



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

Peter Götz

Deputy of the Federal
Republic of Germany

President of the Global
Parliamentarians on Habitat

Minutes of the Parliamentary Meeting

**on 06.10.2009,
10:00 am to 1:00 pm**

**in the Carl-Schurz-Auditorium
at the German Embassy
in Washington, DC, USA**

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A. Participants

Ali Riza Alaboyun, Turkey, MP

Tubwita Bagaya Grace, Uganda, MP

Daniela Georgian, Romania, Parliamentary adviser

Peter Götz, Germany, MP

Frank Graf, Germany, Interpreter

Bobes Marin, Romania, MP

Abubakar Garba Shehu Matazu, Nigeria, MP

Sanja Milinovic, Croatia, Embassy of Croatia

Mariam Nalubega, Uganda, MP

Bukola Olorumdami-Ayeni, Nigeria, Committee Clerk

Markandey Rai, Kenya, GPH Coordinator, UN-Habitat

Jerko Rosin, Croatia, MP

Margaret Zziwa-Nantongo, Uganda, East African Legislative Assembly MP

B. Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting by Peter Götz, President
2. Welcome, Dr. Klaus Scharioth, Ambassador of Germany in the U.S.
3. Welcome, Dr. Markandey Rai, Coordinator GPH, UN-Habitat
4. Report of the Members of the Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat on the activities of the GPH
5. Planning of the next Global Forum of Global Parliamentarians in 2010 and the Regional Forums in Africa, America, Asia and Europe
6. Preparation for the World Urban Forum IV (WUF5), 22 to 26 March 2010, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
7. Other points
8. Summary by Peter Götz, President

C. Review

1. Opening of the meeting by Peter Götz, President

Peter Götz welcomed the Parliamentarians present (see **Appendix 1** for participant list), and thanked the ambassador Dr. Klaus Scharioth hosting the parliamentary meeting in the German Embassy. Götz drew attention to the meeting of the Board of Directors on 5 October and the good discussions and decisions, which will be gone into in more detail later.

2. Welcome, Dr. Klaus Scharioth, Ambassador of Germany in the U.S.

In his welcome speech Ambassador Scharioth stressed the importance and topicality of the Habitat issues. He especially focussed on climate change and the need to deal with this issue in the construction of cities and housing. Particularly in developing countries, urgent action is needed, which must be tackled in partnership. He identified the partnership of 100 German cities with cities in Asia, as an example of cooperation to follow. The setting of a major trend was expected from the climate conference in Copenhagen.

3. Report of the Members of the Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat on the activities of the GPH

After everyone present introduced themselves, Peter Götz took a stand and made it clear how more and more cities are feeling the impact of the financial and economic crises and climate change. He pointed out that in the news, reports of tsunamis, earthquakes, floods and droughts alternate. The developing countries that have contributed the least to these crises are feeling their consequences the most. They face additional challenges. While the population of cities is stagnating in industrialized countries, the urbanization in mega cities in developing countries is increasing rapidly. This results in poverty, slums and precarious living conditions.

Götz requests that the economic crisis be understood as an impetus for environmentally friendly policies and a strengthened international

environmental awareness. A more efficient use of available resources is therefore of paramount importance. He made it clear that Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, have a particular responsibility and demanded that they meet this responsibility through good laws for a climate-conscious and sustainable urban development. The GPH can play an important role by sharing their experience with all stakeholders and by raising awareness.

In the ensuing discussion Mariam Nalubega called for an inventory and analysis of existing legislation. Peter Götz reminded her of the comparative study "The implementation of the objectives and principles of the Habitat Agenda adopted in Istanbul in 1996 in the legislation of the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania and Turkey in the years from 1996 to 2005", which was financed by Germany and presented in Vancouver (World Urban Forum III) as well as the two workshops conducted on this topic in Bucharest (April 2008) and Berlin (World Habitat Day 2008). An extension of this study to other countries outside of Europe, for example by UN-Habitat, could lead to the gaining of new insights and make apparent deficiencies in the legislation. This had not been done due financing problems. The basis for an extension of the investigation is given.

Jerko Rosin asked to examine how the organization of the GPH could be strengthened: many countries are not interested, why, for example, was Australia not among them? The aim must be to attract more colleagues to the issues of Habitat.

