

Statement by Ms Yael Rubinstein, Amabassador of Israel to Singapore at
Preparatory Committee III (PrepComm3), INDONESIA – Surabaya, 25–27 July 2016

Thank you, Co-Chairs and Good Afternoon.

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the State of Israel, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General of UN Habitat III for organizing this meeting ahead of the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the City of Surabaya and to the Government of Indonesia for hosting this important gathering and for a wonderful organization.

Habitat III aims to find workable, lasting solutions to human settlements and urban issues. This comes at a very crucial point in time, when, we see more than half of the global population living and working in cities and will see this number increase substantially more in the foreseeable future.

It is therefore imperative that Israel remains strongly committed to the objectives of UN Habitat to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. We are applying this preparatory process as an external stimulus to launch necessary internal processes, and update our housing and urban development national outline plan.

Today, Israel is already an urban country and 93% of Israel's population lives in cities and towns, or in larger metropolitan areas. Lest we forget, Israel is also a small country that faces economic, demographic, security and ecological challenges. Thus, we have to cope not only with the phenomenon of urban density without harming personal and economical welfare of its

citizens, their social life, environment and natural resources but also looks at ways to enhance the cooperation between national and local government administrations.

Israel's urban policy is led by the Ministry of Construction & Housing together with key stakeholders ranging from government agencies, local authorities, civil society, private sector, academy and professional institution and NGO's. As part of Israel's preparation process towards Habitat 3, the first Israeli National Urban Forum was held in the city of Acre in November 2015.

That Forum led to the establishment of the National Urban Forum, which is now preparing the national report and formulation of the practical, effective and applicable tools for improving sustainable urbanization in Israel. Under the Administration, 7 task teams were created with more than 150 participants, all engaged in a process that takes into account the Sustainable Development Goals, indexes of quality of life prepared by the Government and of course the recommendations included in the Habitat III Road Map.

I would like to highlight some key elements, currently implemented in Israel, as a result of this process:

- Israel has updated the housing and urban development national outline plan, directing most of the new dwellings to the existing urban areas.
- We are also encouraging citizens' to share and be a part of the urban planning process.
- Israel is also looking at improving economic feasibility and social opportunities by investing in rapid transportation systems
- Israel is number one in reusing water with 86 percent of treated sewerage and 30 percent of Israel's water needs is supplied through sea water desalination.

I would like to take this opportunity to confirm again that Israel fully adheres to the language and the spirit of Prague Declaration. Israel will also submit to the UN, in the coming days, a National Report on Urbanization.

Co-Chairs, due to the rapid urbanization, it is not surprising that we are facing numerous challenges in urban development. We have to join our efforts and engage all decision making levels, governmental and local, and connect them with multiple stake holders. The new urban agenda should become a milestone in the history of sustainable urban development and provide a global vision and concrete steps in making the cities more liveable for all.

Finally, I would like to wish all the participants a successful and constructive conference. I believe this meeting will contribute significantly and will provide a good perspective on the current and emerging housing and urbanization issues that need to be addressed in the New Urban Agenda.

Terima Kasih to all of you for your kind attention.