**Ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board**

**Wednesday, 25 March 2026, from 9.00 to 12.00 East Africa Time**

## Response by the UN-Habitat Secretariat to the comments submitted by the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China on the Monitoring Framework of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029

UN-Habitat would like to thank the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China for its constructive and valuable comments on the Monitoring Framework of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029. The observations are appreciated and have been carefully considered.

Please find below the Secretariat's responses.

- **Indicator 5 – Land tenure / "land ownership":**

We appreciate the comment regarding the definition of land ownership. The Monitoring Framework does not rely on a narrow concept of land ownership, but instead uses SDG Indicator 1.4.2, which explicitly captures a broader and internationally agreed understanding of tenure security. As outlined in the Guide:

- The indicator measures both:
  - (a) legally recognized documentation, and
  - (b) perceived security of tenure
- Importantly, *"legally recognized documentation"* goes beyond conventional ownership titles and includes a wide range of tenure arrangements such as:
  - customary rights
  - certificates of occupancy
  - lease agreements

This approach is intentionally designed to accommodate different national systems, including contexts where land is publicly owned but use rights are secured.

- **Indicator 7 – Inclusion of mobile internet coverage:**

We thank the Mission for highlighting the importance of digital connectivity. Indicator 7 currently measures access to basic services, including water, sanitation, energy, waste management and mobility. These are aligned with established SDG indicators and internationally agreed definitions of "basic services".

While digital connectivity is indeed increasingly important, particularly in the context of AI and urban development:

- It is not currently part of the internationally agreed SDG framework for basic services under this indicator.
- Expanding the scope of Indicator 7 would require alignment with global statistical frameworks to ensure comparability and methodological robustness.

The suggestion is well noted and could be explored in future refinements of global monitoring frameworks, but is not incorporated at this stage to maintain consistency with SDG-aligned definitions.

- **Indicator 9 – Use of international poverty line:**

We acknowledge the concern regarding the use of the international poverty line. Indicator 9 is anchored in internationally agreed SDG methodologies and is designed to ensure:

- Global comparability across countries
- Alignment with SDG monitoring frameworks

Indicators have been developed under Results-Based Management principles, ensuring they are measurable, comparable and relevant across contexts.
While national poverty lines vary significantly:

- The international poverty line is used specifically for global aggregation and comparability, not to replace national measures.
- The indicator captures coverage of populations under poverty by relevant policies, rather than measuring poverty levels *per se*.

The use of the international poverty line is consistent with global SDG practices and ensures methodological coherence across countries.

- **Indicator 11 – Property tax sub-indicator:**

We appreciate the observation regarding differences in national and sub-national taxation systems. Indicator 11 measures improvements in Own Source Revenue (OSR) and property tax per capita as proxies for local fiscal capacity and specifically the ability to leverage land for the financing of urban development.

- Property tax is included because it is commonly a progressive tax and the most potent of existing OSRs. It is also one of the most widely used and comparable local revenue instruments globally.
- However, the indicator is designed with flexibility and countries without property tax systems are not penalized, as analysis is contextualized.

The inclusion of property tax remains relevant as a widely recognized proxy, while interpretation of results will continue to reflect country-specific contexts.

- **Indicator 21 – Events and campaigns:**

We thank the Mission for the suggestion to expand the list of events and initiatives. However, the current formulation is based on the criteria of:

1. Mandates, scope and ownership
    - Indicator 21 measures engagement in UN-Habitat-led events and campaigns, such as (but not limited to):
        - World Urban Forum
        - Urban October
    - The Shanghai Award is not hosted or owned by UN-Habitat, but rather an external initiative where UN-Habitat may participate.
    - The UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour, while awarded by UN-Habitat, is not established through an intergovernmental resolution.
2. Methodological consistency
    - The indicator focuses on participation and engagement in UN-Habitat-led platforms, ensuring:
        - clarity of attribution
        - consistency in data collection

The current wording ensures conceptual clarity, appropriate attribution, and methodological consistency.

Finally, with regard to the number of indicators in the Monitoring Framework of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, we thank the Mission for its suggestion to reduce the overall number of indicators. The Monitoring Framework, approved by the Executive Board at its November 2025 session, includes 24 indicators designed to ensure coverage across the full results chain—impact, outcomes and means of implementation—while maintaining alignment with results-based management principles and the

architecture of the Strategic Plan. The Framework was deliberately calibrated to remain both focused and comprehensive, striking a balance between adequate strategic coverage and the practical feasibility of monitoring, and was approved by Member States as such. Any further reduction in the number of indicators can only be undertaken at the request of the Executive Board, and potentially at the stage of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan.

UN-Habitat once again thanks the Permanent Mission of China for its thoughtful and constructive engagement. The comments provided are highly valued and contribute to strengthening the clarity, robustness and relevance of the Monitoring Framework.