

**INTERVENTION BY NIGERIA AT THE ONLINE FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT FOR THE YEAR 2020: MONDAY 29 JUNE 2020**

**AGENDA ITEM 4:**

**Status of the Discussions on the Draft Annual Work Programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Foundation for the Year 2021**

(Delivered by Edna Deimi Tobi, Director, Urban Sector Multilateral Programmes, Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Nigeria)

Thank you Mr. Chair,  
Madam Executive Director, UN-Habitat,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

1. The Government of Nigeria extends very warm greetings to all delegates, and joins others in appreciating the Executive Director, the Bureau and the Secretariat for organizing this virtual session to enable us continue the business of the Executive Board's over-sight functions. We appreciate all the useful presentations made on this Agenda item, and related Agenda Item 3.
2. From the onset, Nigeria aligns with the opening statement of H.E. Beyene Russom, Distinguished Ambassador of the State and Chair of the African Group which was delivered during consideration of Agenda Item 3.
3. We equally applaud the efforts of the Executive Director on the Resource Mobilization efforts to meet the normative and programmatic operations of the Agency, and for the results so far achieved, particularly in terms of developing the novel COVID-19 Response Strategy and other proposed interventions including the Regional Architecture, Communication Strategy and Staffing interventions, amongst others.
4. We however observe that the funds required for the demands of the Work Programme for overall needs as stated in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and Work Plans 2020 & 2021 fall far short of needed amounts. We therefore propose realignment of programmes to reflect current realities.

**Mr. Chair,**

5. We have some questions, and also some suggestions on the way forward:
  - (a) We would want to know what extra efforts are being put into retrieving the several pledged funds made at the Financing Conference held during the First UN-Habitat General Assembly in May, 2019?.
  - (b) We had earlier suggested the expediency of raising a **High-level Fund Mobilization Team** of top political heads, preferably at the level of Heads of States, to aggressively campaign, and drive the process of redeeming pledged funds, raising new funds, exploring private sector contributions, including looking into other innovative options.
  - (c) This becomes even more imperative with the pressing challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic which is forcing practically every Government to restructure

their finances, and conserve scarce resources to meet only essential needs, hence leaving little for anything else.

**Mr. Chair,**

6. We are also keenly following the **COVID-19 Response Strategy for Africa** recently launched by UN-Habitat on 16 June, 2020. We applaud this gesture, and observe that the region, because of its peculiarities in terms of rising urbanization, increasing poverty levels, expanding slums settlements, shortage of critical infrastructure and other concerns, require special intervention programmes, particularly in these challenging times of the outbreak.

7. In this regard, we would like to know: (i) total funds mobilized so far for the Response Strategy (ii) the amount expected to be injected into critical intervention programmes in the region? (iii) when do we expect to start seeing tangible outcomes, (iv) in what specific projects will funds be applied, and (v) what precisely do we expect for Nigeria in terms of projects and interventions?.

8. Finally, Mr Chair, Nigeria has finalized arrangements to honour its outstanding contributions of US\$170,000 for resuscitation of the Habitat Country Office, US\$927,328 for continued implementation of the African Urban Agenda Programme, New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 in the region, in addition US\$ 75,000 to offset outstanding voluntary contributions to the normative work of UN-Habitat for 2018/201. With these payments, Nigeria is no longer indebted to UN-Habitat.

9. We urge other countries and partners, and particularly call on the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG) to contribute their quota to funding operations, including to the COVID 17 Response Plan, no matter how small. A few drops from all will go a long way in assisting UN-Habitat to achieve its mandate of building sustainable cities and communities, and maintaining required Staffing levels.

10. We also eagerly look forward to finalization of the processes for establishment of the proposed UN-Habitat **Multi Country Offices (MCOs)** to better support the sub-region, for which we have indicated interest.

11. I thank you, Mr Chair for giving me the floor.

*(Allotted delivery time: Max.3mins)*

