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Chair: Mr. Talbot (Guyana)
later: Mr. Islam (Vice-Chair) (Bangladesh)

Contents

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) (A/67/263 and A/67/316)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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) (A/67/263 and A/67/316; E/2012/65)

1. **Mr. Close** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of UN-Habitat (A/67/263) and the report on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2012/65).

2. The first of those two reports concluded with a number of recommendations, relating mostly to the scope, modalities, format and organization of Habitat III. The report also described the UN-Habitat governance review and organizational reform. The Consultative Group on Governance Review had recruited a consultant, who had visited New York in October to collect information on the governance models of other United Nations agencies. The Governing Council was expected to consider the proposals on governance reform at its session in April 2013, after which the proposals would be submitted to the General Assembly. As regards organizational reform, in addition to the developments described in detail in the report, he announced that an interim version of the UN-Habitat Project Accrual and Accountability System was functional and had significantly improved decision making in all key management areas, including finance, human resources, project formulation and implementation, project monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

3. UN-Habitat continued to be affected by the extended economic downturn. However, effective cost control measures had continued and the situation was firmly in hand. Total income in the first eight months of 2012 had amounted to \$103 million: \$10.7 million for the regular budget, \$6.6 million as general-purpose contributions to the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and \$85.7 million for Foundation and technical cooperation activities. Total income was 45 per cent below the level of resources received during the first eight months of 2011. However, it was projected that general purpose income for 2012 would reach \$11.6 million by year end.

4. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat had continued to make good progress in the implementation of all six focus areas of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013. A self-assessment carried out at the end of June 2012 had shown that, of the plan's 19 expected accomplishments: 10 had a delivery rate above 75 per cent; 7 had a delivery rate between 50 per cent and 75 per cent; and only 2 had a delivery rate under 25 per cent.

5. Regarding the sixth session of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat was grateful to the Italian Government the region of Campania and the city of Naples for hosting the session, as well as to the European Commission, France, Norway and the United States of America for their financial contributions towards increasing the participation of least developed countries and vulnerable groups. A total of 440 different meetings had been held, or almost one hundred more than during the previous session, with an attendance of 8,209 people from a record 151 countries and 80 per cent of least developed countries represented. Media attendance had also been the highest ever. For the first time, the Forum had fully integrated social media such as Facebook and Twitter and sessions had been streamed live on the Internet. An online television channel had been created where recorded sessions of the World Urban Forum could still be watched. Medellin, Colombia, had offered to host the seventh session of the Forum, which would be held in 2014.

6. In closing, he urged the Committee to expedite the discussion and adoption of a resolution on the scope, modalities, format and organization of Habitat III and thus enable the preparatory process for the Conference to begin soon. Member States were likewise urged to initiate inclusive processes of country-level preparations for Habitat III, including through National Habitat Committees or National Urban Forums. Lastly, he called on Member States to support the establishment of a trust fund for Habitat III and make voluntary contributions to it. As Secretary-General of Habitat III, he would endeavour to make the preparatory process as innovative as possible, building on lessons learned from recent experiences, including Rio+20.

7. **The Chair** expressed sympathy and solidarity on behalf of the members of the Committee to the Governments and peoples of all the countries affected

by Hurricane Sandy and condolences for the loss of life. The hurricane had affected UN-Habitat too and provided a reminder of the need for shelter that could both adapt to changing climate conditions and withstand their effects.

8. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that UN-Habitat played a key role in helping developing countries address their human settlement and urban challenges and sustainable development overall, particularly in view of the unprecedented pace of urbanization. In the absence of effective urban planning, provision of housing, water, sanitation and other basic necessities in order to keep pace with that change was one of the most significant challenges. Climate change and other negative environmental trends also posed challenges, as cities in developing countries lacked the capacity to formulate and implement climate change measures and build the requisite infrastructure to withstand the consequences of climate change and natural disasters.

