

## **Executive Board Meeting 15-16 November 2021**

**15 November 2021**

### **Agenda item 1 – Opening of the session**

Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office Nairobi

Mr Marek Garztecki, Chair of the Executive Board and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland to UN-Habitat (pls correct)

Honourable Martha Delgado, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly

Honourable Charles Hinga, Principal Secretary of the State Department for Housing and Urban Development and Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Kenya representing our Host Country Kenya,

Honourable Ministers,

Members of the UN-Habitat Executive Board

Your Excellencies

Colleagues of the United Nations

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning, Good afternoon and Good evening.

1. Let me thank the Director-General of the United Nations Office of Nairobi and her team as well as our Host Country, the Government of Kenya, for enabling us to meet in hybrid modality in Nairobi. It is a great pleasure to be able to meet Member States in person as I am sure this will help deliberations and bring about meaningful decision-making.

2. I have come away from 2021 more convinced than ever that sustainable urbanisation - our policy work, integrated planning & financing advisory as well as the up-scaling of our operations in the field - will help Member States meet their nationally determined contributions.
3. I have made use of every opportunity open to me at COP26 to highlight the importance of the New Urban Agenda and let me thank the many local governments, professional groups, the private sector and community leaders that continue to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in their respective countries, cities and communities.
4. Just as 65% of the Sustainable Development Goals are attributable to sustainable urbanisation. In short, please let us to strengthen UN-Habitat so that we are better able to help Member States, particularly Least Development Countries, Low income countries and small island developing states, meet the climate challenge. As you know, they have the smallest carbon footprint but are facing the most extreme climate events.
5. His Excellency the President of the General Assembly sent out an invitation to Member States to attend the High Level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda on 28 April 2022. Dubbed Quito + 5, the High Level Meeting is a major recognition by the General Assembly of the importance of the New Urban Agenda. However, with only 21 countries submitting their New Urban Agenda report, it is clear to me that UN-Habitat needs to do more to support Member States.
6. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General, whom I had the distinct pleasure to share a panel at COP26 together with 8 mayors to elaborate on the importance of local level action. The Secretary-General has given unprecedented roles to UN-Habitat as penholder of the Covid-19 recovery plan; appointing UN-Habitat to be co-chair of the Local 2030 coalition; and asking us to lead the Task Force on the Future of Cities.

7. As the responsibilities of the Programme has increased, so too our determination to meet the guidance Member States provided in June 2021 at the High Level Mid-Term Review of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Let me thank the Chair and Members of the Ad-hoc working group on work programme and budget for their guidance and direction, allowing the Secretariat to re-work the Strategic Plan, which will be presented to in Agenda Item 6. I am convinced that through the three perspectives approach with our emphasis on housing, climate adaptation and localising the SDGs, we will be able to meet the targets set out in the Strategic Plan.
8. Let me also thank Member States and our donors for the strong support provided through earmarked and soft-earmarked support. The figures for [2021 is equal to 2020](#) and this is despite the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, political instability impacting our programme in Asia-Pacific and Africa; and the revision of the Strategic Plan.
9. The mandate of UN-Habitat and the Programme's reforms illustrates our commitment to meet the expectations of Member State for more integration between the normative and operational aspects of our work; for greater cooperation with other UN agencies and for more vivid impact of our work on the ground. The impact stories from our field operations, donor reports and testimonies is confirmed by what I have seen first hand in Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Colombia, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Ethiopia, Kenya and other regions.
10. As I come to the end of my first term as Executive Director, let me thank Member States and my colleagues for achievements made in governance reforms, organisation restructuring, re-positioning of the Programme through active advocacy, impact communications and our strengthened normative role and improved field presence. Yet, the road to full recovery is a long one. I know this is a marathon and the robust comments, criticisms and encouragement from Member States is what drives this Programme forward.

11. I look forward to a robust and pragmatic session over the next two days. Let us arrive at decisions we can all support and backed up by the resources we need to get the job done.

Thank you excellency Chair

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