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7th GLOBAL FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ON HABITAT
Zadar, May 18, 2011

Honourable Mr. Götz,

Honourable Mayor,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am exceptionally pleased and honoured to have the opportunity of opening the UN HABITAT Conference here in Zadar.

I would like, at the same time, to say that it is my great pleasure to hold such a meeting in this Croatian city of Zadar, a city particularly rich in cultural heritage. Zadar is also an ambience that emits a rich past and takes pride in a finely-made city unit. I therefore consider it useful to have this discussion on quality life improvement in city and community life on our planet take place right here.

The praiseworthy HABITAT initiative deals with the crucial issues and problems of contemporary man penetrating in the numerous fields of his activities: professional, philosophical, anthropological, historical, and other.

Cities have always played a key role, as they do today, in the civilization of mankind and the development of most countries of the world. Even though this is less emphasized in some continents, nevertheless most of the world inhabitants today dwell in cities. An increasing surface of the world is being transformed into urban area, an enormous megalopolis.

Cities are increasingly feeling the results of the economic crisis and climate changes regardless of its reasons. In the process the developing countries that have least contributed to the creation of this crisis are the most affected by it. News of floods, tsunami, earthquakes and droughts are daily issues and the impression is that catastrophes multiply.

In the conditions of globalisation such a development confronts us, of course, with new challenges, as have not been experienced in the past centuries.

The issues of sustainable development, climate changes, infrastructure, and hygienic life conditions raise issues that cannot be solved individually. It is necessary to put a great amount of energy and conscientiousness into the discussion on these issues.

The greatest responsibility lies right here with parliamentarians, or members of the highest representative bodies of every country. It is not sufficient to just declare a dedication to high standards but it is necessary that acts confirm them.

Now, when the world population is increasing we must ask ourselves serious questions. Are we working and moving in the right direction? In industrial countries the population number is stagnant while in developing countries it is exponentially growing. Are our acts a contribution to the improvement or impairment of the blood count of the planet?

In identifying the best solutions it is not sufficient to work hard for the best technical or procedural solutions. The human universal ethical element should always be kept in mind. The best technical solutions are not always ethical ones.

I am saying this because the themes HABITAT is dealing with go deep into the basic problems of present mankind: population increase, poverty, sickness, natural catastrophes and pollution. These issues cannot be dealt with only by the most expert and most profitable solutions but the ailments of today's mankind are to be observed as a whole and globally. This is the only way we can give a complete and correct answer.

The preservation of man's natural environment is a task without precedent for mankind. The natural environment is inseparable from man's artificially created communities and we must always bear this in mind. It is our great task here on the Adriatic – to preserve the biological diversity of our sea and coastal region.

Natural catastrophes have recently followed one another and they have hit every part of the globe. We must therefore ask ourselves for the reasons of these multiplying disasters and whether or not they are, at least in part, the result of climatic changes.

Ladies and gentlemen, honourable guests,

Due to all that has been stated, I would ask you to reflect on the moves that we take in the near future for ourselves and our children. Let them be in accordance with our own conscientiousness and the eternal thought of what we are to leave behind. We do not OWN this planet, it is only in our temporary possession.

The issues that this praiseworthy world initiative is dealing with are the key to the survival of mankind as we know it. We thus do not have the right to deal with it only declaratively, accumulating documents and creating regulations against the principles of ethics.

As parliamentarians and representatives of our nations we cannot deal with this issue as if all these problems were provoked by non-human forces, but be able to accept our part of the responsibility. Likewise, we cannot search for excuses unless we ourselves make use of the authority we have.

I wish you all successful work and a pleasant stay in Zadar and Croatia!

Thank you