



Global Parliamentarians on **HABITAT**

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Introduction

**Round Table of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat
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The spoken word prevails!

GOOD LAWS FOR A BETTER HABITAT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Round Table of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat. I am pleased that we have been given the opportunity to meet during this World Urban Forum, to discuss common challenges and to develop solutions.

On behalf of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, I would first of all like to thank you, Dr. Joan Clos, for the invitation to the Sixth World Urban Forum and the Government of Italy, the Campania Region and the City of Napoli for hosting this important Forum. My thanks also go to Dr. Markandey Rai, Chief, Global Parliamentarians and Trade Unions, and his team for their assistance in the preparation of our Round Table.

It is an honor as President of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat, to open and to chair this Round Table.

This Round Table is especially for us parliamentarians. As representatives of the people we vote on laws. In addition, we control the budget of our countries and can thus ensure that the necessary financial resources are available at national and international level.

We set the priorities in the spending of public funds. In this way, parliamentarians possess instruments which enable them to make a critical contribution to the sustainable development of cities.

Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I give the floor to the Executive Director Joan Clos and before presenting the panellists to you, let me make a few remarks about our organization. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat is a unique network of parliamentarians from around the world that deals exclusively with the habitat topic. The Global Parliamentarians are led by a Board of Directors. The members of the Board of Directors are the President of the Board of Directors, as well as the President of the regional chapters of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat of Africa, America, Asia and Europe.

We meet regularly at provincial, regional, and international level to seek solutions for the most serious challenges in the field of sustainable urban development. Our organization was founded in 1987 with the aim of supporting UN-Habitat.

At this occasion I would like to draw the attention of all parliamentarians who are interested in becoming active in our organisation to our Work Session tomorrow, from 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. in Pavilion 6, Room Number 1. There, we intend to plan our future activities. The Work Session will be open to parliamentarians only.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

Today, more than half the world's population lives in cities. By the middle of the century, 7 out of 10 people are expected to live in cities. The manner in which we shape our cities today will have a strong impact on our future quality of life.

It is for this reason that we want to talk about cities today. This Round Table will give policy makers the opportunity to critically discuss policy instruments that allow cities to act as "engines for sustainable growth".

Cities and economic progress have always been closely linked. In both developed and developing countries, cities generate significant portions of gross domestic product and national wealth, and create development opportunities, jobs and investment. Cities can therefore be considered “engines of growth”. However, not all cities are equal. While some cities succeed in providing economic and other opportunities for their citizens, others struggle to unlock their potential.

Today, we want to ask ourselves how parliamentarians can contribute to generate growth in cities and at the same time establish the goals of sustainable development.

We also want to explore the question of how a sustainable restructuring of the economy must take place in cities around the world to allow "green" growth?

Finally, we want to think about the kind of economic growth our society can still afford and the role that cities can play in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would warmly like to thank our panelists who have come here to share their particular insights with us. Thank you for making the long trip here in order to enrich our discussion.

Each of these topics merits a detailed lecture. Unfortunately, due to the limited time available to us, this is not possible. For this reason I would like to remind our panelists to limit their contribution to maximum five minutes so that we can finish our Round Table at 7 p.m.

Before we start with our Round Table, I give the floor to the Executive Director Joan Clos. It would be interesting for us to hear from you how important parliamentarians are for UN-Habitat.

Presentation of the Speakers

Vice-Chairpersons

Ms. Mariam Patience Nalubega is currently serving her second term as MP in Uganda. Her energies are in particular directed at empowering Youth and Women and in implementing the Habitat Agenda in Africa and the world.

Hon. Nalubega has been an active member of the GPH for a long time. She was the first President of the African Chapter of the GPH and currently serves the GPH-Africa as their Secretary-General.

Mr. Jerko Rosin is a Croatian architect, publicist, composer and children's writer and current President of the European GPH. He has not only completed numerous architectural tasks and authored a number of urban plans, but has also published a lot on the topic.

As member of the Croatian Parliament, he was President of Parliamentary committee for urban planning and construction, the committee for foreign policy and of the committee for interparliamentary cooperation.

Panelists

Mr. Susheel Kumar is from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation of India. He speaks for Ms. Kumari Selja, who is currently Union Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Minister of Culture in the Republic of India. She has been a Member of Parliament four times. Her special interests include habitat and environmental related issues facing the urban poor. Minister Selja has played an active role in our organization for many years now.

Mr. Mohamed El Bakkouri from Morocco is Senator in Morocco and Vice-President of the GPH-Africa for the region of Northern Africa.

Ms. Patricia M. Hajabakiga from Rwanda is Member of the East African Legislative Assembly where she is Member of the Agriculture, Tourism and Environment Committee and the Communication, Trade and Investment Committee. Before that, she was Member of Parliament in Rwanda and Minister of State for land and Environment.

Mr. Yves Dauge is former Senator and Deputy of France as well as former Mayor and Deputy-Mayor of Chinon. He is currently President of the French World Heritage Sites Association and of the Association des Centre Culturels de Rencontre.

Ms. Nancy Abisai from Kenya is also Member of the East African Legislative Assembly. She is member of the Communication, Trade and Investment Committee and the Committee on general purposes.

Ms. Susan Lyimo from Tanzania is Alternate President of the African Chapter of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat.

The floor is now open for discussion. I would like to ask all discussants to please give us their name and function and to limit their contribution to a maximum of three minutes, so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to speak.

Thank you for the fruitful discussion from different sides. I believe we have received many considerations for our future work. I am convinced we will all receive many more valuable inputs during the forum.

Dear colleagues,

I hope to see you again tomorrow morning at 9.30 a.m. in Pavilion 6 Room 1. There, we intend to plan our future activities. All parliamentarians are invited to attend.

I wish you all the best for your further stay in Naples and your personal and professional future.