

**The EU and its MS Statement for the closure of the Executive Board
meeting of UN Habitat**

26 March 2025

Dear Madam Executive Director, Honourable Chair, Excellences

I appreciate the possibility to address the Executive Board of UN Habitat, on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation to you Executive Director and your team for preparing the first meeting of the Executive Board of 2025.

The EU and its Member States are pleased to see the stabilised financial situation of UN Habitat and appreciate all MS who contribute to the Foundation non-earmarked fund and help ensure stability of the organisation.

Looking at the agenda of the meeting, allow me to mention three important deliverables, on which we all have been working in the recent past.

First is the draft Strategic Plan of UN Habitat for 2026 to 2029. The EU and its Member States would like to congratulate UN Habitat and all the Member States on excellent progress made in developing the strategic priorities of the organisation for the next four years.

We also thank the Executive Director for placing housing and basic services at its heart, which will allow UN Habitat to focus on its core mandate and to support countries, especially in the Global South, helping them to deliver adequate and affordable housing to their citizens. We are looking forward to engage on this within the framework of the intergovernmental working group on adequate housing.

Second, we welcome the draft international guidelines on people-centred smart cities, aimed at helping MS to improve the quality of life of people and to advance social, economic and environmental sustainability and resilience of cities. The draft guidelines are an excellent example of the normative work of UN Habitat, demonstrating its strong value added. We strongly advocate to retain the human rights dimension, especially the right to privacy, at the foundation of those guidelines, as approved on UNHA Resolution 2/1.

The EU and its Member States emphasise the importance of UN Habitat's normative role, including through maintaining its core in the Nairobi headquarters, in order to deliver maximum benefit and efficiency in serving all Member States, which is especially important in the context of UN80 initiative.

Third, we welcome the progress made on the development of UN Habitat's Stakeholder Policy and hope we can maximise our constructive engagement to finalise a progressive policy for the organisation.

Madam Executive Director, allow me to recall that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shall remain the unshakable foundation for UN Habitat and they must guide your strategic direction as well as for your deliverables.

Equally, your work should be implemented through a gender-responsive lense, with the view of the advancement and full enjoyment of all human rights, including those of all women and girls and their empowerment.

The EU and its Member States will vigorously defend these virtues and we will work with UN Habitat in ensuring that they underpin your Strategic plan and other outcomes.

I will conclude my intervention by wishing us three smooth and productive days which should pave the way for a successful resumption of the second UN Habitat Assembly where we will meet to adopt the important deliverables which we have jointly prepared.

I thank you.