

BRIEFING NOTE OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL: 11-15 APRIL 2011



Delegates during one of the plenary sessions

The 23rd session of the Governing Council (GC-23) of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) took place from Monday, 11 to Friday, 15 April 2011, at the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of GC-23 was “sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land and housing, basic services and infrastructure.” 973 participants from 90 countries were in attendance, comprising 563 government representatives, as well as representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, professional associations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

During GC-23, delegates convened in a high-level segment and a Committee of the Whole to consider: the activities of UN-HABITAT; the special theme for GC-23; the work programme and budget of UN-HABITAT for the biennium 2012-2013; and the provisional agenda and other arrangements for GC-24. They also met in a drafting committee from Tuesday to Thursday to consider the 19 draft resolutions before GC-23. In addition, on Wednesday, delegates conducted a dialogue with local authorities and other partners, on the special theme of GC-23.

GC-23 concluded its work by adopting 18 out of the 19 resolutions before GC-23, with one of the resolutions having been withdrawn by the submitting country. The 18 adopted resolutions were on issues relating to: gender equality and empowerment of women in sustainable urban development; human settlements development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; support for pro-poor housing; access to quality urban public spaces; the World Urban Forum; the implementation of the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan and strengthening of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development; urban youth development; the third UN conference on housing and sustainable urban development; strategies and frameworks for improving the lives of slum dwellers beyond the Millennium Development Goals target; future activities of UN-HABITAT in urban economy and financial mechanisms for urban upgrading, housing and basic services for the urban poor; UN-HABITAT’s work programme and budget for the biennium 2012-2013; implementation of the Guidelines on Access to Basic Services For All and the Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities; governance of UN-HABITAT; safer cities and urban crime prevention; country activities by UN-HABITAT; formulation of a global housing strategy; expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure; and natural disaster risk reduction, preparedness, prevention and mitigation.

This Briefing Note provides a summary report of the proceedings of the GC-23 high-level segment and Committee of the Whole, as well as the dialogue on the GC-23 theme.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN-HABITAT

As a result of the First UN Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976, the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements officially established the UN Centre for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities, with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. By General Assembly resolution 32/162 of 19 December 1977, the Commission for Human Settlements was also established as the governing body for the UN Centre for Human Settlements.

HABITAT II: The Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 June 1996, on the 20th anniversary of the first Habitat Conference. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted by the Conference, outlined over 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements. With the adoption of the Habitat Agenda, the international community set itself the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and ensuring sustainable

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of UN-HABITAT	1
GC-23 Report	2
High-Level Segment	3
Dialogue on the Special Theme of GC-23	4
Committee of the Whole	7
Resolutions	8
Closing Plenary	10

human settlements development. Habitat II also reaffirmed the commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

56TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

In its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided to transform the UN Centre for Human Settlements into UN-HABITAT. The UNGA also decided, in the same resolution, to transform the Commission on Human Settlements into the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT. The Governing Council, which was also made into a subsidiary body of the UNGA, reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council and provides overall policy guidance, direction and supervision to UN-HABITAT.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT: The World Summit on Sustainable Development convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted by the Summit, calls for achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, as proposed in the Cities without Slums initiative. The JPOI calls for actions at all levels to: improve access to land and property, adequate shelter and basic services for the urban and rural poor; use low-cost and sustainable materials and appropriate technologies for the construction of adequate and secure housing for the poor; increase decent employment, credit and income; remove unnecessary regulation and other obstacles for microenterprises and the informal sector; and support slum upgrading programmes within the framework of urban development plans.

22ND SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT GOVERNING COUNCIL: This session took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 30 March to 3 April 2009, on the theme, “Promoting affordable housing finance systems in an urbanizing world in the face of the global financial crisis and climate change.” The session reviewed the activities of UN-HABITAT and adopted its work programme and budget for the biennium 2010-2011. It also adopted 11 resolutions, including on: affordable housing finance; cities and climate change; strengthening the development of urban young people; guidelines on access to basic services for all; South-South cooperation in human settlements; and human settlements development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

FIFTH SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM:

Designated by the UNGA as an advisory body, the World Urban Forum (WUF) is an open-ended think tank designed to encourage debate and discussion on the challenges of urbanization, and to strengthen the coordination of international support for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Fifth Session was held from 22-26 March 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on the theme “The right to the city: bridging the urban divide.” The session included six dialogues which focused on the following key aspects of sustainable urbanization: the right to the city; inclusive cities; equal access to shelter and basic urban services; cultural diversity in cities; governance and participation; and climate change. The World Urban Campaign was also launched during the Forum, with the objective of

elevating the drive by UN-HABITAT and its Habitat Agenda partners for better, smarter, greener and more equitable cities to a new level.

