



7th Global Forum
Global Parliamentarians on Habitat
Zadar, Croatia, 18-20 May 2011



Declaration of Zadar

“Good Laws for a Better Habitat”

Preamble

We, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat (GPH), have come together at our 7th Global Forum in Zadar, Croatia, from 18 to 20 May 2011, to take stock of our work and to deal with the challenges of the future.

The GPH is an international organisation of parliamentarians whose members are dedicated to promoting the sustainable development of human settlements and whose primary objective is to encourage the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

The focus of our 7th Global Forum was the joint discussion and search for solutions for the challenges relating to the impact of climate change on coastal cities and the role of Parliamentarians as drivers of change. This exchange of experiences has enabled us to develop common approaches at global level, which we can use to fashion and strengthen initiatives within our national legislative bodies.

In the course of our 7th Global Forum, we have resolved to recognize the following principles and commitments:

Principles

1. UN-HABITAT and the Habitat Agenda

We call for a renewed commitment to implementing the Habitat Agenda through national and international laws and by coordinating and enforcing these laws.

A close cooperation with UN-HABITAT is of paramount importance to the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat.

In order to attain sustainable development through implementation of the Habitat Agenda, we need to place human beings at the core of all our efforts.

Future growth and development of cities now assumes the acceptance of a number of shared human values, including the search for a balance between the three domains of sustainable development: economy, environment and social issues.

We are convinced that strengthening of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is an effective way for boosting international cooperation between parliamentarians. We recognise that the World Urban Campaign, which was launched in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in March 2010, is a platform which facilitates the coordination of all Partner organisations of UN-HABITAT, including the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat.

2. Climate Change and Coastal Cities

By the middle of the twenty-first Century, more than two thirds of the world population will live in cities. Seventy-five percent of energy consumption and about eighty percent of global carbon dioxide emissions are already today accounted for by cities. **Urban areas are undoubtedly the main sources of climate change.**

Cities and their inhabitants are also the chief victims of climate change. Coastal Cities are especially sensitive to the impacts of Climate Change, such as rising sea levels. Cities can and must therefore make important contributions to climate protection.

3. Parliamentarians as Drivers of Change

Parliamentarians, who are representatives of the people, pass legislation, which is in itself the most essential form of implementation of the goals of the Habitat Agenda. Parliamentarians also control the budget of their country and are thus able to ensure that the necessary financial resources to achieve the objectives of the Agenda are available. In the same way, they determine which expenditures of public funds have priority. Parliamentarians can and should, therefore, not hesitate to act as Drivers of Change.

Commitments

1. We reaffirm our willingness to actively strengthen the implementation and dissemination of the Habitat Agenda.
2. We reaffirm the Declaration of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, approved during the Forum held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 14 June 1996 and expanded on at the Global Forums held in Cancún, Mexico, in 1998, in Manila, the Philippines, in 2000, in Berlin, Germany, in 2003, in Rabat, Morocco, in 2005, and in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2010 respectively.
3. We undertake to promote the passing and implementation of national laws on the basis of the Habitat Agenda, and to create the legislative and administrative instruments that lead to a sustainable development.
4. We undertake to strengthen communications and support among members of parliament in order to share experience and knowledge and to promote the setting up of national and regional parliamentarian groups.

5. We intend to step up the public debate with government representatives, non-governmental organizations and business representatives on the options available for improving sustainability of cities.
6. We will urge governments to ensure the availability of adequate and predictable financial resources for UN-HABITAT to enhance its work. We call to the international and regional monetary institutions to participate in directly financing programmes of UN-HABITAT.
7. We congratulate Joan Clos on his election to the position of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.
8. We express our solidarity with victims of the earthquake and the ensuing series of disasters which ravaged Japan in March 2011, including the Tsunami and the destruction of the nuclear power plant in Fukushima with all its terrible consequences for the people of Japan.
9. We confirm that the prevention of maritime pollution is a way of protection of the bio-diversity of the ocean and that this can be done by controlling the quality of the water that flows into the sea or of the ballast water transported by ships.
10. We insist that efforts should be made to diminish the consequences of the rise of the sea level which occurs due to sporadic tidal or tsunami waves and/or due to the constant gradual rise of the sea due to the melting of the polar ice.
11. We declare that Parliamentarians need to ensure that they are constantly and sufficiently informed about all the expert aspects that their organisation, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, is dealing with, in particular by exchanging their experiences with regards to legal and regulatory issues among and between all the UN members.
12. We agree that it is necessary to actively participate in the work of the expert meetings of UN-HABITAT, in order to better and faster implement ideas and agreed guidelines into our national legal systems.

Approved in session at the 7th Global Forum of Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, in Zadar, Croatia, 20 May 2011.