

**Speech by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and
Undersecretary of Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico,
Mrs. Martha Delgado, at the First Session of the Executive Board**

*March 28th, 2023.
Virtual Participation
Location: Nairobi, Kenya.
Duration: 3-7 minutes.*

[Attendees]

- **His Excellency Mr. Silvio Albuquerque**, President of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat;
- **Honorable, Mr. Zacharia Mwangi Njeru**, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development of Kenya;
- **Ms. Zainab Bangura**, Director General of UNON;
- **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director of UN-Habitat;
- **Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates;**

[Messages]

- I am very honored to address you at this **First Session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board in 2023.**
- For me, it has been a **meaningful journey as President of the UN-Habitat Assembly** to support and engage with this Agency in its pursuit of a **better urban future for all.**
- We are only two months away from the **second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly** that will take place in Nairobi. The Assembly will be an important occasion to establish the policy direction for sustainable urban development. Today, this subject is more important than ever, as last year the world population reached 8 billion people. In this regard, we are facing a challenging

global milestone making us reevaluate our shared responsibility for people and our planet.

- Therefore, we look forward **to hearing your recommendations as to what should be considered a priority for the next UN-Habitat Assembly.**
- The **COVID-19 pandemic and the current global crises have clearly demonstrated that the mandate of UN-Habitat is needed** to move firmly towards sustainable development and avoid a shortage of basic urban services.
- Urban areas are primarily on the receiving end of both natural and human-made problems. This means, ladies and gentlemen, that the UN-Habitat directive is at its most critical point. **The UN system expects UN-Habitat to lead in addressing the majority of today's global challenges.**
- As we have reached this topic, I would like to **warmly greet the Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, for being a tireless advocate for sustainable urban development. Also, I want to thank the senior management and all of her staff for the efforts they have made to pull this **UN Program from deficit to surplus in its core budget last year.**
- Ms. Maimunah took over an organization that was operating at a shortfall. Today, although we have not reached the level that we would like, we are running a surplus. Because of this outcome, **I am sure the Assembly would also like to hear from you, Maimunah, about the experience and achievements** that could not have been possible without your guidance and supervision. I urge that we maintain this consistency in leadership so that we reach the objective that we all desire, of course with your firmness in **transparency and accountability.**

- As the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, I also want to **thank Member States and their missions, both in Nairobi and New York**, for their support and strong advocacy on behalf of UN-Habitat. As a result, the UN Secretary-General prioritized this program for a more consistent budget.
- The past year has also seen notable progress in **elevating the issue of urbanization onto the global agenda**. Member States made declarations and commitments to promote sustainable urbanization during **the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly**, assessing progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, in April 2022 in New York and at the eleventh session of the **Urban Forum World Cup in Katowice, Poland** in June 2022.
- During **the COP27 meeting, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt**, the **first ministerial meeting on urbanization and housing** was held, representing a turning point for all upcoming COP meetings, as taking into consideration the importance of reflecting the **urban aspects on climate action**.
- **The effect of climate change is not an isolated event**. We can refer to the cases of Mozambique, Malawi, Pakistan, and South Africa, to mention just some of the findings that have been observed as a **direct consequence in many of the human settlements**.
- Consequently, dear colleagues, I urge you that when we talk about climate change, we do so in the same sentence as its effects on human settlements.
- The Sharm El Sheikh meeting also launched the **Sustainable Urban Resilience Initiative for the Next Generation (SURGe)**.
- This progress is outstanding, but we can do much more. So, I look forward to the UN-Habitat Assembly to further advance our efforts **to emphasize the importance**

of multilateral action. A world in crisis is not capable of making unilateral decisions.

- **Effective multilateral diplomacy and governance, as well as sustainable urban development, can give us the necessary means to deal with our current difficulties.**
- **On behalf of Mexico and as President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, I thank you all for your time and support. I hope that the efforts expressed here help to build a better present so that all people can access a better future in which everyone has a place.**
- Thank you very much for your attention.

HIZ/EVA/JCV/MAVM/PAA