

UN-Habitat Executive Board 2024

H.E. Giovanna Valverde-Stark, Ambassador of Costa Rica to Kenya and Permanent Representative to UN Hábitat

Name of session: Agenda item 7. Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on its programmatic activities in 2023 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities

Date and time: 7th of May 2024, 10:30 am

Thank you Excellency, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Let me begin by expressing Costa Rica's most heartfelt condolences to the government of Kenya for the tragic loss of life and damaged property occurred over the past weeks due to intense rainfall and flooding as a consequence of climate change, and which has also severely affected other Eastern African Nations.

Seeing as this is Costa Rica's first intervention, we would like to thank the Executive Director a.i. and the secretariat for the presentations made on Financial, budgetary and administrative matters and the preparation of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026–2029.

With regards to this agenda item, Costa Rica would like to share a testimonial of the collaboration between the Government of Costa Rica and UN-Habitat under the framework of Flagship "Programme 1: Inclusive Communities – Thriving Cities for the project Integral Urban Operation" carried out in the Miravalles Neighbourhood in Curridabat, Costa Rica in 2023.

Within the Inclusive Communities – Thriving Cities programme and the umbrella proposal for technical assistance in the Central American Region, titled "Contribution to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and post-pandemic recovery in Central America and the Dominican Republic," a collaborative project has emerged with the objective of:

Promoting more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient urban systems as drivers of development and improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable populations in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

In this regard, efforts have been made to ensure that local governments, civil society, and the private sector contribute to enhance the living conditions of populations in Central American cities. This involves using tools that are appropriate to the regional context and that can help reduce inequity and poverty.

In 2023, an Integral Urban Operation was carried out in the Miravalles Neighbourhood in Curridabat, Costa Rica. An Integral Urban Operation is an initiative that applies urban regeneration as a tool within a specific area of the city, whose transformation, inspired by the principles of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, has significant potential to improve the living conditions of its residents.

The goal is to improve Miravalles by visualizing the opportunity for social, economic and environmental transformation and greater integration with the city and the metropolitan area through comprehensive interventions that require joint public-private efforts, capable of driving changes reflected in inclusive communities and thriving cities. The initiative is dedicated to ensuring the inclusion and safety of individuals residing in economically deprived and high-risk zones due to landslides. It proposes a gradual, multi-stage process designed to mitigate these risks. (Identify-Relocate-Remediate).

Ultimately, Miravalles will result in an improved quality of life while preserving its cherished social and ecological assets. Furthermore, national and local authorities have gained interest and see an opportunity to replicate the initiative in other neighbourhoods. Therefore, the project is actively working on resource mobilization to support and sustain the transformation efforts and ensure the implementation of this and more Integral Urban Operation nation-wide.

Some of the concrete impacts are:

- Involvement and empowerment of the local population of the *Miravalles* neighbourhood in decision-making for the improvement of urban, environmental, and social conditions in the neighbourhood. Of the participatory and community processes of the Integrated Urban Operation, 55 % of are women and also includes children, senior citizens and migrants which represent 10% of the population.
- The Integral Urban Operation includes 4 strategic projects with a focus on urban and environmental regeneration, sustainable mobility, and adequate housing, with an estimated total amount of USD \$ 22 million.
- Creation of a public space for children, based on the enhancement of a pocket park, carried out between UN-Habitat and the municipality with the active participation of the community. In the children's park, an activity in which the population of the neighbourhood participated, playground modules, photovoltaic lighting, urban furniture and signage were installed. This activity, which focused on community reactivation and urban regeneration, is integrated to the comprehensive network of existing facilities in the *Miravalles* neighborhood and is the basis for the interventions derived from the Integrated Urban Operation.

As a result from the relationships fostered with local and national stakeholders, the Government of Costa Rica and UN-Habitat are jointly working on several initiatives: on a Green Climate Fund

Readiness proposal with the Ministry of Environment and Energy; on measuring indicators with and The National Institute of Statistics and Census of Costa Rica. These initiatives are linked to the Inclusive Communities – Thriving Cities Programme and the “**Biodiverse and resilient cities**” **resolution**, presented by Costa Rica and Colombia during last year’s Habitat General Assembly. The latter one has also evolved into a project on cities and biodiversity financed by the Development Bank for Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF).

The delegation of Costa Rica looks forward to the continued work being carried out with UN Habitat and which will allow sharing these best practices on the ground with developing and developed countries.

Thank you very much, Mister Chair.