



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

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Welcoming Remarks

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The spoken word prevails!

GOOD LAWS FOR A BETTER HABITAT

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Executive Director Dr. Anna Tibaijuka,
Excellencies,
Honourable Colleagues and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Round Table for Parliamentarians. It is good that we have the opportunity to meet in order to discuss common challenges in the area of "Climate Change and Human Settlements" on this World Urban Forum.

On behalf of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, I would like first of all to very cordially thank Dr. Anna Tibaijuka for the invitation to the World Urban Forum. My thanks also go to Dr. Markandey Rai, Coordinator for Global Parliamentarians at UN-Habitat, for the excellent cooperation and his valued assistance in the preparation of our Round Table. I would also like thank you Director Oyebanji for coming. He will say a few words of welcome shortly.

It is an honour for me as President of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat to open and chair this Round Table. Thank you for your great interest.

This Roundtable is specifically directed at us parliamentarians. As representatives of the people we vote on laws. In addition, we control the budget of our countries and can thus ensure that the necessary financial resources are available at national and international level. We set the priorities in the expenditure of public funds. In this way, parliamentarians make a critical contribution to the good governance of their nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before presenting the participants of this panel, let me make some remarks about our organization: the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is a unique network of parliamentarians from around the world that deals exclusively with the habitat topic. The Global Parliamentarians are led by a Board of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors are the President of the Board of Directors, as well as the President of the regional chapters of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in Africa, America, Asia and Europe. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is a very active organization.

A meeting of all members of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was also held within the framework of the twenty-second Governing Council of UN-Habitat in April 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, among other things, adopted a Resolution which was presented at the closing session of the Governing Council. We also showed a strong presence at the celebration of World Habitat Day 2009 in Washington DC.

In 2009 we have also worked hard to provide you with a new website where you can inform yourself on the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat and their current activities. You are now able to download the minutes of our meetings from our website www.gph-habitat.de/en. The website is supported by the German Bundestag and will be further completed and expanded during the course of this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat meet regularly at the provincial, regional, and international level to seek solutions for the most serious challenges in the field of sustainable urban development. Our organization was founded in 1987 with the aim of

supporting UN-Habitat. Direct contact with UN-Habitat and its partners remains a particularly important concern to the Global Parliamentarians to this day.

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat held a very important Global Forum in parallel to the Conference on Human Settlements HABITAT II in Istanbul in 1996.

The next Global Forums of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat were held in Cancun, Mexico, in 1998, in Manila, Philippines in 2000, in Berlin, Germany, in 2003 and in Rabat, Morocco, in 2005. Our 6th Global Forum was held only last week, from 18 to 20 March 2010 here in Rio de Janeiro.

Some of the parliamentarians who are present here today have also participated in our 6th Global Forum. We discussed our options for action at national and international level in the field of sustainable urban development. The focus was climate change, urban-rural linkages and the participation of the population in city life. We have summarized the results of our deliberations in a "Declaration of Rio", which we will feed into our future parliamentary debates. I would like to thank Eliomar Coelho, Municipal Councillor of

Rio de Janeiro and a member of the Board of Directors of GPH-America, who is sitting here on the panel, for his dedication and professionalism in hosting and organising our forum. Eliomar Coelho will present our Declaration of Rio to you shortly. At this point I would also like to thank the Camara Municipal do Rio de Janeiro for their generous hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We want to talk today about the impact of climate change.

Climate change remains the greatest social, political, ecological and economic challenge of the coming decades. Climate Change was our topic at the Round Table for Parliamentarians at the World Urban Forum IV in November 2008, in Nanjing, China, and one of many points of our discussion last week during our 6th Global Forum. In this Round Table we equally want to deepen the theme by discussing "Climate Change and Human Settlements".

By the middle of the 21 Century, two thirds of the world population will live in cities. 75 percent of energy consumption and about 80 percent of global

carbon dioxide emissions are already today accounted for by cities. Urban areas are undoubtedly the main sources of climate change.

It is also in urban areas in which climate change can be encountered particularly effectively, on the one hand through adjustment measures, on the other hand through preventive measures. A good example of a climate-friendly measure in cities is energetic refurbishment of buildings, which reduces the CO₂ emissions of these buildings.

As parliamentarians, we have the responsibility and the opportunity to enforce measures such as these through legislation and to thus create favourable conditions for a climate-friendly world. The most important resource in fighting climate change is the political will.

The world is linked more and more closely. How much CO₂ is emitted in my home country Germany also has an impact on the climate in Brazil. I am convinced that international challenges can only be answered through good international cooperation.

Through our network of parliamentarians, we aim to

promote this cooperation. Moreover, it is equally important that parliamentarians enter into a dialogue with the public, with government officials, non-governmental organizations and with business representatives on how improvements can be achieved.

The World Urban Forum provides a unique platform to promote such a comprehensive co-operation and support. The Round Table is for us a special opportunity to contribute to the success of this important conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In preparation for this Round Table, our panellists were asked a lot of questions that should be discussed.

Each question lends itself to a long lecture. This is not possible, considering the many panellists this afternoon. I would therefore like to ask the speaker to concentrate on what is important to them in their statement of five minutes. We want to allow as many colleagues as possible to have their say and ensure a lively discussion.

We have time for discussion until 4:00 p.m.

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