



**SEVENTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

New York, 6 – 10 January 2014

**Statement of Mr. Kemal Madenođlu
Undersecretary for Ministry of Development of Turkey**

**Interactive exchange of views on
“Sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport”**

Distinguished co-Chairs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the pleasure to deliver these remarks on behalf of the group of Italy, Spain and Turkey. First of all, we would like to thank the UN Technical Support Team for putting together comprehensive issue briefs with very useful and constructive suggestions for our deliberation.
2. Cities all around the world confront with environmental, social and economic problems due to rapid urbanization. Rapid urbanization is a global trend; half of the world's population now lives in urban areas and it is predicted that 70 percent of the world population will live in urban settings by 2050. In addition to dramatic demographic growth, cities also expand in size and the total urban area is expected to triple by 2030.
3. The urban dimension has been addressed in multiple platforms following the Earth Summit in 1992 and since then progress on social, environmental and economic fronts in cities has been achieved with the contribution of all levels, from local to the international. A quick glance to MDG Report 2013 reveals that there has been a great deal of progress in achieving city related goals, especially in the targets where special emphasis were given like slums, access to drinking water and sanitation. On the other hand, while many positive developments have been registered since 2000 in many areas of the world, intense urbanization has created many new global problems in addition to issues identified in MDGs.

4. The majority of cities worldwide are not experiencing a sustainable urbanization, missing out the efficiencies and the advantages of agglomeration. Cities around the world grow spatially faster than their populations. Unsustainable land use, lack of access to basic services, insufficient infrastructure, degradation of natural ecosystem and agricultural lands, segregation of socio-economic groups, urban poverty and unemployment, increasing and diversifying consumption patterns, increasing energy and mobility demands together with global warming are among some major challenges to be dealt in the urban agenda.
5. A healthy urbanization process can only be achieved through a planned development where infrastructure is installed before; but high rate of urbanization usually hinders the process. Moreover, unplanned urbanization results in a number of negative environmental, economic and social challenges. Among all, overconsumption and inefficient use of resources, congestion, worsening air quality, increasing waste and greenhouse gas emissions, degradation of lands, social segregation, distortion of social and cultural values, unequal access to urban facilities and employment opportunities as well as unbalanced distribution of urban rent are the main ones. The phenomenal urban growth together with the resource scarcity exacerbates the aforementioned results.
6. Urban settings also nest poverty which becomes extremely visible in slums. Although the MDG slum target has been reached, the number of slum dwellers, in absolute terms, increases and rapid urbanization continues to outpace improvements in slum conditions. Urban poor, especially slum dwellers suffer from insufficient infrastructure facilities, poor housing conditions and unlivable areas that intensify their vulnerability.
7. The negative conditions in urban settings are highly felt by disadvantaged groups, mostly women, youth, children and disabled. There is a strong acceptance that increased population density leads to crime and anti-social behavior by creating barriers for social interactions. Disadvantaged and marginalized groups, having unequal capacity to influence decisions and lacking procedural justice, are frequently under the risk of being a crime victim, unprotected against discrimination, harassment and violence.
8. Negative consequences of urban sprawl become obvious in recent years in developed countries. As urban sprawling becomes more apparent, more farmland and wildlife habitats are destroyed. Living in larger, more spread out spaces generally makes public services more costly. Residents of these areas have to travel for long distances usually by car which causes energy intensive travel behavior and negative impacts on environment. In addition to urban-based pressures on environment, urban sprawl can also negatively affect rural areas by creating pressures on resources and reducing the rural character of settlements. These tendencies sometimes go hand-in-hand with social segregation.
9. Cities can be fragile against natural disasters and climate change impacts. Urban expansion often proceeds onto coastal areas and flood plains disregarding the threats of floods and storm surges which may result in economic loss and fatalities.

Honorable Co-Chairs,

10. When addressing the cities, the topics that covered are as diverse as slums, transport, health, water and sanitation, sewage, energy, local authorities and many others. SDGs should embrace the cities as not only a driving force for economic growth, but also as a base for consumption of materials and energy; generation of waste and emission of greenhouse gases; creation of jobs and innovations; exchange of cultures, views and experiences.
11. Even pace and form of urbanization vary across countries and regions, there is a common understanding that the policies relevant for city level should be inclusive, sustainable and supportive for efficient use of all resources. The development policies built for achieving city-level sustainability should help in improving living standards. Amenities that influence the living standards of urban dwellers should be available, affordable and accessible. Amenity improvement in city level requires large, multi-sectoral investments and while doing that local authorities should be open for sustainable planning measures and participatory management systems.
12. Under the pressure of rapid urbanization, further action is needed for improving the long-term social, economic and environmental well-being of human settlements. Decoupling economic growth from urban expansion and sprawling remains a key challenge. Policies serving for efficient land and resource use, improved public and non-motorized transportation, pollution control and minimization, waste management, adequate housing, well-equipped and resilient settlements, strengthened local authorities with participatory decision making processes are indispensable when structuring the SDGs.

Honorable Co-Chairs,

13. I now want to say a few words on sustainable transport. Economic and social well-being of people are very much linked with transportation. It plays a significant role in influencing the pattern of distribution of economic activity and improving productivity. It provides access to markets and supply chains of intermediate outputs and services essential for promoting development. It acts as a life-line linking markets, educational and health institutions. Above all, it connects cities, towns and villages, thereby underpinning unity and integration.
14. Due to rapid urbanization, urban sprawl and increasing vehicle ownership and use, the adverse impacts of transportation such as traffic congestion, accidents, infrastructure costs, depletion of non-renewable resources, human health, air pollution, climate change and habitat losses become more visible. All these negative trade offs have considerable short, medium and long term social, environmental and economic impacts, including increasing medical costs. Transport is the second-largest sector in terms of emissions, representing 22% of global CO₂ emissions in 2010 and it is estimated that fuel consumption of transport will grow 40% by 2035. Considering the impacts and financial

resources needed, it is evident that a new understanding for planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation is required.

15. An integrated land use and transportation planning is one of the tools to eliminate problems while guaranteeing more accessible, safe, secure and comfortable travel patterns together with decreasing automobile dependency. Sustainable urban development forms require high-density land use mixes that will encourage public transport means as well as reduce the number and distance of daily trips. Additionally, demand management measures such as shared vehicles, use of telecommunication, car-pooling, traffic calming, road and parking pricing should also be considered. Other instruments such as flexible working schedules and home office working opportunities can be introduced.
16. Transport related targets should address extensive use of public and environment friendly means of transport, reducing the fuel related air pollutants and reducing the traffic fatalities.

Distinguished Participants,

17. Urban dimension in SDGs should serve improving the quality of life whilst limiting the environmental footprint of cities. The relevant dimensions that should be built-in the goals are, reducing the number of slum dwellers; increasing the number of people with decent jobs; limiting the transformation of naturally conserved areas, forests and agricultural lands into urban use, improving energy efficiency in buildings; decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants; supporting public and non-motorized modes of transport; improving waste reduction, re-use and recycling; increasing water efficiency and re-use; improving access to basic infrastructure; improving the resilience of cities to natural disasters; enhancing the social inclusion; protection and restoration of safe and green urban space.

Before concluding I would like to remind that the full text is available on the website.

I thank you.