

AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

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**AT THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE
COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR)**

TO UN HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

(UNHABITAT)

29 JUNE 2021

NAIROBI

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Chairperson,
President of the UNHABITAT Assembly,
President of the General Assembly,
Ministers and senior officials present
Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Madam Executive Director
Ladies and gentlemen

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, the African Group extends its appreciation to you Chair and your Bureau for the important work conducted in preparation for the first high-level meeting of the CPR to review the work done by the UN Human Settlements Programme since its Assembly in 2019.

The African Group is delighted to participate in this very important meeting which provides an opportunity for member States to collectively assess the priorities set out by the Ministers of human settlements and urban development and their implementation thereof. By the way, we appreciate the high-level participation that was intended when we collectively adopted the reformed governance structure of the organisation.

We also wish to thank the Executive Director, Madame Maimunah Sharif, and the secretariat for the briefing leading to this meeting and the documents prepared. The Group also takes note of the proposed outcome document and look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Chairperson,

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we work and has forced us to come up with innovative ways in moving forward the human settlements and urban development agenda. In this regard, while we remain committed to coming up with and supporting some of the innovative ways to conduct our work, we would strongly discourage virtual negotiations. We believe that virtual negotiations undermine the

principles of equal opportunity, effective and inclusive participation and would open possibilities for weakened outcomes in the intergovernmental process.

Hybrid meetings also pose similar challenges as at the end of the day half of the delegation would be expected to interact, discuss and negotiate online. An even or equal playing field should always be maintained as we continue to conduct our business through virtual means in order to ensure meaningful participation owing to the digital gap that currently exists as a reality for many member States.

In line with the African Group's historical position, we believe that the role of the CPR to UNHABITAT remains imperative in considering the matters listed on the agenda, and has a direct and positive impact on the strengthening of the Nairobi UN Headquarter. This further heightens Member States oversight to UNHABITAT, a task that cannot only be led by a structure with limited membership.

Chairperson,

When we agreed to the current governance structure for UNHABITAT, which include a universal Assembly and CPR as well as limited membership of the Executive Board, we envisaged a platform for all Member States to deliberate and take decisions that would feed into strengthening the work of the organisation and assist member States to realise the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

The African Group appreciates the work of UNHABITAT thus far, despite the unprecedented challenges that they are operating under. The General Assembly established UNHABITAT to be the focal point for all human settlements and urbanization matters within the UN system, and to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements. In view of building back better, Member States will even be expecting much more from UNHABITAT as the normative and operational work will substantially increase to cover all countries.

In this regard, we take interest in the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy for the period 2020–2023 as approved by the Executive Board in October

2020 and are glad that UN-Habitat is working to expand and diversify its sources of revenue. We urge and remain positive that Member States will continue to fulfil their financial obligations to the organization so as to enable its operations. It is important to note that with significant shortfall in non-earmarked voluntary contributions reaching on 26% of the approved budget in the first years, UN-Habitat risk becoming largely project based and donor driven.

The African Group remains committed to providing financial support to UNHABITAT. This is important for the realisation of the outcomes of the Assembly on capacity building and resource mobilisation. In the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy, the Group looks forward to a transformative approach. Predictable resources has a bearing impact on the organisation's capacity to provide specialized technical support, and its ability to galvanize all relevant actors to a common course since contemporary human settlement challenges have increased in scope and complexity.

The Group also notes the adverse challenges coupled by the COVID-19 global pandemic. We wish to acknowledge the work the organization has done so far and to reassure the Executive Director of our continued support to the organization alongside other partners.

Chairperson,

The African Group has taken note of the report on the implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the Assembly. We wish to recall that two resolutions were sponsored by the African Group namely, Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements and Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. We believe these resolutions captured in essence some of the priorities of the continent, where the urban transition process is moving faster than in any other region of the world, and therefore the organization in their implementation should consider and prioritize areas within the region. The follow up and review mechanism on the Guidelines on safer cities and human settlements must build on SDG 11 which is about making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient

and sustainable; the region's vision as stipulated in Agenda 2063 and the Harmonized Implementation Framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa; and therefore complement their effective realization.

African countries have demonstrated their commitment to harnessing the urbanization process for development through their common position towards the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in Quito. In this regard, the continent remains committed in the submission of National Reports on the Progress in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Furthermore, the Group looks forward to the discussions leading to Quito+5 in April next year.

Lastly Chairperson,

The African Groups looks forward to further deliberations as we prepare for WUF 11. It is believed that WUF 11 will contribute to reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, work programme and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With these remarks, we wish for fruitful deliberations and effective outcomes as we remain committed to the role of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in fulfilling the mandate of UNHABITAT.

I thank you!