Ali Riza Alaboyun regretted that few parliamentarians from developed countries commit themselves. He pointed to the different problems in different regions of the world and called for different responses to different problems such as earthquakes, tsunamis and floods.

Margaret Zziwa suggested sending all the position papers of the GPH to all parliaments to ensure that they are accessible to all.

Markandey Rai, when asked by Peter Götz, assured that he would send the addresses of all Presidents of Parliaments to the General Secretariat by e-mail.

Peter Götz pointed out that soon there will be a new website of the GPH on the Internet, where all documents will be made available. There will also be references to new information from UN-Habitat. All available reports will be posted on the Website.

Dr Abubakar Garba Shehu Matazu criticized that UN-Habitat concentrates only on the ministries. The legislators were not taken into account. Parliaments are disregarded by UN-Habitat. The Nigeria-based UN officials had neither resources nor any information. He criticized the communication gap, which must be closed by UN Habitat. He also requested that the issue of rural depopulation and the strengthening of development in rural areas be given attention to. This would contribute to disentangling the problems in the mega cities.

4. Welcome, Dr. Markandey Rai, Coordinator GPH, UN-Habitat

Markandey Rai gave a speech on behalf of Executive Director Dr. Anna Tibaijuka, who was prevented from coming to the meeting. It is attached in **Appendix 2**. He assured the GPH that they play a prominent role for UN-Habitat. This is borne out by their inclusion in the World Urban Forum V in Rio de Janeiro. In addition, there is a strategy paper on the work of UN-Habitat with parliamentarians. It is available on the website of UN-Habitat. He distributed it (see **Appendix 3**). Since none of the parliamentarians present had knowledge of the paper, the discussion on it was postponed.

5. Planning the next World Forum of Global Parliamentarians in 2010 and the Regional Forums in Africa, America, Asia and Europe

Peter Götz informed everyone about the decision of the Board of Directors to hold the 6th World Forum of the GPH on 18 and 19 March 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, before the start of the World Urban Forum V (WUF5).

Peter Götz suggests that three workgroups or panels should discuss the following three topics under the overall theme of “Sustainable Urbanisation”:

- Climate Change
- City for All
- Urban-Rural Linkages

A "Declaration of Rio" will be presented in the subsequent week during the WUF5. The city of Rio de Janeiro will be the host of the conference. The conference will take place in the City Hall (Camara Municipal) of Rio de Janeiro, which is close to the conference venue of the WUF5. Colleague Eliomar Coelho will be in charge of the organizational arrangements in close cooperation with the General Secretariat of the GPH.

Peter Götz also informed everyone that Croatia was interested in hosting the 2011 Global Forum of the Parliamentarians and that on 5 October 2009 the Board of Directors decided to organize the Global Forum together with the European Forum in Zadar, Croatia, in early 2011. Jerko Rosin will discuss the details with the Croatian Parliament and the City of Zadar.

The African colleagues want to carry out the next Forum for Africa in Nigeria or Uganda, venue and date still need to be determined.

6. Preparation for the World Urban Forum IV (WUF5), 22 to 26 March 2010, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Markandey Rai pointed out the WUF5 in Rio de Janeiro and the planned Round Table of Parliamentarians on 23 March 2010. He distributed the provisional programme. Margaret Zziwa suggested renaming the Round Table "Round Table of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat", in order to call attention to the organization of parliamentarians more clearly. She also demanded, together with Dr. Matazu and other parliamentarians, that the President should speak a short greeting on behalf of the GPH at the opening ceremony to emphasize the importance of parliamentarians and their difference compared to other NGOs.

Margaret Zziwa suggested that the Global Forum of the GPH be incorporated into the programme of UN-Habitat, similar to the events "World Urban Youth"

and “Gender Equity Action” (19 and 20 March 2010). This way other participants will be informed at an early stage about the activities of the Global Forum.

Peter Götz was asked to submit these suggestions to Dr. Tibaijuka and ask her to take into account the legitimate concerns of the GPH. He assured he would keep the colleagues present informed.

7. Summary by Peter Goetz, President

Peter Goetz thanked the parliaments present for their constructive participation during the past two days. He suggested advertising for the Global Forum of the GPH and the WUF5 in Rio.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Participant List

Appendix 2: Speech of Markandey Rai

Appendix 3: Strategy Paper on Working with Parliamentarians