

Your Excellencies

The President of Ecuador

The President of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly

Secretary-General of the United Nations

Our kind host the Honorable Mayor of Quito

Other Heads of State, Ministers, Heads of Delegations

Secretary General of the Conference

Co-Chairs and Members of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee of Habitat 3

Representatives of Local and Sub-National Governments

Members of the Global Task Force

Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, Members of the General Assembly of Partners

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Have you been listening to the voices that have been ringing throughout the *Casa de la Cultura* buzzing with its dizzying array of plenaries, roundtables, side events, networking activities? Have you heard them among the extraordinary exhibits in the *Asamblea Nacional*? How about in the streets of Quito from the *Centro historico* with its extraordinary light show or in the Habitat Villages? And certainly, you have heard the excited chatter in the conference's living rooms – the green and public spaces so graciously fitted out with so many amenities -- comfortable seating, art, delicious food booths? Surely, wherever you have been these past days, you have noticed the expectant enthusiasm, buoyant passion, and hopeful anticipation of these voices?

And have you realized who's speaking? There are the member states whose seasoned diplomats successfully delivered the New Urban Agenda, a document so full of promise. There is a phalanx of mayors who have testified to their readiness to align the NUA and their daily work. There is a wide variety of other stakeholders – those represented by the nine major groups accompanied by an additional seven groups with deep interests in cities and human settlements who formed the General Assembly of Partners, that working with its sister organization, the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, sought representation of their interests in the NUA. While I hesitate to single out any person because all are unique and special but I will name three to indicate the power of the NUA and its reach. There is the amazingly articulate young child Emily, who spoke at the Women's Assembly, confident that the city of her dreams will materialize for her generation. There is Victor, co-chair of the GAP Persons with Disabilities Partners Group, who showed us of the true meaning of a city for all in the spoken and written word, the latter through an extraordinary participatory art project – did you see it? (Volunteers holding colorful umbrellas spelled out "inclusion," recorded from above by airplane and now distributed worldwide.) And there is Mayor Data who called for us to think not of PPPs but of PPPPs (Public Private, People, Partnerships), mindful that as we move forward we must do so jointly and inclusively.

These voices remind us to move forward and to do so jointly and inclusively. But before we do that, we thank Ecuador for its warm hospitality during our days here.

And move forward we will, for the name of the game now is to build on the exuberance and celebration, ever present here at the H3 conference to begin the hard work of implementation. We, the stakeholders, well know, as do you, that we must **act now**.

We will begin our journey within hours as we return to our homes, armed with Secretary General Ban Ki Moon's message that the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities. We are prepared to engage immediately and thoughtfully. We will, however, temper our expectations. While ultimately extraordinarily rewarding, achieving our goals will take time and be fraught with challenges. Nonetheless, we will aim to build a world where our cities are inclusive, safe, productive, resilient and sustainable, where urban-rural synergies are maximized and nations have mastered balanced territorial development.

In the past 18 months, we stakeholders, have been preparing for this effort. With your encouragement, that of the Bureau and the H3 Secretary General, we have developed an innovative platform, the General Assembly of Partners, bringing together 16 partners, representing the nine major groups, the Habitat Agenda Partners (e.g. Parliamentarians) and 7 other groups with relevant interests (e.g. grassroots, professionals, academia, media, philanthropies, older persons and persons with disabilities). We have worked with our sister organization, the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments, to find ways to explain and represent our respective interests to you. At the same time, since 1/3 of our membership had never been involved in UN activities, we have also been in training for the post Habitat 3 environment. We want to thank you for your support and openness and, here, I want to give a special shout out to the Habitat 3 Bureau and Secretariat for crafting the extraordinarily transparent, inclusive and participatory preparatory process that not only became the foundation of our preparations for the post Habitat 3 era but also provided the perfect setting for the creation of the *New Urban Agenda* with its multitude of possibilities and opportunities for our joint collaboration.

So now, we stand ready to move, hand in hand with you, the member states and mayors and local authorities, to implement the *New Urban Agenda* and the other associated global agreements. We pledge our support in several areas: knowledge-sharing, advocacy, testing innovative efforts, monitoring progress, and offering counsel on transformative investments. We come as your partners and colleagues, eager to work with you to develop the collaborative frameworks and institutions and share our talents and time, as together, we pursue the New Urban Agenda with enthusiasm, energy and excitement.

**You can count on us.**