



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

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Introduction and Report

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The spoken word prevails!

GOOD LAWS FOR A BETTER HABITAT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After a successful opening ceremony last night in St. Donat's Church, I bid you welcome.

This is the seventh Global Forum of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. 15 years ago the GPH held their first Global Forum parallel to the World Conference on Human Settlements HABITAT II in Istanbul.

Since 1996, we meet regularly to support each other and to develop solutions for particularly urgent challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to inform you about the activities of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat in 2010.

The past year was a very active and successful year for the GPH.

In March 2010 we held our 6th World Forum in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. I would like to thank our Brazilian friend, Eliomar Coelho of the Camara Municipal do Rio de Janeiro, for this. Eliomar, welcome!

In Rio de Janeiro, we had an intensive discussion on our options for action at national and international level in the field of sustainable urban development. We focused our discussions in particular on how to include the losers of the urbanization process in developing countries, the slum dwellers, in city life and how to bridge the urban divide. We want urban development policy to include more renewable energy sources and greater energy efficiency and we have adopted this goal in our "Declaration of Rio".

In Rio de Janeiro the Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was also elected.

A few days later, the 5th World Urban Forum of UN-HABITAT was held, also in Rio de Janeiro. There, we held a Round Table for Parliamentarians on "Cities and Climate Change". In the closing ceremony I was given the honour of presenting the GPH within the framework of the World Urban Campaign, recently founded by UN-HABITAT, before more than 10,000 conference participants.

The World Urban Campaign is an excellent network and also a platform that allows us Parliamentarians to develop common positions on sustainable urban development issues under the auspices of UN-HABITAT and to make these widely known. It allows us to bring our issues forward together with other partners of UN-HABITAT.

We have, therefore, accompanied the World Urban Campaign from the beginning in a positive manner. I thank our colleagues Mariam Nalubega from Uganda and Jerko Rosin, who have strongly represented our organization at various events of the World Urban Campaign in 2010 and 2011.

In September 2010 a change took place in the leadership of the GPH-America. On 30 September 2010 Jose Ramon Lopez Martel, in accordance with the By-Laws of the GPH-America, passed the position of president to his deputy, Senator Ricardo Fidel Pacheco Rodriguez, also from Mexico. I congratulate Senator Ricardo Fidel Pacheco Rodriguez on his new responsibility, and I am glad that he has come to represent the GPH America at our 7th Global Forum. He will surely report in more detail on this tomorrow. I look forward to our cooperation. Welcome!

In September 2010, Constantin Traian Igas from Romania, President of the GPH-Europe, received the responsibility of the Romanian Ministry of Interior and Administration. We congratulate Minister Igas and are pleased that someone who is so intensely involved with habitat issues has been entrusted with such an important position.

In October 2010 I was allowed to present our work in the framework of the World Habitat Week held by UN-HABITAT at the Expo in Shanghai, China. In October 2010 in Beijing the Board of the Directors of the GPH came together to discuss, amongst other things, initial preparations for this Global Forum.

In April 2011, the 23rd Governing Council of UN-HABITAT took place in Nairobi, Kenya. I was invited to represent our organization of parliamentarians at a highly ranked panel on housing. There, it became apparent once again how important it is for developed and less developed countries to work together more closely.

In Nairobi I had a personal meeting with the newly-elected Executive Director of UN-HABITAT Joan Clos and I was able to suggest to him the extension of the GPH-initiated study on changes in legislation after the adoption of the Habitat Agenda 1996 in Istanbul.

In April 2011, a general meeting of the African Council of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat was held, also in Nairobi. The African Board of

Directors was re-formed. I would like to congratulate Hon. Margaret Zziwa-Nantongo on her re-election as President of the African Council and I look forward to continuing our good cooperation.

Yesterday afternoon, changes in the management structure of the GPH were also effected.

As I mentioned yesterday, our Romanian colleague Constantin Traian Igas, President of the European Council, unfortunately saw himself unable to fulfill his duties as President of the GPH-Europe in the way that he wanted, due to his new responsibilities as Minister. Yesterday at the European Council Meeting, his former Vice-President, Jerko Rosin, was elected new president. Congratulations Jerko Rosin!

Also, the Asian Council of the GPH was reformed yesterday. Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon from the Philippines, who for many years and with great dedication has represented the interests of the Asian members of the GPH as President of the GPH Asia, has decided to make his position of president available. Since 2010 Senator Gregorio B. Honason II has been leading the Asian Council, with the aim of initiating elections. For this, I would like to thank him very much. Our Asian colleagues elected their new president yesterday. We congratulate President Ronald Kiandee very cordially. Senator Honasan will continue supporting the GPH-Asia as one of its Vice-Presidents.

The Board of Directors is now complete, as all presidents of the continents are also Vice-Presidents of the Board of Directors, the governing body of our organization of parliamentarians.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have accomplished many things in the past year. The year ahead promises to be equally challenging.

Our African colleagues have decided to revise our By-Laws and to use them as a basis for the draft of a "Charter for Parliamentarians". I would like to thank our African colleagues for their commitment. The revised proposals have been received by us only a few days ago. This Charter and our By-Laws are the most important foundations for our work. We should therefore consult about this issue closely and with great care in our upcoming Board Meetings and Forums.

The coming year is an important year for another reason. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat were founded in 1987. Next year, we are celebrating our 25th anniversary. We are grateful for suggestions on how and where to celebrate this proud anniversary.

The founding place of our Organization is in Yokohama, Japan. I am pleased to again be able to welcome a Japanese member of the GPH, Mr Naokazu Takemoto, here today in Zadar.

At this occasion, we should think of the people of Japan, who face immense challenges after the great damage that they have suffered from the disasters. This catastrophe makes us realize once again how important our work is and also that we must never forget that nature sets limits which we must heed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We parliamentarians have a special responsibility in addressing these complex challenges. We have received this mission from the voters in our countries.

We want to develop common positions, carry these into our national parliaments and request our governments to act.

Thank you again for coming to Zadar, to deal with these important issues. I look forward to fruitful discussions.

We have set ourselves a comprehensive agenda for the next two days. Do you accept this agenda?

Thank you.

For the implementation of this two-day conference, we will require a Chairman. I propose that the newly elected European president of the GPH, our Croatian friend Jerko Rosin, takes over the daily management of our Forum for today and tomorrow and that he is to be assisted by the Vice Presidents as needed. Do you agree?

Thank you!

Congratulations Jerko Rosin. I give over the moderation of the conference to you.

Thank you.