

## Statement by India at the 1<sup>st</sup> Executive Board Meeting of the UN-Habitat 6-8 May 2024

Mr Chair,

India would like to congratulate the Federal Republic of Nigeria for assuming the chairship of the Executive Board, and to you, Your Excellency, Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, for presiding over this Executive Board meeting.

We also wish to convey our sincerest appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Silvio Albuquerque of Brazil for his excellent work as the previous Chair of the Executive Board.

India also takes this opportunity to commend the Acting Executive Director for his visible efforts in meeting with the regional groups in advance of the Executive Board meeting. Similarly, we extend our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for its timely preparation of the working documents for this meeting.

India aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the G-77 and the Asia Pacific Group.

Mr. Chair,

India commends UN-Habitat for its prudent financial management as of [December 31, 2023](#). The surplus achieved in various funds underscores the organization's commitment to fiscal responsibility and efficient resource allocation, while facilitating impactful interventions, particularly in addressing pressing issues such as urban poverty, inadequate housing, and environmental degradation.

Regarding the draft work programme and budget for UN-Habitat 2025, we acknowledge UN-Habitat's focus on flagship programmes such as "Inclusive Cities" and "People-Centered Smart Cities." India's own national initiative of Smart Cities Mission promotes sustainable and inclusive cities with an aim to give a decent quality of life to people. These initiatives underscore the urgent need to leverage urbanization for sustainable development.

India also lends its voice to the Asia Pacific Group statement which stresses the importance of intensifying efforts to ensure equitable access to resources across urban and rural areas, particularly in critical capacity-building initiatives

like digitalization and e-learning, to bridge the digital divide and foster inclusive development.

We also encourage improved geographic and gender balance in the staffing of UN-Habitat as recognized in the report on recruitment, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity.

We note the Mid-term Evaluation of Strategic Plan 2020-2025 conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) which will aid UN-Habitat in moving forward and implement the best practices with accountability and in a transparent manner.

Looking ahead to the strategic plan for 2026-2029, we emphasize the significance of aligning UN-Habitat's priorities with the evolving needs of member states, particularly vulnerable developing countries. Robust stakeholder engagement and participatory processes are indispensable to ensuring the plan's relevance and effectiveness in addressing the challenges, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and climate change.

Mr Chair,

India looks forward to engaging constructively during the Executive Board meeting on all the agenda items for successful outcome.