SPECIAL SESSION OF AMCHUD: A special session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) was held from 9-10 April 2011, immediately prior to GC-23. The aim of the special session was to review progress in implementing the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan, which spell out the commitment of African governments to improve land governance to tackle housing and sustainable urban development challenges. Issues relating to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the AMCHUD action plan and the activities of the AMCHUD Secretariat were also discussed. During the session, 15 countries made presentations on their progress in implementing the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan. Member States also endorsed AMCHUD’s work plan and budget, as well as Kenya’s proposal to host AMCHUD’s permanent Secretariat. The session resulted in nine recommendations aimed at strengthening the capacity of the AMCHUD Secretariat, including recommendations to: develop a communication strategy for better collection and dissemination of information and follow-up; endorse the draft resolution of AMCHUD to GC-23; and identify and assign representatives to the drafting committee of resolutions of GC-23.

GC-23 REPORT

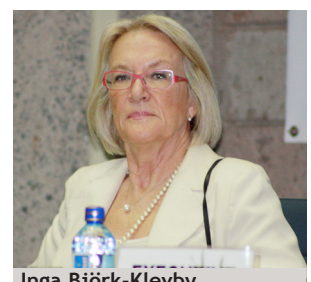
Clifford Warmington (Jamaica), President of the 22nd session of the Governing Council (GC-22) of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), opened GC-23 on Monday morning. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), underscored that the partnership between UNEP and UN-HABITAT is a top priority, especially as the world transcends towards a green economy. Noting that this partnership is one way of fulfilling the UN Secretary-General’s call to “deliver as one,” he called on the international community to support country-led initiatives geared towards changing the future of cities for the better. Inga Björk-Klevby, Deputy Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in which he noted growing demand for more land and basic infrastructure in rapidly developing urban areas, and called for streamlining of policies that can help urban areas embark on a shift to a green economy. He also stressed that decisions made about these policies



Clifford Warmington
(Jamaica), GC-22 President



Achim Steiner, Executive
Director, UNEP



Inga Björk-Klevby,
Deputy Executive Director,
UN-HABITAT



Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

during this session will form part of discussions at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20 Conference).

Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, highlighted the need for policies that address, *inter alia*, the demographic, environmental and socio-economic challenges shaping 21st century cities. He called for a return to the historical vision of cities as places of freedom, political and economic growth, improvement and culture, and urged a return to basic urban planning. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, underscored that urbanization continues to be a major challenge in most parts of the world and urged delegates to be guided by this session's theme. He challenged GC-23 delegates to engage in robust and candid discussions, share country-specific experiences, and devise innovative, pro-poor policies and programmes to address urban development issues.



Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya



Vincent Karega (Rwanda), GC-23 President

Delegates then elected Vincent Karega (Rwanda) as GC-23 President by acclamation. They also elected Konrad Paulsen (Chile), Liu Guangyuan (China) and Sergey Trepelkov (Russian Federation) as Vice-Presidents, and Heli Sirve (Finland) as Rapporteur. Delegates then

adopted the agenda and organization of work (HSP/GC/23/1/Add.1).

The credentials of representatives to the GC were examined by the GC Bureau, and presented to and approved by the closing plenary on Friday.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The high-level segment, chaired by GC President Karega, was held on Monday and Tuesday, addressing the agenda items on: activities of UN-HABITAT, including coordination matters; the special theme of GC-23; and the UN-HABITAT work programme and budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

On Monday afternoon, Clos gave a policy statement and introduced the debate on the items before the high-level segment. Calling for a global mind shift on the management of urban spaces, he described the three strategies of his vision for a new approach to urbanization as: revival of urban planning; creation of urban institutions underpinned by legislation on critical urban issues; and prioritization of job creation by urban stakeholders. Clos further stressed the need to return to the basics of urban management, which should include: better streets; water and sanitation; drainages; some population density; and a percentage of land set aside for streets. Regarding the work of

UN-HABITAT, Clos said that, in the context of UN-HABITAT's resource limitations, its management structure and governance were being reviewed and steps being taken to increase flexibility and adaptability to the new requirements of the world's urban process.

Delegates then undertook a general debate on these agenda items throughout Monday and Tuesday.

Hungary, for the European Union (EU), underscored the need to strengthen the sustainability aspects of urban management, as well as to sustain the social, ecological and economic development of cities. He expressed the EU's willingness to collaborate on the development of human settlements, and highlighted the need for action on, *inter alia*, disaster risk reduction, preparedness and mitigation. Brazil, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), noted the importance of strengthening regional offices and South-South cooperation, and said UN-HABITAT has a role to play in building capacity and encouraging technology transfer. Expressing the Group's willingness to discuss GC-23's theme by discussing country experiences, she also noted the need to discuss the challenges to the wellbeing of city dwellers, together with new ideas to overcome these challenges. Regarding the concept of "green economy," the G-77/China noted that this has not yet achieved consensus. Indonesia, for the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, urged a move from reliance on public sector financing to greater reliance on private finance, *inter alia*, through innovative financing instruments.

Pakistan urged UN-HABITAT to focus on system-wide coherence and to contribute to post-disaster and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. With Tanzania, he also expressed support for organizing a third UN conference on housing and sustainable urban development (HABITAT III). Argentina stressed that environmental measures promoted in the context of a "green economy" should be the result of a transparent multilateral process and should also not be inconsistent with the rules of the World Trade Organization.

