Introductory Statement by Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director
Preparations for the 23rd Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

Agenda Item 6

HSP/CPR/40/6
Nairobi, 2 March 2011
Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to update you on the status of the preparations for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council (GC 23).

The Notification of the Executive Director with all attachments, including the organization of work, was sent out to all Permanent and Observer Missions to UN-Habitat in Nairobi and to the United Nations in New York in November 2010. This has also been sent to all relevant national Ministries and accredited Habitat Agenda Partners.

The Secretariat has started receiving correspondence from Governments and Habitat Agenda Partners informing us of the composition of their delegations to the twenty-third session. We wish to urge other Member States to do the same as soon as possible in order to facilitate early preparations, including registration. On-line registration can be done at the GC 23 website (www.unhabitat.org/gc23). This website also provides information on media accreditation and travel advisory details such as health, visas and hotels.

We have recently received communication from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Rwanda informing us that the African Group has nominated the Republic of Rwanda for the Presidency of the twenty-third session of the Governing Council. The Secretariat would be grateful if other Regional Groups could inform the Secretariat on the following outstanding nominations: (i) First Vice-President, to be nominated by the Eastern European States; (ii) Second Vice-President, to be nominated by the Asian States; (iii) Third Vice-President, to be nominated by the Latin America and Caribbean States; and (iv) Rapporteur, to be nominated by the Western European and Other States. I would like to note that one of the quick-wins of the Governance Review Process, which were approved by the CPR at its 38th Session, asked Chairs of the Regional Groups to recommend their identified nominees and share information with the current President of the Governing Council through the Secretariat in advance.

Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Most of the documents for decision may be found at the GC 23 website. Translation of the remaining documents by Conference Services is still on-going and these documents will be uploaded at the GC 23 website as soon as they become available.

I especially wish to draw your attention to the document on the Dialogue on the special theme of the twenty-third session of the Governing Council, that is document HSP/GC/23/4, titled “Sustainable Urban Development through Expanding Equitable Access to Land, Housing, Basic Services and Infrastructure.” Please kindly note that enquiries on the Dialogue may be referred to Ms. Axumite Gebre-Egziabher, Director of the Global Division.

I wish to thank the CPR Working Group on Planning for its excellent work on the draft resolutions for GC 23. I look forward to further fruitful discussion of the remaining draft resolutions.

Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,
I would like to inform you at this juncture that the Secretariat is ready to receive requests from Governments for places on the speaker’s list for the high-level segment of the Plenary, which is scheduled to take place on 11 and 12 April 2011.

The Secretariat is currently finalising the list of parallel and side events to be organised during GC 23. Members who wish to organize such events may contact the Governing Council Secretariat by 5 March 2011. The final list will be distributed to the Committee shortly after this date.

The exhibition remains a regular and important component of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. It showcases the activities and latest technologies in the field of sustainable urban development. Relevant information on this is also available at the GC 23 website.

Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to inform you that the Secretariat has received several requests from participants for funding to attend the twenty-third session of the Governing Council. As we have limited funds, the Secretariat would like to appeal to member States in a position to do so to consider providing additional funding for this purpose. Priority for funding will be given to Least Developed Countries who are current member States of the Governing Council.

Final details on all organizational aspects of GC 23 will be presented to the Committee at its Extraordinary Meeting on 31 March 2011. Meanwhile, any inquiries regarding the organisation of GC 23 may be addressed to the Governing Council Secretariat (at UN-HabitatGCSecretariat@unhabitat.org).

Madam Chair,

Our sister Programme, UNEP, has conducted its recent Governing Council session using a paperless conferencing system. The UN-Habitat Secretariat thinks that this is the way forward. However, we have noted that there were some technical problems with this system. The Secretariat believes that these problems should be addressed before the full adoption of a paperless system for our Governing Council sessions. I would also like to propose that we start having CPR paperless meetings from the 41st Regular Session in June 2011. The experience accumulated from paperless CPR meetings can then be used to organise the next session of the Governing Council. However, I seek your guidance and advice on this issue, given your first-hand experience with the recent session of the Governing Council of UNEP.

Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Later during this meeting, I will report on the financial status of UN-Habitat, including the recent decline in non-ear-marked voluntary contributions and how we are handling the implications of this on recruitment and staffing levels as well as on the proposed budget for 2012-2013. I will also report on the review of the organisational structure of UN-Habitat that I have just initiated. For now, I only wish to emphasize that all these processes will be influenced by the reorganized and reformulated programme priorities that we are currently working on as we prepare for the Governing Council session in April.

I thank you for your kind attention.