Consultations on the New Urban Agenda 18 - 20 May, NY

Comments on the Preamble and the Quito Declaration, 18 May - Part II

Statement by Norway

Madam Co-Chair,

Let me first of all say that we believe that the preamble and the declaration contain many important principles and paragraphs that we fully support. We are grateful to the Bureau for crafting this language.

However, we agree with previous speakers that there is a potential for streamlining the text as well as making it clearer that the New Urban Agenda builds on the 2030 Agenda.

As I mentioned in our general comments this morning, we believe that the declaration needs to be stronger on the importance of protecting health and the environment.

We think it should be stated clearly that the Paris Agreement can only be fulfilled if widespread, deliberate urban action to reduce greenhouse gases and short lived climate pollutants is taken, ensuring deep cuts in these emissions. This would also improve air quality. We therefore suggest that contributing to achieving the Paris Agreement and keeping global average temperature rise well below 2 degrees celsius should be added under the vision part of the declaration.

Equally, we would like to propose that achieving air quality according to WHO guidelines should be added to the vision of the declaration. Last week the World Health Organization published new data for air quality in 3000 of the world's cities. It reveals the worrisome fact that only 20% of urban inhabitants experience good air quality according to WHO standards. The rest is surrounded by dirty, dangerous air. While the situation in developed country cities has improved in general, the opposite is true for cities in low and middle income countries: only 2% of the cities where air quality is monitored have clean air according to the WHO. With millions of deaths every year, air pollution represents a new urban crisis in many countries. This should be made clear in the New Urban Agenda, and commitments to solve the problem should be included.