



**Thirteenth Commission on Sustainable Development
High-Level Segment**

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Address by
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Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and privileged to interact with you during this high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development. For UN-HABITAT, this 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development is of strategic importance for three reasons. First and foremost, this CSD session focuses on the policy options and actions on the poorest and the powerless, the real target of the Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals. Secondly, it focuses attention on the ground to translate the global goals into local action. Thirdly, it is of central importance to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda themes of adequate shelter for all and sustainable Human Settlements development.

As we decide on the policy actions to meet the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to the thematic cluster of **water, sanitation** and **human settlements**, let us remind ourselves that it was in Johannesburg at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), where Heads of States and Governments, in its paragraph 18 of the political Declaration, resolved through decisions on targets, timetables and partnerships, to speedily increase access to such basic requirements as clean water, sanitation, and adequate shelter.

Our quest for a meeting these targets is by no means an easy task, as demonstrated by the fact that nearly One billion people live in slums, some 1.1 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation. We live in a world where 2 million children die, needlessly, every year, for the lack of water or for its poor quality and millions of girl children are forced to trade education for collecting water, or drop out from schools for the lack of even minimal sanitation facilities.

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The term *human settlements* is about living and working in communities. It encompasses the immediate needs of an individual in shelter and secure tenure, water, sanitation, infrastructure (including transport, communication and, electricity), health and education - everything that enables us to live and work in dignity with security. Today, half the world's population lives in urban areas. And most of the growth of world's population is in urban areas of the developing countries. Thus achieving sustainable development is akin to making our human settlements sustainable. It is at this level that global goals become operational reality and impact on lives of the poor.

Honourable Ministers,

Let us be clear about slums. They are not an abstract concept. They exist in our cities wherever there is insufficient water or sanitation, insecure tenure and lack of protection against the elements, lack of security, and the presence of conditions that breed disease. Slums are often not part of the official city, and thus slum dwellers may be disconnected from ameliorating urban services. Slums are places where most people live on less than one dollar a day, where most children suffer from hunger, where child and maternal mortality is abnormally high, where children suffer disproportionately and women carry the greatest burdens, where education falls far short, where HIV/AIDS is rampant and where the natural environment has been completely degraded.

The Slum Target:

In the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly in September 2000, it was agreed that "By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers as proposed in the "Cities Without Slums" Initiative".

When this declaration was translated in the Millennium Development Goals, as cited in the Annex of the MDG Road Map, (p. 24 of document A/56/326), the slum target (Goal 7. target 11) is limited only to making significant improvements in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, without linking it to the "cities without slums initiative", as was the case in the actual Millennium Declaration Goal.

The outcome is a very restrictive target which is far too modest. It covers only a fraction (10%) of the 1 billion slum dwellers already in existence by 2000. It also has a problem of being stated as a single global figure without country level benchmarks. Individual countries have no way of determining what their share is of the 100 million people targeted. Yet, according to our analyses and projections, as document in the 2003 Global Report on Human Settlements, entitled "The Challenge of Slums", by 2020 there will be a total of 1.6 billion slum dwellers, if no action is taken to prevent the growth of new slums. This realization dictates a much broader and ambitious approach to the slum challenge. I do hope that this Commission will send a clear message on the slum target to the Heads of State Summit to review the MDGs that will take place in September 2005, in New York.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

In our discussions at the CSD-13, we have recognized human settlements - our cities and towns, as major centres of production as well as consumption. We need to acknowledge that the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in our cities have threatened the natural ecosystems. As suggested in Chapter 21 of the Agenda 21 we need to review policy measures and actions for environmentally sound waste management system in the context of our goals for environmental sustainability and promoting sustainable urbanization.

Honourable Ministers,

Let me take a few minutes to describe UN-HABITAT's work in the context of goals of human settlements development identified in the JPOI and MDGs. Our shelter, urban development, research and finance programmes, as well as our two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance,, have been retooled to respond to the plight of the urban poor.

Monitoring the slum target:

The United Nations system assigned UN-HABITAT the responsibility of assisting Member States to monitor and gradually attain the "Cities Without Slums" target, also known as Target 11. Under this mandate, UN-HABITAT has developed a definition of a slum household in order to be able to use existing household level surveys and censuses to identify slum dwellers among the urban population. UN-HABITAT works closely with other UN organizations and national statistical offices to introduce specific questions and categories to household surveys and censuses, in order to ensure that slum dwellers are considered in the sample of households. With the Monitoring Urban Inequities Programme, UN-HABITAT analyzes the huge development differences within cities, of which slums are a part, and translates them into policy results.

Slum Upgrading Facility

UN-HABITAT has established a slum upgrading facility. It is a technical advisory facility designed to assist Governments, local governments and community organizations in the development of their own slum upgrading, low cost housing, and urban development projects. It supports projects that can attract capital primarily from domestic capital markets, utilizing, where necessary, seed capital grants and bringing in existing guarantee and credit enhancement facilities.

Recognising that sustainable human settlements development requires increased international financial assistance for developing countries, especially countries in Africa, the "Commission for Africa" popularly known as the Blair Commission, has highlighted the importance of rapid urbanization in Africa and the need to focus on financing slum upgrading. Specifically, the Commission for Africa (CFA) Report has identified 2 key challenges for Africa in the field of growth and poverty reduction, namely (1) containing the HIV/AIDS pandemic and (2) urban development. The Blair report is proposing the capitalization of the Slum Upgrading Facility of UN-HABITAT to a tune of USD 250 million per annum over 5 years to provide a basis for leveraging private sector resources to invest into decent affordable housing and basic urban services infrastructure - to avert what it calls "chaotic urbanization".

Water and Sanitation Trust Fund:

UN-HABITAT also has established a Water and Sanitation Trust Fund after the Johannesburg summit. Indeed Water and sanitation are first logical steps towards improving slums, and thus the two initiatives complement each other. Through its programmes in Africa and Asia, the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund of UN-Habitat demonstrates the partnership of UN-Habitat with development finance institutions and is now supported by several donor Governments. This Water and Sanitation trust supports pro-poor approaches to ensure provision of water and sanitation in cities and towns of Africa and Asia. Special initiative to deliver the MDG targets on Water and Sanitation in secondary towns have been launched in the Lake Victoria region in Africa and the Mekong Delta in Asia - both areas characterized by Least Developed Countries.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN-HABITAT, as the designated focal point in the United Nations system for human settlements intends to work closely with the Commission on Sustainable Development in the follow-up to the outcomes of this session and look beyond the thirteenth session for its links with other themes to be considered at the Commission's future sessions. While slum-upgrading is of key importance in this CSD cycle, the urban dimension will continue to play a key role in the Commission's future cycles.

In conclusion, I call upon you to consider harmonizing the slum target with other MDG targets. I believe the benefits far outweigh the risks which are in any case minimal. Let us make no mistake: Cities are much more than national engines of economic growth. They are the crucibles of cultural fusion. Standing astride every intersection on the global network of trade and migration, the world's cities must become shining examples of inclusiveness and equity as called for in the *Millennium Declaration*. Otherwise, they will remain potential flashpoints of conflict and reservoirs of poverty, and barriers to humanity's further development.

Thank you for your kind attention.