

OPENING REMARKS BY THE DEAN OF THE AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC CORP IN NAIROBI ON THE OCCASION OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF UN-HABITAT (ON-LINE SESSION), TUESDAY 27TH TO THURSDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2020.

OPENING REMARKS (DAY ONE: 27 OCTOBER 2020):

Chairperson,

The President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly,

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by congratulating the Bureau and the Secretariat of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat for the successful organization of this virtual second session of the Executive Board meeting in 2020. As the African Group, we would like to express our appreciation and recognition of the ongoing efforts by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), under the able leadership of the Executive Director.

As the African Group, we would like to express our appreciation and recognition of the ongoing efforts on the ongoing reforms. The Group takes very seriously and fully supports the reforms currently being undertaken by the Executive Director to ensure the organization is able to realize its mandate, especially during this difficult period of Covid-19 pandemic.

We believe that the pandemic equally offers us an opportunity to rethink how we engage and partner going forward, the need to pull together and build back stronger.

Chairperson,

With regard to the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat including reporting on its Flagship Programmes, the implementation of Sub-programmes and Programme activities in 2020, the African Group takes note of the progress made around the activities the Organization is carrying out. This is both at regional and country levels.

In line with this, the African Group believes that there is need to improve on communication between UN-Habitat and Permanent Missions. This would ensure the Permanent Missions are well synched with the programme and activities being undertaken in their respective countries as well as ensure the organization is visible, felt, seen and heard so as to maintain its status as the go-to organization on Urbanization and Human Settlements matters.

In view of the organization's limited resources, the Group recognizes that is key to the functioning of the Programme and it is our common responsibility to raise the necessary funds in order to achieve the

goals we collectively gave to our Organization. Furthermore, the Group wishes to emphasize on the need to strengthen Country Offices so as to allow Member States engage the Organization more through an enhanced regional presence. It is the considered view of the Group that for the Organization to realize its mandate amidst the numerous financial challenges it faces, Member states have to step-up on their voluntary contributions to the organization. This coupled with fulfillment of financial pledges made during the Pledging Conference, held in May 2019, in the margins of the first United Nations Habitat Assembly, which led to the adoption of the current governance structure, and, would go a long way in keeping the organization afloat and fit to deliver on the needs of its Member States.

Chairperson,

The African Group is closely following on the developments around the COVID-19, pandemic. It wishes to appreciate the steps the organization has taken and continues to take to mitigate the effects of the pandemic globally, notably the preparation and implementation of the COVID-19 response plan. The Group would appreciate an update on the status of the established COVID-19 response and Recovery Fund.

Lastly, the African group wishes to recall its strong commitment to the UN-Habitat and trusts that together we can considerably contribute to take it at the level of legitims expectations of our respective people.

With these few opening remarks, Chairperson, the Africa Group is open to further discussion during this 2020 second session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat.

I thank you!