

**Opening Remarks by Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura,**  
**Under-Secretary-General and Director-General, UNON at the**  
**First Session of the Executive Board of UN-HABITAT**  
**Monday, 21 November 2022 at 09:00**

Honourable Mr. Charles Hinga, Principal Secretary of the State Department for Housing and Urban Development, and Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Kenya;

Honourable Ministers;

Honourable Ms. Martha Delgado, President of the UN-HABITAT Assembly;

Your Excellency Mr. Silvio Albuquerque (AL-BU-KER-KI), Chair of the Executive Board and Permanent Representative of Brazil to UN-HABITAT;

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board;

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT;

Your Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning and welcome to the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Kenya.

As Director-General of UNON, I am delighted to warmly welcome you all to this second session of the Executive Board of UN-HABITAT 2022, on behalf of my dear friend and sister, Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif and her team.

I wish to congratulate you Ambassador Albuquerque (AL-BU-KER-KI), for your excellent leadership as Chair of the Executive Board since

April 2022, and to acknowledge the tremendous work you have done in preparing for this Session. Thank you.

The last Executive Board Meeting of UN-HABITAT had to be held as a hybrid event, due to the COVID pandemic. I am very pleased that this year you are able to meet in person. We at UNON have taken every precaution to ensure a safe environment for all meetings taking place at our Gigiri complex. Though we have lifted COVID restrictions for now, we remain ever vigilant, with full precautionary measures being observed and applied. Our goal is to make the complex a safe haven, which will allow you to meet and deliberate on your critical mandate.

For the conferences we hold here at UNON, inclusivity is key. Our Conference Services team will strive to ensure that our facilities are able to deliver meetings in which all delegates can participate and contribute with ease. This includes for delegates connecting remotely from outside Nairobi, for whom we will ensure good digital access.

In the coming years, we look forward to the onset of our conference facilities upgrade project with increased capacity and state-of-the-art digital capabilities. I am also particularly proud that the project is planning to incorporate the principles of carbon neutrality and disability inclusion in its design from the ground up.

I wish to also thank the Government of Kenya and the Ministry of Health for their, as always, excellent support and guidance. It is only through such strong and special partnership that the UN enjoys in Kenya that we can deliver. We are most grateful for this.

Finally, I would like to assure the Executive Board and Executive Director Maimunah of UNON's close and ongoing cooperation and

support as we plan together for next year's UN-HABITAT Assembly. I look forward to welcoming you again then.

I wish you all the very best for fruitful deliberations and a successful meeting.

Thank you.