

Harmony with nature

In response to General Assembly resolution 68/216 [YUN 2013, p. 1011], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/69/322] on harmony with nature. The report addressed the social dimension of sustainable development. It examined how the holistic relationship that indigenous peoples have had with Mother Earth since ancient times had paved the way in the modern world for Earth system science, in which scientists view the Earth as a system that was indivisible, in an endless continuum and in which no single element took precedence over another. The report discussed the concept of “living well” in harmony with nature as a scalable paradigm from the developing world; Earth system science and governance; and Earth-based economics. The Secretary-General concluded that humanity must intensify its efforts to restore a healthy environment for present and future generations, where human activity took place in balance with the Earth’s offerings, and with reciprocity, dignity and respect for nature.

To commemorate International Mother Earth Day [YUN 2009, p. 1037], the General Assembly hosted an interactive dialogue on harmony with nature (New York, 22 April), focusing on the theme “The promotion of a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through Harmony with Nature”.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/69/468/Add.8], adopted **resolution 69/224** without vote [agenda item 19 (b)].

Harmony with Nature

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled “The future we want”,

Recalling also its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009, 65/164 of 20 December 2010, 66/204 of 22 December 2011, 67/214 of 21 December 2012 and 68/216 of 20 December 2013 on Harmony with Nature and its resolution 63/278 of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

Recalling further the 1982 World Charter for Nature,

Noting the interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, held on 22 April 2014, to commemorate International Mother Earth Day, on the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social

and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through Harmony with Nature,

Recognizing that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that “Mother Earth” is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and expressing the conviction that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature,

Noting that, in promoting a holistic approach to achieve sustainable development in harmony with nature, Earth system science plays a significant role,

Expressing concern about documented environmental degradation, potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity, and recognizing the need to strengthen scientific knowledge on the effects of human activities on the Earth systems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

Taking note of the Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba from 20 to 22 April 2010,

Recognizing that a number of countries consider Mother Earth the source of all life and nourishment, and that these countries consider Mother Earth and humankind an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

Noting that in recent years there have been many initiatives on sustainable development governance, including policy documents on living well in harmony with nature,

Taking note of the conceptual framework of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,

Recognizing that gross domestic product was not designed as an indicator for measuring environmental degradation resulting from human activity and the need to overcome this limitation with regard to sustainable development and the work carried out in this regard,

Recognizing also the uneven availability of basic statistical data under the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to improve their quality and quantity,

Reaffirming that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles,

Recognizing that many ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

Recognizing also the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists in regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts, along with those of Governments and private sector organizations, to devise more sustainable models and methods for production and consumption,

Considering that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

1. *Takes note* of the fifth report of the Secretary-General;

2. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and reports on Harmony with Nature, including the follow-up to the discussions at the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly, such as the dialogue held on 22 April 2014 on the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through Harmony with Nature;

3. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to hold an inclusive and interactive dialogue, at the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day in April 2015, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, to advance discussions on Harmony with Nature in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of giving due consideration to the issue of Harmony with Nature in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Recalls* its resolutions requesting that the Secretary-General establish a trust fund for the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogue to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, and in this regard invites Member States and other relevant stakeholders to consider contributing to this trust fund once it is established;

6. *Also recalls* the launching of the Harmony with Nature website on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by the secretariat of the Conference and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to make use of the existing website maintained by the Division to gather information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature, being undertaken to advance the integration of interdisciplinary scientific work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge and on existing national legislation;

7. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystems;

8. *Invites* States:

(a) To further build up a knowledge network in order to advance a holistic conceptualization to identify different economic approaches that reflect the drivers and values of living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate the support and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humanity and nature;

(b) To promote harmony with the Earth, as found in indigenous cultures, and learn from them, and to provide support for and promote efforts being made from the national level down to the local community level to reflect the protection of nature;

9. *Encourages* all countries and the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to develop and strengthen the quality and quantity of basic statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable development, and invites the international community and the pertinent bodies of the United Nations system to assist the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical support;

10. *Recognizes* the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard welcomes the ongoing work of the Statistical Commission on a work programme to develop broader measures of progress, which, based on a stocktaking exercise of current national, regional and international practices to measure progress, will conduct a technical review of existing efforts in this area, with a view to identifying best practices and to facilitating the sharing of knowledge, especially for the benefit of developing countries;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

12. *Decides* to continue the consideration of the sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature" at its seventieth session under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

By **decision 69/554** of 29 December, the General Assembly decided that the item on harmony with nature would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-ninth (2015) session.

