



STATEMENT

BY

**MR. CHARLES HINGA, CBS, PRINCIPAL  
SECRETARY FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT  
FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

DURING

THE

**FIRST SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT  
EXECUTIVE BOARD IN THE YEAR 2020  
MONDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020**

Check Against Delivery

**REMARKS BY MR. CHARLES HINGA, CBS, THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DURING THE FIRST VIRTUAL SESSION OF 2020 OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT ON MONDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020.**

**The President of UN-Habitat Assembly**

**Chairman of the Executive Board**

**Members of the Executive Board**

**The Director General of UNON**

**The Executive Director of UN-Habitat**

**Excellencies**

**Distinguished Delegates**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

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1. I am delighted to join you today for this Executive Board meeting, which is taking place virtually as part of the ‘new normal’ we all have had to contend with due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I thank the Bureau, the Executive Board and the Secretariat for successfully organizing this meeting.
2. On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, I wish to extend a warm welcome to you all. Your participation is critical to ensuring continuity of UN-Habitat’s work during these unprecedented times.
3. I would also like to acknowledge Member States for supporting Kenya’s election to the UN Security Council for the 2021-2022 period, and reaffirm our commitment to represent the interests of member States effectively.

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates**

4. This session is happening amidst the fast spreading COVID-19 pandemic, which is not just a global health crisis but an economic one too. Although termed as an ‘equaliser’, COVID-19 has especially ravaged economies of developing and Least Developed Countries, plunging even more people into poverty. Governments are under pressure to provide adequate basic services and safety nets especially to vulnerable members of our society. Reallocation of resources to fight COVID-19 is negatively impacting on funding to support the work, programme and budget of inter-governmental institutions, such as UN-Habitat.

5. Kenya like other member States has not been spared, since the first COVID-19 case on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. We have therefore instituted a holistic, comprehensive multi-prong and multi-agency approach in containment and response to the COVID-19 pandemic at national, sub-national and local levels. In May 2020, the government rolled out a Kshs. 53.7 billion (USD 53.7 million) to stimulate growth and cushion families - in eight sectors namely Infrastructure, Education, Small and Medium Enterprises, Health, Agriculture, Tourism, Environment and Manufacturing,
6. Indeed, COVID-19 response requires concerted efforts at global, regional and national levels. I therefore commend the UN Country Teams, UN-Habitat and other development partners for supporting Kenya, and other countries in the fight against COVID-19.

#### **Distinguished Delegates**

7. Achievement of UN-Habitat's mandate of a **better quality of life for an urbanizing world** could be under threat. 95% of COVID-19 cases are occurring in urban areas, The spread is expected to be extensive in slums and informal settlements due to high densities that do not allow for social distancing and other COVID- 19 protocols. In addition, COVID-19 is impacting negatively on fragile health systems, and undermining implementation of Sustainable Development Goals - particularly SDG 11, and the New Urban Agenda which advocate for well - planned human settlements that promote economic efficiency, cost effective service delivery and environmental sustainability.
8. However, the urban-centricity of COVID-19 pandemic provides member States with a great opportunity to leverage on UN-Habitat's normative and technical expertise to **building-back better, inclusive, responsive, productive, holistic and transformative urban communities, towns and cities**. This requires budgetary support to UN-Habitat, commitment and payment of pledges/ including voluntary contributions, plus innovative ways to fund USD 72 million UN-Habitat's COVID-19 Response Plan.

9. I am informed that despite these challenges, some countries have already honoured their pledges, and in this regard I wish to thank them for their commitment.

**Excellencies,**

10. Allow me to reiterate Kenya's commitment to support UN-Habitat as demonstrated in our contribution of USD 500,000 towards the first UN-Habitat Assembly, and increased voluntary contributions by 42% to USD 100,000 since 2019. Despite COVID-19's negative impact on the economy, Kenya will endeavour to pay USD 100,000 for 2020 and beyond. I urge member States and key donors to honour their pledges.
11. The role of UN-Habitat as the lead global agency in promoting sustainable urbanization and human settlements, and as a global focal point in implementation of the New Urban Agenda cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, as we discuss the agenda of the Executive Board, I encourage us to envisage forward looking budgets in line with UN-Habitat's governance structure, restructuring, capacity enhancement and responsiveness. This will ensure a strengthened and revitalized UN-Habitat that is fit-for-purpose in delivering its mandate.
12. With these few remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish every one of us good health, fruitful deliberations and successful outcomes.

**I THANK YOU.**