

Statement

**by LDCs delivered by Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh Mr. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam on agenda item 20: Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
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Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the least developed countries. The group aligns itself with the statement made by Ecuador on behalf of G77.

The LDCs have been experiencing rapid urbanisation. This is primarily driven by rural to urban migration and natural population growth.

According to World Development Indicators, as of 2014, 31 per cent of the population in LDCs live in urban areas and is growing at an unprecedented rate of 4.17 per cent per year. This implies that the urban population in LDCs will double in less than 15 years.

Rapid urbanization in LDCs has been accompanied by a growing demand for affordable urban land, housing, water and sanitation, health care facilities and addressing a wide range of other vulnerabilities and shocks. However, the demand far outpaces supply of the available facilities. Due to the lack of adequate urban planning and management capacities at national and local levels, the rapid pace of urbanization is resulting in the expansion of slums and informal settlements and income inequalities rather than contributing to increasing the wealth of cities.

Besides many challenges, urbanization has huge potentials. We must tap this great potential with a view to ensuring greater equitability, economic growth, strengthened social cohesion, improved environmental outcomes and sustainable development. Well-planned and intelligently designed cities have the potential to improve the lives of half of the planet's people today, and 80% by 2030 at a relatively lower rate of resources use.

The 2030 Agenda has set an ambitious goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The Agenda has also agreed to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums by 2030. SDG target 11.c is especially tuned to support LDCs, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials. The New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito, Ecuador in 2016, also recognizes that the unique and emerging urban development challenges warrant our attention.

We would like to suggest the following measures to address the challenges that LDCs are facing in the areas of sustainable cities and human settlements and to achieve the SDG 11 by 2030:

First: We need to anticipate and plan in advance to prevent further slum-forming urban growth with the aim to develop liveable and productive cities and neighbourhoods through better urban planning in order to improve living condition and prevent slum development. We need to increase access to affordable housing, land and housing-related infrastructure and basic services while achieving a significant improvement in the lives of millions of slum-dwellers.

Second: Appropriate mechanisms should be made available at all levels for capacity building and to ensure direct access and scaled-up financial support for the implementation of urban adaptation,

including the development of resilient food safety nets and other social services. The LDCs should be provided with enough support to fully implement the New Urban Agenda.

Third: We need to improve the physical environment and to maximize the benefits of economies of scale through better planning, developing a supportive regulatory framework to support individual and private stakeholders' initiatives and ensure equitable development. This should include appropriate urban legal frameworks with better land management systems that acknowledge security of tenure for all, including for small individual investments in family homes and small businesses.

Fourth: We need to address the mitigation of natural hazards at the city level, many of which are being exacerbated by climate change. The impacts of disasters are far greater in poorly planned and inequitable cities. Urban areas in LDCs, with their high concentration of population, economic activity and poor infrastructure, are likely to face the most severe impacts of climate change.

Fifth: It is important to promote energy efficient cities, mitigate the negative impacts of urbanization on greenhouse-gas emissions and adapt cities to climate change.

Sixth: An affordable yet quality public transport system is urgently needed for LDCs. We need to improve transportation infrastructure with the use of maximum local manpower, materials and least disturbance to the local environment. However, this needs huge resources, long term research and development and appropriate technologies. Therefore, the availability of sufficient funding and technical assistance is a must to address the critical transport requirements in LDCs.

Finally: We need to put in place a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach that engages the private sector, civil society, foundations, local authorities and governments as well as regional and global networks of cities. LDCs need significant amount of financial and technical support and technology transfer from the development partners to improve access to land, housing and basic services and capacities of national and local governments and institutions for low-cost building and other utility services.

I thank you all for your kind attention.