Agenda Item 5:

Executive Director’s Briefing to the Committee of the Permanent Representatives (HSP/CPR/55/5)
A. First meeting of the preparatory committee of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, New York 17-18 September

The first session of the Preparatory Committee of Habitat III was successfully convened in New York from 17-18 September. The meeting was very well attended, with ministerial presence from eight countries.

The PrepCom elected a fully-fledged bureau consisting of the following members:

- Africa Group: Chad, Senegal
- Asia-Pacific group: Indonesia, United Arab Emirates
- Eastern Europe: Czech Republic, Hungary
- GRULAC: Chile, Ecuador
- WEOG: France, Germany

There was also a very important contribution of local authorities and other urban stakeholders, and the Secretariat is taking steps to ensure that Habitat III will take into account the views of all Major Groups in the process of elaborating the outcomes of the Conference.

A key objective as we continue the preparatory process is to be as coordinated as possible with the discussions on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and a new Climate Change agreement, and take advantage of what has already been done in a formal manner by the United Nations. Concrete discussions on the outcomes of the Conference will take place in close coordination with these negotiations. In this regard, it would be important that the third PrepCom and other key meetings are scheduled in a way that allows us to take stock of these two processes.

The period from now until the second PrepCom here in Nairobi from 14-16 April 2015 will be a period of stock-taking to help prepare the substantive basis for the conference. The remaining countries will hopefully be presenting their National Reports. The preparation of the Regional Reports will be done jointly with the Regional Commissions.

We are now following very closely the resolution in the General Assembly in relation to the pending issues of Habitat III; the decision of the host of Habitat III, the decision of where Habitat III Prep Comm will be held; the timing and duration of these meetings and other relevant aspects that are needed to advance in the preparation of Habitat III.

Further details on the Habitat III preparatory process will be discussed under agenda item 8.

B. The Secretary-General’s Climate Summit on 23 September 2014

You will no doubt be aware that the Secretary-General convened an unprecedented Climate Summit in New York on 23 September, attended by more than 100 heads of state. The Summit marked the largest such meeting of world leaders on climate change in history.

I was tasked to lead the Action Area on Cities for the Summit, along with Mr. Michael Bloomberg, the UN Special Envoy on Cities and Climate Change. In this area, two announcements were made, building on important contributions and support from UN-Habitat. A compact of more than 2,000 mayors and local officials representing cities around
the world was made with a view to step up efforts to reduce city-level emissions, to reduce vulnerability and to enhance resilience to climate change. Furthermore, the Cities Action Area also announced a Leadership Alliance on Climate Finance amongst key global investment and finance institutions. This Alliance agreed to catalyse and accelerate capital flows to cities, maximize investment in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, and close the investment gap in urban areas in the next fifteen years.

The Summit also announced an action plan on Urban Electric Mobility. This plan aims to achieve more widespread adoption of electric vehicles in cities and reach a target whereby travel by electric vehicles makes up 30% of total urban travel by 2030.

I am very pleased with the outcomes of the Summit, which represented a great push forward as member states debate a new climate agreement which hopefully will be adopted in Paris next year.

C. Urban October

The month of October was this year dubbed “Urban October” – a new addition to our campaign to raise awareness, promote participation, generate knowledge and engage the international community towards a New Urban Agenda. Urban October consisted of three flagship events; World Habitat Day on 8 October, the Urban Thinkers Campus from 15-18 October in Caserta, Italy, and the first-ever World Cities Day that took place in Shanghai, China, on 31 October.

Throughout the month, several city, national and regional level events were also organized by our partners around the world. Urban October was one of the most successful campaigns in UN-Habitat so far, reaching thousands of people through social media.

The first World Cities Day was commemorated on 31 October, hosted by the City of Shanghai in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China and UN-Habitat. In his message to the celebration in Shanghai Premier Li Keqiang highlighted the importance of cities as platforms for human advancement and economic and social development. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Chinese hosts for making the day a huge success. Here in Nairobi, the UN Secretary-General marked World Cities Day by visiting the Urban October exhibition during his official visit the UN Gigiri Complex.


The fifth session of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development was held in Seoul from 3-5 November 2014, convened by the Government of Korea. The conference was held under the theme “Equal Opportunity for Sustainable Development”

The theme of the conference was very timely for the Asia-Pacific region, which has gone through impressive economic development over the last decade and produced some of the world’s most prosperous economies. On the not so positive side, the transformations have come with considerable environmental costs. The massive reductions in poverty has not reached everyone, with remaining shortfalls in housing, water supply and sanitation and affordability issues in some parts of the region.
I am therefore very pleased that APMCHUD agreed on the Seoul Declarations, and not least on the Seoul Implementation Plan, to address these critical issues through a regional approach in the coming years.

During the fifth APMCHUD, it was announced that Kuala Lumpur will host the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) in 2018. I personally met with Malaysia’s Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, Honourable Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan, in Seoul to inform him of this decision.


From 12-15 November, I undertook a mission to India to meet with senior officials of the Indian Government to discuss our renewed partnership and our collaboration towards Habitat III. As you may be aware, the Indian Government, under the dedicated leadership of His Excellency Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has launched several new flagship initiatives to accelerate sustainable urban development across the country.

During my visit, I had the honour to meet with Honourable Venkaiah Naidu, Minister for Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, who welcomed UN-Habitat’s assistance in supporting the implementation of the country’s new ambitious urban agenda.

I also met with senior officials in charge of Urban Development and Planning to further discuss possible areas of collaboration, particularly in the area of Smart Planning for Smart Cities. I look forward to further developing our programme in India, a country that stands before a very important urbanization process in the coming years.