

Introductory Remarks by Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat

To the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)

Friday 20 September 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,**

I am pleased to present to you the proposed extra budgetary part of UN Habitat's programme budget for 2020.

Distinguished members of the ACABQ,

UN-Habitat supports Member States with its activities on sustainable cities and human settlements through its normative and operational work at global, regional, national and local levels.

UN-Habitat continues to adapt and change, to be more responsive to Member States' demand for the increased transparency, effectiveness and the positive impact for the delivery of its mandate.

As you are aware, in December 2018, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 73/239 by which it established a new governance structure for UN-Habitat, consisting of the universal UN-Habitat Assembly, a Committee of Permanent Representatives and a 36-member Executive Board.

The new governing body (UN-Habitat Assembly) held its first session from 27- 31 May 2019 during which it approved the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and established the Executive Board. The first meeting of the Executive Board is scheduled from 18th to 20th November 2019.

The 2020-2023 Strategic Plan is UN-Habitat's first four-year plan following the adoption of global agreements between 2015 and 2016. It focuses on supporting implementation of the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals and especially SDG 11 on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; the New Urban Agenda and other global agendas.

The strategic plan 2020-2023 will be implemented through consecutive annual work programme and budgets, the 2020 programme of work being the first. Its main goal is to advance sustainable urbanization to drive development and peace and improve living conditions for all and to ensure that no one is being left behind.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Members,

The Programme of Work 2020 has compressed the substantive portion of the budget from seven into four sub-programmes that correspond to the four domains of change of the new Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The new sub-programmes are:

- (a) Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the rural-urban continuum;
- (b) Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
- (c) Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and,
- (d) Effective urban crisis prevention and response.

The rationale for this is the desire to align UN-Habitat's work with the reform agenda of the United Nations and clearly articulate the relationship of sustainable urbanization with the overall notion of sustainable development.

The overall resource requirements for the year 2020 based on a new organisational structure is projected at US\$ 251,6 million, of which US\$11.2 million is being proposed under the regular budget to be approved by the General Assembly.

As you know the major part of UN-Habitat is funded from extra-budgetary resources. UN-Habitat has developed a new structure that is in my view necessary to put into practice what we have been requested to do by our member states when they approved the strategic plan 2020 - 2023.

I had two alternatives either to gradually add positions in annual budgets over the duration of the current strategic plan or to present member states at the outset of the plan with the financial envelope that is necessary to implement a strategy for UN Habitat that was approved by our constituents and that requires UN Habitat to act boldly and swiftly.

I have received encouraging feedback from many member states, and I believe that our – admittedly very ambitious - budget proposal must match the forward-looking aspirations of member states for a reformed UN Habitat.

I believe that the first UN Habitat Assembly has provided a changed focus on the work of UN-Habitat and showed evidence of a renewed impetus and interest for the normative and operational work of the organization. To bring this forward I will strive to work closely with Member States to secure increased contributions to the Foundation in support of our normative work.

Distinguished members of the ACABQ,

I thank you very much for your attention.