

BRUSSELS URBAN DECLARATION

**AS ADOPTED AT THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - EUROPEAN COMMISSION - UN-HABITAT
CONSOLIDATED URBAN DIALOGUE MEETING WITH
EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERS**

26 January 2011

Preamble

In response to the joint invitation by the European Parliament (EP), the European Commission (EC) and UN-HABITAT under the ongoing cooperation between UN-HABITAT and the Member States of the European Union (EU) and the EU Institutions, the high-level Consolidated Urban Dialogue Meeting with the European Union Partners was held in Brussels, Kingdom of Belgium, on 26 January 2011, at the European Parliament.

The meeting was organised in the context of an on-going urbanisation process that led at the beginning of the 21st century to a historic milestone: for the first time in human history, the majority of the world's population live in cities. Another important milestone of the beginning of this century is that, Latin America and the Caribbean region has a higher proportion of population living in urban areas than Europe. It is also expected that in only seven years, the urban population of Africa will be larger than the urban population of Europe. Also, currently, half of the world urbanites are from Asia region in which urban growth was adding 40 million people every year in this last decade. In 2020, seven out of every ten urban inhabitants in the world will be from Asia and Africa.

The developing countries, in particular, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), experience a high level of poverty and different forms of exclusion. Currently, 823 million people are living in slum-like conditions without adequate water and sanitation and in overcrowded conditions. Urban poverty is one of the major development challenges, which is aggravated by global financial and economic crises, climate change, natural disasters and other calamities. However, these global challenges which are facing cities of all sizes - small, medium and mega-cities, especially, in the developing countries, call upon development partners to act for a strong and harmonized response. This situation offers a unique opportunity to the European Union Institutions, UN-HABITAT and their partners, to design, coordinate and implement common sustainable urban initiatives aiming to improve the quality of urban life of all citizens.

The Consolidated Urban Dialogue Meeting was attended by high-level Representatives from EU Member States, Norway, the EU Institutions, including the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), UN-HABITAT as well as representatives from other European and international partner organisations involved in sustainable urban development.

Participants unanimously consider:

- the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda adopted by the Heads of States and Governments, assembled at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996;
- the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the World leaders in New-York, USA in September 2000, which commits, through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular the MDG 7, target 11, to ensure environmental sustainability by achieving significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020;
- the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, adopted at Ministerial meeting of developed and developing countries, Paris, France, 2 March 2005; and other relevant reports, resolutions and declarations adopted at international Conferences and World Summits;
- the Treaty of Lisbon, amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, on 13 December 2007, and entered into force on 1 December 2009;
- the "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities", adopted at the Informal Council of EU Ministers responsible for spatial planning and urban development, held in Leipzig, Germany, on 24 to 25 May 2009, and other relevant European communications, reports, resolutions and declarations adopted by the European Institutions, including the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as the Committee of the Regions;
- the Declaration on Urbanisation Challenges and Poverty Reduction in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), adopted at the international Tripartite EC-ACP-UN-HABITAT Urban Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, 8 to 10 June 2009;

We, participants:

- Having considered the critical importance to effectively and efficiently address the urbanisation challenges in the world, in a spirit of consolidated partnership at local, regional, national, international and global levels;
- Having recognised that cities are powerful engines of economic growth, social, cultural progress and a key vector of the sustainable environment management, which is promoted by the above European and international communications, declarations, Charter and Treaty; and
- Having noted with great satisfaction the ongoing cooperation between UN-HABITAT and the European Union Institutions, in particular with the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions to promote the sustainable urban development in enhancing the international cooperation to address the urbanisation challenges and to fight human poverty in the world, in particular in the developing countries;

We, the representatives of European Institutions, UN-HABITAT and other European and international organisations participating in the European Parliament, European Commission and UN-HABITAT Consolidated Urban Dialogue Meeting with the European Union Partners, **endorsed the commitments and recommendations** as follows:

1. Commit ourselves to strongly promote sustainable urban development as part of the international agenda at local, regional, national and international levels for beneficial impact on the quality of life of all people in the world, and in particular, in developing countries;
2. Also commit ourselves to promote the role of the cities in the world, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as potential engines of economic growth, social stability, sustainable urban mobility and energy efficiency, as well as innovative climate change strategies;
3. Call upon national governments, regional and international organisations, as well as the international community, to efficiently develop and increase existing partnerships by building institutional capacity of the local authorities in cooperation with civil society and urban professional actors to implement through multi-level and participatory for governance significant local urban initiatives on sanitation, safe water, affordable and adequate housing, urban transport, basic infrastructure and services, land access, adequate urban land use planning, urban security, solid waste and pollution, climate change mitigation and adaptation and renewed municipal finance systems;
4. Recommend that the European Institutions consider to develop a new area of cooperation with UN-HABITAT aiming to ensure that urban issues are taken into account in the European development agenda and debate such as in the European Parliament Committee of Development, the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) - European Union (EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the European Commission European Development Days, the Assises of decentralised cooperation for development of the Committee of the Regions, and other relevant meetings, conferences and summits within the EU in stimulating appropriate awareness and understanding of the urbanisation challenges and developing common effort to integrate urban issues in the development agenda;
5. Confirm, in the line with the Habitat Agenda and other relevant international commitments, our strong support to the promotion of integrated urban development through innovative approaches by enhancing urban policy dialogue and research on renewable efficient energies, industrialisation and urban green economy, urban food security, urban governance, livelihood's resilience following natural disasters or conflicts in respect of the principle "build-back-better", crisis prevention, measures against climate change and other urban challenges that are emerging in today's urban world;
6. Recommend to consider to further enhance the cooperation between the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the European Institutions, by establishing a strategic partnership on sustainable urban development; and invite European and other partners to consider increasing their support to urban normative and operational programmes, by studying the possibilities for establishing appropriate international and national financing mechanisms and instruments to promote and implement effective development strategies that impact positively on poverty reduction in the world, especially in the developing countries;
7. Also recommend that coordinating mechanisms as well as instruments such as "Urban Working Groups" be established involving EU bodies, in particular the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and UN-HABITAT for close and appropriate follow-up on effective implementation of the above commitments and recommendations, as they emanated from the Consolidated Urban Dialogue Meeting with the European Union Partners.
