



**PRESENTATION by Mrs ANNA K.TIBAIJUKA,
UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL of the UNITED NATIONS and
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of UN-HABITAT**

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**Address to the 52nd IFHP World Congress
International Federation for Housing and Planning
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*HOUSING BEYOND ITS WALLS: PLANNING FOR AN AFFORDABLE AND
SUSTAINABLE HABITAT***

***Venue: Puerto Rico Convention Center,
San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA***

Mr. Francesc VENTURA TEIXIDOR, President of IFHP,

Mr. Anselmo DE PORTU, President Puerto Rico Planning Society,

Honorary Jorge RIVERA JIMENEZ, Secretary Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Housing Department,

Mr. Enrique Ortiz-Flores, Habitat International Coalition,

MR. Roy Bernardi, Under-secretary Housing and Urban Development, USA,

Mr. Enrique Penalosa, former mayor of Bogota,

Excellence Ministries and authorities herein present,

Dear Congress Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by expressing my regrets on not being able to attend this congress in person. I am afraid that the demands placed upon me by the UN system make it difficult to be present in different venues situated miles apart from each other. Nonetheless, I would like to thank the International Federation for Housing and Planning and the Puerto Rico Planning Association for this invitation, I take this opportunity to congratulate both organisations for choosing such a challenging and genuine theme for today's world cities. Not forgetting the sponsors of this important event.

I would particularly like to acknowledge IFHP's long history of collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme-UN-HABITAT. UFHP has recognised the need to internationalise the debate on planning and its symbiosis with housing as a way to address the challenges presented by our globalising and rapidly urbanising world. This holistic and rather integrated approach is fundamental and has fostered dialogues between planners and housing practitioners, making sterling contributions to the growing collaboration between planning organisations around the world

Sustainable and affordable habitat, two subjects interlinked with the theme of this congress, are issues placed at the core of contemporary discussions about development. As I shall illustrate in my speech, there can be no sustainable development without sustainable urban development. Planning is critical in achieving this.

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My argument is that planning, if it is to be successful in this mission, it needs to lift its gaze from a focus mainly on the local and make the link to global issues. Global and local need to be much more articulated in planning responses than it is presently the case. And there is an urgent need to move away from sector-based prescriptive to integrated and enabling planning approaches.

This means that planners' thinking and attitude need to reflect these changes and engage in global debate and action. There is a globalisation of urban trends that makes visible the lack of adequate planning and the need for integrated and strategic vision of urban development and urban policies at all scales. There is a new paradigm in the making. This is triggered by the recognition that the dramatic growth of slums and informal settlements is closely associated with inadequate public policies and planning and the absence of housing policies that can deliver affordable housing options at scale. As I shall demonstrate in my speech, this is a way to work preventively by offering alternatives to informally developed land and slums that earmarks the urbanisation pattern in most cities in the developing world. Understanding how the housing sector works and designing enabling shelter strategies that respond to the needs and demands of the poor are two fundamental dimensions that must be incorporated into planning responses. Never before has the linkage between the housing sector and the whole economy (and financial sector) been so visible and overwhelming in modern times.

In order to meet these challenges, planning also has to modernise **to be fit for purpose**. Great strides have already been made but I discern from my perspective as the Head of a UN agency that much more is needed.

In some ways it is somewhat easier for me to address the issue of the need for globally connected planning than it was almost two years ago in touching on the same topic when I addressed the World Planners Congress that preceded the World Urban Forum at Vancouver. Planners such as yourselves have woken up to the fact that the impact of planning decisions is not just limited to the local environment; they have effects around the globe. Urban sprawl in Lagos, Sao Paulo and LA will contribute to the need to address relocation from coastal cities around the world or the disappearance of entire island nations.

This impression was reinforced when I read accounts of more recent planners' conferences, which brings to the forefront the processes of climate change and the development of sustainable communities. This is indeed progress.

So am I preaching to an audience of the converted? Well, I hope so, because the dangers of climate change are beyond any doubt. Climate change is real and touches the fundamentals of planning and housing, particularly when we consider the building of cities and neighbourhoods and the role of the construction sector. We have evidences that the building and construction sector is one of the major contributors to carbon emissions both in the production of materials and utilisation of buildings. Thus, when addressing climate change mitigation we must think holistically and tackle not only planning and housing standards but also the overall production, technology and use of building materials.