Burkina Faso expressed support for UN-HABITAT's new vision, saying he hoped that this vision would be carried out so that UN-HABITAT will continue to be an institution that can assist countries that have been affected by disasters. Nigeria called for the implementation of the Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for All and the Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities, and highlighted the need to work towards a development agenda that can address the new challenges and changing roles of cities. She called on member states to provide sufficient financial support to UN-HABITAT to enable it to effectively address the issues set out in the Executive Director's policy statement.

Spain said UN-HABITAT should: participate in the definition of the urban agenda on a global scale; strengthen its normative dimension; find innovations to address priority activities, given the scarcity of resources; address new challenges and priorities by undertaking governance reform; and combine efficiency and efficacy. France supported the Executive Director's introduction of a renewed vision and organization, and said UN-HABITAT's role should be consolidated as a reference body regarding urban

questions within the UN system. He expressed hope that the Executive Director would give strategic guidelines to implement his proposed reform structure and UN-HABITAT's work programme.

Thailand outlined certain elements needed for effective urban planning, such as: ensuring the inclusiveness of the urban planning process, in particular by including city dwellers, the private sector and youth in the process; ensuring that urban planning takes account of the need to protect infrastructure, increase resilience and reduce the impacts of disasters on people; increasing the amount of financing available for sustainable urban management, for example, by using public-private partnerships; and considering the lifestyle of the people that live in urban areas, ensuring that they are not deprived of their conventional lifestyles and recognizing that there is no universal way to create a good city.

Many countries also gave examples of their experiences of managing urbanization. Uganda highlighted the establishment of a national urban forum with an executive and a permanent forum, and urban fora in five municipalities. Zambia outlined a land development fund for local authorities to open up land for urban development, which forms part of Zambia's low-cost, pro-poor housing programme. Spain reported that her Government is promoting regeneration of cities to achieve greater density, use land effectively and provide sustainable energy and transport on a mass scale. Malawi described the national slum upgrading programme and the development of construction guidelines to ensure disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Morocco informed delegates of the system of regionalization and decentralization in his country that encourages the implementation of better urban housing policies that cater to the urban poor.

Sudan requested additional support from the international community to reconstruct previously war-torn areas and create an "appropriate urban environment." He also drew attention to his Government's urban development fund, a percentage of which is allocated to fund housing for the underprivileged. A representative of the Katuba Women's Association in Zambia noted that local and national governments need to partner with women's organizations at the grassroots level in order to draw from their expertise in affordable housing, community-based projects that improve urban areas, and initiatives that promote

food security for urban residents. Ghana described the Ghana Urban Management Pilot Project, which aims to, among other things, improve the living conditions in urban areas for the inhabitants of four selected Ghanaian cities and improve the quality of municipal services delivery. Countries also highlighted some of the challenges faced in addressing urbanization, such as lack of financing and poor sanitation.

DIALOGUE ON THE SPECIAL THEME OF GC-23

The Dialogue on the special theme of GC-23 was held in two sessions on Wednesday, chaired by GC President Karega. The morning session focused on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land and housing, and in the afternoon, the dialogue focused on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to basic services and infrastructure.

Karega opened the morning session, highlighting the importance of land to the delivery of housing, infrastructure and services. He stressed that efforts to eradicate poverty and enhance sustainable urban development will be futile in the absence of necessary efforts to ensure equitable access to land and security of tenure. Karega further noted that housing plays a central role in economic development by generating employment, eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable green building practices.

Delegates then listened to opening statements from: Joan Clos, UN-HABITAT Executive Director; Elizabeth Thompson, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Coordinator of the Rio+20 Conference; and Ana Maria Sampaio Fernandes, Permanent Representative of the Government of Brazil to UN-HABITAT.

In his statement, Clos outlined key considerations for ensuring sustainable urban development. He highlighted: the importance of streets, stating that at least 30% of land should be set aside for streets; and the need for adequate population density, proposing a population of between 12,000 and 15,000 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Thompson, noting that environmental issues, such as wastewater, energy, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and natural disasters, are at the heart of cities' challenges, underscored that the "green economy" concept will be central to resolving these issues. She stressed that cities are at the heart of the proposed transition to a green economy and said governments must develop dedicated financial mechanisms and incentives to spur clean technology innovation, together with green economy policies and practices to mitigate environmental pressures. Thompson added that, in planning sustainable cities, the cultural heritage and natural charm of cities must be preserved because these attract tourism and foreign exchange.

Fernandes described cities as essential for social and economic development and stressed that issues of good governance of urban settlements is now at the center of concerns for the future of humanity. Discussing the Latin American situation, she said equitable access to land and housing is not yet a reality, but explained that efforts are being made to address this



Sarakasi Trust dancers

problem through, *inter alia*, the creation of mechanisms for slum dwellers to secure financing for self-help housing construction and Brazil's Statute of the City, which provides a framework for urban policies.

Subsequently, Karega introduced four panelists to discuss the theme of the Dialogue: Ahmed Taoufiq Hejira, Minister of Housing, Urbanization and Spatial Planning, Morocco; Peter Goetz, President, Global Parliamentarians for Habitat; Sheila Patel, Chair, Shack/Slum Dwellers International; and Hugo Priemus, Professor, Delft University of Technology, the Netherlands.

