

INTERVENTION

BY

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ON

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND PUBLIC SERVICES

DURING THE

**13TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

NEW YORK – TUESDAY, APRIL 12TH, 2005

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation associates itself with the intervention made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Access to housing and public services is one of the challenges facing developing countries, particularly Africa due to rapid urbanization and increasing urbanization of poverty. This situation calls for concerted efforts involving poverty reduction and upgrading of slums as well as adoption of proactive policies and programmes so as to avert further growth of slums and informal settlements. The proactive policies include constructing affordable housing units, particularly on a rental basis, for low and middle-income groups; and promoting development of rural areas.

Provisions of housing and public services is an expensive venture entailing use of various building materials that constitute well over 60% of the total project cost. Due to high production and transportation costs of such materials, projects end up being very costly pushing them beyond the reach of many. On the other hand, many developing countries are endowed with abundant natural resources that can meet the demand for basic materials using available surplus labour. The policy option is to promote research, documentation and dissemination of information on alternative locally available low-cost building materials and technologies.

Land holds a special and critical position as an invaluable economic asset in the development of human settlements. The policy on land use planning and management is key in providing increased accessibility to affordable and serviceable land, while providing security of tenure to the poorer sections of society, women and vulnerable groups.

Limited access to finance is a major limiting factor in accessing housing and public services. In order to increase availability and access to finance, governments should create and maintain special funds from which related projects can be financed. We encourage donors to contribute to such funds. Other policy options include development of innovative mechanisms of mobilizing resources both locally and internationally; and facilitating access to affordable credit for the poor such as micro-credit and cooperative savings.

Partnerships and joint ventures should be forged with the poor in implementing pro-poor and community-based strategies. The involvement of stakeholders should take cognizance of their respective comparative advantages. Private sector participation can further be enhanced through development of appropriate cost recovery mechanisms and provision of relevant incentives in the housing industry.

Madam Chairperson,

We call for provision of requisite resources to UN-HABITAT to enable the Programme to carry out its mandate. We also call for support to the Slum Upgrading Facility of UN-HABITAT and request CSD to consider harmonization of target 11 with other relevant targets.

Thank you for your kind attention.