



EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF ERITREA NAIROBI

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The Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea in Nairobi presents its compliments to the United Nations Human Settlements programme (UN Habitat) in Nairobi and has the honor to make reference to the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2020 held on 29 June 2020.

In regards to the above, the Embassy kindly forwards the speech delivered by H.E Beyene Russom, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, during the session.

The Permanent Mission of the State of Eritrea in Nairobi avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Human Settlements programme (UN Habitat) the assurance of its highest consideration.

Nairobi, 6 July 2020



United Nations Human Settlements programme
(UN Habitat)
Nairobi

**GENERAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DEAN OF THE
AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UN HABITAT HELD
VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY 29th JUNE 2020**

Mister Chairperson,

Madam Executive Director,

Ministers and Senior Officials from your respective Capitals,

Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

Chairperson,

Let me start by congratulating the Bureau, the Executive Board and the Secretariat for the successful organization of this virtual session to allow for UN-Habitat business continuity; given the particular circumstances in which the meeting is being conducted.

As the African Group we would like to appreciate UN-Habitat for their remarkable support and coordination during these difficult times we are facing, especially through the corona virus disease 2019 (covid-19) global response plan which is in line with the Secretary Generals commitments. As the African Group, we appreciate that the response plan highlights the needs of the most vulnerable groups. The response plan shows the centrality of covid-19 and the need to build capacity for cities to respond to covid-19.

We encourage the Executive Director to actively engage with the African Group in this matter.

Chairperson,

Given the particular circumstances in which the session of the Executive Board is being conducted, as we continue to observe social distancing guidelines, as a result of covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to spell out the modalities of the silent procedure at the onset. In regard to the question of adoption of Executive Board Decisions, during the covid-19 pandemic, via silent procedure, when the Executive Board is not in session, African Group agreed that such draft Decisions require, at least 72 hours, which should be replaced by “three working days” to provide Missions and Capitals with appropriate time limit to consider such draft Decisions before endorsing them through silent procedure process, noting that the draft Decisions should be limited to procedural matters only, and may not be extended to substantive matters, and to be effective until the 2020 second session of the Executive Board in October 2020, and may be further extended upon a Decision approved by the Executive Board while it is in session.

Chairperson,

With regard to Financial, Budgetary, and Administrative matters of UN-Habitat, the African Group has taken note of the challenges that UN-Habitat and UN Human Settlements Foundation are facing in terms of undertaking its normative and operational mandate and staffing management due to lack of adequate funds. Lack of predictability and consistency in voluntary contributions is therefore a serious concern to the better management of UN-Habitat and UN Human Settlements Foundation.

The African Group calls upon Member States who already made financial pledges to the 2020 UN Habitat budget to consider providing the programme with the

pledged funding, and further calls upon the major Donors, Member States to honor their financial contributions for foundation non-earmarked contributions following the achievement of UN-Habitat's new-governance structure, which was quoted as a necessary requirement to resume funding to the programme on regular basis. This will enable the full operationalization of the current governance structure and implementation of the UN-Habitat 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

Chairperson,

With regard to the budget forecasted for the annual work program and draft budget for UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2021, the African Group is flexible and open to the recommendation of its revision by the Executive Board. However, we urge for a forward-looking budget that supports UN-Habitat to undertake its normative and operational work, and role as a global focal point on sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

I look forward to having fruitful deliberations during today's meeting,

I thank you, Chair!