



Embajada de Colombia en Kenia

Executive Board UN Habitat Second Session 2024

Speech Agenda Item 9

H.E. Pedro Cortes Ruiz, Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia in Kenya,
Permanent Representative of Colombia to UNEP and UN Habitat

Thank you very much Mr Chair, Executive Director, Excellencies, and Esteemed Delegates,

Colombia extends its gratitude to the Executive Director and the UN-Habitat Secretariat for the detailed presentation and the progress made in implementing the resolutions of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Colombia, as the co-sponsor of the resolution on biodiverse and resilient cities, is particularly encouraged by the strides made in mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning. Tools such as the "Hotspot Stoplight" represent significant innovation in addressing urban expansion risks while preserving ecosystems. Colombia remains committed to promoting cities that balance environmental sustainability with inclusive growth, as exemplified by our continued engagement with the BiodiverCities network and our efforts to align urban planning with the principles of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

We commend Costa Rica, as co-sponsor of the resolution on biodiverse and resilient cities, for its leadership in hosting the expert meeting in San José and advancing collaborative approaches to enhance urban biodiversity.

We reaffirm our support for the process led by UN-Habitat in developing the International Guidelines on People-Centred Smart Cities. For Colombia, these guidelines align closely with our national priorities, emphasizing the need to ensure that technology serves as a tool to promote equity, inclusion, and sustainability in urban development. In Colombia, cities such as Medellín, Bogotá, and Barranquilla demonstrate how innovation and digital transformation can be harnessed to improve quality of life.

I want to commend UN-Habitat for its inclusive approach in developing these guidelines and for ensuring that diverse voices, including those from the Global South, are heard. I would also like to recognize the work of international experts whose knowledge has enriched this process.



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Furthermore, on the matter of adequate housing for all, Colombia recognizes the importance of addressing housing challenges, particularly in vulnerable and underserved communities. The work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group is a critical step towards crafting actionable frameworks to achieve safe, affordable, and sustainable housing. We look forward to contributing to these discussions and to supporting the broader objectives of this initiative.

Colombia also acknowledges the significant progress made in advancing urban resilience, as highlighted in the resolutions on urban planning, sustainable infrastructure, and climate change adaptation. These efforts underscore the urgent need to integrate urbanization with strategies for reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing disaster preparedness. Colombia fully supports the operationalization of frameworks such as the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative and urges member states to strengthen their commitments to resilience-building measures.

While we commend these achievements, we recognize the challenges, particularly those posed by funding limitations and the growing complexity of urbanization. These issues call for creative solutions, strengthened cooperation, and a renewed focus on capacity building to ensure no one is left behind.