
**Pakistan Country Statement during
26th Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat by
H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner of the Islamic
Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Kenya and
Permanent Representative to UNON**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you and all members of the Bureau on your election.

Today, Pakistan like any other country in the world faces a gigantic challenge of Urbanization.

Pakistan's overwhelming majority lives in the countryside with about one-third of the country's estimated 188 million inhabitants settled in urban areas.

Pakistan is urbanizing at an annual rate of three percent, which is the fastest in South Asia. The United Nations Population Division estimates that, by 2025, nearly half of the Country's population will be living in urban areas.

Rapid urbanization is truly a challenge, but also offers opportunities, which can be tapped through calculated and innovative measures.

Despite these challenges, we are confident that urbanization would bring growth in various potential sectors of growth in Pakistan such as Information Technology (IT).

Urbanization is also a catalyst for modernization, innovation, technology, education and communication. Our cities are not only the hub of our economic growth but are also custodians of our civilization and hence a vital part of our heritage.

Mr. President,

With all its challenges, Pakistan takes ultimate ownership of its urbanization. Our policy makers are striving to strike a balance between urban industrial growth imperatives and the country's agricultural requirements.

In order to make urbanization sustainable and continuing, our urban areas need to be part of socially transformed spatial regions. This requires inclusiveness, competitiveness, building safer cities and promoting energy efficient utilization of resources.

This entire process is essential for creating systemic change and evolving the new paradigm for the vision of inclusive and sustainable urban development in Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan, while being cognizant that urbanization entails new challenges in governance and urban services, is committed to implementing sustainable development goals in urban human settlements.

Mr. President,

Pakistan's Vision 2025 aims at transforming our urban areas into creative, eco-friendly and sustainable cities, through improved city governance, effective urban planning, efficient local mobility infrastructure and better security to make urbanization an important driver of growth.

This Vision also seeks to ensure that Pakistan's cities are digitally connected and equipped with e-connectivity.

Other measures that are essential to make urbanization sustainable and are being focused on, include mass transport system as well as better solid waste and sewage management.

Pakistan is also investing more in natural resource management and addressing Climate Change while focusing on rural development.

Pakistan is keen on taking measures to formulate the National Urban Policy, through a participatory approach to find innovative solutions for climate resilient urban development.

Considering the goals of UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda, readdressing the way cities and human settlements are planned, designed and developed; the Policy will help to lessen urban poverty, reduce inequalities, promote inclusive, and sustainable economic growth as well as build resilience and protect the environment.

Mr. President,

Pakistan is making efforts to ensure that the future growth trends of cities in Pakistan are sufficient to meet the new challenges in governance and urban service delivery.

With the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, the Government of Pakistan proactively urges the Provincial Governments and other stakeholders to work together to implement the Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 11.

Efforts are being made to enhance community based measures to transform our cities into 'creative' entities where local and innovative solutions are found to local problems, through community organization in collaboration with city governments.

The aim is to allow for the free exchange of ideas and organize citizens and city officials so that they can work together in formulating and implementing strategies to combat

local issues. Also, a 'Housing Information System' to provide data on housing demand and supply is being established.

I am glad to recall that Pakistan is one of the founder members of UN-Habitat. It has played an active role in the UN-Habitat activities in the past.

Pakistan also appreciates the contribution of UN-Habitat in the reconstruction of earthquake affected areas of the country, as well as lending a helping hand in the relief work at the flood affected areas during 2011- 2012, in Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan.

Mr. President,

Pakistan, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, is undertaking a State of Pakistan Cities Report, and developing the Policy Guidelines to Implement Green Building Code in Pakistan.

Our Ministry of Climate Change, with the support of Provincial Governments has prepared Policy Guidelines for regularizing slums and upgrading urban dweller settlements.

Besides, the Government is also implementing New Urban Agenda through adopting a participatory approach. A National Habitat Steering Committee has been established to guide the Government in shaping Urban Development Policy.

I am delighted to share with you that Pakistan Urban Development Policy will soon be launched that will further ensure sustainable urban development in an integrated and coordinated manner.

With the support of UN-Habitat, we will ensure a cohesive implementation of this Policy in order to achieve urban development's milestones of Pakistan Vision 2025, and the Sustainable Development Goal 11 to make our cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Government of Pakistan is very keen to take full benefit of its huge percentage of young population.

Mr. President,

Government of Pakistan supports and looks forward to continue working with the UN-Habitat and the implementation of urban development policies in Pakistan.

We seek UN-Habitat's continuing assistance and guidance in supporting the efforts of the Government of Pakistan towards fully adopting the "Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All", globally agreed by 193 countries in Ecuador during October, 2016 and to implement, at all levels of the Government, the "157 Actions under Quito Implementation Plan for New Urban Agenda".

On behalf of the Government of Pakistan, let me assure you of our complete support for the successful outcome of UN-Habitat Governing Council meeting.

Thank you.