



# UN-Habitat Executive Board, 28-29 March 2023 – Statements by Switzerland

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## **Agenda item 4: Financial Status of UN-Habitat**

My delegation joins previous speakers in commending UN Habitat for having achieved the financial turn-around. This is a big achievement! Important management decisions to reduce costs combined with transparent communication and continuous high quality of programme implementation are at the source of strengthened donors' trust.

My delegation would like to commend the Secretariat for the presentation of the budget for 2023. The call for a realistic budget was heard and the transparency, with which it is presented, will further strengthen donors' trust.

While budget decisions are the prerogative of the Executive Board, please allow me, Mr. Chair, to share an observation on the current discussion on adding more resources for reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to the Executive Board. We suggest that a broader discussion on reporting be held before taking such a decision. While we observe a lot of interest in reporting on implementation of SDGs to the HLPF, only few Members States reported on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda ahead of last year's High-Level Meeting. Parallel national reporting requirements on SDG 11, of which UN-Habitat is the custodian, and on the new urban agenda, might be too much of a burden for many countries, including for Switzerland. In our view, reporting to SDG11 should guide the reporting on the new urban agenda. Adding resources for additional reporting to the Executive Board will not change this reality and we question the impact of this measure on the implementation of the new urban agenda.

With additional resources available, the Executive Board should remain cautious in how to prioritize new investments and attributing new posts. Additional resources should be considered along the presented scalability model and where a direct return can be expected.

## **Agenda item 8: Normative and Operational Activities**

Mr Chair

Switzerland and UN-Habitat enjoy a longstanding and strong partnership. UN-Habitat implements a large number of projects funded by Switzerland together with national and local authorities and other partners. Allow-me to highlight four examples of our cooperation:

#### 1) City-to-City Cooperation Zurich – Tyre/Lebanon:

In early February 2023, a visit by experts from Zurich took place in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre. The members of both city administrations, together with the implementation partner UN-Habitat Lebanon, discussed the current status of the planned activities such as the promotion of the bike rental system and the introduction of a Park & Ride concept.

It was furthermore decided to set up a digital tech hub / co-working space in Tyre — «DigiTyre» – to provide the younger population with better employment opportunities in the digital economy. The city of Zurich will support the development as part of the city-to-city cooperation and connect the city of Tyre with experienced Zurich organisations.

#### 2) Greater Abidjan region/Ivory Coast

This project seeks to ensure social cohesion and empower vulnerable migrants and host communities and enable their access to services and employment. Thanks to UN-Habitat's collaborative approach, local capacities are being highlighted and the buy-in from local authorities is ensured. We particularly welcome the well planned project implementation and the timely information about progress made.

#### 3) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building for Sustainable Urban Development in Vietnam

We welcome recent actions taken to counter the significant delays in project implementation, including the recently adopted action plan. We understand that specific urban expertise and additional resources from the UN-Habitat HQ is mobilized and that a Chief Technical Advisor, responsible for project supervision on the ground, will be deployed from HQ to fill the gap until the position is recruited.

Successful adoption of these additional actions is essential to demonstrate UN-Habitat's capacity and commitment to the objective of the project and to implement the project with due diligence and efficiency.

#### 4) UN-Habitat's action in Central America and Cuba

Given the good implementation of our soft-earmarking in Central America, Switzerland has signed additional projects for USD 500'000 in this region since the last meeting of the Executive Board.

Mr. Chair

We encourage UN-Habitat to continue to feed into the Geneva based discussions and to benefit from synergies with all stakeholders of International Geneva. This year, it will be important that UN-Habitat contributes to the discussions on human rights and local governance in the Human Rights Council and that it engages with the different humanitarian actors and the Working Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on humanitarian policies and emergencies. In this context, we note with concern that the position of the Head of UN Habitat's liaison office in Geneva has been vacant for a long time and we invite the Executive Director to fill this vacancy at the earliest convenience.