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**Review of progress in the implementation of the New Urban
Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development****

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report surveys progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since the publication of the Secretary General's 2022 report on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda presented to the seventy-sixth session of the UN General Assembly. Section I outlines the context and purpose of the report; section II reiterates the centrality and urgency of implementing the New Urban Agenda in the current global context; section III highlights progress with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda; section IV outlines recent global efforts to position the New Urban Agenda as a roadmap for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; section V presents a strategy for revitalising New Urban Agenda reporting; and section VI outlines key opportunities for renewed political commitment and accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs.

I. Introduction

1. The New Urban Agenda, endorsed through the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in 2016, serves as a primary guiding framework for policy and practice to promote a better urban future for all. It proposes opportunities to accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development leveraging the way that cities and human settlements are planned, designed, financed, developed, governed, and managed. In doing so, it defines specific transformative commitments for a paradigm shift along with key implementation mechanisms that would optimize the advantages associated with urbanization to address major global challenges including inequality, poverty, financing deficits and environmental risks.

2. In its resolution 75/224, the General Assembly also reiterates the notion that the implementation of the New Urban Agenda contributes to the implementation and localization of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated and coordinated manner at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. With up to 65 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) targets dependent on actions in cities, it is evident that urbanization has a direct or indirect impact on all of the SDGs. In our urbanizing world, it is also

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** The present document has not been formally edited.

essential to prioritize the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to accelerate the realization of other global development agendas including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on climate action and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for financing sustainable development.

3. Consequently, any success in addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities posed by urbanization will generate direct or indirect benefits across the entire sustainable development agenda. Indeed, in today's urban world, global sustainability is tied to the sustainability of cities and human settlements as well as the role of local governments in delivering the SDGs. Some of the most critical global crises of today are manifesting in urban contexts including those related to climate, inequality, energy, cost of living, food security and conflict. At the same time, the power of urbanization, if fully harnessed, offers vast opportunities to tackle the human impacts of these crises and build resilience to future shocks. Local and regional governments, at the frontline of these crises, remain central to resolving global challenges and building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for people and the planet.

4. The current report constitutes a key part of the follow up and review process of the New Urban Agenda as defined by Member States. The UN General Assembly, through resolution 71/256, invited the Secretary General to report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years with progress reports submitted to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council and also feeding into the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly. The resolution also stressed the need for the follow up and review of the New Urban Agenda to ensure effective linkages and coherence with the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN-Habitat is mandated to coordinate the preparation of the report in close collaboration with other entities of the UN system and external stakeholders. Accordingly, the Secretary General has submitted two reports on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to the UN General Assembly in 2018 and 2022.

5. Through decision 1/3 on "Arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)" the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly (2019) decided that Agenda item 8 of its second session would focus on the "Review of progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The current report responds directly to this decision. It aims to provide an overview of the most recent progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, drawing on recent global developments and reviews as well as actions by Member States, UN entities and other stakeholders, underscoring the present momentum while pointing to future opportunities.

II. A unique opportunity to leverage the New Urban Agenda amidst global crises

6. The New Urban Agenda is ever more relevant in today's global context of multiple overlapping crises, including the aftermath of COVID-19. The global public health crisis triggered by the pandemic had multidimensional impacts on cities and human settlements. It exposed systemic inequalities, highlighted pre-existing urban challenges, created new vulnerabilities and pushed hundreds of millions of people back into poverty. With more than 90 percent of recorded cases, urban areas have been at the epicenter of the pandemic¹. In addition, it revealed that cities across the world were not prepared to withstand the magnitude of the economic and social impacts caused by the pandemic, and the measures taken to protect people's health.² The direct impact of the pandemic and the indirect impact of the policy measures taken in the face of the pandemic also led to shrinking local revenues, inflicting strain on the fiscal health of cities and countries to varying degrees. A weakened fiscal capacity and growing pressure on public finances, affected local governments' investments in key infrastructure and services which is essential to lead recovery and resilience building³.

7. Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, interlinked crises facing today's world are manifesting in cities and human settlements including those related to climate and biodiversity emergencies, violence and conflicts, inflationary pressures, displacement, and other disasters. For instance, it is estimated that 60 percent of refugees and 80 percent of Internally Displaced Persons live in urban areas⁴. Similarly, most disasters - including floods, heatwaves, wildfires, earthquakes, and hurricanes - disproportionately impact urban areas, particularly the most precarious locations and settlements

¹ United Nations (2020). Secretary-General's Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World.

² UN-Habitat (2021). Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future.

³ UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities.

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/the-power-of-cities/>

within them⁵. Inflationary pressures are felt in cities globally, with recent evidence showing a rapid rate of increase in 2022 compared to the prior 20 years⁶. Cities are also increasingly the battlegrounds for armed conflicts with immediate and long-term devastating impacts on their future sustainability⁷. Amidst rising global inequality in income and wealth terms over the last two decades⁸, systemic divides are deepening in cities. Critical urban inequalities persist in both developed and developing countries⁹. Crises have highlighted growing inequalities and spatial fragmentation experienced in cities globally including the lack of adequate housing and decent jobs for all.

8. While global crises are increasingly urban in their manifestations, cities offer unique opportunities to respond, recover and build long-term resilience, which can be accelerated with the realization of the New Urban Agenda. Mayors and local and subnational governments are better placed than national governments to understand the context on the ground and to mobilize their communities in order to build greener, healthier, and more resilient cities. Cities and local governments play a pivotal role in achieving progress on the New Urban Agenda as a pathway to the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, local governments are on the frontline in times of crisis, not only to lead responses but also in the recovery process, as clearly seen during the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁰.

9. As the world resets from recent crises, we face a unique moment to leverage the transformative potential of cities and urbanization to address systemic structural deficits that impede global sustainable development. Slow progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda poses a significant risk to support the people and the planet to attain prosperity, and peace. As an action-oriented document, the New Urban Agenda, now more than ever, must continue to serve as a roadmap to combat inequalities and climate change, shape crisis recovery efforts, and sustain peace.

III. Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

10. The New Urban Agenda is premised on three interlinked transformative commitments to harness the potential of urbanization for social inclusion and ending poverty; inclusive prosperity and opportunities for all, and environmentally sustainable and resilient development. Eight years later, and halfway through the implementation of SDG 11, there remain gaps in progress towards these commitments, as highlighted in the 2022 Quadrennial report of the Secretary General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/76/639–E/2022/10). The United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting to assess progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda of 2022 further recognizes that the world is far off track to meet the targets of SDG11 on cities and human settlements by 2030, as well as other SDG targets. These deficits in progress have far reaching impacts, posing critical risks for global efforts to secure sustainable development for present and future generations in an urban world where 6 out of 10 people will live in cities by 2030.

11. Today, persistent urban challenges imply continued gaps in progress with the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting to assess progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda of 2022, and the supplementary information note by the President of the General Assembly¹¹ towards the meeting, underscored global urban challenges faced by urban residents worldwide, namely related to housing, climate, displacement and crises, and urban prosperity and finance among others. The persistence of these bottlenecks points to the need to redouble efforts to implement the New Urban Agenda.

12. Regarding the provision of adequate housing for instance, Member States, through their statements during the High-Level Meeting recognized that this remains a major global challenge requiring renewed action. Indeed, the global progress review of SDG 11 (2023) reports that between 1.6 billion and 3.0 billion people are affected by different forms of housing inadequacy. Slums and informal settlements are the most visible spatial manifestation and are home to more than 1 billion people - one in four urban dwellers, with the proportion of slum dwellers now accelerating for the first time in 30 years.

⁵ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2019). Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction.

⁶ <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2022/11/30/the-worlds-most-and-least-expensive-cities>

⁷ UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities.

