

**Opening Remarks by Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura,
Under-Secretary-General and a Director-General, UNON
at the First Session of the UN HABITAT Executive Board in 2024
6 May 2024 at 9:00a.m. East Africa Time (UNON CR 2)**

Honourable Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, and Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Kenya;

Honourable Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, Minister for Housing and Urban development of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of the UN HABITAT Executive Board;

Mr. Michal Mlynar, Acting Executive Director of UN Habitat;

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Members of the Executive Board;

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning. It gives me the greatest pleasure to warmly welcome you all to our beautiful and environmentally friendly UNON Gigiri complex, the biggest UN compound in the world. UNON is the first and only UN Headquarter that has been awarded the ISO 14001 certification for environmentally sustainable initiative performance.

We are very proud not only to host UN Habitat in this precinct compound but also very honored to be the main service provider to UN Habitat.

We believe the services we provide to UN Habitat remains pivotal in providing much needed operational support, thereby enabling UN Habitat to focus more on programmatic delivery towards vital urban development and sustainable human settlement objectives.

The partnership and collaboration between the two offices represent a pillar for sustainable urban development and human settlements. A key area of our joint commitment is the ongoing concept design of the new

conference facility and the review of the overall Gigiri Master Plan which has leveraged on the expertise of UN Habitat to envision a conference facility that is forward-looking to address international conferences of the future and align with the UN broader agenda for robust development and environmental sustainability.

The challenges we face as a society and globally are numerous and complex, but if we remain committed and focused on the common good, there is no doubt that we can overcome them. Let us move forward with renewed energy and determination, knowing that our efforts will make a real difference in the lives of millions of people around the world who are counting on us to build a better future for all.

The last several weeks has seen most of Kenya and especially Nairobi and the coastal regions inundated with heavy rains and ensuing floods that have caused widespread destruction and loss of life. The relentless floods have swept through our cities and settlements, carrying with them homes, lives, disrupting livelihoods and leaving communities more vulnerable. The impact is not only physical but also emotional and psychosocial as families grapple with loss and uncertainty.

These challenges lend greater credence to UN Habitat's mandate to build safer, more resilient cities and urban spaces that empower communities and promote social equity, helping these communities better withstand some of the challenges inherent in their respective contexts.

Finally, I join UN-Habitat to extend deepest appreciation to all Member States, Partners and stakeholders who have stood behind UN-Habitat during its transformative journey. In this pivotal transitioning period, your unwavering commitment has been the compass, guiding UN-Habitat toward resilient cities, sustainable urban solutions that leave no one behind.

As we meet here today, we recognize that our shared vision of a sustainable urban future can only be achieved through inclusive and effective multilateralism. Together, we have the potential to weave a tapestry of multilateral solutions that transcend borders and silos, under the common mission of shaping a better tomorrow, where resilient

cities thrive, climate justice prevails, and every voice finds resonance. We must continue to forge alliances, pooling wisdom and action from UN Member States to NGOs and the Youth, working together to ensure that UN-Habitat's work remains at the forefront of sustainable urban development.

Once again, allow me to welcome you all to our Gigiri complex, and to wish you very successful deliberations.

Thank you.