Hejira highlighted some of the urbanization challenges facing



Ahmed Taoufiq Hejira, Minister of Housing, Urbanization and Spatial Planning, Morocco

Africa, such as: large numbers of slums and large populations within them; poor access to infrastructure and basic services; and unsuitable land policies. He also outlined some of the challenges faced by Morocco, including: accelerated urbanization and high population concentration along the coastline; high social demand for infrastructure; and complexity of land statutes and information systems.

Hejira then outlined proposals to address these challenges, such as:

reforming land systems to improve land use management; strengthening local authorities to facilitate participatory and responsible decision making; enhancing the role of civil society and local community groups in developing and monitoring urban development projects; and financing decent low-cost housing.

Goetz underlined that the theme for the 21st Century should be "sustainable urbanization." Noting that adequate housing is a basic human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he called for an international dialogue to discuss the best means to provide this basic right in countries where national governments are unable to meet their obligations due to financial constraints. He stressed



Peter Goetz, President, Global Parliamentarians for Habitat

that new partnerships between the public, civil society organizations, the private sector, and local and national governments are key to achieving sustainable urban development.

Emphasizing that the world needs to face some inconvenient truths about urbanization, Patel explained that no planning instrument is prepared for the massive scale of urbanization that the world will face in the future, even as cities grapple with the current



Sheila Patel, Chair, Shack/Slum Dwellers International

rapid rate of urbanization. She called for a mind change that would ensure that citizens' rights to basic services are addressed,

in terms of providing adequate housing and access to public spaces, and making cities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. She also highlighted the need for security of tenure to be incorporated into the vision of future cities.

Priemus suggested a move towards a "tenure-neutral" housing policy that would address the plight of the urban poor and called for the participation of tenants in housing development policies. He cautioned against developing countries adopting housing policies from the developed world, noting that these policies are likely to have attendant repercussions.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates commented on the need to: create gendered land policies; include Habitat Agenda partners in the urban development policy process; work with the Habitat Professionals Forum to produce evidence-led policies on sustainable urban development; ensure that public authorities take the lead in ensuring adequate access to housing, rather than leave this to the private sector; and engage youth in urban planning processes. One delegate highlighted that the power of women to access and control land depends on social empowerment but noted that there is still a gap in achieving their social and economic wellbeing, *inter alia*, because human rights of women, women's access to financing and women's participation in decision making are not enforced.

Delegates also discussed the importance of: including disaster risk reduction practices in urban development plans; involving slum dwellers in the slum upgrading process; and preventing and reducing conflicts, as they invariably lead to displacement of people and an increase in slums and/or slum populations. One delegate raised the issue of rural development, stressing that rural areas are usually the "bread basket" of cities and urban centers. Others proposed that UN-HABITAT establish a fund which developing countries can borrow from to provide low-cost housing in urban areas, and called for donor support to help subsidize the cost of housing for the urban poor, noting that this would reduce the expansion of slums.

In response to questions, Hejira noted that although housing is a universal human right, it also needs to be a constitutional right at the national level. Responding to a question about the cost of housing and who bears this cost, Goetz stressed that the cost of housing needs to be dealt with at the national level. He added that the provision of adequate housing for citizens of a country should be prioritized by the political class. Patel called on delegates to acknowledge that the "poor will continue to build houses whether or not the policy makers agree," and emphasized that what is required is mechanisms to gradually increase the quality of people's habitats.

In the afternoon, the session focused on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to basic services and infrastructure. GC President Karega noted that urbanization has outpaced the provision of basic services like water and sanitation, and that services such as adequate transportation and access to energy are critical for the livelihoods of people, especially the poor. He highlighted the importance of mainstreaming urban issues into the Rio+20 Conference. Karega encouraged delegates to also discuss the themes of green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable urban

development as they relate to basic services and infrastructure. He then introduced the panelists: Vincent Karega, Minister for Infrastructure, Rwanda; Dhamikka Wijaysingha, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Construction, Engineering Services, Housing and Common Amenities, Sri Lanka; Muchadeyi Masunda, Mayor of Harare and Co-President, United Cities and Local Governments; and Stéphane Quéré, Co-Chair, Urban Infrastructure Initiative, World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Karega stressed the critical importance of energy for socio-economic transformation but noted that over 600 million residents of sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to modern energy. He outlined key points that would help increase access to energy, such as: understanding the capacity of energy to leverage proper development, and fast-tracking energy access for the poor in order to improve their standard of living; diversifying energy sources to ensure energy security and reduce energy costs; and tapping into green energy opportunities.

Wijaysingha underlined that water and sanitation are the most important basic needs of humans and emphasized the need to reverse the trend of deteriorating water and sanitation services in



DHAMIKKA WIJAYSINGHA
MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION
ENGINEERING SERVICES
Dhamikka Wijaysingha,
Senior Assistant Secretary,
Ministry of Construction,
Engineering Services,
Housing and Common
Amenities, Sri Lanka

urban areas in order to “prevent cities from becoming epicenters of disease rather than centers of socio-economic development.” She outlined ways of achieving this, such as: inclusive planning that addresses the social, economic and environmental aspects of development; phased implementation that anticipates population growth; promotion of green growth; and reduction of the ecological footprints of cities, such as by reusing urban wastewater and recycling waste.