9. The Rio+20 outcome document, "The future we want", stressed the need to strengthen coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda with the active involvement of all relevant United Nations entities. UN-Habitat already played a key role in that regard and could play a stronger role in coordinating sustainable urban development activities within the United Nations system. However, UN-Habitat was not receiving the necessary core funding. The international community needed to provide the required support and adequate and predictable contributions to ensure the timely, effective and global implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of its goals. The Group looked forward to creative discussions with a view to improving the lives of slum dwellers significantly, as called for in the Millennium Declaration, and to addressing persistent and emerging issues. The Group welcomed resolution 23/9 adopted by the UN-Habitat Governing Council in April 2011 inviting Governments and regional and local authorities to enumerate slum populations and set voluntary and realistic national, regional and local targets for slum improvement to be attained by 2020; however, UN-Habitat and developing countries needed the financial support to achieve those objectives.

10. The Group welcomed the appointment of the Habitat III Secretary-General, but called on the United Nations Secretary-General to provide the necessary support for the Conference and its preparatory process,

including keeping its resource needs under review. The Habitat III Secretary-General should seek innovative ways of supporting the preparatory process and the Conference most efficiently and effectively, while ensuring the effective contribution, and active participation, of all national and local governments and other Habitat Agenda partners. International and bilateral donors must support the preparatory process and the Conference by making voluntary contributions and encouraging the involvement of developing countries.

11. **Mr. Blair** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that, while sustainable human settlement and adequate shelter should be a concern for all countries, it was primarily developing countries that confronted the insurmountable challenges caused by growth in slums and lack of access to water, sanitation and other basic essentials. Consequently, CARICOM called on the United Nations Secretary-General to take all necessary steps to support the preparatory process for Habitat III, including by providing financial and conference services. For his part, the Habitat III Secretary-General should ensure the active participation of Member States, particularly developing countries, and other relevant stakeholders in the regional and international preparatory process and the Conference itself.

12. UN-Habitat had made good progress in sensitizing the international community to the impact of rapid urbanization. However, it was essential to change consumption patterns and lifestyles, notably in terms of land use and urban sprawl. Sustainable patterns of consumption and production were required if the UN-Habitat Agenda were to be implemented. However, they must respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and take into account the needs of developing countries. Attainment of the relevant internationally agreed goals, particularly in terms of adequate shelter, sustainable human settlements and slum eradication, depended on a comprehensive and integrated approach backed by nationally owned and led policies. Capacity-building at regional levels should also be prioritized and could be achieved, in part, by sharing experiences and formulating and implementing common regional policy within the context of the Habitat Agenda and the MDGs.

13. The Community called on development partners to provide it with financial and technical support to

address growing national and regional demands. UN-Habitat's current resources were disproportionate to its many tasks and the imbalance between core and non-core funding was a concern. CARICOM reiterated its call for more predictable and reliable funding, particularly for UN-Habitat. Unpredictability created an imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions and a dependency on a small number of donors, thereby undermining UN-Habitat's ability to meet Member States' requirements and hampering the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda according to developing countries' national priorities.

14. **Mr. Thu** (Myanmar), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the ideal of sustainable, inclusive cities was still far from reality, despite the good management of urban development in all regions. As the proportion of people living in urban environments grew, so did the need to strengthen the urban focus of poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts. Urbanization had clearly been a source of development and could be a powerful tool in transforming developing countries' production capacities and income levels.

15. ASEAN welcomed the formal recognition by world leaders at Rio+20 that cities played an important role in sustainable development and the strong commitment from all stakeholders at the sixth session of the World Urban Forum to move away from seeing urbanization as a problem and towards seeing it as a tool for development. The preparatory process for Habitat III would be important in addressing the new challenges and opportunities that had arisen since Habitat II. ASEAN was encouraged that a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements could provide for affordable housing and infrastructure and prioritize slum upgrading and urban regeneration. The four prerequisites promoted by UN-Habitat to ensure that developing countries' cities and towns played their roles as effective tools for national development were: effective political decision-making; good understanding of the use and productivity of common goods; effective governance capacity; and adequate technical capacity to plan, develop and manage planned urban expansion.

