



ECOSOC • Integration Segment (27–29 May, 2014)
SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION

**BUILDING
THE FUTURE**
we WANT

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

**Contribution to the
2014 United Nations Economic and
Social Council (ECOSOC)
Integration Segment**

March 21, 2014
Ref: NIK/MB/2014
Cc: MND, LB, SZ

Excellency,

Thank you for your letter dated 6 March 2014 inviting the UNCCD secretariat to provide inputs to the Integration segment of ECOSOC this year, which will take up the theme of “Sustainable Urbanisation”.

The concept note developed for the purpose has outlined in some details the evolution of urbanisation and the manifold problems that burgeoning urbanisation exacerbates, including urban sprawl, ineffective resource base, poverty, inequalities, extreme deprivation, and the challenges of meeting delivery of basic services, including water and sanitation. I concur with the view that instead of perceiving urbanization as a problem, it is time to see it as a tool for sustainable development and that Governments can use urbanisation for transforming production capacities, income levels and living standards, particularly in developing countries.

An integral part of the shift in mind sets, there is a need to acknowledge the link between land degradation and sustainable urbanisation, and the need to address the root causes of unsustainable urbanisation, particularly the rapid degradation of land in all ecosystems leading to forced migration from rural to urban areas. This contributes to the creation of slums including the vulnerability of such makeshift settlements to natural disasters.

From the UNCCD perspective, tackling land degradation/desertification and drought are central to achieving sustainable urbanisation, reducing unplanned rural migration to urban areas and limiting proliferation of unsustainable slums. Land must be managed sustainably and degraded land reclaimed upstream to achieve meaningful and long lasting sustainable urbanisation downstream.

The Integration Segment of ECOSOC provides a valuable opportunity to address this important lacuna, which so far has not been adequately addressed. Indeed a key policy recommendation that the Integration Segment of ECOSOC may wish to endorse is the need to implement the commitment of world leaders at Rio plus 20 to a land degradation neutral world, which in turn will bring new hopes and opportunities for both rural and urban population.

Hoping that these inputs will be taken into account in formulating the agenda and draft outcomes of the Integration Segment of ECOSOC, please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Monique Barbut
Executive Secretary



His Excellency Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak
Vice-President of the Economic
and Social Council (ECOSOC)
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