Sustainable tourism

The General Assembly, in **resolution 69/233** of 19 December (see p. 000), recognized that sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, created opportunities for the conservation, protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural areas by encouraging tourists as well as indigenous peoples and local communities in host countries to preserve and respect the natural and cultural heritage. The Assembly encouraged Governments to use sustainable tourism to support environmental protection and the sustainable use of biodiversity and to base tourism on clear evidence of market demand and on a sound economic and environmental foundation. It requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-first (2016) session, a report on the implementation of the resolution, including recommendations on promoting ecotourism as a tool for fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development.

Human settlements

UN-Habitat

Governing Council

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/206 [YUN 2001, p. 987], the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

(UN-Habitat), which met biennially, did not meet in 2014. The twenty-fifth session of the Council would take place in 2015.

Election. On 17 July, the General Assembly, by **decision 68/421**, on the proposal of the Secretary-General [A/68/915], re-elected Joan Clos (Spain) as Executive Director of UN-Habitat for a term of office beginning on 18 October 2014 and ending on 31 December 2017.

Subsidiary body. The Committee of Permanent Representatives, the intersessional body of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, met four times in 2014, on 19 March [HSP/CPR/53/L.1], 18 June [HSP/CPR/54/L.1], 27 August [HSP/CPR/55/L.1] and 3 December [HSP/CPR/56/L.1]. It considered, among other matters, the financial status of UN-Habitat, progress on the implementation of the UN-Habitat medium-term strategic and institutional plan, and preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III).

Board of Auditors report

In June [A/69/5/Add.9 & Corr.1], the Board of Auditors transmitted to the General Assembly its report on the UN-Habitat financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2013. Total income amounted to \$378 million, a decrease of \$52.9 million, or 12.3 per cent, over the previous financial period. Total expenditure amounted to \$348.6 million, a decrease of \$78.2 million, or 18.3 per cent, compared to the previous period. The excess of income over expenditure totalled \$29.4 million, representing an increase of \$25.4 million over the previous biennium. The Board noted that the excess of income over expenditure had been declining steadily since 2006–2007 but rose in 2012–2013. As at the end of the biennium, the level of cash held was \$207 million, representing a 9.3 per cent decrease over the balance of \$228.3 million held at 31 December 2011. UN-Habitat adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) from 1 January 2014 but did not meet the deadline of 31 March 2014 for the preparation of actual IPSAS-compliant opening balances.

The Board recommended, among other measures, that UN-Habitat closely monitor project budget implementation; set up and document a clear monitoring and assurance framework for the use and accountability of the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations funds; and prioritize and expedite the process of data cleansing so that IPSAS opening balances would be finalized in advance of the preparation of dry-run financial statements.

By **decision 69/554** of 29 December, the General Assembly decided that the item of the financial reports and audited financial statements, and report of the Board of Auditors of UN-Habitat, would

remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-ninth (2015) session.

UN-Habitat activities

In 2014, UN-Habitat continued to implement its work programme in line with Governing Council resolutions and the goals of the UN system and the international community. Under the 2014–2019 strategic plan, approved by the Council in 2013 [YUN 2013, p. 1015], UN-Habitat focused on urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; research and capacity development; and cross-cutting issues of gender, youth, climate change and human rights.

During the year, UN-Habitat adopted a more strategic and integrated approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities of cities and human settlements. The new approach was based on two premises: the empirically verified positive correlation between urbanization and development; and recognition that the major challenges faced by cities and human settlements resulted from the inadequacy of the fundamental systems underlying their functioning, particularly regarding urban legislation, design and financial systems. UN-Habitat's approach linked urbanization and human settlements to sustainable development by focusing on prosperity, livelihoods and employment, especially among youth.

