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**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,
World Mayors Assembly of Habitat III**

The Honorable Mayor of Quito,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Madam Minister,
Executive Director,
Distinguished Mayors of the world,

It is a great pleasure to be up here in the Mountains in the proud city of Quito to address the World Mayors Assembly today.

I add my thanks to the Government of Ecuador and the City of Quito for their great hospitality.

We live in times of accelerated change: technological, societal, demographic, and of course climatic.

As you are well aware, waves of urbanization are occurring across our world, with 60 percent of humanity expected to be living in urban areas by 2030 and around 70 per cent to be doing so by 2050.

Excellencies,

We are gathered in Quito just one year after the adoption in New York of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As you know, the 2030 Agenda presents us with the Sustainable Development Goals that are crafted to take us to a transformed world in which humanity will have a sustainable way of life.

A month ago, I assumed the Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly and made the principle objective of the 71st Session of the General Assembly to be the achievement of meaningful progress on each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Implemented effectively, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taken with the subsequent adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Climate Agreement, will transform our world for the better. We will eliminate extreme poverty, increase prosperity, empower women and girls, sustain peace, protect our environment, and combat climate change. This is the promise we have made.

It is clear to me that the national planning agencies of governments across the globe have taken great strides in incorporating the 2030 Agenda into their national plans.

But achieving the promise of the SDGs will only be fulfilled if humanity as a whole is aware of the Goals, and by embracing them as their own, become vectors for their effective implementation. This is not yet the case.

Therefore, today in Quito, I am appealing to you as leaders of national and local governments from across our world to bring awareness of the vital importance of the Sustainable Development Goals to your citizenry at large.

Tomorrow, at the UN's Habitat III Conference, the New Urban Agenda will be adopted. The New Urban Agenda will have an enormous impact on driving implementation of not only SDG 11 on building inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, but will crosscut to each of the other SDGs.

The New Urban Agenda will thus be an essential part of the mosaic underlying our future.

But it goes without saying that meaningful progress will only be possible if there is a universal buy-in of the SDGs.

If they aren't already doing so, stakeholders, including governments at all levels, civil society, the private sector, and community groups, should now be forging implementation-orientated partnerships if we are to succeed with our existential master plan for humanity and planet.

Local and regional authorities clearly have a critical role to play, including by putting in place strategies to respond to the SDGs, as many of you are already doing.

Communities are the bedrock upon which bonds of fellowship and belonging are built, so we must work to harness the cooperative networks within and between communities.

Young people are our greatest resource for energy, innovation, and ideas. We must ensure that our development processes, and our urban spaces, are inclusive, engaging, and empowering. And that youth and children are being taught about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in schools and universities.

And of course, private sector leaders are the ones who can create decent jobs and find the innovations we require; therefore, we have to engage with corporations and companies to align their plans and processes with the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The task ahead of us is a daunting one, but therein lie incredible opportunities to transform our world for the better.

I firmly believe that cities must be in the vanguard of the SDG revolution and that the actions of Mayors will be critical to the success of the 2030 Agenda.

I appeal to those of you who have not yet done so, to integrate the SDGs into your own plans, policies and strategies.

I ask that you spread the word of the SDGs to your citizenry through all your local community networks, transport networks, and schools.

I encourage you to use your local regulatory and fiscal roles to support sustainable, low carbon and climate smart investment.

In mid-2017, I look forward to seeing many of you at the United Nations in New York when we meet to discuss the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the positioning of UN Habitat in this regard. I hope at that time to hear about your cities' activities to progress the 2030 Agenda and in particular SDG 11.

In closing, I commit to continuing our discussions, at your convenience, and to working with you all to drive our global effort to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 11, and the 2030 Agenda, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Thank you.