But, I would like to expand on this issue of the relationship between sustainable development – which has to be addressed on an international scale - and the domestic issues dealt with by planners worldwide. I would like to elaborate on a few aspects only:

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- The planning models and their outcomes
- The link of planning and the environment as part of the sustainability debate
- The growth of slums and informal settlements as part of contemporary urbanisation

- The right to adequate housing and its implication for planning and housing policies
- Our responses to the magnitude of informal land development and slum formation
- Findings from our global survey of cities and the future of planning

The planning models and their outcomes

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Planners must be aware of the power of the models of urban development propagated in the developed north which found its mainstream to many cities in the Developing world. Mainstream planning methodologies were largely developed to deal with the problems of capital rich but pollution and poverty haunted cities in the North in the early twentieth century. These approaches have been refined in the ensuing period when these nations have become increasingly wealthy in terms of both capital and consumption. These mainstream methodologies found its way in local planning solutions and city models in the developing world with flagship examples such as Brasilia, Abuja, Chandigarh and Dodoma standing as unequivocal evidences of this transposition of planning models and methodologies. Today, the main features of these models are by-and-large still the staple professional diet of planners in the capital poor and poverty stricken and environmentally blighted cities of the developing nations, which differently, have to cope with problems of a scale and intensity of urbanisation never witnessed before in human history.

We have observed in our work as the UN city agency, that still many planners in Africa, Asia and Latin America have a mental image of the planned city that is based on the western model. Spatial planning, design, standards and norms implicit and integrated into these plans result in urban services, spatial and residential environments that exclude poorer members of society who cannot afford nor comply with it. They frequently have high environmental costs that lead to consequences not only for the quality of life in the city but also for their extended hinterlands.

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Let me paint a picture. Extensive provision for car based transport leads to local and global environmental impacts. This boosts sprawl and intensifies commuting and dramatic expansion of urban areas, threatening environmental resources and imposing high cost of infrastructure provision on municipal budgets. Traffic jams become endemic. In Delhi, cars consume 75% of the road space yet transport only 20% of the people. Rapid and unplanned urban growth has endangered water sources of many cities resulting in pollution of aquifers by untreated sewage and in potable water being abstracted at greater distance from cities. Decisions are focused on high-cost technologies for both water supply and sewage treatment that require large areas and heavy investments. Not mentioning the overall high capital and recurrent costs. The overall package are often unaffordable and excludes large parts of the population who is not capable to afford these services. The point I want to make here is that we need to have culturally and economically-bound planning solutions while keeping them abreast with global processes.

Many cities are therefore less effective than they should be in addressing global environmental issues. In other words, the planning tools that worked for you will not necessarily work for them. Working with developing countries does not mean exporting inappropriate models. Many planners occupying key positions in the developing world are trained in North American and European institutions where notions of the primacy of certain models are first implanted. Careful thought has to be given to the reform of the curricula of the planning courses at your universities.

Planning education need to reflect the contemporary challenges and this apply to curricula in the developing nations as well. The logic of city growth has changed dramatically and this needs to be embedded into the formation of a new planning generation. Capacity building and investment in training & planning education is therefore paramount for an affordable and sustainable habitat, as depicted in your congress focus.

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The link of planning and the environment as part of the sustainability debate

But I would like to expand the argument further. One danger of the current debate is that the term “sustainable development” has become associated with a purely environmental agenda that emerged successfully after the Second United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. But let me remind you that the Agenda 21 has a particular chapter on sustainable cities which UN-HABITAT has further developed into a global sustainable cities programme that worked with more than 100 cities in the globe since then. We have worked with these cities in employing an urban environmental planning and management approach that recognises participatory planning and cross-sector coordination as paramount.

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The problem with the pure environmental perception is that it tends to place the developed and the developing world at odds. This is because what is regarded by the developed world as sustainability is often perceived by the developing world as self-interest, a desire to pull up the ladder once prosperity has been attained. The developed world has caused the problem of global warming by building up greenhouse gases for generations but it now wants the developing world to pay the price in terms of foregoing economic development, for example, by foregoing car ownership. For example, discussions about energy policy to address climate change in OECD countries are almost always associated with calls for energy security, thus tending to muddy the waters with regard to the real nature of concerns about reducing consumption of fossil fuels.