UN-Habitat's Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) grew to 66 partners and 2,115 individual members who worked in a more coordinated manner to implement the GLTN agenda. The UN-Habitat Cities and Climate Change Initiative expanded its scope and impact into a global programme involving over 40 cities. UN-Habitat spearheaded the launch of two global multi-partnership initiatives at the Secretary-General's 2014 Climate Summit (New York, 23 September) to mobilize and accelerate action on the issue of climate change in cities. In the area of risk reduction and rehabilitation, UN-Habitat and its partners made progress in field operations in post-conflict and post-natural-disaster countries. Activities included the reconstruction of housing, water and sanitation infrastructure, community centres and schools; land conflict mediation; and the creation of livelihood opportunities for internally displaced persons and refugees. Through UN-Habitat's Youth Programme, 277 youth-led groups across 65 countries benefited from small grants for project implementation. Through its Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme, UN-Habitat established a network with 160 cities, 200 communities and 35 countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, all implementing city-wide slum upgrading strategies. Regarding implementation of the Umoja Enterprise Resource

Planning system, UN-Habitat completed most of the preparations in readiness for deployment, scheduled for June 2015.

Progress was made towards achievement of five of the six expected accomplishments outlined in UN-Habitat's six-year (2014–2019) strategic plan, but little progress was made on mobilizing core income. With respect to urban legislation, land and governance, there was increased capacity, knowledge and awareness among local and national governments and other Habitat Agenda partners to implement programmes that improved security of tenure for vulnerable groups. On urban planning and design, a notable achievement was the development of the international guidelines on urban and territorial planning, which constituted a global framework for improving policies, plans, designs and implementation processes for more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories that fostered sustainable urbanization. There were enhanced capacities among UN-Habitat partner cities to develop urban plans and policies supportive of inclusive economic growth, as demonstrated by the increased number of partner cities that prepared local economic development plans. With the support of UN-Habitat and its partners, there was an increase in the number of local, national and regional authorities taking action towards the implementation of policies and guidelines on equitable access to sustainable urban basic services. As a long-term measure, UN-Habitat made progress in terms of increased urban resilience plans, launching recovery and rehabilitation plans and the development of urban frameworks promoting the new urban agenda. Through the Global Urban Observatory, 14 local and national urban observatories implemented UN-Habitat's methodologies and tools for data collection and analysis and supported their Governments in formulating more informed policies during the year. Since the launch of the City Prosperity Index in the *State of the World's Cities 2012/2013* report, 288 cities had requested UN-Habitat's support to implement the index. Mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issues of climate change, gender, youth and human rights had been institutionalized in UN-Habitat and took place at both programme and project levels.

Regional ministerial conferences. The fifth session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD 5) (N'Djamena, Chad, 25–28 February) took place under the theme, “Case studies in financing human settlements in Africa: Appropriate legislative frameworks and innovations in implementation”. Matters discussed included the urban agenda for Africa and its linkage with the African Union Agenda 2063; preparations for the seventh session of the World Urban Forum; the post-2015 development agenda; and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III.

The main outcome documents were the N'Djamena Declaration and Action Plan, which prioritized access to affordable and decent housing; the delivery of infrastructure and basic services for human settlements, including sanitation and waste management; slum prevention and upgrading; urban and territorial planning and effective land tenure; the urban economy; and the link between urban and rural areas.

The fifth session of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD 5) (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 3–5 November) adopted the Seoul Declaration, in which participants decided to deepen their commitment to regional collaboration to make cities and human settlements integrated, inclusive, sustainable and resilient. Participants also committed to developing and implementing innovative national policies and to promoting inclusiveness and equity in urban development and infrastructure expansion. They recognized the importance of Habitat III and resolved to prepare a roadmap to participate in Habitat III and the formulation of the “New Urban Agenda”, and they requested the Chair of APMCHUD to ensure the implementation of the Declaration, in collaboration with other members of the Bureau, the APMCHUD secretariat and UN-Habitat.

