68th General Assembly
Second Committee
Agenda item 20:
Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Statement by the Delegation of Brazil
28 October, 2013
(check against delivery)

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you and the other members of the bureau for convening this meeting as well as the Secretary General for submitting his report A/68/8 and Note A/68/328.

Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the G-77 and China and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Mr. President,

Brazil attaches great importance to the convening of the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization, known as Habitat III, in 2016, following the recommendation of this Committee.

Taking into account that approximately 60% of the world population will be living in cities in 2050, we welcome the focus of the Conference on reinvigorating the global commitment to sustainable cities, which expresses the consensus reflected in the Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Bearing in mind that the preparatory process of Habitat III should be carried out in the most inclusive, efficient, and effective manner, we believe that UN Habitat III should build on regional experiences, specially taking into account the needs developing countries.

In this regard, we reaffirm that the preparatory process should take full advantage of forthcoming planned meetings, such as the twenty-fifth sessions of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat as well as the seventh and eight sessions of the World Urban Forum.

Mr. President,

With respect to UN-Habitat Biannual Strategic Framework for the period 2014-2015 and the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019, Brazil commends the initiative taken by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to reaffirm the importance of urban planning, a concern that has been absent from previous editions of both documents.
With respect to the structural reform in the Programme’s governance, we consider that changes shall be focused exclusively on actions capable of improving UN-Habitat’s ability to better implement its mandate.

Mr. President,

The document “The Future We Want”, resulting from the Rio+20 Conference, encompasses the promotion of an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements, which is intrinsically related to UN-Habitat’s mandate. Such provisions represent the importance of the urban agenda to the promotion of sustainable development in all its three pillars.

The Brazilian Delegation notes that, although the Millennium Development Goal of improving at least 100 million slum-dweller lives by 2020 has been achieved, an estimated 863 million people still reside in slums in developing countries. For this reason, more ambitious targets, such as slum upgrading, should be promoted by the international community.

We would like to recall resolution 24/10 of UN-Habitat Governing Council, entitled “Urbanization and sustainable urban development in the post-2015 development agenda”. In this regard, Brazil encourages the Programme to step up efforts to the development and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and to promote sustainable urbanization.

Mr. President,

Since the promulgation of the Federal Constitution in 1988, our national urban policies have been guided by the principles of the social role of property and of participatory planning. Since then, the Brazilian Government instituted a series of robust initiatives. The most important legal framework was the approval of the Cities Statute of 2001, result of the articulation of political and social forces for the celebration of “the right to the city”.

The My House My Life Programme (“Minha Casa Minha Vida”), which has financed the construction of popular/affordable housing since 2008, resulted in the completion of more than 1.3 million housing units. Other important initiatives are the National Plan for Basic Sanitation and slum urbanization initiatives.

This approach is in line with the three dimensions of sustainability – social, economic and environmental. Enhancing the participation of urban residents, including the poor, in decision-making, is crucial to the establishment of sustainable cities, as envisaged for sustainable cities by the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20.

Finally, Brazil welcomes the offer made by the Government of Colombia to host the VII World Urban Forum, in Medelín, in April 2014.

Thank you.