive Director, on the coordinated implementation of guidelines on access to basic services for all and guidelines on decentralization and its recommendation to develop complementary guidelines on urban and territorial planning so as to facilitate the implementation of existing guidelines by providing a reference document for inter-sectoral and multi-level planning,
Recalling the objective of focus area two, urban planning and design, of the UN-Habitat [draft] Strategic Plan 2014-19, that is “…to improve policies, plans and designs for more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change, at the city, regional and national levels”,

1. Requests the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to ensure the involvement of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in the formulation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda in order to promote sustainable urbanization;

2. Encourages Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to highlight the relevance of urban planning and governance to the achievement of sustainable development in their contributions to the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including the new Sustainable Development Goals,

3. Encourages Governments to initiate processes to review and develop national urban policies as a key strategy for national socio-economic development, to maximize the national and local benefits of urbanization, while mitigating potential adverse externalities, and as a coordination mechanism amongst different sectors and ministries,

4. Requests the Executive Director to develop a general guiding framework for the development of national urban policies, based on international good experiences, to further support member states when developing and improving their national urban policies,

5. Encourages Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to use planned city extension methodologies to guide the sustainable development of cities experiencing rapid urban growth, to prevent slum proliferation, enhance access to basic urban services, support inclusive housing, enhance job opportunities and create a safe and healthy living environment,

6. Requests the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in close consultation with national Governments, international associations of local authorities, including United Cities and Local Governments, all relevant United Nations organizations, international finance institutions, development agencies, relevant international professional associations and non-governmental organizations, and other international stakeholders, to draft international guidelines on urban and territorial planning, based on the already agreed urban planning principles outlined in the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 approved by member States, and to present the draft guidelines to the twenty-fifth session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council for approval,

7. Invites the international community and financial institutions to contribute adequate financial resources to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to enable UN-Habitat to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in mobilizing public investment and private capital to achieve sustainable urban development through the implementation of national urban policies and planned city extensions,

8. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.