Follow-up to the 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

Coordinated implementation of Habitat Agenda

In an April report [E/2014/64] submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/22 [YUN 2013, p. 1016], the Secretary-General described the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in cooperation with other UN system agencies and organizations in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the global, regional and national levels. Activities at the global level included Habitat III preparatory activities; the World Urban Campaign; the preparation and launch of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2013*; the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals processes; cooperation with international financial institutions; and the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Activities at the regional level focused on regional ministerial meetings on housing and urban development and cooperation with development banks. Thematic activities at the national and subnational levels focused on urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy and municipal finance; urban basic services; risk reduction and rehabilitation; research and capacity development; and gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women.

The report recommended that Member States give appropriate consideration to the role of urbanization in sustainable development in their national

development plans; formulate and implement urban planning policies that enhance economic productivity and equity; apply more systematically urban planning methods, including participatory processes; use planned city extension methodologies to guide the sustainable development of cities experiencing rapid urban growth; and facilitate the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the preparatory process for Habitat III.

Sustainable urbanization

In an April report [E/2014/67] prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 61/16 [YUN 2006, p. 1589], the Secretary-General discussed effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization. The report informed the thematic discussion of the Economic and Social Council's 2014 integration segment (see below), which focused on the same topic and summarized governance, planning and management instruments for promoting urban sustainability; emerging models for sustainable urbanization; and lessons learned from the implementation of different urban governance models to address sustainability challenges. The Secretary-General concluded that urban governance models, policies and planning tools should recognize and address the widening scope and impact of urban activities across policy areas and spatial boundaries and involve an increasing number of urban stakeholders and actors. He provided policy initiatives to be considered, including a whole-of-government approach; inclusive and participatory mechanisms for decision-making; and strong partnerships.

Economic and Social Council consideration. The first-ever integration segment of the Economic and Social Council (New York, 27–29 May) focused on the theme of sustainable urbanization and provided a multi-stakeholder platform to demonstrate how urbanization could become an instrument for the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The segment identified the potential short-term policy choices, resulting trade-offs and long-term gains inherent to an integrated and balanced sustainable development approach; provided solutions, innovations and partnerships on sustainable urbanization; and identified tools and instruments to facilitate inputs that could be used by the Council to assess the integrated approach. The high-level exchange of experiences, practices and strategies demonstrated the transformative potential of urbanization and led to the identification of recommendations that could shape the post-2015 agenda and Habitat III (see p. 000).

On 25 July (**decision 2014/248**), the Economic and Social Council took note of the report [E/2014/67] of the Secretary-General on effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 25 July [meeting 47], the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 2014/30** [draft: E/2014/L.29] without vote [agenda item 16 (d)].

Human settlements

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its relevant resolutions and decisions on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda,

Recalling also relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 66/288 of 27 July 2012, entitled “The future we want”, and 67/216 of 21 December 2012 and 68/239 of 27 December 2013, entitled “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)”,

Acknowledging the work of UN-Habitat towards attaining the goal of sustainable urban development and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda as well as other goals and targets relevant to human settlements,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda;
2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the first ever integration segment of the Economic and Social Council on sustainable urbanization, held from 27 to 29 May 2014, and its focus on the role of sustainable urbanization as a transformative force for achieving and advancing sustainable development, and invites the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to make full use of this focus in its work;
3. *Encourages* Governments to give appropriate consideration to the role of urbanization and human settlements in sustainable development in their national development plans in order to ensure coordinated implementation of different sectoral policies within cities and human settlements in general and to formulate and implement national urban development policies;
4. *Reiterates its invitation* to Governments to further enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the role of local authorities and to consider the environmentally sustainable, socially inclusive and economically productive roles of cities and human settlements in their consideration of the post-2015 development agenda;
5. *Emphasizes* the importance of ensuring consistency and coherence in the deliberations of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on agenda items related to the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat);
6. *Decides* to transmit to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-ninth session the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda;
7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2015 a report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

In response to resolution 2014/30 (see above), the Secretary-General, by an August note [A/69/343], transmitted his April report to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-ninth (2014) session.

