

Agenda Item: 21

Implementation of the outcomes of the UN Conferences on Human Settlements and Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

INDIA STATEMENT

By Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant, Hon'ble Member of the Parliament

**Second Committee
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Mr. President,

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports under this agenda item.

India associates itself with the statement made by Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. President,

The world is urbanising rapidly. More than half of the world's population already lives in cities. This figure is likely to increase to more than two-thirds by 2050. Much of the projected urban expansion will take place in developing countries.

While successful urban centres become economic hubs, urbanisation brings challenges of infrastructure, connectivity, housing, sanitation, healthcare, education, economic disparities, crime, pollution, disaster risk reduction among others.

In this context, the New Urban Agenda sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development and has important synergies with the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework.

In July this year, at the High Level Political Forum, our Minister for Urbanisation in his capacity as the President of the governing body of UNHabitat participated in the deliberations on SDG11 on urbanisation.

Mr. President,

One sixth of global population lives in India.

Urbanization in India has become an important determinant of rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. Urban areas generate over 2/3rd of the country's GDP and account for 90% of government revenues.

The ongoing efforts in India to manage its rapid urbanisation through innovative and dynamic measures have coincided with the international efforts to chart a New Urban Agenda.

By 2030, nearly 600 million Indians, or 40% of our population, will reside in urban spaces. We are, therefore, fully conscious of the challenges and opportunities offered by the ongoing urbanization.

India is currently implementing the world's largest sanitation and hygiene program - the *Swachh Bharat* Mission, with the objective of making India open defecation free and achieving scientific waste management by 2 October 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of the Mahatma Gandhi.

Speaking on the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention in New Delhi last week, attended by leaders from more than 50 countries, Secretary General Antonio Guterres highlighted that ongoing work in India was changing the global sanitation statistics rapidly.

Mr. President,

The *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* or the Prime Minister's scheme on Affordable Housing for All is the world's largest housing programme for the poor. The government aims to build 11 million affordable homes for urban Indians by the year 2022.

India has launched the 'Smart Cities' Mission to strengthen urban infrastructure by applying smart solutions and giving a decent quality of life and a clean and sustainable environment to citizens.

At the same time, to ease pressure on larger urban centers, connectivity to smaller cities is being improved using green and clean energy with high ways, public transport, airports and railways to give boost to attracting businesses to those cities.

Mr. President,

In this session the important issue of reform of UN Habitat will be considered by the Second Committee. We support the recommendations by the Open Ended Working Group to establish a multi-tiered inter-governmental structure of the UN-Habitat that provides policy guidance and reciprocal aspects of its work.

At the same time, we also feel that the concerns about UN Habitat are declining funding need to be effectively addressed.

I thank you.