Masunda presented on the provision of public services by local authorities, good local governance for effective service provision, local governments and their role in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and financing cities. He noted that central governments need to develop an enabling mechanism that sets out clear roles for all stakeholders in a city, including local authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. He also called for strengthening the capacity of local authorities to effectively carry out their role.



MUCHADEYI MASUNDA
MAYOR OF HARARE &
CO-PRESIDENT, UNITED
CITIES AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS

Quéré noted that access to basic services for all is a keystone for achieving the MDGs, and highlighted: the need to clarify the role of the stakeholders living in cities; the importance of forming long-term partnerships to better provide basic services to urban dwellers; and the importance of balanced financing efforts, drawing from both for-profit avenues and public resources.

In the subsequent discussion, delegates highlighted: the importance of integrated urban planning for achieving sustainable development; the need to mainstream sustainability and sustainable use of energy in order to achieve sustainable urban development; and the need for a good relationship between government spheres, including national and local governments, and civil society. Delegates also discussed the green economy concept, with one noting that for the concept to be sustainable and successful, there should be no veiled restrictions to trade. Other delegates underscored the need for cities to be more compact, environmentally-sustainable and efficient in their service provision to citizens.

Responding to comments and questions, Karega lauded Kenya for working on implementing sustainable energy policies and regulating charcoal production and use, and called on countries to look into new ways of generating energy for their citizens. He described the situation in Rwanda, where the government is committed to delivery of quality goods and services to the public and highlighted that to do this: technocrats, not politicians, hold local government offices; performance contracts have been introduced to create better accountability of public funds; and a monitoring and evaluation system has been put in place to track the progress of projects.

Wijaysingha called for increased capacity building for local authorities, as well as financial assistance and knowledge sharing to promote better service provision to citizens. Masunda highlighted partnerships with community-based organizations that create a sense of citizen ownership of city projects. He also encouraged local authority practitioners to enter into alliances with “more mature cities,” for sharing of lessons and best practices. Quéré called for stakeholder involvement in local level urban planning, agreeing with Masunda that this encourages community ownership.



STÉPHANE QUÉRÉ
CO-CHAIR, URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
INITIATIVE, WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Stéphane Quéré, Co-Chair,
Urban Infrastructure
Initiative, World Business
Council for Sustainable
Development

Anna Maria Argilagos, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, provided an overview of some of the messages from the day’s sessions, such as recommendations for progress in the renewable energy sector, investment in transportation for all and integrated resource management. She also highlighted the call for new partnerships in planning sustainable cities and noted that sustainability goes hand-in-hand with inclusiveness and a participatory approach.

Rapporteur Heli Sirve then presented her report on the Dialogue, highlighting key messages, including that: improving the urban planning process is a key instrument for addressing the slum challenge; housing can contribute to all three dimensions of sustainable urban development; promoting energy security for the poor is a means of fast-tracking their development; and sustainable urbanization and green growth are mutually enforcing pathways.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee of the Whole (COW), chaired by GC Vice President Guangyuan, met from Monday to Thursday, to consider the following agenda items: activities of UN-HABITAT, including coordination matters; the work programme and budget for the biennium 2012-2013; and the provisional agenda and other arrangements for GC-24.



GC Vice-President Liu Guangyuan (China)

ACTIVITIES OF UN-HABITAT, INCLUDING COORDINATION MATTERS: On Monday afternoon, Björk-Klevby introduced the relevant documents (HSP/GC/23/2, and Add.1-7; HSP/GC/23/INFs/2-4 and 7). Yvonne Khamati, Chair of UN-HABITAT's Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), introduced the CPR's report on its work during the intersessional period and its draft resolutions (HSP/GC/23/3 and Add.1).

In the ensuing discussion, Norway, with Kenya and Uganda, welcomed the convening of a HABITAT III. Norway suggested that the conference be convened in conjunction with the World Urban Forum scheduled for 2016.

Burkina Faso expressed satisfaction with the Executive Director's policy statement, but noted that the question of food insecurity in rapidly growing cities has not been tackled. Mexico lauded the clarity of the Executive Director's policy statement and noted that it presented a "fresh approach to goal-setting in UN-HABITAT." Morocco requested clarification on how the Executive Director's report on UN-HABITAT's activities would tackle sustainability in relation to urban land and housing, and called for clear guidance on governance mechanisms to attain this sustainability.

WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: On Tuesday morning, the COW considered the UN-HABITAT work programme and budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (HSP/GC/23/5). In his introduction, Clos explained that the document had already gone through rigorous review and urged delegates to approve it. Norway suggested having: a new organizational structure; a unified planning and reporting system for greater transparency and accountability; specific criteria for resource allocation; a central strategic management sector; an independent evaluation function based on a biennial reporting system; and greater concentration on the competence and commitment of UN-HABITAT staff.

