

THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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STATEMENT

by

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Mr. Chair,

As stated in The Future We Want, the outcome document from the Rio +20 Conference, cities if they are well planned and developed, including through integrated planning and management approaches contribute significantly to the promotion of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies.

Cities have always had a significant role in the process of degradation of the environment and unsustainable exploitation of resources. Cities contribute by 75% to the utilization of energy, two thirds of which is from fossil fuels (non-renewable resources). It is well-known that the expansion of cities often takes place at the expense of agricultural and forest land, which is especially prevalent in developing countries. Mega cities of over ten million people pose exceptional challenges.

According to UN statistics it is forecast that by 2025 60% of the global population will live in cities, and that by 2050 cities will account for more than 80% of global population. Cities utilize 75% of all energy and transmit 80% of harmful green-house gases. It is evident that the success in combating climate change to a great extent depends on the sustainability of cities. The participation of city dwellers in consumption of natural resources is in disproportion to the space and area that they cover. The main problems arise from mismanagement of waste and often irresponsible consumption of water. The lack of clear and strict regulation on consumption of water is a concern of many cities. The necessity of undertaking measures to reduce the inefficient and costly utilization of energy is also a key priority.

Sustainability is quantified not only by environmental indicators but social and economic measures. Such criteria come to the fore in the most striking manner in terms of the global economic crisis, when innovative forms of financing sustainable development should be explored.

The sustainable development of cities requires comprehensive programs that have to be adopted at country wide and local level. The challenge of this program is to promote and test all forms of economic development in a manner that is not detrimental to the environment and is consistent with

sustainable and responsible patterns of consumption and production.

Many cities in Serbia have undertaken measures to fulfill the recommendations put forward by Agenda 21. The directions that need to be followed in order to establish sustainable urban development and sustainable cities have to include the following elements:

- compact and rational cities, based on the efficient utilization of land,
- efforts to reduce the use of motor vehicles in city centres,  
efficient utilization of resources, leading to reduced pollution and waste,
- introduction of regional and local plans for managing waste,
- establishment of an organized system for recycling of waste,  
development of public consciousness for the solution of problems of waste management.

Particular emphasis must be placed on energy efficiency in housing, where regulations on the energy efficiency of buildings have to be refined and developed. Introduction of energy efficiency certificates or passports for buildings is a viable option.

The goal must be to achieve smart low carbon, or post carbon cities that address the socio-economics of urban divide. For that goal to be achieved access to the state of the art low carbon technologies is key which raises the question of the mobilization of public and private as well as innovative financial resources.

Mr. Chair,

It is evident that transportation and the movement of people and goods is a central element in the quest for the achievement of sustainable development. Efficient and effective transportation which does not contribute to the degradation of the environment is a key element of economic growth.

Middle-income countries and countries in transition facing specific developmental problems are making significant efforts to upgrade their transportation network and develop its sustainability, which is a challenging task.

Efforts to achieve sustainable transport have to include the following elements:

- reduction of participation of transportation in air pollution and noise through the improvement of quality of motor vehicles and reduction of the use of fossil fuels, increasing of the quality of transport services and transport infrastructure,
- development of multi-modal transport system, and notably public mass transportation system,
- greater reliance on rail and river transport, development of specific systems of transport adopted to the needs of final user.

International cooperation and support to developing countries as well as countries in transition is essential. The role of national financial institutions as well as regional financial bodies as well as international financial institutions in developing transport networks (road, railway, river) is of the utmost importance. In that framework innovative forms of financing have to be explored as well as the blending of private and public sources.

Thank you!