



UN-Habitat re-establishes its country presence in Morocco signaling a strengthened partnership on sustainable urbanization

Rabat, 8 March 2021 – UN-Habitat, the United Nations agency for sustainable urbanization, opened a new country office in the Moroccan capital Rabat which will serve as a strategic urban development centre for its work on developing inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities in the country.

Morocco's Minister of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and City Policy, Nouzha Bouchareb and Maimunah Mohamed Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, chaired the inauguration of the new country office. Representatives of local authorities and ministries and United Nations organizations in Morocco, the President of the Association of Moroccan Regions and Heads of Professional Federations attended the event which included the signing of the UN-Habitat Country Programme Document (2020 – 2023), which serves as a roadmap for achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development and addressing key urban challenges in the Kingdom of Morocco.

The Minister of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and City Policy welcomed the opening of the office saying her Minister was honoured to host UN-Habitat at its headquarters and this would allow the country to benefit from the agency's support to implement its policies in urbanization and housing.

The Minister added that: "The opening of this office will enable more exposure to the partner countries of UN-Habitat, especially African countries within the framework of South-South cooperation, by sharing Morocco's experience in the areas of land adjustment, urbanization, housing, city policy, and benefiting from the experiences of other countries in these fields."

She affirmed that the signing of the UN-Habitat Country Program Document would contribute, through its nine pillars, to strengthening and revitalizing public policies in territorial planning, housing and city policy, the protection of ancient city fabric and rural development, in the context of the post-COVID19 economic recovery scheme.

The Minister highlighted that the event was distinguished by the presentation of the reference guide prepared by the Ministry in cooperation with UN Women on accessible urban public spaces for women and girls.



UN-Habitat's Executive Director stated that: "With this office, we are convinced that the already strong ties with the Government of Morocco, will be further reinforced leading to great progress to make this country more prosperous and give its people a brighter urban future".

The inauguration coincided with the International Women's day. A seminar was held on the importance of safe and inclusive public spaces, particularly for women and girls, for enhancing social cohesion, improving the quality of life, fostering civic and economic empowerment and availing opportunities for greater institutional and political engagement. The event witnessed the launch of "Her City Toolbox" platform, which facilitates the integration of women's and girls' perspectives throughout the planning, design and implementation of urban public spaces.

The Ministry of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and City Policy, with UN Women launched a reference guide entitled "Towards Accessible Urban Public Spaces For Women and Girls". This will facilitate dialogue on the inclusion of gender in city policy projects and present good practices for accessible public spaces for women and girls. It can educate institutions, project owners, local actors and civil society organizations concerned with urban planning at the national and regional levels regarding gender sensitivity in their projects.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director's visit also includes site visits to public spaces, sports and recreational facilities in Rabat, in addition to cultural and heritage sites, green sustainable parks and social housing projects.

UN-Habitat has been working with Morocco since 1995 on national and local programmes in the field of sustainable urban development, supporting addressing urban challenges in cities, promotion of decent housing and improvement of basic services. This partnership has directly involved four ministries and nearly twenty cities in Morocco and helped with capacity building of national and local stakeholders. UN-Habitat has partnered with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Policy on the National Programme "Cities without informal settlements" which contributed to more equitable access to basic services and improving the living conditions for vulnerable and marginalized groups and was awarded the Scroll of Honour Award in 2010.

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