



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE RT. HON. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AT  
THE CONFERENCE OF GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ON HABITAT  
(GPH) AFRICA CHARPTER, KAMPALA 19-20 AUGUST 2009**

**MADAM CHAIRPERSON, HONORABLE MEMBERS,**

- ON BEHALF OF PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA, I WISH TO OFFER A VERY SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR PARTNER AND FRIENDS FROM UN-HABITAT
- AND TO ALL HON. MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS TO THIS CONFERENCE OF GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARIANS ON HABITAT (GPH ) AFRICA CHAPTER.

**MADAM CHAIRPERSON,**

- THIS FORUM PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT FOR US TO REVIEW THE PROGRESS MADE AND CHALLENGES AHEAD TO HARNASS GLOBAL PARTERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.
- THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS IS GETTING MORE SERIOUS THAN EVER IT IS SAID THAT MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS, AND MORE THAN ONE BILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN UNHEALTHY SETTLEMENTS WITHOUT CLEAN WATER, SANITATION AND ELECTRICITY
- ACCORDING TO THE UN ESTIMATE, 60% OF THE WORLD POPULATION ARE ESTIMATED TO LIVE IN URBAN AREA
- THE VAST MAJORITY OF THESE PEOPLE LIVE ON LESS THAN ONE DOLLAR A DAY AND ARE HUNGRY.

- ONE THIRD OF THEM LIVES IN SLUMS WITHOUT ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION.
- OVERCROWDED IN SHACKS MADE UP OF TEMPORARY BUILDING MATERIALS THAT CANNOT WITHSTAND THE SLIGHTEST CHALLENGE FROM NATURE.
- AND WITHOUT SECURE TENURE SO RISK EVICTION OF AUTHORITIES OFTEN WITHOUT NOTICE.
- MOST SLUM DWELLERS ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 25 AND HAVE NO SERIOUS PROSPECTS FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.
- THE COMBINATION OF THESE FACTORS MAKES THE URBAN POOR THE MOST DISEMPOWERED GROUP IN TERMS OF POVERTY AND ACCESS TO HEALTH AND EDUCATION,
- AND THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUP IN TERMS OF HIV/AIDS AND OTHER DISEASES.
- UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR NUMBER IS GROWING EVERYDAY.

**MADAM CHAIRPERSON, HONORABLE MEMBERS,**

- THE ABOVE SITUATION REPRESENTS OUR COLLECTIVE FAILURE TO COME TO TERMS WITH RAPID URBANISATION, SLUM UP-GRADING, AS WELL AS RAISING AWARENESS OF THE WORLD TO THESE VITAL ISSUES.
- ADDRESSING THE ABOVE CHALLENGES WILL DEPEND INCREASINGLY ON THE ABILITY OF GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS

TO COME UP WITH CONCRETE SOLUTIONS TO MAKE OUR CITIES AND TOWNS MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE.

- I WISH THEREFORE TO RECOMMEND THAT WE FOCUS OUR DELIBERATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING CRITICAL ISSUES OF:
  1. RAPID URBANIZATION AND THE URBAN POVERTY CRISIS THAT HAS COME TO ACCOMPANY IT.
  2. THE WATER AND SANITATION CHALLENGE IN MANY CITIES AND TOWNS.
  3. THE ADEQUATE SHELTER CRISIS MANIFESTED IN EVER GROWING SLUM FORMATIONS.
  4. HOUSING AND SHELTER FINANCE CHALLENGES.
  5. LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS AND LACK OF SECURE TENURE FOR INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND SLUM DWELLERS. AND
  6. THE NEED TO IMPROVE URBAN SAFETY AND SECURITY.

**MADAM CHAIRPERSON, HONORABLE MEMBERS**

- THIRTY YEARS AGO, JANE JACOB, IN ONE OF THOSE JERICHO BEACH HANGERS SHARED WITH US TWO LESSIONS.
- THE FIRST WAS THAT CITIES ARE ORGANIC. THEY GROW, THEY DECAY AND THEY ARE RENEWED AND REBORN.

- THE SECOND WAS A LESSON TAUGHT BY EXAMPLE, THAT THE CITIZENS MOST AFFECTED IN URBAN ISSUES MUST BE ENGAGED IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS.
- TODAY THE NEED FOR ENGAGEMENT OF THE POOR, THE WOMEN AND YOUTH IN ADDRESSING THE URBANIZATION OF OUR PLANET COULD NOT BE GREATER.
- IN THIRTY YEARS WE HAVE LEARNED THAT NOT ONLY IS THE CITY ORGANIC, BUT THAT THE PLANET IS ORGANIC WHOLE.
- THAT DECISIONS MADE IN MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND YES INDEED, SOCIAL IMPACTS AROUND THE WORLD.
- WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER AS GLOBAL CITIZENS.
- THIS FORUM IS THEREFORE WELL PLACED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES FACING CITIES
- AND TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT.
- WE HAVE IDEAS AND BEST PRACTICES TO GUIDE US, TOGETHER, WE MUST SCALE UP OUR EFFORTS, AND MAKE OUR URBAN PLANET MORE JUST, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FOR ALL ITS INHABITANTS.
- IN THAT HOPEFUL SPIRIT, PLEASE ACCEPT MY BEST WISHES FOR THE SUCCESS OF YOUR IMPORTANT DELIBERATIONS.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR LISTENING TO ME.**