



Speech by the Executive Director, UN-Habitat, on the occasion of the Launch of the Launch Flagship Programme on “SDG Cities”, Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10)

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, A very good afternoon to all of you! Assalamu Alaikum!

While I hope the video you will see afterwards describes the need and the opportunity for cities to achieve the sustainable development goals, I want to emphasize the following 4 D’s and 1 C.

1 – **Demand:** this is the decade of action. Cities are uniquely placed as engines of sustainable development. We need to generate demand amongst cities worldwide to accelerate SDG achievement – SDG achievement is good for the city, good for its people, good for national and global development. SDG City Certification will be a means to recognize efforts made by cities that are highly committed to drive SDG achievement.

2 - **Data:** Data tells us where we are; strategy tells us where we are going. Measurement tells us how well we are doing. I want to be able to measure everything. We need to be able to measure expected impacts of interventions to understand how far they help deliver our strategies. We need to put our money behind what achieves the greatest SDG impact. If I had 5 million dollars to invest in my city’s roads, the choice of where I invest it will make all the difference in how much impact it would make. In the coming months, together with our UN sister agencies UN-Habitat will be developing the UN System wide urban indicators measurement system. The system will be applied to assess baselines, and targets, to measure progress and to provide for SDG Certification. It will also be applied to the UN Country Common Assessment and Voluntary Local Reporting.

3 – **Capacity and Know-How:** You remember Habitat 3? Yes? the New Urban Agenda guides how SDGs can be achieved in cities. There are key building blocks: policy, planning, governance, legislation, local financing, we must continue to support cities to have the key capacities in place to ensure good planning and decision making and to ensure they have the resources needed to meet strategic priorities.

4 - **Delivery:** Too often we can develop amazing plans, but they sit on the shelf because they seem impossible to finance. The City Investment Facility being developed alongside the SDG Cities Programme, enables the last mile: delivery. By linking SDG impact projects, to sources of investment, supported as needed with blended finance, we will achieve largescale impact. We are short of between 2 and 4 trillion dollars per year to reach SDGs in cities. It is our job to make this gap an opportunity for investors and businesses. SDG Cities will create a global pipeline of assessed, de-risked, impact investment opportunities.

5– **Delivering as ONE:** I repeat: this is the Decade of Action. We have no time to lose. We need impact at scale! We need to join forces. No more working alone. No more competing. If you are good with data, join, if you are good in strategic planning, join, if you are good in planning and urban management, help us, if you are innovative and can develop good



project ideas, SDG Cities needs you. We need advocates and communicators. If you have a constituency of mayors, then you are influential – help generate that Demand for the SDG City Certificate of Excellence. If you are an investor that wants to drive impact while ensuring healthy returns, here is a huge opportunity. We need to build an ecosystem of partners that drive this enormous undertaking. Ladies and gentlemen, we need this initiative to impact on the lives of more than a billion people in more than a thousand cities. The New UN-Habitat is about bringing people together and driving massive impact.

Are you in? Join us!