Implementation of outcome of Habitat II and strengthening of UN-Habitat

An August report [A/69/298] submitted by the Secretary-General in response to General Assembly resolution 68/239 [YUN 2013, p. 1017] described UN-Habitat activities over the previous year in implementing the Habitat Agenda [YUN 1996, p. 994], adopted by the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) [ibid., p. 992], and the strengthening of UN-Habitat. It reviewed progress in preparation for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) at the global, regional and national levels, and in information and publicity, including through the seventh session of the World Urban Forum (see below) and the World Urban Campaign [YUN 2009, p. 1038]. It also described progress in the implementation of three issues highlighted by the General Assembly in resolution 68/239: outcome of the governance review process; financial developments in UN-Habitat; and sustainable urbanization and the post-2015 development agenda. The report further described UN-Habitat's engagement in the first-ever Economic and Social Council integration segment (see p. 000), which was on the theme of sustainable urbanization, and global and regional activities including publication of the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2013: Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility*, and celebrations related to World Habitat Day 2013, and the inaugural World Cities Day observed on 31 October 2014.

The UN-Habitat Committee of Permanent Representatives, through its Bureau, continued its consideration of the governance review process, including the timing of that process in relation to the envisaged outcome of Habitat III. Regarding financial developments, income projections for the biennium 2014–2015 remained at \$62.9 million and \$283 million for non-earmarked and earmarked income, respectively. As at 30 June, non-earmarked income received and confirmed pledges amounted to \$24.5 million (or 39 per cent of the projection), while \$57.6 million (or 19 per cent of the projection) had been received in earmarked income.

On Habitat III, the report called upon Members States to decide on the venue, final dates, format and organizational aspects of the conference; to decide on the venue and duration of the third and final Habitat III Preparatory Committee meeting; to ensure the participation of local governments and all other stakeholders in the preparatory process and the conference itself; and to expedite the preparation of Habitat III national reports and their submission to the Habitat III secretariat. On urbanization and human settlements policy issues, it called upon Members States to continue giving consideration to sustainable urbanization and human settlements in

the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda; and to continue supporting UN-Habitat through predictable multiyear funding and increased non-earmarked contributions in support of its strategic plan 2014–2019.

World Urban Forum, 2014

The seventh session of the World Urban Forum (Medellín, Colombia, 5–11 April) [HSP/WUF/7/3], held under the theme “Urban equity in development: Cities for life”, examined ways to effectively integrate urban equity into the development agenda with a view to ensuring sustainable transformative change in an increasingly urbanized world. Many events at the Forum discussed the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, with participants supporting the idea of sustainable urban development being more centrally positioned in the post-2015 agenda, together with an urban sustainable development goal. The World Urban Campaign, launched in 2010 [YUN 2010, p. 1045], was positioned as an inclusive platform to mobilize stakeholders for Habitat III (see below). There was concern among participants about the unsustainability of the current level of urban sprawl, the diminishing of urban densities and the progressive consumption of arable land due to unplanned urbanization. The Forum exhibited broad consensus on the need for good and inclusively designed urban policies driven by equity and discussed urban equity in development law, urban planning and design for social cohesion, basic services: local businesses for equitable cities, innovative financing instruments for local authorities, raising standards for urban resilience and a safe city as a just and equitable city. For the first time, the programme of the Forum integrated assemblies that convened business representatives, youth, women and children, respectively. There were nine special sessions addressing traditional and emerging subjects relevant to the urban agenda, and 1,607 people, including 789 women, participated in 30 training events.