Namibia sought clarification about the funds allocated for the proposed review of UN-HABITAT's organizational structure. Clos clarified that the amount allocated to the structural review would diminish with any reduction in the budget. He also noted that 5% of the budget had been set aside for any restructuring or redistribution required. The EU welcomed the proposed review of UN-HABITAT's organizational structure and called for the CPR to give progress reports on this review. The Philippines

welcomed the programme of work and budget, noting that UN-HABITAT's focus areas can be achieved through stronger partnerships between countries. The document was forwarded to the drafting committee for further consideration.

The Secretariat introduced the documents for the medium-term strategic and institutional plan (HSP/GC/23/5/Add.2 and 3). The COW approved the document and forwarded it to the plenary.

The Secretariat then introduced the evaluation of the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations (ERSO) programme (HSP/GC/23/5/Add.4), noting that the main function of this document is to request a transfer of the ERSO portfolio to a partner financial institution that is better placed to handle the programme's financial obligations. The document also proposes undertaking a study to identify the best organization to continue the programme. The EU, with Norway, welcomed the call to transfer the ERSO portfolio, and said that discussions on the best financial organization to take over the programme should be held in close consultation with the CPR. Norway stressed that this was an opportunity for UN-HABITAT to demonstrate its financial acumen and competence. The COW then approved the document and forwarded it to the plenary.

The Secretariat also introduced the document on the Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development (HSP/GC/23/5/Add.5), lauding Norway for funding the initiative. The COW approved the document and forwarded it to the plenary.

Finally, the Secretariat introduced the progress report on the implementation of the gender equality action plan 2008-2013 (HSP/GC/23/5/Add.6). Morocco welcomed the report and said that it was necessary to use local authorities to streamline gender issues at the grassroots level. The COW approved the document and forwarded it to the plenary.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR GC-24: On Thursday morning, the COW discussed the provisional agenda and other arrangements for GC-24. The Secretariat explained that although the provisional agenda for GC-24 (HSP/GC/23/6) has been prepared, the dates of the meeting have not yet been set. Thailand requested that GC-24 not be convened in April because the Thai New Year falls in April. The Secretariat said it would take this into consideration. The COW forwarded the provisional agenda for adoption by the plenary.



The Kenyan stand at the meeting

REPORT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE: The Drafting Committee met from Tuesday to Thursday. On Thursday evening, the COW considered the report of the Drafting Committee and agreed to forward the 18 draft resolutions agreed on by the Drafting Committee to the plenary for adoption.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT: The COW adopted its draft report (HSP/GC/23/CW/L.1 and Add.1) on Thursday evening.

RESOLUTIONS

Eleven draft resolutions (HSP/GC/23/L.1-11) were submitted by the CPR for consideration by GC-23. An additional eight draft resolutions were introduced during the session, with one being later withdrawn, leaving a total of 18 draft resolutions for consideration by the Drafting Committee which met from Tuesday to Thursday. All draft resolutions were adopted by the closing plenary on Friday.

Gender equality and empowerment of women in sustainable urban development: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.1/Rev.1), the GC requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*: strengthen the Gender Mainstreaming Unit, and with the Unit, manage a unified system of gender focal points and a gender task force effective throughout UN-HABITAT; encourage the establishment of a consultative mechanism with the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and other relevant agencies, to promote coherence, coordination and alignment within the UN system, and to involve grassroots women and community-based organizations in informing these consultations; and to set up an advisory group on gender issues to advise the Executive Director on all issues related to gender mainstreaming in UN-HABITAT's work.

Human Settlements Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.2/Rev.1), the GC, among other things, encourages the Palestinian Authority to, with UN-HABITAT's support, continue its efforts and further enhance its legal and institutional framework, policies and practices related to planning, land and housing so as to prepare the ground for sustainable urbanization; and requests the Executive Director to set up and chair an advisory board to provide policy guidance to the Special Human Settlement Programme for the Palestinian People and its Technical Cooperation Trust Fund.

Support for pro-poor housing: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.3/Rev.1), the GC: encourages the Executive Director to secure technical assistance to support housing and pro-poor housing initiatives in all stages of planning and implementation, and to secure capacity building in the fields of project management and provision of infrastructure; and calls on all member States, in a position to do so, as well as international institutions, to support the projects in Iraq.

Sustainable Urban Development through Access to Quality Urban Public Spaces: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.4/Rev.1), the GC, *inter alia*, invites governments to formulate and implement sustainable urban development policies that promote socially just and environmentally-balanced

uses of urban public space in conditions of urban security and gender equity. It also invites governments and local authorities to facilitate the use of public spaces of cities, such as streets, parks and markets, to foster social, cultural, economic and environmental convergences so that all citizens have access to public spaces in a socially just landscape and within resilient environmental conditions. The GC further requests the Executive Director to advance the agenda on place-making and public spaces in a manner that will: consolidate local and international approaches to creating inclusive cities; enhance UN-HABITAT partners and local authorities' knowledge of place-making, public spaces and the quality of urban life; and facilitate and implement exchange, cooperation and research between partners working in this field.

World Urban Forum: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.5/Rev.1), the GC requests the Executive Director, with the CPR, to implement the main findings from the lessons learned from the review of the first four sessions of the World Urban Forum, and to assess the impact and outcome of each Forum using a results-based approach. The GC also requests the Executive Director to strengthen coordination, as appropriate, including by enhancing the interdivisional support mechanism of the Forum.