For developing countries, and more particularly cities, where 1 billion people out of a world population of 6 billion are currently living in slums on incomes of less than \$1 per day, talk of reducing resource consumption and carbon emissions seems light years away from the daily reality of struggling for an existence. Concerns in the North about climate change, which can be motivated by a desire to keep things the way they are, mean little to people for whom keeping things the way they are means continuing abject poverty and deprivation.

It might be contended that the urban poor in developing countries will be those most adversely affected by climate change. But this environmental argument does not go far enough - it does not convey an optimistic vision of much-needed socio-economic improvement and poverty reduction. As a consequence, development models based on undiluted economic growth are popular because they at least hold the prospect of a route out of poverty. This is despite strong evidence that the benefits of economic growth are often captured by small elites in the developing world.

And the problems of poverty in the cities of the developing world are currently getting worse rather than better. Let us look at the pace and nature of urban growth and give you some of the headlines

From last year, for the first time in history, the majority of the world's population will live in cities. In the future, 90% of all new global population growth is going to be in cities. By 2030 60% of us will live in cities. *Homo sapiens* has become *homo urbanus*.

Most of this increase will take place in the developing world. This trend is particularly marked in less developed countries, which are least equipped to cope with change. Urban areas in these countries will grow at 3% per annum, whereas rural areas will grow at only 0.1% per annum.

By contrast, cities in the developed North are often stagnant or shrinking. Over half of its cities exhibit a growth of less than 1%. Four out of ten cities actually experience population loss. Interestingly, stagnation and decline of city growth rates is being experienced in some of the larger and more mature cities of the developing world.

The growth of slums and informal settlements as part of contemporary urbanisation

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Urban growth in the developing world is being accompanied by the urbanisation of poverty which affects between 1 and 2 out of every 3 urban dwellers. The proportion of the urban poor is growing faster than the rate of urbanisation. Today 1 out of 3 urban dweller lives in slums. The rate of slum formation in Africa, for example, exceeds the rate of urban growth. This means that African cities, like many others, are not growing on the basis of plans and guided by planning but by informally developed and unplanned land occupation. There is evidence from Latin American's large metropolitan regions showing that even under declining urban population growth rates, the growth rates in informal areas and slums are still high. This points to shortcomings in housing policies and inadequate land and housing delivery systems resulting in many not able to find affordable housing options in these cities through formal mechanisms. Here is where planning and housing come strongly together.

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The scale and intensity of informal and unplanned development as well as urban poverty is growing. But in many countries we find planning standards that actively discriminate against them. How often do we see planning requirements for minimum house plot sizes that are unattainable for the poor or for standards of road provision that cater for the small minority of the population that has access to a car? How often do we witness the informal commercial sector, a major economic lifeline for slum dwellers, either ignored or abolished by rehabilitation or beautification plans without provision any other alternatives?

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The "Planned City" I referred to earlier even requires that the poor should at best be hidden or, at worst, swept away.

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So in Nairobi, where the poor are hidden, some 80% of the population lives on 5% of the land in the most marginal locations. If you visit Nairobi you are unlikely to see their settlements, crammed at high densities into flood plains, alongside railway tracks, by garbage dumps, in toxic industrial wasteland.

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Or they are swept away. I was the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Zimbabwe in 2005 to assess the situation concerning Operation Murambatsvina, or "drive out the trash" (operation restore order). Over 700,000 urban dwellers were evicted and their homes demolished. What I found out, was that this operation was justified by the need for so-called "proper planning". Needless to say, the evictees are still homeless today.

This was not an isolated incident. It is being repeated out of the gaze of the world's media in many countries. And the dream of the planned city, where the poor have no place, continues to be used as a justification of such actions. Let me quote from the foreword of a recent report by the UN-HABITAT Advisory Committee on Forced Evictions. "Forced evictions have increased dramatically in frequency, in number and in the level of violence. Forced evictions appear to have become a common practice *in lieu* of sustainable urban planning and inclusive social policies...."

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The right to adequate housing and its implication for planning and housing policies

UN-HABITAT is entrusted with the mandate to monitor and promote the full and progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing as defined in the Habitat Agenda, undersigned by dignitaries of more than 150 countries in Istanbul, 1996.

