



**Statement on behalf of the European Union  
and its Member States**

**By**

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**Ireland's Permanent Representative to UN-HABITAT**

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**(Closing Statement)**

Madam President, Distinguished Ministers and delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.  
The acceding country of Croatia aligns itself with this Statement.
2. The European Union and its member states wish first of all to express their appreciation to Dr. Joan Clos for his stimulating leadership and engagement during this session of the Governing Council. I would also like to thank his staff, as well as the staff of UNON, for their hard work and dedication.
3. The High-Level Dialogue on the theme of this session of the Governing Council provided stimulating discussions on the positive influence of urbanisation on economic and social development, highlighting the importance of cities as drivers of economic opportunity, especially where there is an inclusive planning and decision-making process which accommodates the needs of youth and women. While many cities across the world are experiencing significant challenges, particularly in the current global economic climate, the positivity and the ‘can-do’ attitude that informed the Dialogue was very striking.
4. The European Union shares the Executive Director’s view that urban development must be guided by the principles of sustainability, taking into account energy and material efficiency, and planning for urban expansion that can accommodate new demand for access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure. This will enhance economic growth and job creation.
5. The range of issues covered in the parallel events also gave us plenty of food for thought to bring back home. I hope delegates had an opportunity to enjoy the very interesting side-event “*Art and Architecture at Work*” jointly presented by the European Commission and Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels in partnership with the African Union Commission, showcasing recent best practice in Africa.
6. Thanks to the hard work and an excellent spirit of cooperation, the 24<sup>th</sup> Governing Council has reached agreement on some important resolutions. We would like to point to a few in particular:

- a. The resolution on the Strategic Plan 2014-19 and the Work Programme and Budget for the biennium 2014-2015 will guide UN-Habitat's work for the period ahead in line with the seven focus areas of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan. The EU and its Member States warmly appreciate the manner in which the Executive Director has shaped the work programme to address the challenges presented by rapid urbanisation in order to promote sustainable urbanisation and access to adequate shelter for all. The EU and its Member States support the need for greater accountability and therefore encourage the Executive Director to continue to develop performance monitoring through Results-Based Management.
  
- b. The Resolution on urbanization and sustainable urban development in the Post-2015 Agenda highlights the need to place urbanisation firmly in the context of the discussions on a Post-2015 agenda; the active involvement of UN-HABITAT in that process will be crucial.
  
- c. Looking further ahead, the HABITAT III Conference will be key to reinvigorating the global commitment to sustainable urban development. We are pleased that the Resolution on UN-Habitat's input and support to the preparatory process for this Conference gives a good basis to move this work forward, which should be carried out in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
  
- d. The EU and its Member States greatly regret that it was not possible to reach agreement on a resolution on Strengthening the Organization, even on a pilot basis, that would have provided for enhanced governance and a deeper engagement by the membership with UN-HABITAT. We believe an important opportunity has been lost. The EU and its Member States will now reflect on the outcome of this Governing Council on this matter.

Mr. President, in conclusion let me thank the Secretariat for all its hard work during the Governing Council.