

BUCHAREST,  
ROMANIA 2008



## **6<sup>th</sup> European Forum**

### **Global Parliamentarians on Habitat**

**Bucharest, 23-24 April 2008**

#### **Bucharest Declaration "Good laws for a better life in cities"**

##### **Preamble**

We, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat for Europe, have come together within the scope of our Sixth European Forum being held in Bucharest, Romania, from 23-24 April 2008, to take stock of our work hitherto and to deal with the challenges of the future. Our working basis in this respect is the Habitat Agenda.

We are building on the predecessor world forums (Istanbul, Turkey, 1996, Cancun, Mexico, 1998, Manila, Philippines, 2000, Berlin, Germany, 2003 and Rabat, Morocco, 2005) and on the European forums (Bonn, Germany, 1997, Zagreb, Croatia, 1999, Helsinki, Finland, 2000, Berlin, Germany, 2003 and The Hague 2006).

Our aim is to work together regarding the implementation of statutory measures to bring about sustainable worldwide settlement development and adequate shelter for all, as well as well-managed cities fit for the future. The climate-related challenges for cities and energy-policy issues are at the top of the agenda in this context. The focus of our efforts on behalf of sustainable development is on people.

We are living in a world that is undergoing a dynamic process of urbanization. In the mid-21st century, two thirds of the world's population will be living in cities. Conurbations are the biggest causers of climate change; today, cities already produce some 80% of carbon-dioxide emissions worldwide and consume 75% of global energy. Hence, cities, working along with other responsible stakeholders, must function as trailblazers.

This said, we have resolved to recognize the following

**principles and commitments:**

**PRINCIPLES**

1. Transposition of the goals of the Habitat Agenda into national law

We affirm the urgent need to implement the commitments under the Habitat Agenda of the United Nations from the year 1996, which was ratified by 171 countries, and the UN Millennium Development Goals agreed in 2000. We call for a renewed commitment to implementing the Habitat Agenda in our countries and worldwide and coordinating and enforcing laws. Greater attention must be paid to the issues of settlement development and poor people. Working towards this end and ensuring that people suffering from the problems of rapid urban changes are listened to are the stated goals of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. We emphasize the fact that states must pass laws that help promote sustainable settlement development. There should be a balance between the laws on development of rural and urban areas.

2. Climate change and its impact on cities

The biggest causers of climate change are conurbations; today, cities already produce some 80% of the carbon-dioxide emissions worldwide and consume 75% of global energy. Energy efficiency and the use of “clean energy”, which is produced in an ecologically acceptable manner from renewable energy sources, are the most important tools for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Urban areas and their inhabitants are also the chief victims of climate change: rising sea levels, water scarcity, heat waves, death from high ozone concentrations and even more extreme weather events like tornados and devastating conflagrations – there is a considerable risk that such events will occur much more frequently and with more serious outcomes in future. That is why cities, in collaboration with responsible stakeholders, must serve as trailblazers. It is our task as parliamentarians, acting together with governments and other protagonists in society, to do our bit to counteract such developments by ensuring good, sustainable laws.

### 3. The role of the Parliamentarians

We are convinced that the strengthening and ongoing consolidation of the Global Group of Parliamentarians on Habitat is an effective and appropriate procedure for boosting international cooperation and coordination with other worldwide organizations which represent similar interests that are compatible with those of our organization in the issues of sustainable settlement development and adequate shelter for all. We therefore consider close cooperation with the United Nations (UN Habitat) to be of outstanding importance. Therefore, the Parliamentarians should raise awareness of the themes of the Habitat Agenda, they should prioritize those themes and take initiatives. They should also stimulate local capacity building.

## **COMMITMENTS**

1. We reaffirm our willingness to promote active and decisive involvement of parliamentarians, in harmony with the points contained in the Habitat Agenda and in the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and undertake to strengthen the promotion and dissemination of the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements (Habitat Agenda).
2. We reaffirm that we will work to promote the initiation and improvement of national government measures in harmony with the above recommendations, principles and commitments – at both subregional and regional level – and to create the legislative and administrative instruments that lead to a sustainable development of housing and settlements and provide access to adequate shelter.
3. We undertake to strengthen communications and mutual support among parliamentarians as regards the exchange of experience and findings in these areas and to promote the setting up of national and regional parliamentarian groups for Habitat.
4. We undertake to go on pressing for our governments' support in underpinning the implementation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

5. We undertake to promote the passing and implementation of national laws on the basis of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals, and to strengthen communications and support among members of parliament in order to share and exchange experience and knowledge in these fields.
6. We undertake to step up the public debate with government representatives, non-governmental organizations and business representatives on the options available for improving the quality of life in cities.
7. We undertake, jointly with governments and other stakeholders in society, to help by means of sustainable laws to contain climate change and shape the world we live in so that it poses no threat to people.

Bucharest, 24 April 2008