



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

Peter Götz

Deputy of the Federal
Republic of Germany

President of the Global
Parliamentarians on Habitat

Peter Götz
Member of the German Bundestag

President
of the
Board of Directors
of the
Global Parliamentarians on Habitat

SPEECH

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German Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
GERMANY

Tel. +49-30-227-74928
Fax: +49-30-227-76862

peter.goetz@bundestag.de
www.goetzpeter.de

The spoken word prevails!

GOOD LAWS FOR A BETTER HABITAT

Thank you, Axumite, for this invitation. For a long time now, UN-Habitat and the Global Parliamentarians have been working together.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here. For the GPH it is very important to take part at this event.

The world is changing rapidly. In the film we watched some moments ago, we have seen what can happen in the future. More than half of the world's population already lives in cities.. The next thirty years the demographic growth will be concentrated in the cities. The role of cities and therefore the importance of sustainable urban development is increasing.

These developments are enormous challenges for the cities. In developing countries the combination of a very rapid urbanization and weak economic growth is often catastrophic. Without sufficient financial resources and clear guidelines, many cities are no longer able to meet their citizens' needs. The cities become a collecting basin for the poor.

We cannot let things get that far.

There are many city governments and many organizations which are struggling more or less successfully to find solutions for this challenge. Frequently, however, every city and every organization is struggling to find a solution on their own.

On 26 March this year, the World Urban Campaign was presented at the 5th World Urban Forum of UN-Habitat in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The World Urban Campaign is an excellent network and also a platform that allows us Parliamentarians as partners of UN-Habitat to develop common positions on sustainable urban development issues and to make these widely known.

Because of the World Urban Campaign, we no longer need to struggle to find good solutions on our own. The exchange of information between stakeholders is the basis for success. We can all learn from each other.

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is a unique network of parliamentarians dealing exclusively with habitat issues. We count more than 200 MPs from

nearly 180 countries. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was founded in 1987 with the aim of supporting the activities of UN-Habitat. We want to implement the goals of the Habitat Agenda, which was adopted fourteen years ago in Istanbul, in the national legislation of our countries. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat have also participated in the conception and design of the World Urban Campaign as a founding member right from the start.

We need to promote sustainable urban development in our national legislation and to provide funding for the implementation of these laws. For this reason, it is very important to me, as President of our international parliamentarian network, to actively support the World Urban Campaign of UN-Habitat. We need "Good Laws for a Better Habitat".

As representatives of the people, our members vote on laws. In addition, as parliamentarians, we control the budget of our country and can ensure that the necessary financial resources are available at national and international level. We must use our political power to influence the quality of our cities.

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat meet

regularly at national, regional, and global level to find solutions to key challenges in the field of sustainable urban development.

After holding global forums in Istanbul, Cancun, Manila, Berlin and Rabat, the Global Parliamentarians held their 6th Global Forum in March 2010 also in Rio de Janeiro. We focused our discussions in particular on how to include the losers of the urbanization process in developing countries, the slum dwellers, in city life and how to bridge the urban divide. We also focused on climate change and its impact on cities. We want urban development policy to include more renewable energy sources and greater energy efficiency and we have all adopted this goal in our “Declaration of Rio”. We are currently preparing our next world conference of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in May 2011 in Zadar, Croatia.

Climate change remains the greatest social, political and economic challenge of the next centuries which we will all need to face. Without a doubt, the developed countries are the biggest contributors to global warming. The negative effects, however, are suffered mostly by developing countries, who can least protect themselves from the consequences. It is

the poorest of the poor who are hit hardest by floods and drought.

Those who are responsible must support developing countries financially and technologically in adapting to climate change. This also applies to those countries whose industrial development is occurring at great speed. Not - or not only - out of a moral obligation, but out of healthy self-interest, because a world in which the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer, is not a stable world. It is not a peaceful world. We should not be surprised in Europe if, every year, there are more refugees from Africa at our borders trying to escape the hunger and other terrible conditions in their countries of origin.

Measures which can prevent even worse disasters in the future are of paramount importance. Energy conservation is also becoming more important. The generation of sustainable energy is an important technological advance that allows us to slow down global warming. But we should not limit ourselves to the supply side of energy. The demand for energy must be reduced, especially in the energy-hungry industrialized countries. Developing countries will also have to adapt to changing conditions. Those who

want to achieve prosperity in the future can nowadays only achieve it with high energy efficiency.

These days in the German Bundestag we are discussing an Energy Concept of the German Government which fixes the Energy Policy Goals until 2050 and we are putting a lot of money into this.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By the middle of the twenty-first Century, more than two thirds of the world population will live in cities. Seventy-five percent of energy consumption and about eighty percent of global carbon dioxide emissions are already today accounted for by cities. Urban areas are undoubtedly the main sources of climate change.

Cities can and must therefore make important contributions to climate protection, in urban planning or when it comes to the energy efficiency city-owned buildings.

We parliamentarians have recognized that cities and regions are of outstanding importance for the implementation of a sustainable development.

It must be our concern, as responsible parliamentarians, to combine economic development and environmental concerns in such a way that good laws result. In this, we must place the people at the centre of our efforts. Thus, we concur wholeheartedly with the motto of the Shanghai Expo and this year's World Habitat Day "Better City, Better Life.

We have received this mandate from the voters in our countries. We, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, see this as an obligation to future generations.

Our discussions in Rio de Janeiro have shown clearly how important the cooperation of all parties involved in the Habitat process is. We need new partnerships at all levels of government. It is only together that we can overcome the great challenges ahead. Our most important resource in doing this is the political will!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Urban Campaign is an excellent vision. Let us not leave it with visions. We must implement our

visions. This is a task we all share. Let us work hard for a better life in a better world!

Thank you for your attention.