

**GRULAC DRAFT STATEMENT
FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF 2023
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
(UN-HABITAT)**

Nairobi, 28 March 2023

Dear Mr Chair, Madam Executive Director, Excellencies, Colleagues,

I am pleased to address the Executive Board as Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, GRULAC, Nairobi chapter.

We thank the Secretariat for preparing the working documents and for today's comprehensive reports and briefings.

Moreover, the Group wants to convey its appreciation to the ED, for her vision and leadership that has created positive changes toward a more efficient and effective administration and moving forward with the mandate of this program. We recall the importance of the work of UN Habitat to assist and provide guidelines to build inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements, as well as promote urbanization as a positive transformative force for people and communities, reducing inequality, discrimination, and poverty.

Furthermore, we would like to thank the hard work of the chairs of the ad hoc working groups to assist and advise the Executive Board in conducting its work.

GRULAC considers important to promote strong participation from stakeholders during the UN Habitat Assembly, the Executive Board and the CPR as they bring to the table valuable research and advocacy functions. Intergovernmental decisions have stronger and broader recognition and support on the ground if we consider stakeholders' views as early as possible in policy-making and decision-making processes. Therefore we would like to support the extension of the Ad hoc working group's mandate on developing a stakeholder engagement policy to finalize a solid document that provides clear guidelines for stakeholder engagement.

Mr. Chair,

Regarding the report on the financial status, GRULAC would like to highlight the net operational surplus of \$5.5 million, the first surplus in over a decade. While we are moving in the right direction, we still need to find innovative options to increase funding for the core work of UN Habitat and avoid the extreme dependency on the regular budget and earmarked contributions. We welcome the work of the informal contact group on resource mobilization matters to discuss this matter.

On the supplementary budget, we note that only 36 countries were able to present national reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to date, which jeopardizes an adequate follow-up of this important outcome of the Habitat III Conference. In order to increase that number, Member States should be able to count on assistance from the Secretariat, which cannot be provided with current limited resources. Therefore, we welcome the proposal of hiring new staff to build capacity on and improve reporting and implementation of the New Urban Agenda. We do so with the understanding that current level of non-earmarked contributions allow for a cautious expansion of human resources to enhance this normative activity, which lies at the core of UN-Habitat's mandate.

On the road ahead of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, GRULAC wants to remind the importance of the publication on time of the substantive documents for the session as established by paragraph 3 of rule 30 of the rules of procedure and have enough time for the discussions for the ministerial declaration and the draft resolutions.

This next Assembly is an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and to achieve this goal; we encourage funding for all developing countries, not only LDCs.

Mr Chair,

The Group takes note of the Report of the Executive Director on the Status of preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, and we would like to know if the theme of the Forum has been decided.

Regarding the update of the private sector engagement strategy, we appreciate the efforts of UN Habitat to improve long-term financial sustainability by attracting and expanding financing from the private sector as part of the progress in implementing the resource mobilization strategy.

The Group welcomes the report on “the need and the possible benefits of the development of the model of Sustainable Development Goals-related cities certification”. We look forward to continuing examining this topic, including capacity development needs and an assessment of possible related risks.

Finally, we support UN Habitat's efforts in fighting against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace. Metrics and indicators are fundamental to developing and implementing an evidence-based policy to eradicate sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. GRULAC takes this opportunity to stress the importance of transparency and accountability in the United Nations system concerning fighting sexual exploitation and abuse.

I thank you, Excellency Chair.