The right to adequate housing is relevant to all States. Collectively they have ratified at least one international treaty referring to adequate housing and committed themselves to protecting the right to adequate housing through international declarations, plans of actions and various international conferences and covenants. The right to adequate housing has many dimensions and implications for planning and housing policies. A right-based approach to housing and planning seem to be one of the challenges ahead of us. Adequate housing encompasses amongst other things the availability of infrastructure, water and basic sanitation, durability and sufficient space to prevent overcrowding, affordability and security of tenure to prevent forced evictions.

When a city is designing and deploying planning and housing policies that recognise, protect and fulfil these rights, it does not necessarily mean the obligation to build and provide housing for the entire population. This is a misconception. But rather to enable the access to housing opportunities and options and ensure that there is no discrimination against minorities and vulnerable groups. A right-based approach to housing entails a different approach to planning and housing that is necessarily inclusive and consultative in essence rather than prescriptive and normative. These are fundamental shifts that are required when considering the right to adequate housing.

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The achievement of the MDG 7 Target 11 – which deals with the slum population and access to water and sanitation – is conditioned to the realisation of the right to adequate housing. Evictions, on the contrary, go against the MDG. Thus, the quest for an inclusive and enabling housing policy is vital and will become an important instrument of public policies and planning must be an integral part of it. This calls for planners to understand that housing is more than houses. UN-HABITAT works with its partners and ministries of housing and urban development with a holistic and integrated view on housing that considers the supply of land, building materials and technology, infrastructure and finance as keys to address the challenges of a rapidly

urbanising world. The challenge for planners is not only to incorporate this understanding but also to move away from the prescriptive type of planning models that is at the heart and is boosting forced evictions world wide.

Our responses to the magnitude of informal land development and slum formation

Not only is this, but the mental model of the planned city at odds with the reality of informal settlements and poverty. Assuming for the moment that planning becomes sensitive, inclusive and responsive to this overwhelming informal development process engendered by the poor on an international basis, do we have the tools to get on with the job? Planning tends to be based on formal processes and a logical sequence of residential development and housing delivery, as often taught at planning schools and employed in formal housing and urban development. Planning is not good at dealing with informality and the opposite logic of informally developed land and housing. But illegal modes of acquisition, sub-division and development are the norm in slum areas.

Ladies and gentleman, whether we accept it or not, we are confronted with a model of urban development that is not nurtured by planning and plans. We need to understand that this is propelled by social political processes and a buoyant informal market. This leads to large scale sprawl of poverty and informal settlements and slums in cities of the developing nations. Often the formal planning processes cannot keep up and also because they are often subverted for greater financial gains by land speculators. This also has had an impact on the standards of buildings - both residential and high rise; as well as on trunk infrastructure; and the individual connections in buildings; and on poor land documentation which also increases forced eviction. Thus both poverty, informality and environmental damage are perpetuated, at least in part, because planning does not have all the right weapons in its armoury.

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Planners should not grieve about the fact that the world does not fit into their plans. Instead they should be asking: “How do we build on the dynamism of this situation and these roaring land markets which are delivering land and housing at scale, through many different approaches? How do we strengthen the market so that it also supports the poor, the vulnerable and women as opposed to delivering benefits largely to slumlords and speculators? How do we widen the options of affordable housing that can offer a competitive alternative to informality? How should we understand and work with land markets in a way that our plans and planning processes can make urbanisation sustainable?”

These questions present a complex challenge to planners in this congress and around the world in addressing the “fit for purpose” question I raised in the beginning. Let me give my own take on some of the possible answers:

My first contention is a general one that is not limited to the planning profession, but certainly includes it. Unless the developed North buys into the need to address poverty in the developing world, there is a danger that many in the South will remain indifferent to the potentially catastrophic environmental change that threatens us all.

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Poverty needs to be tackled as a problem of at least equal significance to climate change. We must recognise that information and unplanned urbanisation coupled with the reproduction of poverty is rapidly becoming the weakest link in the chain of our pursuit of sustainable development. Indeed, an over-emphasis on environmental considerations can be anti-poor – with evictions from watersheds or national parks without alternative provision being made, or from the sites of new towns, or controls on development that restrict access to land for housing by the poor.

Our efforts specifically to develop sustainable planning must therefore be focused on two fronts. One front consists of smart growth and of reducing the ecological footprint of our cities to preserve our common future. The other front consists of social equity and justice to ensure human rights and dignity in our towns and cities.