16. ASEAN leaders had committed to undertake, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, various programmes to raise awareness of climate change adaptation and mitigation and of practices to promote a low-emissions society,

including by incorporating climate change into educational curricula. ASEAN member States had fully cooperated with UN-Habitat in encouraging public and private stakeholders to participate in the decision-making and implementation of affordable housing projects. Cities must be ecological, liveable and people-oriented and there must be harmonious coexistence of human, nature and city. Synergies between urbanization and development should help to improve quality of life for millions of people. ASEAN stood ready to cooperate with all partners in creating the smart, people-oriented city of the twenty-first century, which would be free of the inefficient, unsustainable urban habits of its predecessors.

17. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that climate change and global crises, including the fuel and food crisis, had a disproportionate impact on the poor and had resulted in unprecedented urban poverty, malnutrition and environmental degradation, particularly in least developed countries. Worldwide, more than 800 million people were living in slums or slum-like conditions and it was projected that, by 2030, two thirds of the global population would be living in urban areas. That would cause further slum expansion, and transform national and global consumption and production patterns.

18. Within the framework of the MDGs, the international community aimed to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020. Bangladesh welcomed the fact that sustainable urbanization was identified as a key goal in the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, endorsed by UN-Habitat, and called on the international community to provide that organization with adequate and dependable funding.

19. Sustainable urbanization must be integrated into national development strategies, and developing countries must be provided with adequate resources to promote sustainable urban development that improved the architectural fabric of cities, and ensured that their inhabitants enjoyed access to basic services and employment. However, although it was estimated that \$20 billion a year was required to upgrade existing slums and prevent the formation of new ones, donors had provided only \$2 billion a year in ODA for that purpose over the previous decade. Developed countries were therefore urged to increase such assistance in

order, in particular, to support pro-poor housing and urban development. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that actions to promote sustainable urbanization complemented, and did not replace, actions to promote rural development or provide health and education services.

20. Reports by the Secretary-General on urban development had failed to provide adequate data on least developed countries. Bangladesh hoped that future reports would do so.

21. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) said that his country shared the global commitment to sustainable urbanization and called for a holistic approach to urban development and human settlements which involved affordable accommodation and infrastructure and prioritized slum upgrading and urban regeneration.

22. There was a key link between sustainable development and risk management. Thus, following the earthquake that had hit the country in February 2010, Chile had formulated and implemented a rebuilding plan that took into account cities' level of exposure to potential natural disasters with a view to making them safer and more resistant. Chile had also developed a new national urban development policy that it hoped to implement later in the year. Internationally, it was important to continue strengthening UN-Habitat in order for it to meet current demands. The current review process of UN-Habitat's governance structure was crucial, as was providing the necessary financial resources.

23. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that a number of significant developments and challenges had emerged since Habitat II in 1996. Habitat III should be built on the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals. Malaysia supported General Assembly resolution 66/207 and hoped that Habitat III and its preparatory process would ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection, which were interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

24. UN-Habitat's governance review process should conclude by the end of 2012 and result in greater transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness. Malaysia would continue to support the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013 and financing of pro-poor housing and urban

development, in the hope that the Plan would promote coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and improve the living conditions of the urban poor by enabling Governments to attain MDG 7.

25. Nationally, Malaysia had launched a housing assistance programme to provide 50,000 new and restored houses for the poorest urban groups with a view to eradicating urban poverty by 2013. A rent assistance programme had also been introduced based on applications through a national poverty databank system used by relevant agencies to ensure fair distribution of assistance and avoid double coverage of aid programmes. A people-centric housing project had since 2009 focused on repairing and rebuilding houses of the poor to help promote a safer and more comfortable quality of life. From 2011 onwards, the project would be implemented through a social responsibility programme driven by the private sector but receiving government support. In 2012, the Malaysian Government had invited government-linked companies to contribute in cash or in kind to reconstruction and renovation efforts. It had also launched its Safe City programme in 2004, which involved crime-proofing and constant surveillance. The strength of the programme, which was expected to benefit 70 per cent of the urban population, lay in a strong partnership led by local law enforcement agencies, residents' associations and civil society. With the support of developed and developing countries in the form of knowledge sharing, Malaysia would continue to strive to provide sustainable living conditions for its people.

