

**Website Welcome Message by Mr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-HABITAT**

**Berlin High-level Dialogue on
Implementing Rio+20 Decisions on Sustainable Cities and Transport
19-21 June 2013**

Welcome to the Berlin High-level Dialogue on Implementing Rio+20 Decisions on Sustainable Cities and Urban Transport. As Executive Director of the United Nations agency for human settlements, I am very pleased to co-organize this important event.

Within a generation, we've added over one-and-a-half billion people to the planet – a billion alone in our cities. Towns and cities are increasingly the centres of economic growth and employment, domestic consumption and production and social development. However, urbanization, especially in developing countries, leaves vast amounts of the poor living in deplorable conditions – in slums and squatter areas without access to proper shelter, to clean water and adequate sanitation, education or health services. Rio+20 highlighted the important role of municipal governments in setting a vision for sustainable cities, including the development of sustainable transport systems to alleviate congestion, pollution and health risks associated with the pressures of urban living, while also improving the access to cities for rural populations. Much remains to be done. It is therefore with great pleasure that I invite you to join the Berlin high-level Dialogue to discuss how all stakeholders, from national to local governments, from industry associations to individuals, can ensure we together can build the foundation for sustainable living.