

NEW URBAN AGENDA – STATEMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR LESTE

Mr.Co-Chairman, Excellencies, honourable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Timor Leste recognizes that urbanization is a tool towards economic and social development for our country as whole. Timor Leste is small nation with a population now over 1 million people and moreover free and independent only since 2002.

Timor Leste has a general infrastructure deficit. Even the capital city Dili has not been able to deliver adequate municipal services nor deliver on urban environmental management. The deficit on water supply, mobility and public amenities for health and education remains significant in Timor Leste's small towns and rural areas. Traditional houses are not adequate in relation to minimum standards. Meanwhile, the new housing stock is often a poor quality and at times built in hazard zones or environmentally sensitive areas.

Timor Leste aspires sustainable and balanced urban development, strongly binding urban and rural areas and with a rational use or conservation of natural resources and with a multimodal city network, so as to promote effective urban-rural economic and territorial linkages. Rural communities should be involved in development without losing their social and culture heritage way of life. The government should reach out to people to self-build and organize progress through community initiative and cooperatives.

A strategic plan for Timor Leste is being implemented. As part of the plan, the government initiated the administrative decentralization and is setting up municipalities. Planning of secondary cities is ongoing. A comprehensive Act on spatial planning is forthcoming. A National Housing policy was approved already in 2007.

Timor Leste requires a framework for environmental protection and heritage preservation. A basic law on the environment is already in place, providing both national standards in general but also creating a national park.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Having clarified where the country stands today, I set forth the simultaneous tasks ahead. Knowing that there are obvious difficulties, we like to think more in terms of opportunities. We can gather knowledge from experience elsewhere with countries, in regional for a or in global conferences such as here in Ecuador, sharing different realities but common problems. We are in the process of setting up a new collaboration with the Government of Indonesia to develop cities and settlements and to promote

sustainable urbanization. With the approval of the New Urban Agenda, we call on UN-Habitat and partner countries to strengthen support also to Timor Leste.

Timor Leste supports the “New Urban Agenda” as it is being adopted in Quito during Habitat III and we strongly support the principles, commitments and means of implementation to guide through sustainable urbanization and prosperous human settlements also in Timor Leste. To ‘make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ is our duty now and I call for your strong assistance.