



STATEMENT BY MR. CHARLES HINGA, CBS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DURING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING, 7TH TO 8TH APRIL 2021

President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, Ms. Martha Delgado,

Chair of the Executive Board, H.E. Jafar Barmaki, Ambassador of the of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Executive Director, UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif,

Director General UNON, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura,

Heads of Delegations,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to join you for this first Session of the 2021 UN-Habitat Executive Board meeting, which is taking place here in Kenya albeit virtually. On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to you all to this session. Your participation in this session is testament to the significance you attach to urban matters which are critical for the growth and development of our nations.
2. Allow me from the onset to thank the Executive Director, the Secretariat of UN-Habitat, the Executive Board, Ad-hoc committees and Bureau members for the excellent preparations put in place for this meeting, and for granting Kenya an opportunity to make opening remarks.
3. I note that the convening of this meeting online has been guided by the decision of the Bureau of the Executive Board based on the continued and unpredictable global circumstances with regard to Covid-19 that has impeded in-person meetings. As host Country we look forward with anticipation to once again hosting the UN-Habitat meetings.



Distinguished delegates,

4. Urban areas are home to over 55% of the world's population with projections that by 2030, the world will have 43 mega cities with over 10 million inhabitants and an increase of urban population to about 68% by 2050. These statistics are an affirmation that Urbanization is real, inevitable and cannot be ignored due to its positive transformative power and its effects.
5. Kenya is proud to be associated with the progress and achievements of UN-Habitat and the Executive board with regard to implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Habitat Assembly. I urge UN-Habitat to fast track the process of implementation of these strategies to enable the transformation of UN-Habitat into a more robust and efficient programme.
6. This session of the Executive Board provides us with an opportunity to discuss pertinent issues; Budget, Programmatic and Administrative issues, Financial status of the UN-Habitat for 2021 as well as progress on implementation of decisions adopted and the organization's programmes and technical cooperation activities among others; all aimed at reinvigorating UN-Habitat. We commend the Executive Director and her team for the efforts expended towards the preparation of the annual work programme, its sub-programme and the proposed budget for 2022 as per the 2020-2023 strategic plan. It is our desire that the programme will be supported with adequate financing to facilitate its effective implementation.

Distinguished delegates

7. The present financial position of UN-Habitat is a matter of concern to Kenya. The annual non-earmarked voluntary contributions have gradually been decreasing. This is a matter of grave concern given that the non-earmarked funds are a pillar to the organization's approved programme of work and the only way that the organization can deliver on its core mandate. Kenya has consistently made its voluntary contributions to support the work of UN-Habitat and is up to date with her assessed contributions to the regular budget of UN-Habitat.
8. In 2019 at First Session of UN-Habitat Assembly in Nairobi, H.E. the President, Uhuru Kenyatta pledged to increase Kenya's annual contributions to the regular budget from 70,000 to 100,000 USD, a pledge that we have continued to honour. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to Member States who have so far honored their contribution. Further, I urge Member States to support UN-Habitat to deliver on its normative and operational work by making voluntary non-earmarked contributions.



9. I wish to recognize that while the Executive Director's resource mobilization efforts with Member States and donors has yielded additional funds in support of projects on climate resilience, Global land network and participatory slum upgrading, this has not been the case for non-earmarked funds. As we deliberate I wish to urge members to seek to adopt resolutions and decisions that will create predictable financial resources for UN-Habitat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The restructuring of UN-Habitat through the regional architecture is key. However, the implementation of this new Structure needs to be properly guided to ensure that there is a balance between the Headquarter and the Regional Offices. Further, the restructuring process will require adequate funding to ensure that the staffing levels at the Headquarter are not compromised
11. Kenya acknowledges the UN-Habitat for the support it has rendered to member states and partners in the implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda at National, Regional and Global levels. In this regard, I extend my appreciation to the Executive Director and her team for facilitating a virtual training workshop on monitoring human settlements indicators on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) to Kenya's National Habitat Committee and partners in January, 2021. The training has been instrumental in the voluntary reporting for the New Urban Agenda.

Distinguished delegates,

12. As we deliberate on the agenda before us, I am hopeful that we shall adopt decisions that shall result in the transformation of UN-Habitat. Further, I am optimistic that we shall analyze the most appropriate option of aligning the Strategic Plan to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the United Nations in preparation for its adoption by the Habitat Assembly in 2023, which Kenya looks forward to hosting. I am also proud to inform you that Kenya will be Hosting the 9th Africities Summit in April 2022, in Kisumu County, a year before the UN-Habitat Assembly.

As I conclude I wish you all fruitful deliberations during this first Session of the Executive Board.

I thank You

Charles M. Hinga, CBS
Principal Secretary
State Department of Housing and Urban Development