

Draft Opening Statement

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Nairobi Chapter, Brazil congratulates the members of the Bureau for their election and wishes them the best in discharging their responsibilities throughout this week.

Distinguished Members of UN-Habitat's Governing Council,

Almost a year ago, representatives from all around the world gathered in Rio de Janeiro and reiterated their commitment to sustainable development, recognizing once more the need to adopt a threefold approach – economic, social and environmental. Nothing shows more clearly how intertwined are these three dimensions of sustainable development than the dynamics of cities, which clearly reveals that a shortcoming in one of them adversely impacts the others. This time around we will focus on the economic dimension of urban sustainable development and discuss the role of cities in creating improved economic opportunities for all, especially for women and youth. We are certain that this will be a valuable opportunity to exchange views on how best can national and local authorities enhance urban economies in order to ensure more prosperous cities.

Economic development is a subject that has always been at the core of the concerns of developing countries. In a moment when many countries face economic difficulties, it is important to recall that a joint international effort to eradicate poverty in all its forms and ensure a better life for all is still needed. From those goals stems the relevance of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which will require the attention of the members of the Governing Council and UN-Habitat's Secretariat.

Soon after the definition of the world's new development agenda, the Third Conference on Sustainable Urban Development and Housing will take place. The new urban agenda that will emerge from Habitat III will surely build upon the Post-2015 Development Agenda and revitalize UN-Habitat's mandate in light of the new development priorities established by the international community. It is important that Habitat III rests upon a robust preparatory process, from both the substantive and the procedural point of view. As to the substantive aspect, it is key to ensure that developing countries are assisted with capacity building, technical and expert support to prepare their national reports; as to the procedural one, it is necessary to guarantee an adequate level of representation from developing countries.

Over the years, the challenges facing cities around the world have increased in number and importance. That tendency has translated into a growing number of demands presented to UN-Habitat. As we prepare to discuss a new urban agenda, which will probably be reflected in a strengthened mandate, it is important to stress UN-Habitat's role in providing technical assistance to interested Governments and to ensure that the priorities of developing countries are taken into consideration both in the definition of the Program's strategies and in the implementation of projects. In this regard, regional Ministerial Fora, such as MINURVI, AMCHUD, APAMCHUD and the proposed Forum of Arab States, have the potential to be an invaluable channel of dialogue between UN-Habitat and developing countries.

We are looking forward to hearing the contributions of the Members of the Governing Council to our general debate and wish us all fruitful discussions.

Thank you.