



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

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Speech

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of the GPH

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The spoken word prevails!

Margaret, thank you for your warm welcome.

Good morning,

Honourable Colleagues and Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today in this beautiful city of Nairobi.

I bring you the best wishes of the Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. Thank you for coming to Nairobi.

For us as Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, your work in your countries and your personal involvement in Africa is of particular importance. My special thanks go to my Deputy and President of the African Council of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, Mrs. Margaret Zziwa-Nantongo, for the organization of this meeting here today in Nairobi.

I also thank Dr. Markandey Rai, Chief of Global Parliamentarians and Trade Unions at UN-HABITAT, for his strong support in the planning and preparation of this meeting. I know very well how difficult it was. Thank you Markandey!

Dear Colleagues,

Let me briefly report on the activities of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in the last year, so that you can gain a little insight into our work.

After holding global forums in Istanbul, Cancun, Manila, Berlin and Rabat, we, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, held our 6th Global Forum in March 2010 in Rio de Janeiro.

We intensively discussed our options for action at national and international level in the field of sustainable urban development. 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”.

In addition, the Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was newly elected.

A few days later, also in Rio de Janeiro, the 5th World Urban Forum of UN-HABITAT took place. We held a Round Table for Parliamentarians on "Cities and Climate Change" at the Forum.

We also presented our organization within the framework of the newly established World Urban Campaign by UN-HABITAT before more than ten thousand participants.

The World Urban Campaign is an excellent network. It is also a good platform that allows us parliamentarians as partners of UN-Habitat to promote common positions of sustainable urban development together with other partners. This gives us a strong publicity impact.

For this reason, we have positively accompanied the creation of the World Urban Campaign right from the start. I would like to thank our colleague Mrs Mariam Nalubega for strongly representing the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat at various events of the World Urban Campaign.

In October 2010 I was able to present our work within the

framework of the World Habitat Week of UN-HABITAT at the Expo in Shanghai, China.

Today I want to draw your attention to our 7th Global Forum of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. It will take place in May 2011 in Europe in the beautiful coastal city of Zadar in Croatia.

You should have received the written invitation by now, either by e-mail or through the speaker of your parliament. If you have not yet received your invitation, I would like to ask you to give me your business card with your address.

The theme of the conference is "Good Laws for a Better Habitat". In Zadar, we want to talk about our options for action at national and international level in the field of sustainable urban development. We will in particular discuss the management of climate change in coastal cities and the role of parliamentarians as "Drivers of Change".

I would like to invite all of you to Europe and I am looking forward to seeing you again in Zadar in May this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

More than half the world's population already lives in cities today. The demographic growth will concentrate in the cities over the next 30 years.

In Africa, this urbanization process is taking place especially rapidly. Urbanization is a global process and it causes huge problems. Many mega-cities have become the nightmare of any housing policy. In these places, we must succeed in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, housing shortages, lack of education, lack of work, but also of indifference towards fellow humans, other creatures and the environment.

If we fail to solve the social, environmental and economic problems soon, we must expect to deal with social unrest, crime, abuse of human rights and even revolts and civil wars, as we are unfortunately currently experiencing in many countries. We know very well how difficult it is to raise the necessary financial and human resources to influence the urbanization process in a positive and, above all, sustainable manner, especially in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We parliamentarians have a special responsibility in addressing these complex challenges. We have received this duty from the voters in our countries. The people must be at the heart of our efforts in all that we do.

The African Regional Council of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is very dear to me. For this reason it was a priority for me to be here with you today. We need strong parliamentarians from Africa, who demand clear rules in their national legislation for sustainable urban development and who ensure that financial resources are provided for this purpose in the budgets of their countries.

I would therefore like to ask you to actively participate in the activities of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. Today, elections of the African Board of Directors of our organization of parliamentarians are on the agenda. Please join us, we need strong personalities from the north and the south, from the east and the west of this wonderful continent. With your activity you strengthen our role as parliamentarians in your home country and internationally. We must not leave politics to the governments. This is only possible if we get involved

personally.

All of you who have come to Nairobi are committed to a better habitat. For that, I thank you very much. If we work together well and closely, we can tackle the huge challenges that lie ahead.

I trust we will have an interesting and successful conference.

Thank you for your attention.