

Introductory Remarks to the first Open-Ended High-Level Midterm Review of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat

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Your Excellency Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Colleagues from the United Nations Family, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. In my capacity as the Director-General of UNON, I am very pleased to welcome all of you on behalf of my sister and friend, Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif and the United Nations family in Kenya, to this High-level Midterm Review of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to UN-Habitat.
2. This is a particular honour, as this is the first time the CPR is meeting since the General Assembly transformed the Governance Structure in its resolution 73/239 of December 2018, dissolving the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and replacing it with the UN-Habitat Assembly.
3. I would like to also take this opportunity to say Karibu Kenya! to His Excellency Volkan Bozkir, the President of the 75th General Assembly, who is joining us here in person. It is a great pleasure to have him here with us. It underscores the importance of this meeting, especially noting that the last visit to our duty station by a President of the General Assembly was in December 2017.
4. I extend greetings to Honorable Martha Delgado, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and, to Ambassador Mr. Beyene Russom, Permanent Representative of the State of Eritrea to UN-Habitat, and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and thank him for convening this important review of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan, its achievements and the challenges we all face due to COVID-19 and the ensuing socio-economic fallout.
5. Very importantly, I would like to thank the Cabinet Secretary for Lands and Physical Planning, Her Excellency, Ms. Farida Karoney, for being with us today and representing our host government Kenya. UNON is appreciative of the support

from President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Government of Kenya for extending the first vaccination programme to the United Nations family and the diplomatic community. The United Nations, in partnership with the Government of Kenya and the Nairobi Hospital, have been able to build a state-of-the-art 100-bed COVID-19 hospital facility, that has since, firstly catered for medical emergencies and medical evacuations for United Nations personnel from as far away as Afghanistan, Nepal, the Middle East, and several neighbouring countries; secondly for medical emergencies for ordinary Kenyans; and thirdly, catered for medical evacuations for citizens and the diplomatic community of neighbouring countries. This partnership and support from the Government of Kenya allowed us to reinforce healthcare services in Kenya and in this region, making Nairobi a well-equipped regional hub as we face the long journey out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the UN Family in Kenya is safer today, because of these actions taken by the Government of Kenya.

6. This meeting highlights the importance of UN-Habitat's mandate particularly at a time when cities are at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 and many are struggling to deal with the socio-economic impact arising from 'locked-down' economies.

7. In a very short time, COVID-19 has fundamentally transformed the way we work, the way we live, and interact. I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the UNON Conference Management Services team, which is providing simultaneous interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations during this three-day event. I would also like to thank Dr. Joshua Anino and his team for providing medical advice and guidance to help ensure that we operate in a safe and appropriate manner. UNON is committed to ensuring that the important work that happens within this campus can be undertaken efficiently, safely, and in strict adherence to the UN and host country COVID-19 protocols.

8. Finally, I wish all participants a fruitful conference, and we all look forward to the positive outcomes and resolutions that will help strengthen our collective UN goal of achieving sustainable development through well-planned and integrated urbanisation.

Thank you. Asante sana.

