Introductory Statement by Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director

Report on the Outcome of the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum

Agenda Item 5

HSP/CPR/37/5
Nairobi, 14 June 2010
Mr Chair, Excellencies,

I am pleased to report on the outcomes of the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum which was held in Rio de Janeiro, 22 to 26 March 2010.

First I would like to congratulate the Government and people of Brazil on hosting this Forum successfully. The Forum was opened by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, H.E. Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, accompanied by many of his cabinet members and public figures of Brazil. The Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro and the Mayor of the Municipality of Rio were also present and deployed substantial resources towards its hosting. Representing the main geographical regions were: President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda for the Africa Region; Mr. Noli de Castro, Vice President of Philippines for the Asia Region; Mr. Manuel Chavez Gonzales, Third Vice President of Spain for Western Europe and other Groups, and Secretary Shaun Donovan of the Department of Housing and Urban Development who attended the Forum as a special envoy of President Barack Obama and as the Co-Chair of the Forum together with the host, Mr. Marcio Fortes de Almeida, Minister of Cities of Brazil of Brazil.

I would like to recognize the members of this Committee who attended this Forum – by our count there were 16 of you, a number higher than any previous session. Our gratitude also goes to the European Commission and the Governments of France and Norway for their in-cash contributions.

Attendance and Participation
A total of 358 different meetings were held during the Forum. Overall attendance to the Forum hit a record high of 13,795 from 150 countries. A comprehensive analysis giving the detailed break down by country, by categories and gender ratio was presented to you at the Working Group held on 26 May 2010, and is also contained in the final report of the Forum. The statistics of daily attendance and at individual events show that all events were full to capacity.

The exhibition was also very successful. Over ten thousand visitors came to see more than 110 displays from all corners of the globe and from many international organisations. The exhibitors were as varied as the interest groups that attended the Forum. Over 350 representatives of the Media covered the conference with more than 8,300 articles in English and nearly 500 in another 8 languages.

Substantive output of the Forum
Substantively, the Forum has been rated very rich and varied by the participants. We are pleased that our efforts at responding to the positive suggestions coming from participants of past fora and from this Committee have paid off. The breadth and dept of the debates in all substantive sessions – dialogues, special sessions, roundtables, and training sessions and business caucuses were marked by intense interaction between different stakeholder groups. The level of fact-to-face inter-action and true dialogue between ministers, mayors, industry leaders, grass roots organisations and professionals was unprecedented and without a doubt one of the main outcomes of the Forum.

The Forum also presented a platform for the implementation of some important resolutions made at the 22nd Session of the Governing Council, thereby advancing our work significantly. These include: the South-South Cooperation, Decentralization and Access to Basic Services.
The World Urban Youth Assembly and the Gender Equality Action Assembly which were held just prior to the Forum clearly linked the Forum with follow-up to Governing Council Resolutions 22/4 and 22/7. The two assemblies were each marked by the launch of two important documents: *The State of Urban Youth – 2010/2011: Levelling the Playing Field*; and *Gender Equality for Smarter Cities: Challenges and Progress*.

The 150 networking events demonstrated the high interest, engagement and commitment of our partners to furthering the urban agenda. Several organisations took advantage of the Forum to sign cooperation agreements for joint projects and programmes. The critical mass of partners, stakeholders, media and leaders present at the Forum is without a doubt a major contributing factor to realising efficiency gains, as called for in the MTSIP. In outreach and awareness raising terms it is unparalleled in cost-effectiveness.

UN-Habitat helped the Government of Brazil to convene and organize a high level special session on Haiti, titled *Haiti: Building Back Better* presided by Mr. Jean-Max Bellerive, Prime Minister of Haiti. The session was well received by all concerned and was a timely reminder of the need to focus attention on sustainable recovery and reconstruction.