A report [HSP/GC/25/2/Add.2] of the UN-Habitat Executive Director summarized the issues discussed at the seventh session of the Forum, as well as its outcome—the Medellín Declaration, which provided recommendations that emerged from the Forum and around which a substantial consensus was reached. It contained four key areas: equity as a foundation of sustainable urban development; the city as opportunity; new urban agenda; and contributing to the future. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to integrating urban equity into the development agenda, employing all means and resources available to ensure that cities were transformed into inclusive, safe, prosperous and harmonious spaces for all. Although urbanization had ushered in economic growth,

development and prosperity for many people, cities were also spaces of multidimensional poverty, environmental degradation, and vulnerability to disasters and the impacts of climate change. Participants thus agreed that although notable efforts were being made to overcome challenges to sustainable and inclusive development, much work remained to be done. They highlighted the need to promote a new urban agenda that could overcome the lack of an adequate legal framework and planning system and promote a people-centred urbanization model based on “cities for life”. On contributing to the future, the Medellín Declaration discussed the importance of sustainable urbanization in the post-2015 development agenda, contributions to Habitat III, and the World Urban Forum.

Preparations for Habitat III

In a September report [A/CONF.226/PC.1/4], the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) described activities carried out at the national, regional and international levels prior to the first session of the Habitat III Preparatory Committee (see below). The report discussed consultations and contributions between 2012 and 2014 in relation to the UN-Habitat Governing Council, the sixth and seventh sessions of the World Urban Forum, regular ministerial conferences on housing and urban development, the UN system and global partners. The report also provided information on the activities proposed for the period 2014–2016 in four areas: knowledge, engagement, policy and operations.

Preparatory Committee. In October [A/CONF.226/PC.1/6], the Habitat III Preparatory Committee reported on its first session (New York, 17–18 September), at which it established a working group on operational and administrative matters that met twice over the course of session. The Habitat III Secretary-General reported to the session on the activities of the secretariat in preparation for the Conference and presented proposals for the improved participation of local authorities and other stakeholders in the preparatory process and in the Conference itself. He also reported on an outline of work to be carried out between September 2014 and the holding of the Conference in 2016. The Preparatory Committee held an exchange of views on progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and on the identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development. It took note of a note [A/CONF.226/PC.1/INF/3] by the Secretary-General of the Conference on the financing of the preparatory process and the Conference, and it recommended that the Preparatory Committee’s second session be held from 14–16 April 2015.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/69/469], adopted **resolution 69/226** without vote [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)

The General Assembly,

Recalling the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996,

Recalling also relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on the 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), including its resolutions 64/207 of 21 December 2009, 65/165 of 20 December 2010, 66/207 of 22 December 2011, 67/216 of 21 December 2012 and 68/239 of 27 December 2013, which addressed the convening in 2016 of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III),

Recalling further relevant decisions and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including Council resolution 2014/30 of 25 July 2014 on human settlements, adopted by the Council at its substantive session of 2014,

Reaffirming the outcome document, entitled “The future we want”, of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, in particular paragraphs 134 to 137 on sustainable cities and human settlements, in which, inter alia, it is recognized that cities are engines of economic growth which, if well planned and developed, including through integrated planning and management approaches, can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies,

Recalling its resolution 68/309 of 10 September 2014, in which it welcomed the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and decided that the proposal of the Open Working Group contained in the report shall be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda, while recognizing that other inputs will also be considered, in the intergovernmental negotiation process at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly,

Noting that, while significant progress has been made in implementing the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda, since urbanization has brought growth and development, including a dramatic reduction in poverty, national economic growth, major progress in human settlements connectivity, which helps to boost productivity and the creation of opportunities, the merging of cities and towns into new regional spatial configurations that are conducive to faster economic and demographic growth, and a higher degree of interdependence between rural and urban areas that has helped to

reduce the vulnerability of rural communities and enhance the prospects of more equitable development, challenges remain, such as urban sprawl, congestion, pollution, the emission of greenhouse gases, emerging urban poverty, segregation, increasing inequalities and other negative externalities, as well as the continuing increase in the number of slum dwellers in the world, the negative impact of environmental degradation, including climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity, on human settlements and the need to reduce disaster risks and build resilience to disasters in urban settlements.