⁸ https://wir2022.wid.world/www-site/uploads/2022/01/Summary_WorldInequalityReport2022_English.pdf

⁹ UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities.

¹⁰ UN-Habitat (2021). Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future.

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/04/HLTD-on-NUA-Information-Note-1.pdf>

13. Deficits in access to affordable and adequate housing persist in both developed and developing countries. One in ten Europeans are spending more than 40 percent of their income on housing¹². In the United States, in 2020, the mortgage of 30 percent of all households was unaffordable (beyond 30 percent of monthly household income) while there is an estimated deficit of 3.8 million houses¹³. This clearly implies that the world is lagging behind in realizing key commitments of the New Urban Agenda to promote adequate and affordable housing as a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for sustainable urban development.

14. The gaps in urban resilience in the face of climate risk also imply the need for renewed action to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Indeed, in both developing and developed countries, urban areas are increasingly facing episodes of heatwaves, droughts, floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and landslides, which are intensifying with climate change. While many local governments have developed disaster risk reduction strategies, structural elements causing the vulnerabilities of cities persist. Climate change, coupled with poorly planned urbanization, continues to render many settlements and populations vulnerable to disasters, disproportionately affecting poor people, women, and children. Building resilience to climate-induced events is a core element of the New Urban Agenda. It sets a vision of cities and human settlements that reduce vulnerability, build resilience and responsiveness to foster mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

15. In the context of recent crises, specific urban challenges have been further accentuated including in regard to inequality, poverty and employment. Rising inflation has led to declining wages in many countries, reducing the purchasing power of low and middle-class families and severely affecting low-income households particularly in emerging and developing economies¹⁴. In most developing countries urban unemployment remains a key challenge, particularly among the youth. In addition, informal employment constitutes close to 44 percent of total employment in urban areas. The New Urban Agenda urges to promote productive and decent work for all as a key element for sustainable urban development while recognizing the important contribution of people working in the informal economy.

16. Further, in regard to commitments of the New Urban Agenda for effective implementation, the Secretary General in his 2022 Quadrennial report concludes that despite some progress, gaps remain in several areas. Several structural bottlenecks persist in implementation processes, including a lack of coordination, policies, financing, and capacity. On building a governance structure and establishing a supportive framework to implement the New Urban Agenda, there remain gaps in multilevel governance including unclear distribution of responsibilities between different spheres of government, weak cooperation mechanisms and limited local government participation in national policy making and execution. As for urban planning and management, while it is positive that over 150 countries embedded urbanization into their national policies and institutional fabrics, few effectively link national urban policies to economic planning, while planning capacities remain constrained relative to the scale and pace required to manage the expansion of cities and curb urban sprawl. The deficits in financing necessary urban investments remain considerable, with both national and local government capacities to deliver services, infrastructure and employment continuing to be highly constrained in many cases.

17. Given the persistent challenges in sustainable urbanization globally, progress with the New Urban Agenda needs to be accelerated and scaled up, as also clearly called for by the United Nations Secretary General in the 2022 Quadrennial report. Scenarios of urban futures will need to be anticipated and tackled effectively through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2022 lays out three possible urban futures namely high-damage, pessimistic and optimistic scenarios also linked to the systematic and enduring effects of recent global crises¹⁵. An optimistic scenario whereby cities and human settlements are equitable and inclusive, productive, green, compact, walkable, and healthy is a precondition for a resilient global future that is imperative for present and next generations. This can only be realized through concerted efforts and transformative action to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

18. When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, pre-existing deficits in urban sustainability accentuated impacts of households, communities and businesses. Addressing systemic gaps in urban development and strengthening the role of local governments through the implementation of the NUA is urgent for global preparedness for imminent and long-term future shocks. This was evident most recently during the pandemic where the role of cities and local governments in response and recovery

¹² <https://www.oecd-forum.org/posts/tackling-europe-s-housing-crisis>

¹³ <https://www.habitat.org/costofhome/2022-state-nations-housing-report-lack-affordable-housing>

¹⁴ ILO (2022). Global Wage Report 2022-2023.

