



**6<sup>th</sup> GPH**  
Global Forum of Parliamentarians on  
**HABITAT**  
Rio de Janeiro • march 2010

## Rio Declaration

---

Since it was set up, the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat Group has been an effective forum for the exchange of experience in the field of human settlements, adequate housing and sustainable development. Today more than ever, meetings of this kind are essential, as they enable us to find common and coordinated approaches at global level to public policy and legislative experience, which enable us to improve and strengthen initiatives within the various national and infra-national legislative bodies.

We, as legislators and other participants in the 6th Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, which met in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil, on 18, 19 and 20 March 2010, discussed and reflected on the challenges faced by modern human settlements, and we now present to our partners in dialogue and society in general the terms which we have agreed and commitments which we have assumed, which are summarised in this document.

### **PREAMBLE**

WHEREAS this Global Forum was held in order to prepare for the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat Group's participation in the 5th World Urban Forum organised by UN-HABITAT in Rio de Janeiro, between 22 and 26 March 2010.

NOTING that the discussions focussed on the examination and proposal of new forms of parliamentary action within the various legislative bodies and levels of government, seeking to minimise the causes and damaging effects of climate change, to correct inconsistencies and inequalities in the relationship between Cities and the Countryside and to strengthen the principles and instruments for citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

EXPRESSING our shared interest in the World Urban Forum topic entitled “The Right to the City – Bridging the Urban Divide” and our commitment to the agreements reached during the First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver in 1976, and the Habitat II Conference, held Istanbul in June 1996, and also the Habitat Agenda which resulted from those Conferences.

RECOGNISING that the promotion of participatory democracy not only enriches the political process within Cities, but also reinforces the legitimacy of formal representative bodies within the legislative process and the effective implementation of universal public policies, thus providing an effective pathway towards genuine social and environmental sustainability within cities and rural areas.

NOTING that both urban planning and the efforts to mitigate and control the climate change which we are experiencing today are essential factors in the development and welfare of the world’s peoples.

## **DECLARATION OF COMMITMENTS**

**FIRST.** We reaffirm the recommendations made in the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the recommendations contained in the Habitat Programme, approved during the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 14 June 1996.

**SECOND.** We reaffirm the Declaration of Principles and Commitments of the Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, approved during the Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 14 June 1996 and expanded on at the meetings in Cancún, Mexico, in 1998, in Manila, in the Philippines, in 2000, in Berlin, Germany, in 2000 and in Rabat, Morocco, in 2005, respectively.

**THIRD.** We undertake to collaborate in the implementation of the United Nations Programmes for Human Settlements, supporting the legislative and institutional implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

We highlight the fact that the major challenge facing parliamentarians is to encourage the adoption of these recommendations by our national institutions, whilst at the same time fully respecting the sovereignty of each country and the specific local and regional conditions, with a view to updating the legislation specifically governing sustainable human settlements and adequate housing for all and helping to formulate and improve public urban, rural and housing policies and to provide support for government institutions, especially at local level. In this way, it will be possible to ensure that the laws are complied with and the relevant policies are respected, with the ongoing participation of civil society.

**FOURTH.** We will step up our efforts to promote consistency, uniformity and relevance in national and local laws on essential matters relating to urban and rural human settlements and their sustainability. In this area, we need to take account of the capacity of the local and national authorities to pass the necessary laws and to ensure that they are enforced and, where this action has proved insufficient, we intend to develop additional support and monitoring measures together with local, regional and national governments.

**FIFTH.** We will promote measures to control the causes and the negative effects of climate change and the risks resulting from it in urban and rural areas. We will strengthen preventive and civil protection programmes in order to reduce the risks created by natural phenomena in cities and rural areas and also to protect and rehabilitate native ecosystems which are still present in urban and rural areas and which serve to protect the environment or to contain processes leading to degradation of soil, air or water quality.

**SIXTH.** In each of our countries, we will support the implementation of measures to strengthen the United Nations programmes on climate change. This support will basically consist of proposing initiatives to reinforce programmes coordinated by the United Nations Organisation, concerning the creation of legal, financial, tax and administrative instruments to fund and implement programmes to combat climate change and its negative effects.

**SEVENTH.** We will work to develop specific indicators and targets which will help to support and assist in the evaluation of public policies, in particular those aimed at combating urban and regional inequalities and broadening participation in the formulation of policies, plans and major urban and regional projects.

**EIGHTH.** We will promote the necessary legislative and administrative improvements in our countries in order to reinforce measures to prevent and deal with urban and rural

emergencies caused by natural disasters or disasters of any other kind, and also the necessary rehabilitation measures, encouraging participation by civil society.

We also express our solidarity with Haiti and Chile following the natural disasters which recently occurred in those countries.

**NINTH.** We will analyse the criteria and factors used to define and delimit urban and rural areas, paying particular attention to improvements in urban and rural planning rules and guidelines aimed at eliminating regional inequalities and processes leading to social and spatial segregation.

**TENTH.** We will continue to strengthen the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat Group and also our continental and national sister organisations and will carry out the following priority activities, amongst others:

- a) Identify progress with the legislative and institutional implementation of the Habitat Agenda in our regions and countries;
- b) Help to consolidate the mechanisms for coordination and collaboration between continental groups and the Global Group;
- c) Collaborate in the implementation and regulation of the United Nations Programmes for Human Settlements, promoting the necessary reforms of the laws and institutions in our regions and countries;
- d) Work to increase membership of the Group and its participation in activities via new and more efficient communications channels between members of continental groups and the global group, in particular by making use of information technologies and the creation of permanent working groups which will examine and discuss in greater depth the principal topics already covered at global and continental conferences;
- e) Encourage the creation of national Parliamentarians on Habitat Groups.

**ELEVENTH.** The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat Group will strengthen coordination and cooperation to assist in the implementation and fulfilment of this Declaration.

Approved in session at the 6th Global Forum of Parliamentarians on Habitat, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 March 2010.