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**Statement by  
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TO THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
New York, 11 April 2008**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to address the Commission on Population and Development for the first time as Assistant-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs.

This week, the Commission has considered issues that are fundamental for development: the changing spatial distribution of the growing world population and the process of urbanization. Your rich and detailed statements have made plain the variety of national experience. In some countries, the number and size of cities has been growing rapidly. In others, the population of major cities is declining. In developing countries, natural increase still makes a major contribution to urban growth. In developed countries with very low fertility, migration, whether internal or international, helps to balance the excess of deaths over births. In some countries, urban-to-urban migration has surpassed rural-to-urban migration. In others, rural-to-urban migration is rising. Given such variety of experience, government responses are being tailored to each particular situation and your

statements document the creativity and flexibility that are necessary to formulate and implement successful policy responses.

Your statements have also reflected those aspects of urbanization that are a major source of concern. As you have rightly diagnosed, the most pressing are those generated by the marriage of urbanization and poverty. Poor housing conditions, lack of services, overcrowding, environmental degradation, pollution, lack of security are common in places where the poor and marginalized live. If poverty is to be eradicated, it is necessary to address those deficiencies. Your work this week has provided useful guidance in this regard.

You have also recognized that the development of cities has to go hand in hand with the development of rural areas. Consequently, you have outlined strategies to improve the livelihoods of both men and women living in rural areas.

In sum, your work has laid a solid foundation not only for continued action at the national level to address the challenges posed by urbanization and the need to promote the integrated development of urban and rural areas, but also for the future discussion, within the Economic and Social Council, of the attainment of the goals related to sustainable development.

I commend the open and frank discussion of the issues that the Commission conducted and, on behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, congratulate you for the progress achieved.

Lastly, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, together with the members of the Bureau, for the thoughtfulness and care with which you guided the organization of this session and for efficiently conducting its proceedings.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.