

Statement
by the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt
on behalf of the Group 77 and China
for the First Session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board 2024
6-8 May 2024

Nairobi, 6 May 2024.

Check against delivery.

Mr. Chair,
Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat;
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum and good morning,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chair,

Firstly, we wish to commend Ambassador Silvio Albuquerque of Brazil for his able leadership of the Executive Board during a very challenging time, and to congratulate Nigeria on the chairmanship of the Board. The Group also extends its sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for the timely preparation of the working documents. We also appreciate the efforts by the Acting Executive Director to meet with the regional groups prior to this Executive Board meeting.

Mr. Chair,

It is encouraging to see UN-Habitat improving financial status. Efficient and prudent financial management by the team led by Madam Maimunah Mohd Shariff, who ended her term recently, deserves our respectable recognition. We hope the level of financial strength will improve further to enable UN-Habitat to effectively carry out its mandate, particularly in reducing urban poverty, providing affordable housing and basic facilities, transforming slums and tackling urban environmental deterioration. We highly appreciate the generosity of various donors as their contributions will certainly help UN-Habitat to work on more projects for the benefit of a larger number of recipients.

The Group takes note of the report on recruitment, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity at UN-Habitat, which shows the need to improve the balance in the staffing of the Programme. We hope that further efforts will be made to ensure equitable representation of developing countries as well as gender parity in the

higher categories of UN-Habitat staff. We also believe that collaborative activities with other UN agencies under the direction of the Secretary-General are vital to ensure the achievement of the targeted outcomes. It is also necessary for us to call for the non-politicisation of the work of UN-Habitat, and to focus discussions on issues within the Programme's mandate.

Mr. Chair,

We believe it is necessary to ensure the early conclusion of the ongoing discussions on the Stakeholders Engagement Policy. Therefore, we hope this could be achieved soon for us to move forward with all the programmes in an efficient manner. We also wish to see the implementation of resolutions and decisions, whether made by the UN-Habitat Assembly or the Executive Board, in a balanced manner. Equally important is for the Executive Board to continue monitoring UN-Habitat programmes and activities to ensure the adherence to its core mandate, especially in the execution of its normative activities. In that regard, the Group welcomes the engagement of Member States in the preparation of the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan.

Mr. Chair,

The Group welcomes the upcoming First African Urban Forum to be held this coming September. It is very timely, considering the rapid urbanisation in Africa, which surely needs an inclusive, holistic and harmonised urban agenda. Apart from that, we also look forward to the 2024 World Cities Day Global Observance, and the 12th World Urban Forum in Cairo, and really hope for wide participation from Member States, civil society, academia, private sector, philanthropic foundations and various stakeholders. The Group stands ready to support these very important activities and conferences and hope that they would successfully achieve the intended objectives. We notice the important roles played by the Awards, including UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour and the Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities (Shanghai Award) on the urban development. We appreciate the Government of Azerbaijan's offer to host the 13th World Urban Forum in 2026, which will ensure the continuous efforts to build on the outcomes of previous WUFs.

While commending Egypt and Azerbaijan for hosting the next two WUFs, we also welcome the organisation of the 7th Asia-Pacific Ministerial conference on Housing and Development (APMCHUD), which will be held tentatively on 12-14 August 2024 in Penang, Malaysia. It will be a platform to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Goals, whereby the Asia-Pacific New Urban Agenda platform will be a major initiative that will be discussed and deliberated. We also wish to recognise the efforts by Malaysia to develop the Asia-Pacific New Urban Agenda platform, which will systematically and efficiently enable Member States to share knowledge and experiences, and enhance capacity-building on the New Urban Agenda.

The Group also takes note of 'The Quality of Life Initiative' by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the support of UN-Habitat. The initiative includes innovative indicators, which are hoped to be globally relevant and locally applicable to assess and accelerate progress on local and global policy agendas on improving the quality of life in cities.

Mr. Chair,

The Group appreciates the preliminary report of the Executive Director on the "Status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip". UN-Habitat commitment to support the efforts to reconstruct human settlements affected by conflict and disaster is very commendable. We hope that these efforts would receive strong support from all relevant partners and international organizations.

Thank you.