



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION
AND PHYSICAL PLANNING

Statement by
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at

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Honourable President of the Governing Council,
Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel proud to have been given the opportunity to greet this conference on behalf of the Republic of Croatia as a member state of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

I would like to express the gratitude of the Republic of Croatia to the City of Nairobi for hosting this 26th Governing Council meeting.

I would also like to extend gratitude to Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos for the guidance in reaching consensus among UN member states on adopting the *New Urban Agenda*, as well as to all those involved for their efforts in agreeing on activities, goals and means of our future urban development.

The position of the Republic of Croatia with regard to the themes of this 26th meeting have been presented in the joint Statement on Behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

In order to address the challenges and provide new impetus for achieving urban equity, well-being and prosperity, over the past two years the United Nations and their member states have adopted exceptionally important and ambitious agendas.

In New York in 2015, the world leaders agreed on the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in Addis Ababa a pioneering agreement was achieved on the manner of providing funds for its implementation. As a logical sequence, in Quito, at the Habitat III Conference in October 2016, we adopted the *New Urban Agenda*, a new global strategy for sustainable urban development.

All this represents a major commitment of the entire international community. Our ambitions have to be accompanied by full responsibility, capacity and determination in fulfilling all that which we committed to, and by implementing the *New Urban Agenda* we are making the first step towards improving methods of planning and governing urban areas in a manner directed towards social inclusion and reduction of urban poverty, environmental sustainability and resilient urban development.

The Republic of Croatia has a long tradition in planning the development of space, and it has directed its spatial and urban development by the basic strategic spatial development documents of an integrated planning approach – the *Physical Planning Strategy and Programme of the Republic of Croatia*. By these documents the Croatia committed to a more harmonious development of its urban system, to providing impetus to the development of medium and small sized cities and development centres, as well as to slowing down population growth in major cities.

However, the general world trend has resulted in the fact that today more than half of Croatia's population live in urban areas, and the urbanisation process continues to develop towards population concentration in several urban regions, along with a concurrent depopulation of island, mountain and rural areas. In view of these depopulation trends and a loss of functions and public facilities, mostly in medium and small sized cities, Croatia's urban policy will pay particular attention to the development of cities for all generations, whereby one of the key development themes will consist in addressing the needs of the youth, in order to mitigate the drain of the young population and to stimulate demographic recovery of the country.

Therefore, housing, which occupies most part of the urbanised space and is a prevailing content of settlements, deserves, as a basic human need and right of every individual, special attention. The new *Strategy of Spatial Development*, which is undergoing the adoption procedure, pays special attention to housing as a basic function of towns by determining appropriate measures for the realisation of the right to affordable and quality housing, the provision of accessibility of public

transport and public facilities, and the development of business opportunities complementary to housing and in its vicinity.

As part of the overall policy of the Republic of Croatia, in the document *Architectural Policies of the Republic of Croatia 2013-2020 (Apolitika)* are all formatted to become a catalyst for the processes of sustainable development, the concern for the public interest and space, the improvement of design values based on architectural specialities, the protection of health, climate and security. Housing is the most important component of the social development of society, and thus also of its economic progress. *Apolitika* therefore proposes various housing models, calling also attention to the fact that housing needs to be a socially regulated and controlled field not only in terms of its availability, but also in terms of ensuring basic housing standards and quality, as well as providing affordable housing prices for vulnerable groups of the population.

In order to achieve the set goals, over the past 20 years Croatia has realised a number of programmes and projects aimed at enabling an as wide as possible population range to resolve their housing needs and to improve their housing standard depending on their needs, material status, age and number of family members, under terms substantially more favourable than those on the market.

Considering the special theme of this session, I would like to point out that for an effective implementation of the *New Urban Agenda* and for the realisation of the goals of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable development*, particularly Goal 11, *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, quality organization and monitoring of its implementation is of essential importance, as well as the involvement; in an optimal manner, of an as wide as possible circle of stakeholders: from the international community, national, regional and local authorities, experts, the educational system, the business sector, up to the citizens themselves.

In fact, we all can, within the framework of national policies, contribute to the realisation of the set goals. This, however, not seldom requires a better regional, intergovernmental and transboundary cooperation, which would additionally advance the addressing of issues that are significant for the life and well-being of the population.

Allow me please to conclude by expressing the belief that the *New Urban Agenda*, as a common vision of sustainable cities, will assist us in responding to the challenges and provide additional impetus for achieving its goals, in order to create the presumptions for a better life of future generations.

Thank you for your attention.