¹⁵ UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities.

has been of paramount importance. As in the case of other crises, cities and local governments were at the forefront of responding to impacts of the pandemic on households, communities and businesses. Cities and local governments will thus remain central to realizing the collective global vision of a better future articulated in the 2030 Agenda.

IV. Positioning the New Urban Agenda as a catalyst for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

19. A dedicated, ongoing strategy to align global and regional intergovernmental processes, reports of the United Nations Secretariat, and other global forums in 2022 helped to (re)position the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator and catalyst to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and other global development agendas.

20. In November 2021, the President of the 76th session of the General Assembly established the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization to elevate urban issues throughout the 76th session and to plan for and follow up on the General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The Advisory Committee comprised of selected Permanent Representatives, the ECOSOC President, as well as representatives of local government associations, grassroots movements, professional associations, the International Chamber of Commerce, and the United Nations development system including Economic Commissions. The Advisory Committee agreed to make the 2022 Quadrennial Report of the Secretary-General as the pre-session document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly and to utilize its recommendations to guide Member States to prepare commitments of action for the high-level meeting.

21. To support the intergovernmental processes in New York, the President of the General Assembly encouraged Member States in each of the five regions to work with the Economic Commissions and UN-Habitat to utilize the respective Regional Forums for Sustainable Development to prepare inputs to the high-level meeting. The Economic Commissions provided these inputs in a consolidated report¹⁶ for dissemination to Member States thereby engendering a nuanced, regional perspective. Subsequently, the President of the General Assembly and the ECOSOC President agreed to coordinate efforts to elevate the New Urban Agenda by aligning meetings of their respective intergovernmental bodies. On 21 April 2022, the ECOSOC President convened the special meeting on sustainable urbanization. Member States reviewed the 2022 Quadrennial Report from the perspective of inequality and with consideration of the reform of the United Nations development system. The ECOSOC President presented the summary report as part of his remarks to the General Assembly at the opening session of the high-level meeting.

22. On 28 April 2022, the President of the General Assembly convened the high-level meeting to which 87 Member States inscribed statements, joined by group statements by G77+China, European Union, Africa Group, and ASEAN. Member States pronounced themselves on the New Urban Agenda, noting its role as a road map for the attainment of SDGs. The President's Summary and corresponding Annex of Actions¹⁷ identified five areas of declared actions and commitments derived from these statements submitted by 87 Member States as follows:

- (a) Importance of the New Urban Agenda in achieving the SDGs.
- (b) Provision of adequate housing is among key social security measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (c) Contributions by cities to mitigate climate change, adapt equitably to the effects of climate change, and half environmental degradation.
- (d) Urban displacement and crises.
- (e) Multi-level governance and localization.

23. In their respective statements, the Governments of Botswana and Slovakia underscored the need to sustain the momentum created by the high-level meeting and thereafter announced the establishment of the Group of Friends on UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization, and the New Urban Agenda. Reaching 46 members, the Group of Friends has subsequently held several meetings to strengthen UN-Habitat, promote sustainable urbanization, and accelerate the implementation of the

¹⁶ UNECA, UNECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA (2022). Regional Commissions report on the progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (2019-2022)

¹⁷ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/06/Final-HLM-on-NUA-PGA-Summary.pdf>

New Urban Agenda, serving as an interface between the United Nations Secretariat and the Second, Third, and Fifth Committees of the General Assembly.

