

German Statement at the Opening Session of Habitat III

(gesprochene Fassung, ca. 3 Minuten Redezeit)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

here in Quito, we will be adopting a globally applicable framework for implementing the sustainable development of our cities.

Sustainable urban development is the key for achieving the SDGs under the 2030 Agenda and our global climate targets.

The decisions we take today will determine the resource consumption and CO₂ emissions of cities for decades to come.

Therefore, the New Urban Agenda needs to be more than simply words on paper.

We must consider it a mandate for action to successfully combat poverty and mitigate climate change.

Conventional development strategies can no longer serve as our blueprints. If we pursue business-as-usual we will be steering the planet towards climate collapse and running the risk of grave social dislocation, with serious hardship, violence and waves of people fleeing their homes.

In my view the core goals of the New Urban Agenda are these:

1. Cities must be recognised and empowered as actors in development processes.
2. Cities and settlements must be made liveable.
3. We must pursue integrated and sustainable urban development.

I am delighted that we have been able to anchor these goals in the New Urban Agenda. I feel this is a very important step in the right direction.

It is now a matter of acting resolutely to implement these goals. National governments need to initiate and advance follow-up processes.

As I see it, the New Urban Agenda is founded on three pillars:

Firstly, on cities and municipalities which are provided with the requisite qualified staff and funding to fulfil their important function.

Secondly, on national governments, which support their cities in the performance of their tasks.

And finally, on global partnerships under the UN or international networks which give cross-border support, particularly to actors at local level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Germany has long standing experience with integrated urban development policy. For instance in the fields of sustainable building and housing, and sustainable local infrastructures.

Cities must secure the needs of their residents, from housing and access to green energy and clean water to adequate management systems for wastewater and waste.

And Cities of the future also need sustainable and affordable mobility, for mobility is the key to participation. However, it must not be achieved at the expense of the environment – nor at the expense of human health.

That is why we are pushing for a mobility change.

We have set up a Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative which just in the field of urban mobility, will facilitate investments worth 1 billion euros next year.

And we intend to expand funding for projects relating to urban development in the International Climate Initiative (IKI) to the tune of about 30 million euros.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Liveable cities have to be geared to the needs of their citizens.

They need to be able to meet their responsibilities at a decentralised, local level.

In Germany we can build on our experiences with the Leipzig Charter on the Sustainable European Cities.

And lastly, but by no means least, the residents themselves need to be involved. They, too, must be considered responsible partners of urban development. Civic participation in urban planning and organisation is a must.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the cities of today that will determine the world of tomorrow. I look forward to our discussions and wish us all stamina and strength for our joint endeavours on the road ahead.

Thank you very much.