



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat Michal Mlynár
Speech at the opening of the first session of the Executive Board for 2024**

Date: 6 May 2024

- **Honourable Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, Minister for Housing and Urban Development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the Executive Board,**
- **Honourable Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, representing our host country, the Republic of Kenya,**
- **Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi,**
- **Honourable Ministers and Mayors,**
- **Distinguished representatives and members of the UN-Habitat Executive Board,**
- **Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of UN-Habitat, I have the honour to warmly welcome you to the first session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat for the year 2024. It is a profound honour to stand before you today as the Acting Executive Director to officially open this session. As we gather in our vibrant city of Nairobi, which embodies both the challenges and the boundless potential of urban development, we are reminded of the urgency and importance of our collective mission: to forge sustainable urban futures where everyone can find their place and potential.

In this context, I must express my condolences and sympathies with the nation of Kenya which has experienced the most challenging circumstances due to the heavy rains and floods, causing the unnecessary loss of human lives as well as severe damage to the natural and built environment all around the country. It is also a harsh reminder of why we are here: rapid urbanization continues to bring both tremendous opportunities and unprecedented challenges. Cities and human settlements all around the world are on the frontline of grappling with the complexities of economic disparity, climate change, and social inclusion. The work of UN-Habitat, guided by the New Urban Agenda and our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, is more critical than ever.

This first session of 2024 of UN-Habitat's Executive Board represents a pivotal opportunity for us to review our progress, confront our challenges, and strengthen our resolve. We are tasked not only with deepening our understanding of these global issues but also with harnessing the innovative solutions that can only come from our collaborative effort.

Our agenda over the coming days promises to ignite discussions that are both necessary and transformative. We will discuss financial matters of UN-Habitat, review the independent findings of the previous Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat, as well as receive a report on the draft strategic plan for 2026-2029 which is currently under development. In addition, we will go further in-depth to update you on the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including programmes on urban regeneration, resilience, and urban crises.

Among other important topics, we will hear the progress made on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly and updates on the UN Development System Reform that is directly impacting UN-Habitat. We will highlight progress on hosting the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum taking place later this year. Our agenda for the coming days is packed, and we look forward to rich discussions and feedback from all our Member States.

As we proceed, let us be guided by the spirit of cooperation to make tangible impacts on the lives of the urban populations we serve. Let us also take a moment to appreciate the generous hospitality of our hosts here in Kenya, represented by the Honourable Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development. My appreciation also goes to Honourable Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, Minister for Housing and Urban Development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for chairing this Executive Board meeting over the next three days.

I look forward to engaging with you in the coming days, learning from your insights, and building on our shared commitments to create cities that are not only resilient and environmentally sustainable but also equitable and inclusive.

Thank you for your dedication to the vision of UN-Habitat, and for your continued support towards a better urban future for all.

Let's make this session a milestone in our journey towards transformative urban development.

Thank you!