24. In December 2022, the General Assembly adopted resolution 77/173 welcoming the high-level meeting and the President's Summary, as well as the establishment of the Group of Friends on UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization, the New Urban Agenda. Further, the General Assembly encouraged greater focus on the five areas of action (above) and, in this regard, took note of the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly towards accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

25. In June 2022, the Government of Poland, the city of Katowice, and UN-Habitat convened the 11th session of the World Urban Forum that drew over 17,000 participants. Over ten percent of these were local and regional government representatives, including 105 Mayors¹⁸. Ministers, local and regional governments, grassroots communities, professionals, young people and women's groups held constituent assemblies and roundtables that identified opportunities to promote the key areas of action highlighted by Member States during the high-level meeting. In this way, the World Urban Forum produced Declared Actions¹⁹ that included practical steps to promote adequate housing, climate action, crisis recovery, SDG localization and multilevel governance, and sustainable financing.

26. The New Urban Agenda was further elevated through a number of other platforms. In 2021, UN-Habitat supported the establishment of a G20 Platform on Intermediary Cities and SDG localization. In 2022, Germany hosted the first-ever G7 Ministers' Meeting on Urban Development, and sustainable urbanization was mentioned for the first time in the G7 leaders Communique supported by UN-Habitat, ICLEI and OECD. In addition, sustainable urbanization was reflected in the agenda of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting for the first time in 2022, following the launch of the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative and the Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanization across the Commonwealth supported by UN-Habitat. At the closure of the 2022 meeting, all 53 countries adopted a Declaration that will prioritize a greater focus on sustainable urbanization to ensure liveable cities and human settlements.

27. Further, the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties 27 (COP 27) Presidency in Egypt convened the first ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change in November 2022, bringing together ministers of housing, urban development, environment, and climate change as well as the representatives of local governments. The COP27 ministerial meeting launched the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative, which will support the achievement of sustainable and resilient urban systems through the implementation of the climate agenda within cities, unlocking urban climate finance, and providing capacity-building. In addition, the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 elevated sustainable urban development in the CBD Action Framework.

28. The cumulative momentum achieved through the above processes presents a strategic opportunity to scale up action to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Resounding messages have been conveyed by national and local governments as well as other stakeholders throughout 2022 on the centrality and relevance of the New Urban Agenda for achieving the collective global vision articulated in the 2030 Agenda. Building on the revitalized commitments inherent to this momentum will be critical for scaling up policy action and investments to accelerate the New Urban Agenda implementation, follow up and review.

V. Revitalizing New Urban Agenda reporting

29. Concerned with the low levels of reporting by national governments on the New Urban Agenda, as well as the lack of progress on implementing the New Urban Agenda as documented in the 2022 Report of the Secretary-General on Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/76/639-E/2022/10), UN-Habitat has initiated a process to revise its New Urban Agenda implementation and reporting strategy, which will culminate in the 2026 Report of the Secretary-General on Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

30. Only 25 countries submitted progress reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda during the prior reporting cycle (2018–2021) in time to be considered for the 2022 Report of the Secretary-General on Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Action is needed to increase both the quantity and the quality of reporting for the next reporting cycle (2022–2025). As of March 2023, 39 countries have submitted progress reports on the New Urban Agenda, with many received in the period between the 2026 Report of the Secretary-General in Progress on the

¹⁸ https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/12/sdg_localization_and_lrgs_at_wuf11_report_1.pdf

¹⁹ Accessible online at <https://www.urbanagendaplatform.org/actions>

implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the high-level meeting on the New Urban Agenda (see figure 1).

