

Statement Dr. Asad M. Khan, Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations
Agenda Item 54: Implementation of the Outcome of the Second UN
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat-II) and Strengthening of the UN
Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
26 October 2006

Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of the G-77 and China.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on Implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat-II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) as contained in document A/61/262.

Chairperson,

The 'State of the World's Cities' Report has documented the worsening living standards of urban poor, particularly in health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

More than half of world population will live in cities by 2007. Much needs to be done to realize significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. Accelerated and concerted efforts at the international level and provision of increased resources is imperative, as concluded by the 2005 UN Summit.

Pro-poor policies with a focus on tenure security, in particular for slum dwellers, and access to affordable housing are needed more than ever before. This, in our view, can be realized through an integrated approach to Human Settlement Development, water and sanitation, with the full involvement of all stakeholders.

Chairperson,

In order to produce optimal results, it is imperative to; **firstly**, expand technical assistance to developing countries including training and capacity building; **secondly**, identify disaster prone areas and formulate mitigation strategies, rapid response to post-disaster and post-conflict situations, and **thirdly**, provide sustained technical assistance in reconstruction efforts.

Chairperson,

Pakistan is faced with serious challenges of urbanization. About 33% of our total 155 million population lives in urban areas, where the growth rate is more than 4 % per annum. 40% of the total urban population lives in *katchi abadis*/slums or informal settlements. There is also an acute shortage of housing units. Overcrowding of cities is taxing further the already inadequate civic amenities and services. According to estimates, the number of housing units presently required is 5.5 million with an annual increase of 270,000 units.

To overcome security of tenure and other related problems, Government has taken a number of measures, including regularization of slums and slum upgrading programme through the granting of ownership rights to dwellers; involvement of local communities in development of physical infrastructure in slum areas; establishing new housing projects for middle and low-income groups; and encouraging private sector to invest in the housing sector.

Government is also making improvements in urban transport systems, water supply and sanitation, improving the quality of waste water discharges into waste bodies and agricultural field, and over all improvement in quality of life in informal settlements. Efforts are being made to provide jobs in rural areas and to discourage migration to urban centers. The benchmarks and targets fixed by the Government include: increasing safe water supply coverage from 55 percent in 2005 to 90 percent in 2015 and to increase coverage of sanitation facilities from 35 percent in 2005 to 70 percent in 2015.

In addition to these efforts at national level, Pakistan actively participates in the regional and international initiatives. In line with objectives of MDG-7, we convened Second South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN-II 2006), which was held on 20-21 September 2006 in Islamabad. It provided a unique opportunity for sharing experiences, best approaches and practices in South Asia on sanitation and to highlight the urgent need to accelerate action for achievements of MDGs on sanitation in the region.

Chairperson,

The devastating earthquake that struck parts of Northern Pakistan and Azad Kashmir on 8th October last year rendered more than 3.5 million people without shelter. A year later, more than 90% of the displaced people have been relocated to transition shelters as the long-term reconstruction process is picking momentum. However, around 40,000 people still live in tented communities. In partnership with the international community, the Government of Pakistan is accelerating the rehabilitation and reconstruction. This is a daunting challenge and could take 3 to 5 years to complete. The objective of the government is to build back better communities in accordance with the international standards. To meet this requirement, seismological surveys have been conducted by international experts

in the affected areas to ensure that new settlements are less prone to natural disasters like earthquake. People from, some towns devastated by earthquake, like Balakot and parts of Muzaffarabad, will be relocated from the previous locations. Besides, the Government has devised new building code to construct safer housing and other structures.

We appreciate the assistance of UN agencies in the recovery and reconstruction efforts of the government of Pakistan. UNDP's collaboration has been particularly effective in this regard. We feel, however, that UN-Habitat should also expand its role with greater involvement in the long-term rehabilitation process by mainstreaming the issues of shelter and disaster risk reduction and assist the government in completing the enduring task of reconstruction.

Chairperson,

The Third World Urban Forum of UN-HABITAT recognized the critical need for increased financial resources to attain the slum-upgrading target of the Millennium Declaration.

Allocation of resources to the core programmes and regular budget resources is vital for the work of UN-Habitat. Though this increase in over all contributions to UN-Habitat reached \$ 47.1 million in 2005, the non-earmarked contributions remained low, at \$10.5 million. This rising imbalance needs to be reversed as it may hamper strategic planning and delivery of services in a timely and predictable manner.

In order to strengthen UN-HABITAT, it is essential to introduce an effective balance between its normative and operational activities. Similarly, improving inter-agency cooperation in the field of Human Settlements and other cross-cutting issues as well as mobilizing support for the UN Human Settlement Foundation and its Slum Upgrading Facility are essential. We are of the view that inclusion of UN Habitat in the UN Development Group may help strengthen this organization.

Pakistan remains committed to implement its commitments related to improvement in human settlements as contained in Agenda 21, the decisions of the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in order to attain sustained economic growth and sustainable development of our people.

I thank you all

