

**Third Session of 2023 Executive Board Meeting of the UN Habitat
28-30 November 2023**

Asia Pacific Group statement

Mr. Chair, H.E. Mr Silvio Albuquerque, Chair of the Executive Board,
Madame Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat,
Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group.

Since this is the first time for the Executive Board to meet after the Second Session of the UN Habitat Assembly (UNHA), I wish to extend the Group's congratulations to the Chair, the Bureau, and the Executive Director and her team for the success of the Second UNHA. The APG likewise conveys its appreciation for the preparations done for this meeting.

Mr. Chair,

The APG would like to take this opportunity to thank the ED for her leadership in steering the work of the UN Habitat in the past six years.

The Group has fully supported ED Maimunah over the past years not only because she is from Asia, but because she has resolutely worked with Member States in overcoming challenging circumstances to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the UN Habitat, including its financial viability.

Her work has produced tangible results. By the end of 2022, non-earmarked contributions to the UN-Habitat Foundation reached its highest level since 2014, signalling the restored confidence of member states in the Program's ability to deliver on its mandate. This redounds to the benefit of the peoples that the UN Habitat serves. The APG is proud of ED Maimunah's achievements.

Mr. Chair,

The APG is appreciative of UN Habitat's work in our region, across its four domains of change and five flagship programs.

The Habitat's projects are impactful in helping our region, which hosts more than half of the global urban population, in moving forward on the SDGs, especially SDG 11.

The APG would like to see more Habitat projects in our region, including those aimed at enhancing the capacity of local governments in sustainable urbanization. In this context, the APG welcomes the World Urban Forum (WUF12) theme direction on 'Localization of the SDGs.' The APG supports the view that local awareness,

ownership of, and action on the SDGs, are essential if our region, which is lagging on SDG implementation, is to put progress back on track.

The APG welcomes Habitat events that build the awareness of governments, at all levels, and other stakeholders on the importance of sustainable urbanization and its connection to the other areas of sustainable development. These include the World Habitat Day in Baku on 2 October, the Award Ceremony of the First Cycle of the Global Award for the Sustainable Development in Cities in Shanghai on 28 October, the World Cities Day in Üsküdar in Istanbul on 31 October, and in a few days, the second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change on 6 December in Dubai during COP 28, and the World Cities Summit in June next year in Singapore.

The APG also welcomes the various national urban forums that have taken place in our region, translating the New Urban Agenda into the local context.

The APG thanks the ED for her analysis on the principal obstacles to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by member states. We hope to hear plans from the Secretariat on how to overcome these obstacles.

The APG notes that the Secretariat has moved methodically and swiftly at implementing the resolutions adopted at the Second UNHA, starting with the creation of the Task Force headed by the Deputy Executive Director to oversee their implementation. We hope to receive regular updates on the progress done.

The APG thanks all member states and partners, including those from the APG region, that contribute to the UN Habitat's budget. The APG hopes that more funds would go to strengthening the Habitat's regional and country offices to capacitate them to better respond to the urgent needs of the Asia Pacific region, which is as complex in the development challenges that it faces, as it is rich in diversity and cultures.

Mr. Chair, as the work on preparing a new strategic plan for the UN Habitat begins, the APG looks forward to working with other member states and the Secretariat in preparing the Plan, through a consultative, open, and inclusive manner.

In closing, the Asia Pacific Group reiterates its heartfelt appreciation to and staunch support for the Executive Director.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.