26. *Mr. Islam (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

27. **Mr. Laguna-Celis** (Mexico) said that effective urban policies were a key tool for achieving sustainable development. An urban agenda for the twenty-first century and the United Nations post-2015 development strategy must fully take into account the fact that, while they presented many challenges for policy makers, cities also fostered economic growth, innovation and opportunity.

28. Mexico welcomed efforts to strengthen the transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat. Habitat III should adopt a multidisciplinary approach that drew on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, the post-2015 development

agenda, and the experience of parties involved in the sixth session of the World Urban Forum.

29. **Mr. Müftüoğlu** (Turkey) said that by 2050 approximately 70 per cent of people would live in urban areas. Cities had a significant social and cultural impact; they would remain the main drivers of the global economy and would increasingly shape patterns of consumption and production. However, cities required an increasing share of the world's natural resources, and unsustainable urban practices were polluting the environment and threatening biodiversity. Integrated policies to ensure that cities were environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically productive were therefore of crucial importance. To that end, local authorities, which played a pivotal role in the provision of basic services, must be given more wide-ranging powers and work closely with national governments.

30. Cities had a key role to play in supporting development. Due attention must therefore be given to urban issues when setting post-2015 targets. Habitat III which Turkey had offered to host, would provide an opportunity to integrate global urban development goals into the post-2015 development agenda. The Committee should support efforts to enhance the role of UN-Habitat, encourage implementation of the outcome of the Habitat II, and agree on modalities for Habitat III. Careful drafting of those modalities would contribute greatly to the success of that Conference.

31. **Ms. Onishi** (Japan) said that over half of the world's population already lived in cities and urban areas and the percentage was rising. The challenges facing cities and urban areas demonstrated how the smallest concerns of daily life were directly linked with global sustainability. As a member of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, Japan would strive to ensure the success of Habitat III. In formulating modalities for that Conference, the international community must draw on lessons learned at Habitat II and the Rio+20 Conference, at which it had been acknowledged that well-planned cities could promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. Stakeholders must adopt a holistic approach to urban development that addressed economic, social and environmental aspects, involved governments, local authorities and the private sector, and gave individuals the opportunity to reach their full potential and help build a better society.

32. Japan had learned from experience that it was critical to strengthen the resilience of cities so that they could better withstand natural disasters. Japan had a duty to share its experience and lessons learned in that field with the international community and ensure that disaster mitigation was incorporated into the international development agenda. As part of its "Green Future Initiatives", Japan would work with stakeholders around the world to help them plan and build environmentally sustainable, resilient and liveable cities for the future. Japan would also host an international conference on the "Future City" in 2013, and would invite urban planning specialists from developing countries to Japan so that they could visit successful examples of future cities. At the 2012 World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku, Japan had pledged to provide up to \$3 billion to developing countries to enable them to strengthen their disaster resilience. Japan also intended to host the third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015.

33. **Ms. Tandon** (India) said that the global urban population was likely to increase to 70 per cent by 2050, with most of that increase occurring in developing countries. Global efforts to combat poverty, promote inclusive growth and reduce environmental stress would increasingly be determined by the way in which urban development was integrated into the broader socioeconomic agenda.

34. India welcomed progress made in the implementation of the UN-Habitat Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, and commended its focus on pro-poor housing, and basic infrastructure and services. Adequate funding must be made available so that UN-Habitat could provide greater financial support to slum upgrading and prevention initiatives. In that connection, it was very encouraging that the global community had already achieved the MDG target of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers.