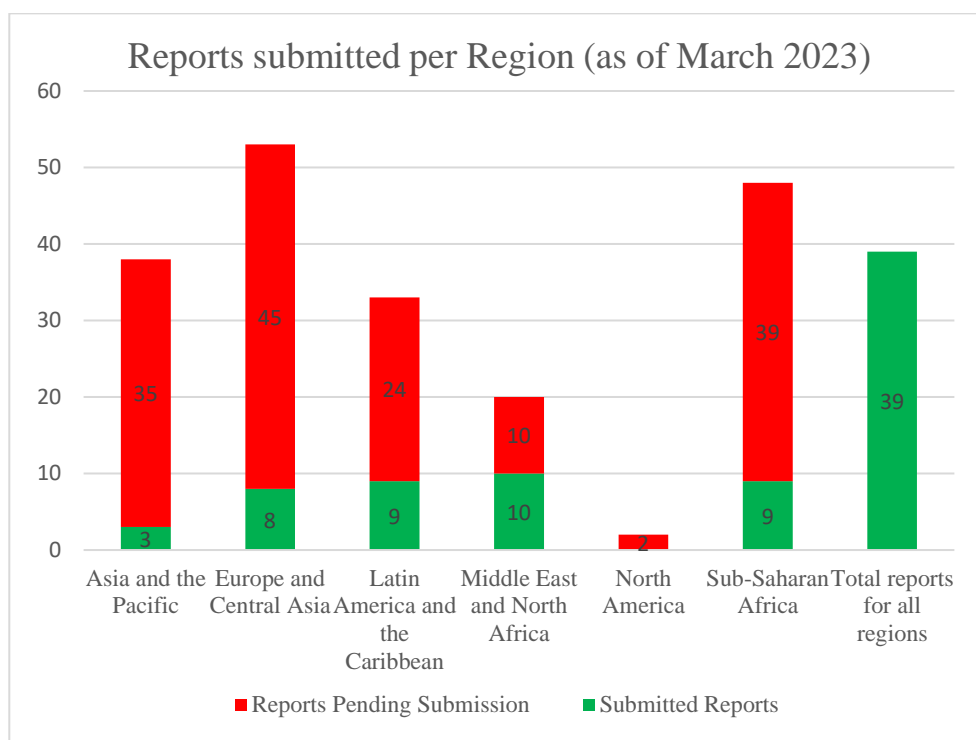


Figure 1. National Progress Reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda submitted per region as of March 2023

31. The revision of the New Urban Agenda reporting strategy considers several significant changes to the current reporting strategy. Importantly, the 2026 reporting cycle will complement the National Progress Reports on the New Urban Agenda implementation by diversifying the sources of data and information. A total of six streams are envisioned for this, namely the Progress Reports by National Governments; key SDG and New Urban Agenda indicators as compiled by UN-Habitat; trends and data supplied by other United Nations agencies and other relevant multilateral institutions; enhanced ‘on the ground’ expertise through more dedicated regional involvement, including United Nations regional economic commissions, resident coordinators and country offices; and finally, closer integration of best practices and other relevant case studies by stakeholders; and strengthened engagement with non-national and non-multilateral actors, including at the local level.

32. Further, the 2026 reporting cycle will follow an incremental, open and transparent reporting approach through which analysis and engagement with stakeholders and partners along the six streams will occur throughout the reporting period, starting in 2023. This implies that significant events and multilateral fora should, from now until the end of the reporting cycle, offer appropriate opportunities to report on the New Urban Agenda.

33. Also, while UN-Habitat commends Member States who intend to submit a National Progress Report for every quadrennial reporting cycle, recognizing the significant resources required to submit a National Progress Report for every reporting cycle, the Agency equally encourages substantive update reports to earlier submitted National Progress reports. Initial progress reports can provide a baseline, which can be revisited in update reports. The Urban Agenda Platform is currently being technically improved for the 2026 reporting cycle to enable the upload of multiple reports per country.

34. Recognizing General Assembly resolution 77/173, the New Urban Agenda reporting strategy will also develop a common methodology for aggregating subnational urban statistics, strengthen means of verification of new tier III indicators of targets under Sustainable Development Goal 11 on cities and communities, and to utilize the Global Urban Monitoring Framework²⁰ to develop innovative methods, approaches and guidelines for data collection, analysis, monitoring and implementation.