Reiterating its support for the World Urban Forum and recognizing that it is the foremost global arena for interaction among policymakers, local government leaders, non-governmental stakeholders and expert practitioners in the field of human settlements, and expressing its appreciation to the Government of Colombia and the city of Medellín for hosting the seventh session of the Forum from 5 to 11 April 2014,

Recalling the commitment of Member States and the efforts of other stakeholders to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements,

Emphasizing the importance of the wide participation of all relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, in the promotion of sustainable urbanization and settlements,

Recalling its resolution 67/148 of 20 December 2012, in which it called upon the United Nations system, including the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, to increase efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration and within their mandates, as well as all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and their follow-up processes,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and on the 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);

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) on its first session, and endorses its recommendation that the second session of the Preparatory Committee be held from 14 to 16 April 2015;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of ensuring consistency and coherence in the deliberations of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and the Preparatory Committee in their respective consideration of the work of UN-Habitat and preparations for Habitat III, within their respective mandates;

4. *Continues to encourage* giving due consideration to sustainable urbanization in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Notes* the conclusion of the Secretary-General's Climate Summit, and welcomes its contribution to existing political momentum with a view to galvanizing action to address climate change;

6. *Reiterates its encouragement* to Member States, UN-Habitat and all relevant stakeholders to take appropriate measures to implement Governing Council resolution 24/4 of 19 April 2013, and requests the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender

equality and women's empowerment in the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat;

7. *Welcomes* the offer by the Government of Ecuador to host Habitat III, and decides that the Conference will be held in Quito during the week of 17 October 2016;

8. *Recalls* its decisions in resolution 67/216 on the objective and results of the Conference, while remaining mindful of the need to carry out the Conference and the preparatory process in the most inclusive, efficient, effective and improved manner to ensure a successful Conference, and decides that:

(a) The Conference shall be composed of eight plenary meetings, on the basis of two meetings a day, and six high-level round-table sessions to be held concurrently with the plenary meetings, except during the opening and closing plenary meetings;

(b) Parallel meetings and other events, including multi-stakeholder segments, will be held during the same hours as the plenary meetings and the round tables, the multi-stakeholder segments will constitute an official part of the Conference, and interpretation for such meetings will be provided on an as-available basis;

(c) Special events, including briefings, seminars, workshops and panel discussions on issues related to housing and sustainable urban development, will be organized by Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and accredited institutional and non-institutional stakeholders for the benefit of the participants in the Conference;

(d) The third session of the Preparatory Committee will be held in Indonesia in July 2016 and shall consist of six plenary meetings on the basis of two meetings a day;

9. *Emphasizes* the need for effective coordination between the preparatory process for the Conference and the preparations for the summit to be held in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, in order to promote coherence and to minimize duplication of effort;

10. *Encourages* Member States to participate at the highest possible level in the Conference;

11. *Also encourages* Member States to participate in the Preparatory Committee and to continue giving due consideration at all levels to the New Urban Agenda and commit to defining it, together with all relevant stakeholders;

12. *Encourages* Member States and international and bilateral donors, as well as the private sector, financial institutions and foundations and other donors in a position to do so, to continue to support the national, regional and global preparations for Habitat III through voluntary contributions to the Habitat III trust fund and to support the participation of representatives of developing countries in the forthcoming Preparatory Committee meetings and in the Conference itself in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 13 (c) of resolution 67/216, and invites voluntary contributions to support the participation of Habitat Agenda partners and other relevant stakeholders in the Preparatory Committee meetings;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the Conference to continue to mobilize the expertise of the United Nations system as a whole, including the regional commissions, and of other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations for the Habitat III preparatory process;

14. *Calls upon* Member States to ensure the effective participation in the preparatory process and in the Conference itself of local governments and all other stake-

holders, including those in the national habitat committees, as appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 10 of resolution 68/239, and, inter alia, to expedite the preparation of Habitat III national reports;

15. *Invites* Member States to facilitate participatory processes and the wide participation of stakeholders, including local authorities and their associations, when developing, revising and implementing national urban policies, where appropriate, in particular through national urban forums, and as a means of preparing for Habitat III;

16. *Encourages* stakeholders gathering at the World Urban Forum, as well as at the regular ministerial conferences on housing and urban development and other relevant expert group meetings, to provide inputs and to contribute as appropriate to the process leading to the Conference;

