

Statement by Asia Pacific Group to be delivered at the second Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly by H.E Hazem Shabat, permanent representative of the State of Palestine

The APG wishes to extend its appreciation to the President of UN-Habitat Assembly for the exceptional leadership and commendable work in the preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The APG would also like to express its deepest appreciation to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat Maimunah Mohd Sharif and the Secretariat for their outstanding work in the preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and for the tireless efforts that have been put in ensuring the success of this event.

Mr.President,

Over the past decade, the Asia Pacific region has faced multiple crises: natural disasters arising from climate change have caused mass displacements; the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted social and economic progress, and political conflicts have led to instability.

These crises have slowed our progress in SDGs implementation. According to the Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2023, the region has made only 14.4 per cent overall progress, with regression in one in five SDG targets. At this pace, the region will not achieve 90 per cent of the 118 measurable targets by 2030 unless efforts are multiplied.¹

It is thus important to put progress on the SDGs back on track. Urgent and resolute national, sub-national and local actions, that are supported by inclusive and effective multilateralism, are necessary and urgent as we move into the last mile towards 2030.

Mr. President,

The Asia-Pacific, with its diverse cultures and peoples, is a rapidly urbanizing region, hosting more than half of the global urban population.² As many of the

¹ Asia and the Pacific SDG progress Report 2023, UNESCAP

² 2.2 billion people, or 54% percent of the global urban population live in Asia. This figure is expected to increase by an additional 1.2 billion people by 2050—UN Habitat

SDGs intersect in cities, the APG fully appreciates the UN Habitat's work in helping the region move forward on the urban dimensions of sustainable development.

Thus, this Second Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, with the theme "A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises", presents a timely platform to contribute to this effort. We look forward to engaging member states in exchanging thoughts on the theme, including on how to fully implement the New Urban Agenda.

Mr. president,

We support the call for implementing the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs, especially to address local needs to overcome pressing challenges and local crisis.

A more dynamic and inclusive multilateral system is required involving governments, civil society, business, professionals, academia and other stakeholders to develop innovative and transformative local level actions and solutions is essential.

Collaborative platforms are required to share data and resources, enhance capacity-building and jointly undertake advocacy to achieve sustainability and resilience for cities and communities.

Financial and technical support, and technology transfer to accelerate the implementation of local actions to ensure that no one is left behind are crucial.

Mr. President,

We note that many of the important resolutions that have been put forward to promote inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements at this Assembly echo these calls. We look forward to adopting them and their effective and inclusive implementation.

The APG also takes this opportunity to convey its appreciation to Member States that have proposed the resolutions tabled during this assembly, the tireless work of the facilitators, as well as the constructive spirit of member states in the consideration of the resolutions.

Mr. President,

We commend the UN Habitat's efforts in improving its financial stability, overall effectiveness, and emerging from challenging circumstances, positioning itself to better address the needs of Member States. The APG calls on member states to continue to provide full support to the UN-Habitat.

Mr. President,

The Group also appreciates the donors from our region contributing to UN-Habitat Funds, namely the Foundation non-earmarked, Foundation earmarked and technical cooperation funds, which reflects the engagement that our region has with UN-Habitat and the support to its mandate and projects.

We encourage UN-Habitat to direct more resources to the countries of our region, and call for maintaining a high level of support throughout the coming annual programmes related to adequate housing, urban resilience and disaster risk reduction, climate action, and effective urban crisis prevention and response.

We believe that these flagship programmes are vital for strengthening our preparedness in responding to crisis, building solid urban resilience, promoting sustainable urban development, and achieving the SDGs.

The APG encourages member states to support these programmes to contribute to building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities and thereby improving the quality of life for current and future generations.

Thank you, Mr. President