35. India had witnessed rapid urbanization and, within two decades, there would be 590 million people living in urban areas, which would produce more than 70 per cent of India's GDP and account for 70 per cent of all new jobs. India was committed to providing cities with the infrastructure they needed as they expanded rapidly, and was seeking holistic and integrated solutions to urban problems. As part of its National Action Plan on Climate Change, the National

Mission on Sustainable Habitat sought to promote energy efficiency as a core component of urban planning and urban renewal. The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy promoted sustainable development through its focus on urban housing and infrastructure development. India had also implemented specific initiatives to improve conditions for slum dwellers and the urban poor, including by providing employment opportunities, and to make Indian cities healthy places to live. India also supported programmes that provided financial assistance for the construction and upgrading of homes for poor people in rural areas, with a special focus on improving sanitation. Within the framework of South-South cooperation, India's was committed to sharing its expertise on housing technology with other developing countries. Such initiatives could be further strengthened through triangular cooperation.

36. The Rio+20 outcome document had provided for an integrated approach to urban planning and development, and stressed the need to implement the UN-Habitat Agenda. India welcomed progress achieved in preparations for Habitat III and supported calls for UN-Habitat to be provided with additional budgetary resources. The global financial crisis must not serve as an excuse for donor countries to renege on their financial commitments.

37. **Mr. Song** (China) said that peace, development and poverty reduction were essential prerequisites for successfully addressing human habitat issues. Autonomy in decision-making was also a fundamental requirement. Stakeholders should therefore endeavour to respect the characteristics, legislation and sovereignty of countries when identifying priority areas for action and elaborating policies and strategies. Sustainable development was key in efforts to deal with population growth and, in seeking to meet people's habitation needs, policy makers must balance resource utilization and environmental protection.

38. To successfully address human settlement issues, enhanced international cooperation was needed; all countries, especially those in the developed world, must take action to further humanity's common interests. Efforts must be exerted to narrow the gap between rich and poor, and to create conditions that would enable developing countries to move forward. In particular, stakeholders must provide funding, strengthen market access, and promote debt relief initiatives for developing countries. The Chinese

Government had always given particular attention to human settlement construction and was supporting large-scale affordable housing initiatives and strengthening oversight of the real estate market.

39. In order to ensure that they achieved successful outcomes, Habitat III, UN-Habitat and the World Urban Forum should focus on their respective mandates.

40. **Mr. Tham** (Singapore) said that, although cities would present many global challenges in the future, they would also provide solutions to many of those challenges. The world was becoming increasingly urbanized and Singapore, a small city State with a population of over five million living on a land area of only 704 square kilometers, was at the forefront of that global trend. Learning from the experience of other cities, Singapore had succeeded in providing its people with a high quality of life while also promoting environmental sustainability. Although every city was unique, all cities faced common urbanization challenges. With Sweden, Singapore had established a Group of Friends for Sustainable Cities. Comprising 29 countries, the Group aimed to make an active contribution to discussions on sustainable cities and, within the context of post-2015 development efforts, to provide a platform for long-term dialogue on that key, cross-cutting topic. Within the Group, Singapore would continue to work with Sweden to organize meetings on sustainable cities, and provide assistance to governments so that they could follow up on sustainable urbanization commitments.

41. Habitat III would reaffirm the international community's commitment to sustainable urbanization, and enable stakeholders to make further progress in that area, in line with the UN-Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and other relevant internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs

42. **Mr. Achergui** (Morocco) said that it was predicted that, by 2030, there would be more urban dwellers than rural dwellers in all developing countries. Urban planning was therefore critical, particularly because many cities in those countries were expanding extremely rapidly and were unable to provide adequate living conditions for all their inhabitants. Growing inequality in cities meant that great wealth and extreme poverty often existed side by side. That phenomenon exacerbated social instability

and insecurity, and had social and economic costs. Urban sprawl, which led to the expansion of slums, was often the direct consequence of growing poverty, and the erosion of social cohesion and traditional patterns of production and consumption.

43. However, by adopting appropriate policies and with the support of UN-Habitat, a number of countries, including Morocco, had curbed slum expansion and were improving the lives of people who lived there. According to UN-Habitat, the living conditions of 227 million people in developing countries had improved between 2000 and 2010, and the world had already achieved target 7.D of MDG 7. Nevertheless, wide regional, national and sub-national disparities still existed and a new strategy was needed to enable all countries to halve, by 2020, the proportion of their populations living in substandard housing. Strategies to combat environmental degradation should also be integrated into urban planning and development, and dialogue and coordination were needed between governmental decision-makers, local authorities and civil society to ensure the success of development projects.

