

Unofficial translation from Russian

**Statement of the Representative
of the Russian Federation
on Agenda item 8**

Mr. Chair,

Madame Executive Director,

Distinguished colleagues,

We cannot but draw attention to certain fundamental problems in the report of UN-Habitat on Ukraine, which raise serious concerns from the perspective of the Programme's mandate and neutrality, as well as the correctness of the language used.

First and foremost, this concerns the phrase contained in the report: "*Cities have faced direct targeting.*" This wording is of a qualifying and legal nature and relates to the establishment of intent in attacks against civilian objects, which does not fall within the competence of a technical, specialized United Nations agency such as UN-Habitat.

The report does not contain references to any internationally recognized investigations or findings that would confirm "targeted" nature of attacks against cities. The sources cited in the document relate to damage assessments, the scale of destruction, data on internally displaced persons and the humanitarian situation, but they do not establish responsibility of the parties to the conflict.

The use of the term "direct targeting" is therefore neither justified nor permissible from the standpoint of UN-Habitat's mandate and the principle of Secretariat neutrality. Such wording in a technical report undermines confidence in it and transforms it from a professional analytical document into a politically interpretable text.

Distinguished colleagues,

We are also concerned by the wording included in the report related to the "facilitating returns" of the population. Any references to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees should use commonly accepted wording that emphasizes the voluntary nature of return, as well as compliance with international

standards. These issues traditionally fall within the responsibility of UNHCR, rather than UN-Habitat.

In addition, the report contains other elements that go beyond the Programme's competence. In particular, it includes a detailed description of the macroeconomic and macro-financial parameters of recovery, as well as mentioning of the "aspiration towards European Union accession". These matters are of political nature and fall under the competence of other international and regional structures, but not UN-Habitat.

As a result, despite the presence of relevant factual material related to the recovery of human settlements, in its current form the report cannot be considered as fully neutral or prepared in strict accordance with the Programme's mandate. Certain formulations give it a politicized character and obscure the distinction between the Secretariat's technical activities and political matters, which should remain within the competence of intergovernmental bodies or other entities of the UN system.

The Russian Federation proceeds from the understanding that UN-Habitat should continue to focus on its core functions - supporting sustainable territorial development, the recovery of housing, infrastructure, urban governance systems and spatial planning, using neutral, depoliticized and legally correct terminology.

Thank you for your attention.