



Strong calls for better urban equity as WUF7 officially opens in Medellin

The Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF7) officially opened in Medellin, Columbia with strong calls to increase opportunities for all those living in cities.

In a video message, United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon welcomed the participants saying, "We need inclusive development to eradicate extreme poverty."

On his part, Medellin Mayor Mr. Anibal Gaviria, said the city was not a finished piece of work but it is an inspiring city. He added that: "We want to face the creation of a more equitable city and we show that we can do it with innovation."

The Governor of Antioquia Region – where Medellin lies – Mr. Sergio Farjado, said the people of Medellin had built a path to transform themselves while the Housing Minister Mr, Luis Felipe Henao declared: "Our country has a new hope."



Addressing the meeting, the United States of America's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mr. Shaun Donovan admitted that Inequality was one of the world's biggest challenges adding that the opportunity between men and woman was still far too wide. "We support local leaders to support their local solutions and we are also aware that the effects of climate change endanger communities all around the world," he said.

Ms. Teima Onorio, the Vice President of Kiribati also took the same path admitting that urban equality and climate change were still a challenge.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Dr. Joan Clos said Medellin had radical hope to improve. He said that Latin America was the most urbanized continent on earth with 80 per cent of its population living in urban areas.

"We must think urbanization. We must plan. It is not enough that "Only 20 countries of 193 have national urban development plans," he said. The Executive Director said that inequality was going to be a main topic on the table at WUF7.

In his speech, the President of Ghana Mr. John Dramani Mahama said that Africa has one of the fastest rates of urbanization while the President of Colombia, Mr. Juan Manuel Santos, said that cities had to be economically competitive.

More than 15,000 people representing 164 countries have so far received their entry badge for the World Urban Forum.

