



***Ambasciata d'Italia  
Quito***

***Statement of the Italian Head of Delegation,  
H.E. Mr. Marco Filippo Tornetta, Ambassador of Italy to  
Ecuador***

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE HABITAT III  
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I am very pleased to take part to the Habitat III Conference in Quito. I wish to convey my deepest appreciation to the Government of Ecuador and the City of Quito for hosting this milestone Conference.

I am particularly glad to acknowledge that an agreement has been reached on the text of the New Urban Agenda, clearly demonstrating the deep commitment of all Member States to sustainable urban development. Italy fully aligns with the European Union in its appreciation for the outcome document.

The most innovative aspect of the New Urban Agenda is, we believe, its deep interconnection with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the milestone documents adopted in 2015, providing a concrete platform to attain their objectives.

We must harness the positive potential of cities: rather than sources of inequality, fragility, and conflict, urban areas should be drivers of growth and development, innovation and social cohesiveness.

Cities, indeed, can be the driving force to achieve not only the SDG 11, specifically focused on cities and human settlements, but the whole set of Sustainable Development Goals.

While investments in infrastructures are essential, we ought not to forget that investment in these areas is not enough if we do not equally invest our resources in development of human capital: education, health and employment opportunities. These should remain at the top of our priorities.

Rural-urban linkages are of paramount importance as well: urbanization needs to be seen as part of wider transformations that include both urban and rural areas. Urbanization should benefit wider regions, and not just the urban settlements themselves. A key issue, for example, is food and nutrition security: in order to create a world free from hunger, we must create food systems that foster an inclusive rural transformation while, at the same time, answer to the growing demand coming from cities. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, an international agreement signed by 130 cities all over the world, is a true milestone in this direction.

Italy, indeed, has a strong commitment to support sustainable urban development. In the last 20 years there have been more than 200 urban-related projects for a total amount of more than 1 billion euros. I am pleased to mention that the programme for the requalification of the informal settlements in Korogocho (Nairobi) is considered a best-practice for slum-upgrading.

Our interventions have been characterized by a participative approach, with the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the strategic planning process. We have pursued this approach also through an intense activity of technical assistance, directed to local and central governments of the Partner countries.

An important and innovative aspect of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda as well, is their universality: they are a challenge for the world as a whole, and all countries and relevant stakeholders shall contribute both at home and abroad.

Together with the European Union, Italy has been working to develop a European Agenda to answer to the specific challenges being faced in our Region, reflected in the recently agreed Pact of Amsterdam.

At national level, a large share of cohesion resources is dedicated to urban issues. I would like to mention, in particular, the operational programme for Metropolitan Cities, the regional operational programmes 2014-2020 and the Pacts for the Seven Metropolitan cities of Southern Italy.

With the regular budget we are also financing two extraordinary programmes for urban requalification and security of suburban areas of metropolitan cities and other relevant towns and for run-down urban areas. We are implementing these initiatives with the active involvement of public and private partners.

Italy, dramatically hit last summer by a terrible earthquake, is promoting a national plan denominated 'Casa Italia'. The Plan aims making all human settlements safer fostering at the same time economic and social development: Casa Italia is an 'infrastructural bet' that encompasses a wide range of interventions: from the improvement of school buildings to drainage and

hydrogeological stabilization, all components of a broader and innovative vision for our shared future.

This vision is reflected in the National Report for Habitat III and its annex on development cooperation activities, the product of the successful cooperation among national, regional and local administrations, civil society and academia. The Report represents a useful tool to take stock of what has been done until now and to move forward to further promote sustainable urban development, improving equality, welfare and growth while preserving the ‘common home’ that is our Planet.

We wish for the important debate prompted by the Habitat III process to continue beyond Quito, through community mobilization and participation at all levels, among institutions and civil society, in order to re-establish in the political agenda the centrality of sustainable urban development.

Thank you.