Draft minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to United Nations Human Settlements Programme held on 31 March 2011

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.40 a.m. on Thursday, 31 March 2011, by Mr. Sergey Trepelkov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representative, who took the Chair in the absence of Ms. Yvonne Khamati-Kilonzo, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to UN-Habitat and Chair of the Committee, who was unable to attend the meeting.

2. The meeting was attended by 92 representatives from 53 countries and one observer mission.

3. At the invitation of the Chair, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. Zdravko Bisic, Permanent Representative of Serbia to UN-Habitat, and to express sympathy to the Government and people of Japan following the recent devastating earthquake and tsunami that had afflicted that country. The representative of Japan thanked the Chair for the expression of sympathy.

4. The Chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Mr. Kingsley Saka Abdul Karimu (Ghana) and Mr. Beyene Russom Habtai (Eritrea).

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in documents HSP/CPR/EX/1 and Add.1.

Item 2: Report on the status of preparations for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

6. In his introductory statement, Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, expressed his appreciation to the Committee and the working groups for their hard work in preparation for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council, noting that the preparatory process had been delayed as a result of the change of leadership in UN-Habitat. He thanked the representatives for their forbearance and constructive guidance.

7. Reporting on the preparations, he outlined the main substantive items on the agenda of the Governing Council, namely UN-Habitat activities, including coordination matters; the dialogue on the special theme for the session; and the programme of work and budget. Under UN-Habitat activities, he highlighted in particular the UN-Habitat governance review and the proposed third United Nations
conference on housing and sustainable urban development. The Governing Council was expected to authorize further consideration of the options for fundamental reform of UN-Habitat governance structures proposed by the joint review team and preparation of an action plan for presentation to the General Assembly.

8. The secretariat had prepared a report making a case for holding a third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development in the light of new developments in urban growth and global issues such as climate change, and also a report on sustainable urban development to form the basis of the special thematic dialogue at the session and a contribution to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012.

9. Turning to the work programme and budget for 2012–2013, he emphasized the strong results orientation of the work programme and the proposed prioritization intended to facilitate decision-making in line with available resources as issues that he would raise in his policy statement to the Governing Council. Intense discussions were also anticipated on the experimental reimbursable seeding operations. He also drew attention to the draft resolutions prepared by the Committee for transmission to the Governing Council, set out in document HSP/CPR/EX/2/a, particularly the resolution proposing new global and national strategies and frameworks for carrying forward UN-Habitat work on slum upgrading and prevention.

10. Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary of the Governing Council, provided information on logistical aspects of the preparations for the session, drawing attention to registration procedures, the submission of credentials and nominations for Bureau officers, among others. He took note of the recommendations from some Committee members on the need to learn from the outcome of the paperless endeavor piloted by the United Nations Environment Programme and assured the Committee that the secretariat was aiming to achieve a reduced use of paper at the session and that all documents would be available on the Governing Council website.

11. Mr. Roger Lewis, Deputy Chief, Security and Safety Service, United Nations Office at Nairobi, provided information on security arrangements for the session and requested the Committee to direct any further queries to the Division of Conference Services, which would be acting as the focal point for security issues.

12. The Committee approved for transmission to the Governing Council the draft resolutions set out in document HSP/CPR/EX/2/a.

Item 3: Other matters

13. The Executive Director informed the Committee of the forthcoming retirement of Ms. Inga Björk-Klevby, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, at the end of April 2011 and paid tribute to her for her hard work and dedication within UN-Habitat and her outstanding international career in diplomacy, international finance and development cooperation.

14. Thanking the Executive Director for his remarks and the Committee members for their support and friendship, the Deputy Executive Director said that she was pleased to have seen UN-Habitat change and develop and welcomed the current reform process. She urged the Committee to engage more in spreading knowledge of the work of UN-Habitat in various countries and of the urban challenges and to continue to work closely with the secretariat to improve UN-Habitat governance structures.

15. Several representatives expressed thanks to the Deputy Executive Director for her valuable contribution to UN-Habitat work.

Closure of the meeting

16. The Chair declared the meeting closed at noon on Thursday, 31 March 2011.