²⁰ UN-Habitat (2022). The Global Urban Monitoring Framework. *A Guide for urban monitoring of SDGs and NUA and other urban-related thematic or local, national and global frameworks.*

35. Given that the 2026 Report of the Secretary-General on Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda serves as a mid-term review of the New Urban Agenda, and the triple role of reporting as a tool for knowledge generation, advocacy and policy guidance, the 2026 reporting cycle aims to build synergies between these three uses of reporting. The engagement to generate knowledge will be an opportunity to advocate the implementation of the Agenda, and which needs to lead to concrete policy guidance to enable countries to steer back on track. The multiple tracks of engagement with Member States are considered critical in strengthening awareness and capacities for effective design and execution of New Urban Agenda policies and strategies.

36. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/173 to ‘harness the Urban Agenda platform to share progress, action and knowledge resources on sustainable urbanization’ information generated through the six streams of the revised New Urban Agenda reporting strategy will be made available on the Urban Agenda Platform to support Member States in their national progress report preparation and to facilitate a better informed 2026 Secretary General report.

37. The revised New Urban Agenda reporting strategy should also be used to reposition New Urban Agenda reporting more strategically within National planning processes, particularly within National Urban Policies and National Urban fora. While the majority of National Progress Reports described advances in their National Urban Policies, very few countries have used the New Urban Agenda reporting process to initiate, evaluate or update their own National Urban Policy. Such alignment would reduce the reporting burden for countries, while also functioning as a mechanism to enhance the reporting quality. The collection and analysis of data on urbanization that is required to formulate an effective National Urban Policy, has a significant overlap with the thematic areas and indicators of the New Urban Agenda, and thus there is a strong incentive to align National Urban Policy processes with New Urban Agenda reporting processes.

38. The New Urban Agenda reporting guidelines, which were formulated in response to General Assembly resolution 71/256, already called for National Habitat Committees and National Urban Forums to be involved in New Urban Agenda reporting. However, of all countries that submitted National Progress Reviews, only one reported to have used their National Urban Forum to review implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the SDG Goal 11 in May 2020.

39. According to the report *Global State of National Urban Policy 2021*, 56 percent of countries have explicit National Urban Policies²¹, of which 40 percent fulfil the criteria for SDG 11.a.1. target, i.e. responding to population dynamics, ensuring balanced territorial development and increasing local fiscal space. However, only 60 percent of countries recognize National Urban Policies as key to achieving the New Urban Agenda. Very few countries have integrated New Urban Agenda reporting within their National Urban Policy processes.

40. The present report therefore identifies a strategic opportunity in enhancing the contribution of National Urban Policies to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda and to align National Urban Policy targets and indicators with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda to build a coherent monitoring and evaluation framework.

41. This repositioning of National Progress Reports also responds to a recommendation regarding the collection and analysis of disaggregated data from the 2022 Report of the Secretary-General on Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which identifies that adequate disaggregated data is still lacking at the local level, especially as countries and cities aim to decentralize. It also responds to General Assembly resolution 77/173 which encourages UN-Habitat to continue to assist countries in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

VI. Fast tracking the New Urban Agenda

42. Further to the recommendations made by the Secretary General in his 2022 Quadrennial report on the New Urban Agenda to accelerate progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the following recommendations are made for the consideration of Member States in order to fast track implementation:

(a) Prioritise sustainable urban development at the highest levels of policy and decision making as an overarching and crosscutting driver of delivering the 2030 Agenda. Given the significance of urbanization in shaping sustainability outcomes across sectors, its positioning as an enabler for achieving national priorities is urgent. A shift is needed away from a siloed single sector

²¹ OECD, UN-Habitat, UNOPS (2021). *Global State of National Urban Policy 2021. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Delivering Climate Action.*

approach to implementing urban policies towards leveraging urban policies for impact across major sectors as prioritised in national and development plans, visions and strategies.

(b) Deliberately integrate the New Urban Agenda in the design, implementation and review of National Urban Policies and local and urban plans and strategies. Specific strategies for integrating and actioning the New Urban Agenda through relevant policy frameworks may also be developed, as has been done by some Member States already. This is based on the premise that achieving the New Urban Agenda requires the integration of its transformative commitments across national and local policies, strategies and investments with corresponding multilevel implementation.