Implementation of the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan and the Strengthening of the AMCHUD Secretariat: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.6/Rev.1), the GC welcomes the Bamako Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) in November 2010; takes note of the commitment by AMCHUD member States to make an annual contribution of US\$10,000 to support AMCHUD's programmes; welcomes AMCHUD's decision to establish a permanent secretariat and accept Kenya's offer to host it; and invites UN-HABITAT to continue to support AMCHUD in its implementation of resolutions and action plans, and to provide financial and capacity support to its work programme.

Urban Youth Development: The Next Step: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.8/Rev.1), the GC, *inter alia*, encourages governments to give priority and support to urban youth-led development initiatives and invites multilateral agencies and other stakeholders to engage urban young people in participatory processes of sustainable urban development. It also encourages the Executive Director to: further strengthen the participation of young people across UN-HABITAT's activities through the involvement of the Youth Advisory Board; and mainstream urban youth in focus areas in the strategic plan for 2014–2019.

Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.9), the GC takes note of the Executive Director's report on HABITAT III and invites the Secretary-General to include its ideas and proposals in his report to be considered by the UN General Assembly at its 66th session. The GC also takes note of the observations made in the Executive Director's report, in particular the proposed aims of Habitat III, and invites the General Assembly to deliberate further, at its 66th session, on the question of convening Habitat III in 2016.

Global and National Strategies and Frameworks for Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers beyond the MDGs

Target: In the resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.10), the GC, *inter alia*: invites governments and regional and local authorities to set voluntary and realistic 2020 targets for improving the lives of slum-dwellers through the formulation and implementation of national urban development strategies; requests UN-HABITAT to provide technical and advisory assistance to governments and others wishing to, *inter alia*, set such targets and prepare slum prevention and upgrading strategies and plans; and invites the international community and financial institutions to contribute to UN-HABITAT to enable it assist developing countries in mobilizing public investment and private capital for slum upgrading, shelter and basic services.

Future Activities by UN-HABITAT in Urban Economy and Financial Mechanisms for Urban Upgrading, Housing and Basic Services for the Urban Poor: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.11), the GC requests the Executive Director to: shift the focus of UN-HABITAT's work in the area of human settlements financing towards strengthening its normative approaches to urban economy and the promotion of finance for urban upgrading, housing and basic services for the urban poor; explore and select a partnership model with development finance institutions for future lending, guarantee and financial advisory services in the urban upgrading and housing finance sectors; and transfer either the ERSO programme portfolio or its management, and the technical loan guarantee oversight responsibilities of the slum upgrading facility programme, to an appropriate external development finance partner.

UN-HABITAT's work programme and budget for the biennium 2012-2013: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.12), the GC approves the proposed work programme and budget for 2012-2013, with a total general purpose budget of US\$70,221,500 and a special purpose budget of US\$110,524,800. It also approves an increase in the general-purpose statutory reserve from US\$6,619,500 to US\$7,022,150. The GC also requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*: develop a strategic plan for 2014-2019, including a road map for preparatory work; and report to governments biannually and to GC-24, progress made in the implementation of UN-HABITAT's work programme activities.

Coordinated Implementation of the Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for All and the Guidelines on Decentralization and Strengthening of Local Authorities: In the resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.13), the GC: invites governments to increase efforts to adapt and implement the two sets of guidelines in a coordinated manner and according to national circumstances; invites all relevant UN entities to engage with UN-HABITAT to ensure that their initiatives related to shelter and basic services benefit from the two sets of guidelines; and calls on UN-HABITAT to assist interested countries, particularly developing countries, to undertake coordinated adaptation and implementation of the guidelines.

Governance of UN-HABITAT: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.14), the GC takes note of the Executive Director's report on the review of UN-HABITAT's governance structure, as well as of the range of options presented in the review, and

requests the Executive Director, jointly with the CPR, to further examine those options to identify a preferred option, if necessary. It also requests the Executive Director, with the CPR, to develop a procedure for the examination phase, seek consensus on the identified option by GC member States, and develop an action plan that clearly defines all steps to be taken.

Sustainable Urban Development through Policies for Safer Cities and Urban Crime Prevention: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.15), the GC: encourages member States to consider, adopt and strengthen effective urban crime prevention responses, and reinforce the coordination of security, safety, and social and economic policies to build safer cities; requests UN-HABITAT, in cooperation with the relevant UN bodies, to compile best practices on policies, norms and institutional conditions related to urban crime prevention within the context of sustainable human settlements and urban development; and calls on UN-HABITAT to draft safer cities guidelines on access and delivery of urban crime prevention within the context of sustainable urban development.

Country Activities by UN-HABITAT: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.16), the GC, *inter alia*, requests the Executive Director to: contribute to post-disaster and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in affected countries; improve the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned from country activities and to ensure that those lessons feed into UN-HABITAT's global normative work; and develop subregional, regional and interregional programmes as a mechanism to promote South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, through exchanges of experts, best practices and policy options.

Formulation of a Global Housing Strategy: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.17), the GC requests the Executive Director, in consultation with governments, to review the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and to formulate a new global housing strategy, taking into account the challenges of providing adequate and sustainable housing and basic infrastructure and the need to integrate housing policies into broader urban planning strategies and governmental actions.