17. *Invites* the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee to prepare the draft outcome document of the Conference on the basis of inputs from broad regional and thematic consultations among all stakeholders and to circulate it no later than six months prior to the Conference;

18. *Calls upon* Member States to continue to include in their planned regional meetings, such as the regular sessions of regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development, as well as other relevant regional intergovernmental meetings, discussions on Habitat III so as to facilitate the provision of regional inputs to the preparatory process for the Conference;

19. *Decides* that the major groups and the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as those accredited to Habitat II and the summit to be held in September 2015 for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, shall register in order to participate in the Conference;

20. *Also decides* that non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council wishing to attend and contribute to the Conference, and whose work is relevant to the subject of the Conference, may participate as observers in the Conference as well as in the preparatory meetings, in accordance with the provisions contained in part VII of Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, and subject to the approval of the Preparatory Committee in plenary meeting, and that, while respecting fully the provisions contained in rule 57 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council, such a decision should be made by consensus;

21. *Notes with appreciation*, as reported by the Secretary-General in his report submitted pursuant to resolution 68/239, that the discussions among stakeholders gathered at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum provided, inter alia, an important contribution to Habitat III and that in those discussions it was recognized that Habitat III was a unique opportunity to develop a new urban agenda that could contribute to harnessing urbanization as a positive force for present and future generations and to advancing the quest for equity and shared prosperity;

22. *Takes note* of the Medellín Declaration, adopted at the seventh session of the World Urban Forum, in which Governments, the private sector, international organizations, academia, professionals, civil society and other social actors reaffirmed the importance of cities in sustainable development;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue to provide, in the most efficient

and cost-effective manner, all appropriate support to the Secretary-General of the Conference and to the work of the preparatory process and the Conference, while promoting inter-agency support to the maximum extent possible;

24. *Recalls* the seven priorities and four cross-cutting issues contained in the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2014–2019 approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session, which the General Assembly welcomed in its resolution 68/239;

25. *Invites* Member States, the international and bilateral donors and financial institutions to contribute generously to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, including the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund and the technical cooperation trust funds, and invites Governments in a position to do so and other stakeholders to provide predictable multi-year funding and increased non-earmarked contributions to support the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019;

26. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of UN-Habitat, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to UN-Habitat and other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat under review so as to continue efforts to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in supporting the implementation of its mandate;

28. *Notes* the governance review process of UN-Habitat, encourages the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat and the Governing Council to continue their consideration of proposals, including recommendations and options for reform, with a view to reaching a consensus at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council on how to proceed with the governance review, and underlines that it shall consider the report of the Governing Council on this and other issues at its seventieth session;

29. *Recognizes* that, over the years, the responsibilities of UN-Habitat have changed considerably in their scope and complexity and that the requirement to provide substantive and technical support to developing countries has changed in areas related to sustainable cities and human settlements, as reflected in its strategic plan for 2014–2019;

30. *Reiterates its invitation* to Member States and Habitat Agenda partners to formulate and implement sustainable urban development policies that promote just, resilient and inclusive cities, considering the contributions of all relevant stakeholders, and with a particular focus on the needs of women and those who are most vulnerable, including children and youth, older persons, persons living with disability, rural to urban migrants, internally displaced persons and indigenous peoples;

31. *Notes with appreciation* the first-ever integration segment of the Economic and Social Council on sustainable urbanization, held from 27 to 29 May 2014, and its focus on the role of sustainable urbanization as a transformative force for achieving and advancing sustainable development through an integrated approach that engages all key stakeholders, including local authorities, in order to produce in-

novative solutions to foster economic, environmental and social sustainability;

32. *Invites* Member States to take into account the interlinkages among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable urbanization and human settlements in the formulation of policies, plans and programmes at the local, national and international levels in order to address, as appropriate, the structural problems and challenges facing many cities;

33. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including an update on progress made in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III);

34. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventieth session the item entitled “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)”.

By **decision 69/554** of 29 December, the General Assembly decided that the item of the 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) would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-ninth (2014) session.