

Talking points for Minister Izabella Teixeira on sustainable cities.

Quality of life in cities was a recurrent theme in last year's street demonstrations in my country, in particular the challenges related to urban mobility. Social exclusion and environmental injustice walk hand in hand. We must point out that a by product of social segregation is an environmental divide. The poorest are deprived of good air and water quality, adequate sanitation and transportation services as well as of decent housing.

As an effort to overcome this, last October, thousands of representatives from all parts of Brazil met in a National Conference to discuss the best solutions for solid waste disposal, one of the pillars of urban sustainability.

The Open Working Group, encharged by the Rio+20 Conference to formulate a proposal of Sustainable Development Goals recognized the need to focus on urban sustainability. The OWG defined as one the global goals that of "making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". We fully support such proposal. In fact, I raised the urgent need to tackle this issue at the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, that I had the privilege of integrating, at the invitation of the UN Secretary-General.

In Latin America, the vast majority of our citizens live in urban areas. The Brazilian Amazon Region is the place where over 20 million people live, most of which in cities. The struggle for mitigation and adaptation to climate change in that biome does not only mean combating illegal deforestation. It is also a struggle to improve the quality of life and the sustainability of cities. The transition towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, is, above all, an urban challenge.

The principles and objectives of our National Policy for Urban Mobility were set in 2012. At that time, the voluntary National

Plan for Transportation and Urban Mobility for the Mitigation to Climate Change was also put in place.

Our greatest contribution to the reduction of GHG emissions come from land use, by means of an unprecedented reduction of deforestation and the substantial increase in agricultural productivity.

If we are really committed to changing the social and environmental landscape of our cities across the world, we can no longer postpone action on making them more inclusive and resilient, healthier, safer and more sustainable.

In this sense, it is high time to work towards a new paradigm in which due consideration is given to issues such as introducing environmental variables to urban mobility and construction building criteria. Public policies should also focus on the widespread use of low cost technologies that reduce waste and emissions, as experienced during the World Cup in Brazil.

Our efforts towards limiting the increase of global temperatures bellow two degrees centigrade must involve a change in lifestyles. And such efforts mean making our cities more sustainable, including in respect to poverty eradication.

The ambitious global agreement that we are committed to achieve must involve all segments of our societies, with due attention to our cities. That means addressing their specific vulnerabilities, in terms of weather patterns and climate change adaptation measures. But our efforts must also benefit from the commitment of local authorities, worker unions as well as of social and environmental movements. Changes in life styles will be positively influenced through the mobilization and active engagement of urban populations and social movements, such as those we saw in New York , Rio and so many cities across the world this last week-end. Thank you.