

GRULAC FINAL STATEMENT

First session of 2026 of the Executive Board

Opening statement

Mr Chair

Mme Executive Director

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

Good morning.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC).

The Group wishes to express its gratitude to the Executive Director and her team for the comprehensive documentation prepared for this session. We welcome the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 and, in particular, the presentation of the Monitoring Framework. Establishing robust baseline values and clear targets are fundamental requirements for accountability and for ensuring that the Programme's normative and operational work translates into tangible impacts on the ground.

GRULAC supports the efforts to overhaul UN-Habitat's structure "fit-for-purpose." However, we underscore that any organizational realignment, including those arising from the UN80 initiative and system-wide reforms, must be transparent and Member State driven. We recognize the emphasis placed on regional action and the role of regional offices. For Latin America and the Caribbean, a strong presence in the field has been instrumental to engage effectively with local and national governments.

Adequate Housing remains the cornerstone of our regional priorities. GRULAC reaffirms its commitment to the Open-Ended Working Group established for this purpose and takes note of the progress toward establishing the Housing Knowledge Platform. Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the effective participation from developing countries and reaffirm the need for the mobilization of dedicated resources and support mechanisms to ensure that the expertise and realities of our region are fully represented in these deliberations.

In this context, we look ahead to the 13th session of the World Urban Forum, hosted by Azerbaijan. The theme, "Housing the World," resonates deeply with the challenges faced by our cities and we expect WUF13 to serve as a decisive milestone in fostering housing as a global policy priority and a fundamental human right.

Mr Chair,

With regard to the financial health of the organization, GRULAC underscores the need for a predictable and sustainable funding model. We have closely followed the development of the Resource Mobilization Strategy 2026-2029, which must prioritize the diversification and stabilization of the funding base, and look forward to the approval of its final version.

A point of critical importance for our Group is the balance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions. While we appreciate all support to the Programme, the heavy reliance on earmarked funding risks fragmenting the implementation of the Strategic Plan. We encourage donors to increase their non-earmarked contributions to the Foundation, granting the Secretariat the necessary flexibility to address programmatic gaps and regional priorities that might otherwise be overlooked.

Turning to institutional matters, GRULAC takes note of the Staffing Report and reiterates that UN-Habitat's most valuable asset is its human resource. Therefore, it is imperative that the principles of equitable geographical representation and gender balance are upheld at all levels, particularly in senior management positions. In this regard, we urge the Secretariat to redouble its outreach efforts to underrepresented and unrepresented countries from our region and to provide regular updates on recruitment key performance indicators.

Finally, as we approach the High-Level Meeting for the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda, GRULAC stresses the importance of an inclusive preparatory process and counts on the facilitation of meaningful engagement not only in New York but also for the Permanent Missions based in Nairobi.

Mr Chair,

GRULAC remains a steadfast partner of UN-Habitat. We are committed to a constructive dialogue during this session in order to ensure that the Programme is better equipped to foster resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cities for all.