

**3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable
Urban Development
HABITAT III**

Quito, 17-20 October, 2016

Plenary Meeting

[date and time to be confirmed]

**Intervention by the Portuguese Secretary of State for Spatial
Planning and Nature Conservation, Ms. Célia Ramos**

Check against delivery

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Under Secretary General Joan Clos,
Ministers, Excellences,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentleman,

Allow me firstly to express my satisfaction in representing Portugal at the 3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, and to associate myself to the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

I am also very pleased that by the end of this Conference we will have adopted the New Urban Agenda, which is the guiding framework of our action on urban development issues for decades to come, reflecting our shared vision and establishing a renewed commitment to urban sustainable development.

Over the past two years, the international community has adopted key tools in order to define the vision we have for our future, such as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement - which Portugal ratified on September 30.

Without an integrated and targeted approach to urban areas we all know quite well that these goals are not achievable.

Therefore the New Urban Agenda will be an extremely useful tool in order to achieve, at the regional and local levels, the vision expressed in these documents and simultaneously to enhance the contribution of urban areas for the fulfilment of our international commitments. The New Urban Agenda also recognizes the importance of involving national, regional and local authorities as well as other relevant stakeholders in this process, with a view to address the demanding challenges that we are facing.

A variety of challenges such as climate change adaptation, urban mobility, energy efficiency, sustainable and inclusive growth, territorial distribution, taking place at a time marked by the demographic regression and population ageing, massive and unexpected influx of displaced persons (migration and refugee movements) impose themselves as unquestioned and urgent priorities. Having said this, a future in which urban economies are sustainable and inclusive, without neglecting environmental sustainability, must not be faced as a utopia.

At a national level, the elaboration of the National Habitat III Report has been the opportunity to assess progress achieved in the last twenty years on spatial planning and urban development but also to identify the main challenges that Portugal faces, which will require a coherent response based on a strategic vision.

I would also like to highlight the broad participation that characterized the elaboration of the National Habitat III Report, which involved entities of various administrative levels, as well as the interest of various sectors of society for the events organized in Portugal in preparation of the Habitat III Conference.

The diagnosis provided by the National Report is extremely useful at a time when Portugal is strongly committed to defining and implementing public policies in line with European and international trends but also attentive to the specificities of a country like Portugal and its territory.

Some examples that reflect our concern with a concerted and integrated action in this regard are the National Programme for Spatial Planning Policy (PNPOT); the Strategic Framework for Climate Policy (QEPiC), the National Programme for Climate Change (PNAC 2020/2030), the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (ENAAC 2020), the National Strategy for t Air 2020 (ENAR 2020) as well as the 2020 Sustainable Cities Strategy, which is a main step in the commitment by Portugal to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal eleven on sustainable cities and communities.

The adoption of the EU Urban Agenda in the 30th of May, 2016, is an equally important contribution to the integration of the urban dimension in the planning of the Member States of the European Union. This is a political instrument of unequivocal value that aims to involve urban authorities in order to achieve better regulation, better financing and better knowledge, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The Habitat III Conference is also an event of unquestionable importance and merit for reflecting and discussing economic, social and environmental challenges of urban development faced nowadays, not only to international, national, regional and local policy makers but also to all citizens without exception.

This inclusive approach has guided the preparatory process of the Habitat III Conference - and should therefore be commended. It is furthermore reflected in the diversity of sectors represented here and in the multiplicity of events in which we will have opportunity to participate in the coming days. This event has also provided the opportunity to promote in Portugal a wide and fruitful debate on urban and sustainable development challenges.

Aware that the path for sustainable urban development is long and that much more needs to be done, Portugal is confident in a future in which the ideals and intentions we are expressing here today will become a reality.

Finally, on behalf of the Government of Portugal, I would like to thank the Government of Ecuador and the city of Quito for generously hosting this Conference and to all of those who have contributed to its preparation, allowing us to adopt a renewed political commitment to sustainable urban development for the upcoming decades.

Thank you.