

STATEMENT BY MR. GOPINATH PANDURANG MUNDE, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON
AGENDA ITEM 21 – “IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS [HABITAT II] AND STRENGTHENING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME [UN-HABITAT]’ AT THE
SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 02, 2010

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Secretary General for the report on the agenda item under discussion today. India associates itself with the statement delivered by Yemen on behalf of the G-77.



Majority of the world population today lives in urban areas. It is projected that by 2050 this figure would go up to 70% with developing countries accounting for most of the change. Such a population settlement scenario, especially in developing countries, entails new challenges for policy planners and the way the global community approaches sustainable development.

The development role of UN-Habitat, urban planners, municipal and local governments and other stakeholders, thus, assumes far greater importance. The UN-Habitat with its valuable experience of working in a dynamic urban setting can play an important role in enriching the discussions on sustainable development at the Rio+20.

India supports the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

We are working for governance reform in our local bodies to make them a catalyst for change. Our efforts have involved greater representation of all sections of society in local authorities, and expansion of their functional domain to focus on environment, local economic development, as well as innovative resource mobilization.

Mr. Chairperson,

India is a founding member of UN-Habitat and has been an active member of the organization. We support the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2008-2013, particularly the focus on strengthening the catalytic and pre-investment role of UN-Habitat.

In this context, we urge upon all entities to contribute to further capitalization of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation so as to enable UN-Habitat to provide more financial and seed capital support for slum upgrading and prevention, as well for pro-poor investment in urban water and sanitation.

We welcome the developments towards early operationalization of the reimbursable seeding operations activities, which will permit UN-Habitat to assist national housing development programmes. India has been active, particularly through public housing finance institutions, in promoting institutional housing finance for the poor and the economically weaker sections.

Mr. Chairperson,

India's economic growth in the past decades has led to a massive shift in its population from rural to urban areas. This trend would continue in the future. We have added 65 million people to our urban population in the decade of the 90's alone, and we are poised to having nearly 50% of India living in our cities by the earlier part of the present century.

To meet the challenges of rapid urban development in an integrated manner, India launched a National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy in 2007. The policy seeks to realize the goal of "Affordable Housing for All", through sustainable development of

habitat, towards ensuring equitable supply of land, shelter and services at affordable prices to all sections of society.

An important element of this policy is the "Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission". This programme seeks to provide seven basic services to the poor, namely, land tenure, affordable shelter, water, sanitation, education, health and social security.

With majority of its population still living in rural areas, India has also been actively promoting affordable rural housing. Dedicated programmes such as "Indira Awaas Yojna", provide direct support through grant-in-aid for construction of dwelling units and upgradation of temporary houses.

The report of the Secretary-General has highlighted the significance of rational land-use planning, green building codes and energy efficient transport options to reducing energy consumption and emissions. In this context, I am happy to mention that India has adopted an Energy Conservation Act and an Energy Efficiency Code for new commercial buildings, and has been promoting use of compressed natural gas for public transport.

Mr. Chairperson,

It is satisfying that the resource mobilization efforts of UN-Habitat have borne fruit. However, it is of concern that regular budget, which provides non-earmarked and predictable funding, remains low. We fully support the demand for enhanced budgetary resources for UN-Habitat.

Enhanced efforts by the international community to provide financial and technical assistance, including transfer of technology, in the areas of poverty eradication and infrastructure support, remain crucial if the human settlements related Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved by developing countries.

I would like to highlight that India has been privileged to share appropriate housing technology, particularly in the field of cost-effective, environment friendly and disaster resistant construction, with fellow developing countries within the framework of South-South cooperation. The international community could strengthen such initiatives through triangular cooperation.

I thank you.

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