Progress Report on Preparation for the Third Session of the World Urban Forum

Statement

By

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Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It will be my pleasure to briefly highlight a number of important developments with regard to the preparations for the Third Session of the World Urban Forum.

Efforts are well underway with regard to the preparation of the World Urban Forum. With already over 6000 people registered to attend, we are well on track to ensure that this World Urban Forum surpasses previous expectations.

While we are very pleased to see the high level of interest, I would like to once again ask you to remind your capitals of the urgent need for additional funds to ensure the participations of representatives from least developed and developing countries.

Substantive and logistical preparations are also progressing smoothly. Over three hundred applications for networking events have been received, and a rigorous selection process is nearing completion to fill some 160 slots.

Several round tables, including a ministerial round table, and several side events and special events are at an advanced stage of planning. And finally the dialogues promise to surpass the standards set in Barcelona and Nairobi, thanks to their innovative and highly participative nature which will do away with traditional panels and rely instead on a more dynamic town hall format.

As you are aware the official language of the WUF is English. But we are pleased to inform you that the Government of Canada will also provide interpretation in French. The Delegation of the Russian Federation has informed the Secretariat that its Government is looking into the possibility of providing interpretation in Russian.

The Secretariat has invited the Spanish-, Chinese- and Arabic-speaking delegations to encourage their respective governments to do the same in respect of Spanish, Chinese and Arabic. It is my sincere hope that we can together create solutions to ensure that language is not a barrier to participation of member states in this historic meeting.

And finally, Madam Chair, I would like to thank the efforts of the Working Group and in particular the leadership provided by Ambassador Braun who greatly aided our preparatory activities. I would like to welcome the new Chair of the World Urban Forum Working Group, His Excellency Mr. Wojciech Jasinski, to this important role. I look forward to working intensively with you over the coming few months to ensure that the World Urban Forum is a truly historic event.

Thank you Madam Chair.