(c) Promote continuous engagement, dialogue and coordination on the New Urban Agenda leveraging also National Urban Forums as strategic platforms to facilitate multisector, multi-actor and multilevel implementation. Shared understanding and commitments constitute a critical foundation for more effective implementation that responds to the multidimensional nature of the New Urban Agenda. Often, opportunities for higher impact are compromised through weak coordination and coherence between actions across sectors, actors and investments.

(d) A key opportunity to accelerate progress on achieving the New Urban Agenda, is centered around the call for the localization of the SDGs and the strengthening of multilevel governance systems, achieving vertical, horizontal and multistakeholder integration. The importance of cities and local governments in achieving the 2030 Agenda is widely acknowledged, both as theaters of unfolding crises, as well as engines of growth and centers of opportunity. The United Nations Secretary General through Our Common Agenda prioritised the need to strengthen the role of cities and local and regional governments by establishing an Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments and recognized the key role of Voluntary Local Reviews in accelerating SDG Localization. Furthermore, the Local2030 Coalition was launched in 2021 to support SDG localization everywhere and mainstream it across the work of the UN in order to accelerate progress in the Decade of Action.

(e) Enhance capacity of Member States and other actors to design, implement and monitor the New Urban Agenda at all levels as a necessary means of delivering the 2030 Agenda effectively. Existing tools can be leveraged, including UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda Illustrated²² guide and related training programs, while peer to peer learning and exchanges can be of value. Strengthening the mandates of local governments in delivering development to their constituencies remains essential to accelerate progress with the New Urban Agenda.

(f) Strengthen data disaggregation for improved availability of urban data to more robust monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda. Currently, gaps in urban data constitute a major bottleneck to assessing progress, but also in designing appropriate solutions and responses that correspond to evidence-based diagnostics of needs, capabilities and opportunities. Given that the delivery of the 2030 Agenda is unfolding in an urban world, disaggregating all development indicators at the urban scale is essential for progress at scale and speed. The Global Urban Monitoring Framework adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission provides an opportunity in this regard.

(g) The gaps in financing investments needed to plan and manage global urbanization for sustainability are considerable. While many innovative financing instruments and solutions have emerged over the years, gaps remain substantial, especially in developing countries where the urban transition is unfolding rapidly. Local government finances were particularly strained during the pandemic, with its aftereffects persisting in many parts of the world. Unlocking local finances and related mandates, while scaling up national investments for sustainable urbanization are urgent.

VII. Sustaining engagement on the New Urban Agenda

43. Sustaining engagement among Member States and stakeholders on the New Urban Agenda is necessary for continued mobilization and action for accelerated progress. In this regard, a number of opportunities lie ahead to foster dialogue, revitalize actions and leverage emerging opportunities as they relate to the New Urban Agenda as follows:

(a) The second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly provides an immediate opportunity to provide policy direction useful to countries in their efforts to implement the New Urban

²² UN-Habitat (2020). The New Urban Agenda Illustrated.
https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/12/nua_handbook_14dec2020_2.pdf

Agenda, including on housing, climate, crisis, localization, and financing as encouraged by General Assembly resolution 77/173.

(b) The high-level political forum on sustainable development (New York, 10-19 July 2023) will focus on “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels”, and presents an opportunity to take forward the policy guidance and other outcomes of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in the context of the report on the review of progress on SDG11 to be presented at the Forum.

(c) The 2023 SDG Summit (New York, 19-20 September 2023) which will review progress with the 2030 Agenda at its midpoint is a unique opportunity to reconsider the role of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of the SDGs and specifically SDG 11; and

(d) The Summit of the Future (New York, 22-25 September 2024) presents yet another moment to articulate and demonstrate the role of the New Urban Agenda and sustainable urbanization more broadly in shaping outcomes for humanity today and tomorrow.

ADVANCE