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Integration segment

Summary record of the 19th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 29 May 2014, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Drobnjak (Vice-President) (Croatia)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Sustainable urbanization *(continued)*

1. *A panel discussion entitled “A conversation on sustainable urbanization”, moderated by Ms. Afaf Konja (Spokesperson for the President of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly), was held. The panellists were Mr. Akwasi Opong-Fosu (Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana); Mr. Patrick Ho Chi Ping (Secretary-General of the China Energy Fund Committee); Mr. Don Chen (Just Cities Initiative, Ford Foundation); Mr. Gary Lawrence (Corporate Vice-President and Chief Sustainability Officer, AECOM); Mr. Richard Florida (University of Toronto and New York University; and Senior Editor, The Atlantic); and Ms. Anne Hidalgo (Mayor of Paris; and Co-President of United Cities and Local Governments), who delivered a keynote address. The panellists made statements and an interactive discussion ensued, during which the panellists and the keynote speaker responded to questions posed by the moderator.*

2. *An interactive discussion on the topic “The way forward in sustainable urbanization”, moderated by Mr. Richard Florida (University of Toronto and New York University; and Senior Editor, The Atlantic), was held. Mr. Clos (Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme) delivered a keynote address. Representatives from the Mayors Adaptation Forum held at the Resilient Cities Congress and hosted by Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) in Bonn, Germany, joined the discussion via video link. The moderator and the keynote speaker responded to comments and questions from the representatives of Germany and India; a representative of the non-governmental organization New Future Foundation, in consultative status with the Council; invited representatives of the non-governmental organizations Slum Dwellers International and Communitas Coalition; and invited representatives of Colby Gallery International, United States Sustainable Development Corporation, and Archonica Architects. Mr. Andrew Reynolds (United States of America), Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, also made a statement.*

Conclusion of the segment

3. **The President** said that the first ever integration segment had been a success, serving as a unique platform that had brought together Member States, local government officials, the United Nations system, the Council’s subsidiary bodies, civil society representatives and other actors to stimulate dialogue on how sustainable urbanization could be achieved through incorporating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The inputs of high-ranking participants had been invaluable in providing key recommendations, sustainable solutions and innovative ideas that would enhance the quality of the ensuing policy decisions. The integration segment had also further strengthened the Council’s role in promoting effective collaboration and coordination between various stakeholders to produce a large-scale response to the emerging cross-sector challenges to sustainable development.

4. Over the three days of the segment, there had been an exchange of regional, national and local experiences, practices and strategies that had demonstrated how urbanization could be transformational in the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, which implied a balanced consideration of all three dimensions. Multi-stakeholder dialogue on the various dimensions of urbanization, namely the demographic, economic, environmental, institutional and socio-spatial challenges faced, had helped to identify the right tools and instruments to facilitate an integrated and balanced sustainable development approach. The interactive panel discussions had generated a number of substantive responses to the key issues of sustainable urbanization, particularly in addressing urban prosperity and urban inequities, promoting sustainable urbanization in Africa and identifying effective governance, policy-making and planning mechanisms to support rapid urban growth. To address those complex, multi-dimensional issues, local authorities must partner with national Governments as well as other stakeholders to promote a more holistic and integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities, which would be critical in creating employment opportunities, as well as in providing efficient transportation and communication networks, greener buildings, efficient human settlements and service delivery systems, improved air and water quality, reduced waste, improved disaster preparedness and response and increased climate resilience. In order

to develop and promote multidimensional integrated responses, capacity-building would be necessary to build more effective institutions that could improve policy coordination and cohesiveness. To that end, urban planning and design required the concentrated action of all levels of government alongside cross-sector coordination to make cities more resilient. Adequate technical capacity to analyse and manage those processes was also needed.

5. Bearing in mind the inherent contribution of cities as engines of economic growth and socioeconomic development, it was important to continue to generate and build upon the responses of the international community to address the interlinkages between sustainable development and urbanization. It was therefore critical that the potential of urban areas should be harnessed to promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies in order to achieve sustainable, equitable and inclusive development for all. Long-term sustainability could only be realized with new linkages and stronger ties among various tiers of government. All stakeholders, including national Governments, local authorities, the United Nations system and civil society actors must work together to promote a holistic and integrated approach to urbanization.

6. The recommendations and conclusions reached during the segment would serve as inputs to the Council's high-level segment, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council, and would also serve as the Council's contribution to Habitat III in 2016.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.