

First Session of the Executive Board 2021
United Nations Human Settlements Programme – UN-Habitat

April 7th, 2021

Opening of the session 1:00 - 1:30 AM (Mexico City time)

Vice-minister intervention: 5 minutes

Virtual meeting

[Vocatives]

- **JAFAR BARMAKI**, Chair of the Executive Board and Ambassador of Iran in Kenya.
- **ZAINAB HAWA BANGURA**, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)
- **MAIMUNAH MOHD SHARIF**, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
- **MARTHA DELGADO**, Viceminister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Right and President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- **REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA (TBD)**

[Opening]

- Hello everyone. It is a true honor to speak to you today as President of UN-Habitat Assembly.

- I want to thank your excellencies Jafar Barmaki, Chair of the Executive Board, and Maimunah Sharif, UN-Habitat Executive Director, for the opportunity to address the Executive Board Members and Member States, as well as accredited participants to the UN-Habitat Assembly and ECOSOC.

[Intervention]

- It has been nearly two years since the creation of the UN-Habitat Assembly. Besides the great honor of being designated as its first President, this designation recognizes the Government of Mexico for the notable efforts supporting sustainable urban development and the transformative role of cities in a better future for all.
- In an unsettling scenario caused by the pandemic, we have come face to face with inequality gaps that prevail in our societies. But we are also in front of an opportunity to guide cities into a significant change for more equitable, green, and healthy settlements.
- I want to celebrate the great labor of the UN-Habitat Executive Director, walking towards efficiency and transparency to achieve a better urban future.
- Throughout these years, Madame Sharif has directed a Strategic Plan sustained in a new governance mechanism to consolidate UN-Habitat capacities to deliver high-quality results, create innovative solutions and develop impactful local projects.
- Therefore, I strongly suggest the Member States consider UN-Habitat as a public good that needs nurturing for the sake of all inhabitants, particularly those in a disadvantaged situation, and who require better housing, adequate transportation, and inclusive spaces.
- I want to congratulate the Agency for the recent launching of the report “Cities and Pandemics: Towards a just, green and healthy future,” a timely and well-

documented study. I fully share that the world is calling for an *empathy revolution* to turn social, political, and economic aspects into a system that works for everyone.

- Today, UN-Habitat has a great opportunity to focus on its comparative advantages, and to strengthen its knowledge, innovation, and evidence-based interventions. Without doubt, this will lead to the agencies' leadership among other UN Agencies, funds and programmes on quality integrated urban policy advice to Member States, cities and communities as they advance in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the SDGs and the Paris Agreements.
- For this, UN-Habitat members must ensure consistent funding commensurate with the Agency's mandate, expectations, and opportunities for this task.
- This is why I appeal, once again, to the commitments made by all Member States when they adopted global agendas, approved financial mechanisms, and pledged additional resources so that we can continue to achieve our goals to access better opportunities for all.
- As for Mexico, I am excited to announce that soon will be inaugurating the regional core for the excellence in cities. An initiative which aims to bring together the local and regional stakeholders to find urban sustainable solutions with stable sources of revenue.

[Closing remarks]

- I want to thank the Chairman of the Executive Board, Jafar Barmaki, for the opportunity to address the Executive Board; and reaffirm my support for the Executive Director, Maimunah Sharif, that has done excellent work in leading the Organization amid these difficult circumstances.
- I'd also like to thank the Executive Board bureau and the UN-Habitat Secretariat for the careful preparations for this session.

- I am confident this Executive Board closes in a symbolic manner a period in the modern life of the Agency with a new architecture and more efficient functions. Today is a decisive moment to initiate a new phase and bring the organization to a next level.
- Rest assured that you can count on my constant support from the Assembly's Presidency to leave no one behind in the goals of this project.
- Thanks again for being here and for the attention you give to these matters that generate progress and give our citizens hope.

BEGV/PERZ