

Statement delivered by Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG
On behalf of the constituency of local and regional governments

Dear Mr. Chair, dear Vice-Chairs, dear Executive Director Madam Mohd Sharif, dear colleagues of UN-Habitat and from other constituencies,

Thank you for providing a space for our constituency of local and regional governments to provide its inputs. We would also like to thank you for the informative session this morning and would like to congratulate UN-Habitat for the work done.

First of all, we see the UN Secretary General Policy Brief on Covid19 in an Urban World as an important policy way forward for the work UN-Habitat is carrying, together with its stakeholders. At a moment where UN-Habitat is adapting its work plan to the current context, it would be interesting to continue incorporating the inputs provided by the UN Secretary General Policy Brief, recognizing the work done by the networks of local and regional governments, and looking for complementary with the work programme of UN-Habitat.

Second, as constituency of local and regional governments, we see the Stakeholder Engagement Policy as an important tool to foster the involvement of local and regional governments among others into the institutional and programmatic activities of UN-Habitat. We would be grateful to receive updates on the advancement of the ad hoc working group on the Draft Stakeholder Engagement Policy.

Overall, we see critical the challenge to maintain UN-Habitat's normative work for Member-States. It is also our priority to call to Member-States and to UN-Habitat Governing Bodies to maintain financial support to the activities and programmes developed at local level. In a context of unprecedented and universal challenges we, the local and regional governments around the world, are at the forefront of the efforts to overcome these proving times as allies of other spheres of government, of the scientific community, and as global actors with important transformational and convening power.

This pandemic has galvanized how critical our role is in raising public awareness and maintaining the functionality of basic public service provisions and has required the rapid development of new and adapted services to support sanitary measures, all while ensuring the protection of the local public officials who facilitate them.

The sacrifices of our communities cannot go unnoticed: as we progress in addressing health challenges, currently deserved of our undivided attention, we must also focus on how to avoid a transformation from a health crisis into a global social crisis.

This crisis challenges many of our models and puts a magnifying glass on the many shortcomings we were already aware of, such as the need to preserve public service provision.

Thank you.