

PAKISTAN

THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR HABITAT-III (PREP-COM3), SURABAYA, INDONESIA,
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Statement of Minister of State MNA Marvi Memon from Pakistan at the Opening plenary session.
July 25.

Bismillah hir Rehman ir Rahim

Asalamoileikum and good afternoon.

Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to be making this statement on behalf of Pakistan here in the Opening plenary session at Surabaya today.

1. Pakistan has made commendable efforts towards implementation of Habitat - II Agenda, since the second United Nations Conference on Human settlements (Habitat - II) held in Istanbul in 1996. The Agenda defines a set of goals and principles, spelled out unified commitments adopted as Global Plan of Action that called for taking initiatives towards creation of healthy, safe, equitable and sustainable human settlements through better management of its cities and towns.

2. Pakistan is the one of the most urbanized nations in South Asia and its urban population has increased from 43.0 million to more than half between 1998 to 2014 and is expected to become predominantly urbanized by the year 2025.

3. Pakistan has opportunities to reap from its demographic and gender dividend.

4. Challenges to sustainable urban development include framework for landuse planning, addressing climate induced and natural disasters, enhancing the capacities of local government institutions, water scarcity and contamination, waste management and upgradation of urban infrastructure.

5. Government has launched Vision 2025, a perspective plan, which has implications for managing urbanization as well as changing urban demography. The vision envisages a people centered and inclusive approach to development whereby, the main driver of growth will be:

- Anchored in better functioning urban clusters
- Focus on creation of jobs/employment
- Bolstered by better skilled and more employable youth
- Led by the private sector
- Based on productivity improvement and export enhancement.

6. The new Urban Agenda in this regard focuses on institution of third tier of government empowered with adequate administrative and financial authorities.

7. Urbanization has proven to be an opportunity, which has triggered the process of developing institutional and programmatic framework for pursuing the objective of sustainable process. Some

of the worth mentioning initiatives include development of waste management institutions, urban transport and infrastructure upgradation projects etc.

8. Programs like Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Pakistan's largest social safety net for the poorest of the poor women living in rural and urban Pakistan are critical for this New Urban Agenda. BISP customers or beneficiaries are likely to reap the most benefits once cities in Pakistan become sustainable as per the new Urban Agenda. Being the only custodian of the gender issues and women empowerment of Pakistan we at BISP in Pakistan will be key to ensuring gender equity whilst cities develop in Pakistan. BISP through its e-commerce initiatives and microcredit interest free loans is empowering women in the rural and urban spaces. However the big shifts to the cities will be well managed by BISP's latest poverty census expected to be completed in early 2018. Creating safer violence free urbanization especially for the vulnerable women is a key challenge for Pakistan which BISP through its advocacy will manage well in coordination with the provinces and federal ministries like Finance, Planning Development, Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Housing and Works and PM Youth program.

9. To overcome housing backlog the government has taken initiatives like construction of low cost housing under a dedicated Prime Minister's Program; Apna Ghar Scheme in Punjab and similar programs in other parts of the country.

10. Integrated Mass transit System, Metro Bus and Metro-rail in major cities are being developed at a very fast pace; so far the Mass transit Metro Bus system is successfully working in Lahore and Islamabad.

11. Pakistan, despite challenges of economic development, natural disasters, terrorism, climate change vulnerabilities and high rate of migration to cities and developing third tier of government; has largely managed the urbanization challenges and is moving forward to reap the benefits of demographic dividend.

12. Pakistan has been fortunate that due to the visionary leadership of PM Nawaz Sharif and successful economic management of the Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, the economic indicators have greatly improved in the last three years and the economic successes have been well acknowledged by the international community. As a result, pursuing the new Urban Agenda of UN Habitat 3 is a reality Pakistan is well on its way to managing.

13. At the outset on behalf of the government of Pakistan I would like to accept our responsibility towards the new urban agenda and the revised zero draft which is under negotiation in Surabaya. We are committed towards making our growing cities safer, sustainable, economically productive, and equitable for the rural and urban vulnerable societies so that Pakistan wins and we win collectively globally as well meeting the global targets and challenges. And so that we in Pakistan fulfil our longterm responsibility. And so that 20 years later Pakistani cities are model sustainable cities in line with UN Habitat New Urban agenda.

Thankyou very much Ladies and Gentlemen.