44. Morocco's efforts to combat rapid, unplanned urban development and slum expansion had been recognized at the international level, and the UN-Habitat report *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011*, had ranked Morocco second in the world for the percentage of urban population lifted out of substandard housing conditions between 2000 and 2010. Morocco had also been awarded the 2010 UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour for "delivering one of the world's most successful and comprehensive slum reduction and improvement programmes". Morocco stood ready to share its experience and lessons learned in that field as part of its efforts to promote South-South Cooperation. It would soon be hosting a conference entitled "Making Slums history: a worldwide challenge for 2020". Morocco welcomed the convening of Habitat III and commended the support provided to countries by UN-Habitat to enable them to promote socially and ecologically sustainable cities that provided adequate housing for all their inhabitants.

45. **Ms. Assaf** (Brazil) said that, in preparing for Habitat III, full advantage should be taken of forthcoming meetings, including sessions of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, and the World Urban Forum. Brazil commended the attention given to

urban planning in the UN-Habitat strategic framework for the period 2014-2015, and that organization's draft strategic plan for 2014-2019, as that topic had previously received insufficient attention.

46. Brazil welcomed the progress achieved in implementing the UN-Habitat Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, which was helping programme countries to mainstream the UN-Habitat Agenda into their development frameworks. UN-Habitat must redouble its efforts to address challenges in connection with focus areas three, on pro-poor land and housing and five, on strengthening human settlements finance systems. It should, in consultation with Member States, review the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 with a view to formulating a new global housing strategy, and should build on the lessons learned from experimental reimbursable seeding operations and programmes implemented by the Slum Upgrading Facility. Innovative partnerships with development finance institutions should be established to facilitate lending, loan guarantees and financial advisory services and thus promote urban renewal. In so doing, UN-Habitat would shift the focus of its human settlement financing activities so that they were more closely aligned with Governing Council resolution 23/10.

47. In urban policy, Brazil endeavoured to take into account the social dimension of property, promote participatory planning modalities, and ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability. Enhancing the participation of urban residents, including the poor, in decision-making was crucial in efforts to establish sustainable cities.

48. The Rio+20 outcome document had provided for an integrated approach to urban planning and development. As the MDG goal to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers had already been achieved, the international community should consider setting more ambitious targets, including in the field of slum upgrading. Brazil urged UN-Habitat to provide technical and advisory assistance to governments and regional and local authorities seeking to obtain data on their slum populations.

49. **Mr. Saeed** (Bahrain) said that increasing urbanization in the developing world over the coming decades would create opportunities for global economic growth that could help to alleviate poverty

and promote environmental sustainability. The Rio+20 Conference had underscored the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach in efforts to plan and build sustainable cities. The international community must strive to mobilize adequate resources to enable effective planning, and must avoid unnecessary overlap between projects and programmes.

50. Bahrain was taking steps to improve the living conditions of all its citizens and was enhancing its housing, poverty alleviation, and sustainable urban development policies. Its strong economy had enabled it to enhance social safety nets and create educational and work opportunities. Despite ongoing challenges resulting, in particular, from its rapid population growth, Bahrain had proved that sound governance mechanisms and policies could eliminate extreme poverty and achieve social justice. His country was committed to striking a balance between sustaining its flourishing economy and promoting environmental sustainability. UN-Habitat was opening an office in Bahrain that would assist that country in its efforts to achieve sustainable development. The office would also play a key role in promoting coordination and knowledge-sharing among countries of the region. It was critical that urban development was integrated into the international community's post-2015 development agenda so that the world could effectively address the growing negative socioeconomic impact of unbridled urban development on societies and the environment.

51. **Mr. Devanlay** (Observer for the European Union) said that the modalities of Habitat III should ensure that the Conference successfully addressed urban challenges and supported efforts to promote economically prosperous, safe, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable cities. The European Union and its member States called for efforts to ensure that the most effective and efficient use was made of meetings and conferences.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.