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My third contention is that if planning is to fulfil its promise, it should vigorously lay claim on a unique niche in creating sustainable development. As a non-sectoral discipline it is well placed to balance social, economic and environmental pressures in both developed and developing countries. To do this, planning has to continuously improve its core planning methodologies and ensure that these replace the outdated approaches still used in many countries. At the stage where we are today, we need to pursue planning that results in plans of action rather than plans that over-regulate actions. We need to move from normative and statutory type of planning to a more strategic action oriented type of planning.

If old-fashioned expert-driven models of “predict and provide” hold sway there is the danger that only the rich and powerful will continue to appropriate the fruits of development. Therefore, participatory models of “debate and decide”, which involve civil society and elected local representatives, need to become the driving forces for sustainable urban development. Such approaches are more likely to produce decisions that balance social, environmental and economic considerations. Urban planning was indeed one of the first professions to pioneer public participation, but this experience has not been absorbed in the practice of planning in many parts of the world.

Although great strides have been made, there is much left to do. Planning is still associated in the minds of non-planners with often costly, unimplementable and unresponsive master plans. This historical association is often unwarranted, but planning is still closely associated with unpopular bureaucratic and legalistic land use controls. As indicated in my description of the chaotic urbanisation experienced in the world’s slums, these tools are no longer relevant in many parts of the world. A new and easily understood paradigm of planning practice that is simple to understand, cheap to apply and is easy to implement is required.

Many think that planning needs to strongly reconnect with infrastructure provision, and particularly with transportation, especially with non car based modes, as a key lever. Indeed, through infrastructure investment, win-win solutions can be obtained. Serviced land can be supplied at scale and options for the provision of affordable housing can be increased. Transportation systems can meet both poverty reduction and ecological objectives, water supply networks can influence patterns of growth and encourage increasingly compact cities,

infrastructure and land development standards can increase spatial efficiency and access to services.

Findings from our global survey of cities and the future of planning

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There are also implications for sustainable planning methodology emerging from the latest analyses of urban population change contained in the *State of the World's Cities Report 2008* produced by UN-HABITAT. City population loss is a reality increasingly recognised in the North, but also an emerging trend in 143 cities out of a sample of 1,408 in the developing world, particularly in larger cities (15.8% of our sample of large cities).

The report argues that growth and shrinkage are the two faces of the coin of urban change. It concludes that there is a need to rethink traditional ideas based on the assumption that all cities can achieve growth. Smart planning for sustainable growth needs to be accompanied by the notion that smart planning is needed to make population loss sustainable. This idea is not popular because from a local perspective population shrinkage is associated with failure. But it is a reality that has to be addressed, not through denial, but by using the right planning tools. The report also makes the point that one city's shrinkage is also likely to be another city's growth. It argues for a re-engagement in regional planning, a long neglected planning tool, as a means of adapting to an improved understanding of the realities of city growth and decline.

Finally, I would argue that sustainable urban development requires a complementary strategy of internationalisation by the planning profession. Stronger and more financially viable planning associations need to reach out in solidarity and goodwill to weaker associations. The creation of the Global Planners Network, an evolving alliance of planning associations set up as a response to the stimulus of Vancouver, of which UN-HABITAT is also a member, is an important first step.

Within my own agency the attention given to planning and housing is greater than ever before. In UN-HABITAT's Medium Term Strategic and Institutional Plan approved by our Governing Council, planning has featured strongly for the first time in many years. At the World Urban Forum in Vancouver we joined hands and started making a difference.

I am looking forward to the World Urban Forum in Nanjing in November this year, not to mention the Global Planners Network Congress in Zhenjiang that precedes it, as opportunities not only to reflect on progress made but also to chart our way into the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of IFHP and the Puerto Rican Planning Association,

The future role of planning and housing in sustainable urban development is important. I have argued that if it is to respond to new global challenges, that planning in one country is no longer enough, that the connection of the local decision to its global impact has to be taken into account; measures to enable the housing sector to work for the poor as well is fundamental for economic development and employment generation; that international solidarity is required and that all

planners have a role to play in this. UN-HABITAT, as a global agency which has the mandate to address issues of sustainable urban development, stands ready to work with you.

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Thank you for your kind attention.