Sustainable Urban Development through Expanding Equitable Access to Land, Housing, Basic Services and Infrastructure: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.18), the GC encourages governments and Habitat Agenda partners to: consider increasing urban density through intensification of land use; promote public transport and mass transit systems, non-motorized transport, as well as the provision of equitable space for pedestrians and cyclists; and undertake coordinated action to promote cities and biodiversity as an integral part of their sustainable urban development strategies.

With regard to access to land, basic services and infrastructure, the GC encourages governments and Habitat Agenda partners to, among other things: strengthen the capacities of administrative and financial institutions and delivery systems responsible for expanding access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure; and promote integrated urban governance to foster the participation of beneficiary groups in the decision-making process.

Monday, 18 April 2011

With regard to land issues, the GC encourages governments and Habitat Agenda partners to: implement land policy development and regulatory and procedural reform programmes to achieve sustainable urban development and to better manage climate change; promote security of tenure for all; and review and improve urban land governance mechanisms.

With regard to housing issues, the GC encourages governments and Habitat Agenda partners to: promote enabling housing policies, including slum upgrading initiatives, and reforms that facilitate the delivery of affordable and adequate housing solutions for all social groups; and enhance the contribution of the housing sector to national economic development through policy and institutional reforms.

Natural disaster risk reduction, preparedness, prevention and mitigation: In this resolution (HSP/GC/23/CRP.19), the GC requests UN-HABITAT to support the implementation of regional, subregional, national and local urban risk reduction and early warning programmes, including the production of guidelines and training programmes and the collection and dissemination of best practices. It further requests the Executive Director to ensure that all necessary financial and administrative mechanisms, including dedicated extra-budgetary resources, are in place to enable rapid deployment of urban experts to address imminent urban natural disaster risk and immediate needs, following natural disasters. The GC also encourages governments and relevant organizations to provide, upon request, rapid assistance to countries affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies in their rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Friday morning, GC President Karega invited delegates to consider the draft reports of the COW and GC-23. GC Vice-President Trepelkov introduced the COW's draft report (HSP/GC/23/CW/L.1 and Add.1). He reported that the COW had considered and endorsed the provisional agenda for GC-24, while entrusting the Secretariat to continue its consultations on the exact dates for the meeting. The plenary adopted the draft report of the COW. Rapporteur Sirve introduced the report of GC-23 (HSP/GC/23/L.12 and Add.1-2), which was also adopted by the plenary without amendment.

The plenary then considered the draft resolutions before GC-23 (see previous section). The Chair of the Drafting Committee, Vice-President Paulsen, reported on the work of the Drafting Committee that had met from Tuesday to Thursday. He explained that the Committee had considered and reached agreement on 18 out of the 19 resolutions before it, with one of the resolutions having been withdrawn by the country that submitted it. President Karega noted that the EU had alerted the Secretariat to a number of editorial issues within the resolutions and said these issues had been noted and addressed. He then invited delegates to adopt the resolutions. The 18 resolutions were adopted without amendment.

Delegates then considered the provisional agenda and other arrangements for GC-24. They agreed that GC-24 should be held in Nairobi in 2013. The Republic of Korea, for the Asian Group, suggested that the session be held in either May or June, saying

the proposed dates in April are too close to the UNEP GC. The Secretariat noted this request and said they would consult the General Assembly's Economic and Social Committee on the best possible dates.

In his closing statement, Executive Director Clos expressed his appreciation to all those who had contributed to the success of the meeting. Noting that Deputy Executive Director Björk-Klevby would be retiring soon, he thanked her for all her hard work during her 5 years of service. Clos reiterated that UN-HABITAT is challenging itself through a new governance review and re-elaboration of policies. He highlighted that, although the organization has a heavy agenda, it is prepared to carry it out effectively.

Hungary, for the EU, stressed that implementing sustainable urban development will further the agenda of a green economy, and said the discussions during GC-23 should feed into the upcoming Rio+20 Conference. Brazil, for the G-77/China, lauded the important work done at the session, and called on UN-HABITAT to contribute its experiences in slum upgrading and creating sustainable cities at the Rio+20 Conference. Rwanda, for the African Group, welcomed Kenya's bid to host the AMCHUD Secretariat, and urged all UN-HABITAT member States to provide adequate, stable and predictable financial resources to enable UN-HABITAT to meet its goals on time. The Russian Federation, for the Central and Eastern European Group, expressed deep satisfaction with the work done at the session, and joined the GC in wishing Björk-Klevby well on her retirement. Cuba, for the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries, lauded the Executive Director for his clear message on the way forward for UN-HABITAT, and called for renewed efforts to create sustainable solutions to the issues faced by shack and slum dwellers.

GC President Karega thanked all the delegates for their participation and valuable contributions. He pledged that the Bureau of the GC will continue to work closely with the Executive Director's office to ensure effective implementation of the reforms and programmes contained in the resolutions. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 12.10pm.



UN-HABITAT Executive Director Clos shakes hands with GC-23 President Karega at the end of the session