In summarizing the substantive achievements of WUF5, I would be remiss not to mention how the Government of Brazil used the Forum as an opportunity to initiate the revival of a depressed dockside of Rio. It did so by transforming abandoned warehouses into a conference venue and by bringing thousands of people to what is generally considered a no-go zone.

The number of countries represented at WUF5 provides clear evidence of an increasing demand for more dialogue, exchange and mutual learning on sustainable urbanization. This was one of the key messages conveyed by all partners during a week of intense and often passionate debate.

The report of the Forum has been sent to UNON Conference Services for editing. The edited version will be sent to Advisory Group, subsequent to which it will be presented to you. Meanwhile, the summary report, which was endorsed by the Advisory Board and was read at the closing of the Forum, was distributed at the CPR Working Group Meeting on 26 May 2010. We are thankful to the distinguished delegates who took time to make constructive comments during the last Working Group Meeting.

As you are aware, a full and comprehensive analysis of the Forum will however be contained in my successor’s report to the Governing Council in April 2011 and the full report of the activities and discussion at WUF5 will also be submitted to the Governing Council as an information document. A more user friendly summary report of the Forum will also be published before the 23rd session of the Governing Council.

**Challenges and Looking Ahead**

I would like to highlight the following challenges which this committee may wish to keep in view as it looks into the future of WUF.

1) The Forum is now the world’s premier event and platform on urban issues. The expectations of our partners have reached new heights, not only in attendance and participation, but also in their involvement in shaping the forum and organising their own events. While this forms part of the success of the Forum, it will require
new and innovative arrangements to ensure that we can capture the wealth of actionable ideas generated at the Forum for the benefit of all.

ii) Identification of future hosts also needs further thought. The size of the forum has cost implications for the host country and city and it might be appropriate to re-examine the business model to share the costs of hosting the forum with other sectors of the economy.

**Excellencies,**

The World Urban Campaign was officially launched at the World Urban Forum. The latter has thus become the tool for propelling the former. Many government, non-governmental and industry leaders signed a compact to carry forward the message of sustainable urbanization. At every WUF session henceforth, these leaders will review the progress of the Campaign. This interaction between the Forum and the Campaign will contribute significantly to the objectives of the MTSIP. Together they are the main means by which we strengthen our advocacy work. Together they give concrete expression to the MTSIP goal for UN-Habitat to become a robust catalyst. Together they provide the glue by which we can progressively enhance internal collaboration and cohesion and improve external communications. I am happy to report that the most recent Steering Committee meeting of the World Urban Campaign was held in Alicante, Spain 30 May-2 June with some 50 public, private, civil society and UN partners in attendance. The work programme of the Campaign resulting from that meeting provides a bridge for carrying forward many of the ideas and commitments of the Forum. It will also help many of our partners to better prepare for the next Forum.

Finally, I have received encouraging feedback from the Working Group on WUF, including some strategic issues which some of you raised for the future of WUF. I agree with those who see potential in the WUF becoming an organ of the Governing Council with a stronger and more direct feedback loop. Such a proposal should however be taken together with the ongoing Governance Review process in a comprehensive and meaningful set of recommendations and remain fidel to the spirit of the Forum, the ownership of which is clearly entrenched with our partners.

Mr. Chair,

At this point if you allow me, I’d like to takes a few minutes to present a pictorial flashback on Rio to bring the flavour to those who were not there.

[Video clip and photo slides]

**Excellencies,**

As you know, the sustainability of the Forum hinges on the generosity of the host government, which I have tried to rotate among regions. In line with your recommendations contained in resolution 22/10, we provided the relevant information to governments who approached us. Despite our due diligence, we were unable to secure a definitive and timely response. For this reason, I accepted the firm offer of the Government of Bahrain.

I am happy to inform this Committee that the Conference Agreement was signed last week.
The theme being explored for WUF6 is: *Prosperity of Cities: Equity and Sustainable Urbanization*. This is still tentative and will be finalized in close consultation with you and the Host Government over the coming months.

Thank you for your attention.