

Closing Remarks by Dr. Joan Clos, UN-Habitat Executive Director

26th Session of the Governing Council

May 12, 2017

Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

President of the Governing Council, Your Excellency Mr. Vankaiah Naidou,
Honorable Minister of Housing and Poverty Alleviation and Urban Development of
India,

Distinguished Members of the Bureau,

Mr. Chairman of CPR, High Commissioner James Kimonyo of Rwanda,

Your Excellences, Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives and Members of the
Diplomatic Corps,

Members of the Independent Panel for the Assessment of UN-Habitat,

Honorable Mayors and Representatives of Local Authorities,

Partners of UN-Habitat,

Members of the Media,

Dear colleagues and friends,

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all the delegations for
accompanying us during these intense five days, and for your very active
participation in the various committees, activities and side events organised during
this Governing Council.

Asante Sana to all of you.

I would like to convey a very special thanks to Your Excellency Mr. Vankaiah Naidou, President of the Governing Council and Honorable Minister, for your extraordinary leadership chairing the 26th Session of our Governing Council.

Bahut Bahut Shukriya Mr. President

I also would like to thank all members of the Bureau, for their untiring efforts and contributions during this process.

This process has not been possible without the valuable contributions and dedication of the members of the CPR and working groups here in Nairobi.

My highest appreciation is for all of you.

And of course, I cannot forget the UN family in Nairobi, my UN-Habitat team, the Secretariat, Directors, local and international staff, JPOs, consultants, volunteers, interns, and UNON Conferences Services, Interpreters and Security, for your efforts.

Thank you for your incessant work serving the values and the interests of the United Nations and its member states.

Mr. President,
Excellences.

This Governing Council is a critical milestone in shaping the vision that you adopted unanimously in Habitat III, in Quito.

With the efforts of all, we have succeeded in defining a decisive step forward in the opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

With the adopted resolutions, we are ready to move forward and make the implementation of the New Urban Agenda a success for all.

The Implementation Framework of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA) provides us with the conceptual framework and action plan for it.

I look forward to developing this further with you in the coming months.

With the adopted Work Programme and Budget and the Revised Strategic Plan, I can assure you that the UN-Habitat family, will immediately start the path towards an even more responsive, effective and accountable programme.

The World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, next February, will be an extraordinary platform to continue advocating and implementing the vision adopted here today.

Drawing on our normative and field expertise, we will work with national and local governments, UN sister agencies and partners, the GAP (General Assembly of Partners), experts and civil society in monitoring and reporting the New Urban Agenda.

You have defined the path for an inclusive implementation and we will make it a reality.

The implementation of the New Urban Agenda will be only effective if we count on your political and financial support in strengthening the work and the capacity of the programme.

We are also ready to mobilize resources through various mechanisms.

We hope to launch with your cooperation and support the Implementation Facility for Sustainable Urban Development (IFSUD), to drive support for the New Urban Agenda with our partners.

In achieving this, advocacy will be critical in mobilizing all actors to support sustainable urban development.

Mr. President,

Excellences,

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking you for your serious and committed discussions during this long trip, which led us to place urbanization on the top of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The path has not been easy in understanding the complexity and relevance of urbanization and an agreement over an action plan to address its complex challenges.

Allow me to finalize my words by quoting an eminent greek poet, Cavafis, who warned us about the relevance and the difficulties on the path towards Ithaca, a greek city of the Mediterranean sea.

The poem is a metaphor for any path or objective that we may draw during our life.

What counts is the path and the consensus that you have reached, despite the difficulties to reach the final destination.

And this is the spirit of the United Nations, despite the difficulties and initial disagreements. At the end we reach consensus. Together we build the path.

“As you set out for Ithaka

hope the voyage is a long one,

full of adventure, full of discovery.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind,

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey,

Without her you would not have set out. As you set out for sustainable urban development,

Hope the voyage is a long one,

full of adventure, full of intrigue and discovery.

Keep the fundamentals of urbanization always in your mind,

The New Urban Agenda gave you the marvelous journey,

Without it, we would have never set out the principles for prosperity and development for a better urban world.

Thank you very much.