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**Strategic plan: annual report for 2023 on the strategic plan
for the period 2020–2025**

Summary of the annual report for 2023 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025

Report of the Executive Director

1. The challenges facing the world's cities are complex and interrelated. The annual report for 2023 of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), entitled "Local action in a time of crises" (HSP/EB.2024/INF/12), underscores the urgent need for urban transformation in order to tackle issues ranging from climate change to inequality, and emphasizes the pivotal role of cities and local and regional governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. The synthesis report published by UN-Habitat in 2023, entitled *Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet*, indicated that critical interventions by urban actors across the globe were needed to meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable). Driven by the urgent need for accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda and measures to achieve Goal 11, UN-Habitat worked in 2023 to facilitate global action on sustainable cities and communities.
3. At its second session, in June 2023, the UN-Habitat Assembly adopted resolutions on promoting adequate housing for all, transforming informal settlements and slums, accelerating the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, preserving urban biodiversity, and enabling people-centred smart cities, among others, and Member States signalled their collective resolve to revitalize action towards sustainable urban development.
4. An interactive relationship between normative and operational work at the national and subnational levels enabled UN-Habitat, through its work in 2023, to achieve impact at scale, provide thought leadership, and spark urban innovations, contributing to making cities and communities sustainable, inclusive, resilient and safe. The present report sets out some of the highlights of that activity.
5. The global impacts to which UN-Habitat contributed in 2023 included the following:
 - (a) Some 958,000 people benefited from improved connectivity and green mobility, including support for start-ups and rapid bus transit in 10 cities globally.
 - (b) More than 280,000 people in poor and vulnerable communities gained increased access to basic services and sustainable mobility.

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- (c) More than 88,000 households in partner countries acquired more secure tenure rights to land.
- (d) Some 2.8 million additional people gained access to safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces in 102 cities, which indirectly benefited 15.2 million people.
- (e) A total of 162 countries reported having national-level urban policies.¹
- (f) A total of 129 countries included urban content in nationally determined contributions.
- (g) A total of 25 countries received support in the collection of data in relation to Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The work of UN-Habitat is anchored in the thematic areas of its strategic plan for the period 2020–2025: reducing inequality; promoting prosperity; acting for climate and nature; and responding to crises. Its activities in 2023 to tackle poverty and reduce inequality between and within communities included:

- (a) Rehabilitation of 40 public spaces around the world that are now being enjoyed by 395,000 individuals, offering safe and inclusive environments for all;
- (b) Support for 24 partner cities in implementing urban and territorial renewal and regeneration initiatives;
- (c) Participatory slum-upgrading interventions in Madagascar, which benefited 27,000 residents by improving their living conditions;
- (d) Community development and access to basic social services, such as road maintenance and collection of household waste for 1,310 people from vulnerable areas in Côte d’Ivoire;
- (e) Strengthening of housing, land and property rights for some 39,000 people in Afghanistan;
- (f) Support for water and sanitation operators in 13 countries to improve operational capacities.

7. The activities of UN-Habitat in 2023 to enhance the shared prosperity of cities and regions included:

- (a) Supporting efforts by 16 local governments to adopt people-centred smart city strategies to ensure inclusive and sustainable urban development;
- (b) Supporting efforts by 30 local governments in more than 10 countries to improve their financial position, which benefited more than 500,000 people;
- (c) Supporting nine regional spatial development plans that coordinate urban planning practices and policies to promote integrated and balanced development;
- (d) Supporting seven cities in Brazil in their implementation of participatory approaches to engage the population in integrated and sustainable development, which ensures equitable inclusion for marginalized groups.

8. UN-Habitat activities in 2023 with the aim of strengthening climate action and improving urban environments included:

- (a) Supporting steps by 24 cities to enact legal frameworks for low-emission development strategies to reduce their global footprint and ensure a sustainable approach to construction;
- (b) Enhancing climate change adaptation actions for more than 100,000 beneficiaries from Jordan and Lebanon through the promotion of sustainable water management practices;
- (c) Supporting steps by 32 cities to develop nature-based solutions to build climate change resilience, which has resulted in restored and protected biodiversity and contributed to sustainable livelihoods and food security;
- (d) Supporting the efforts of six cities in the Philippines to develop land-based marine plastic litter action plans designed to help keep public spaces free of litter so that they can be enjoyed by the public.

¹ Countries whose urban policies were supported by UN-Habitat in 2023 include Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Cameroon, Comoros, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mozambique, Nigeria (state-level), Paraguay and Senegal.

9. In 2023, UN-Habitat also implemented a broad portfolio of interventions to support effective urban crisis prevention and response, including:

- (a) Issuance of 1,500 land title deeds in support of integrating displaced communities in urban areas, which provided vulnerable individuals with much-needed rights and security;
- (b) Support for five countries' efforts to develop context-specific responses to urban migration to ensure inclusive urban planning;
- (c) Support for 10 cities' efforts to apply participatory planning methodologies to integrate the concerns of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities into their urban planning and management, which created inclusion for vulnerable groups;
- (d) Reconstruction of buildings in the Syrian Arab Republic, which benefited 150,000 people;
- (e) Support for 11 cities' implementation of the City Resilience Global Programme, which measures and increases resilience to multi-hazard impacts to better prepare cities to respond to climate change effects;
- (f) Conducting of 800 damage assessments on buildings and infrastructure in earthquake-affected areas in Aleppo (Syrian Arab Republic), which enhanced the resilience of vulnerable communities.

10. In 2023, UN-Habitat also facilitated numerous global events that brought together key stakeholders to explore approaches and propose solutions to address urban crises, including more than 30 Urban Thinkers Campuses supported by the World Urban Campaign and more than 500 events organized worldwide during Urban October.

11. The activities mentioned in the present report demonstrate the implementation in 2023 of the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, which continues to provide a robust framework for accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
