



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

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Welcome and Report

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The spoken word prevails!

GOOD LAWS FOR A BETTER HABITAT

Excellencies,
Honourable Colleagues and Friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat (GPH), I would like to welcome you warmly to this working session. This working session is by invitation only, as the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the upcoming activities of our organization.

You have participated in one of our regional or global events.

For those of you who are new to the GPH and who were not able to attend our Round Table yesterday, I would like to say some words about our organization.

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is a unique international network of parliamentarians who are dedicated to the sustainable development of human settlements. Its members are Parliamentarians from around the world who are committed to sustainable urban development and to improving the housing and living conditions of the people not only in their own countries but also worldwide.

The GPH is a very active organization. They are led by a Board of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors are the President of the Board, as well as the Presidents of the regional chapters of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

Dear Colleagues,

We meet regularly at regional and international level to seek solutions for the most serious challenges in the field of sustainable urban development. Our organization was founded twenty-five years ago in 1987 with the aim of supporting UN-Habitat. Direct contact with UN-Habitat and its partners remains a particularly important concern to the Global Parliamentarians to this day.

The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat held their first Global Forum in parallel to the Conference on Human Settlements HABITAT II in Istanbul in 1996.

Our next Global Forums were held in Cancun, Mexico, in 1998, in Manila, Philippines in 2000, in Berlin, Germany, in 2003 and in Rabat, Morocco, in 2005, and in 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Our 7th Global Forum was held in May last year, in Zadar, Croatia, under our motto "Good Laws for a Better Habitat". About 100 parliamentarians from over 30 countries came to Zadar to discuss current challenges in the field of sustainable urban development and to develop solutions. Hosts of the conference were the City of Zadar and the Croatian Parliament, with support from the University of Zadar. Parliamentarians from around the world developed solutions in two working groups on "Climate Change and Coastal Cities" and "Legislators as Drivers of Change". The results of the workshops were recorded in a "Declaration of Zadar", which is now to be carried into the respective parliaments of the participants.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank my friend Jerko Rosin, President of the European Chapter of the GPH, for organizing this successful conference in his home country of Croatia.

The Regional Councils of the GPH for the regions of Africa, America, Asia and Europe are very strong and have developed a number of meaningful activities in 2011 and 2012.

In April last year, a general meeting of the African Council of our organisation was held in Nairobi, Kenya. The African Board of Directors was re-formed. Margaret Zziwa-Nantongo, currently speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, was re-elected President of the African Council.

In May last year, Regional Forums for Asia and Europe took place. Amongst other things, new Board members were elected in both groups. Ronald Kiandee, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Malaysia, was elected the new President of the GPH Asia. The former Vice-President of the GPH Europe, Jerko Rosin from Croatia, was elected president of the GPH Europe.

In February this year the 8th Regional Forum of the American Council was held in Panama City, Panama.

We have also worked together closely with UN-Habitat.

Thank you very much Markanday Rai for all that you have done for us.

In April 2011, I had the honour of representing the GPH at a high-level panel on housing during the 23rd Governing Council of UN-HABITAT in Nairobi, Kenya.

In October, we took part in the global celebrations of World Habitat Day in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The World Habitat Day Celebrations were strongly supported by a prominent member of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, one of our former presidents, Oscar Lopez Velarde Vega, who is currently Secretary of Urban Development and Housing of the State of Aguascalientes, Mexico.

This year, the GPH were requested to organize one of the Round Tables of the World Urban Forum VI, as in previous World Urban Forums, together with UN-Habitat. Yesterday, Parliamentarians from around the world discussed their role in connection with "Cities as Engines for Sustainable Growth". We have developed strategies and solutions which we will take to our national parliaments to implement.

Dear Colleagues,

There is also a lot of work ahead of us.

If there are special habitat activities in your country, please let us know about these. Before that, I would like to inform you of our future activities.

I mentioned that the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat were founded in 1987 in Yokohama, Japan. Preparations are underway to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. In our Board Meeting earlier this week, we discussed the host and place of this important event.

We decided to celebrate the anniversary in different regions. We would like to celebrate in the Republic of Moldavia for Europe and in Tanzania for Africa. The time and place of our 8th Global Forum still need to be determined. We are happy for suggestions in this regard.

Since the previous Forums took place in Africa, America and Europe, we would first like to give Asia the opportunity of hosting our anniversary. However, we are also happy to consider offers from the other continents. Please let me know if your country or city would like to apply as a host.

During this working session, I would like to discuss these activities in particular with you. I am looking forward to your suggestions and ideas.

Thank you very much for your interest and for coming to this meeting.

We have time to discuss the points on our agenda until 11.30.