

**Message from UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Convention on the Status of Women (CSW66) Side Event 15 March 2022**

First and foremost, I would like to reiterate the Secretary-General's call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to normalcy on Ukrainian territory.

It is my hope that leaders will take the Secretary-General's call for peace and respect for the solidarity expressed by Ukraine's neighbours to heart. However, it is important to emphasise the Secretary-General's remarks that to be effective, the generous solidarity extended to the Ukrainian people must be extended without regard to race, religion, or ethnicity.

I would like to thank the Secretary of State for International and Global Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, Madame Ángeles Moreno Bau, and the Chair of our Advisory Group on Gender Issues, Professor Ines Sanchez de Madariaga, for co-hosting and organising this event.

Friends, the theme of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental, and disaster risk reduction policies and programs." It has strong interactions with the New Urban Agenda, SDG 11, and Beijing +25.

Climate change is a critical issue for gender equality. Women and girls are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Gender, age, and disability discrimination as well as spatial inequalities further complicate this issue.

We know that when more women are involved in decision-making on climate action policies, we have more chances to see action. Policy actions can be agreed upon and effective measures can be implemented.

Since its inception in 2012, the Advisory Group on Gender Issues has been supporting UN-Habitat's work on gender equality and women's empowerment. It has provided valuable advice to identify opportunities to promote gender equality in cities. Cities have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic also has negatively impacted the livelihood of women and girls.

The Advisory Group on Gender Issues was also engaged in different fora, such as Generation Equality Forum organised by the governments of Mexico in March and of France in June 2021, as well as the Valencia Declaration on "Gender in Sustainable Urban Development in the Post-Pandemia," in October 2021. This shows how this group contributed to key discussions about what gender equality and women's empowerment means for human settlements around the world.

The Second Quadrennial Report for the New Urban Agenda, is currently being drafted, and will be presented at the Quito +6 meeting in April 2022. It will provide an up-to-date overview of the state of its implementation and advancement in cities and human settlements across the world, in its role as an accelerator of the Agenda 2030 aiming at 'leaving no one and no place behind'.

Furthermore, the upcoming World Urban Forum 11 in June 2022 will provide another important arena to discuss and review with our partners and stakeholders. We will look at gender and the key interlinkages between climate change and disaster risk reduction, the progress on the implementation of Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, and the progress of the implementation of UN-Habitat's strategic plan.

I wish you fruitful deliberations at this very important event as we examine opportunities for accelerating actions on gender equality and women's empowerment in communities, cities, and human settlements.