

***Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,***

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

At the beginning, the African Group would like to express its sincere appreciation to H.E. Sebastian Groth, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany and Chair of the Executive Board for convening this important meeting.

Furthermore, the Group conveys its heartfelt thanks to you Madam Executive Director and her team for the briefing on the preparations of this first session of the Executive Board.

Agenda Item 3

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,**

The African Group commends the report of the Second Open-Ended Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H), which clearly defines key thematic areas and provides concrete recommendations to advance the urban development agenda, taking into account the multiple challenges facing the sector, including those related to climate change.

The document emphasizes the importance of an integrated approach to housing policies, ensuring that social housing strategies are closely linked with efforts to address unemployment, improve access to education, strengthen public services, and enhance climate resilience.

The Group welcomes the inclusion of recommendations on social housing, particularly with regard to strengthening data collection mechanisms to be implemented by local and national authorities, which will be essential for evidence-based policy making.

From an African perspective, the mobilization of financing mechanisms to support urbanization and advance the housing agenda remains one of the most significant challenges. In this regard, the Group recommends that the OEWG-H undertake a comprehensive reflection and facilitate in-depth discussions practical and sustainable approaches to addressing this challenge.

Furthermore, the African Group expresses its support for the adoption of an urgent, multi-stakeholder approach to achieve the ambitious objectives outlined in Resolutions 2/7 on “Adequate Housing for All” and 2/2 on “Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements.”

We also commend the establishment of the Housing Knowledge Platform and look forward to its timely operationalization as a key tool for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

The African Group expresses its appreciation for the ongoing work of the experts within the OEWG-H and encourages all stakeholders to actively engage in ensuring the successful implementation of the priorities outlined in the OEWG roadmap for the period 2025–2029.

The African Group once more extends its gratitude to the Republic of Kenya and the French Republic for their stewardship in the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Housing for All.

The African Group commends the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group for the comprehensive and constructive outcome of its second session of the African Urban Forum. The report accurately reflects the depth of the global housing crisis and highlights, with clarity, the significant disparities in international support for housing development, particularly the persistent underinvestment in regions facing the highest needs, notably Africa.

Mr. Chair,

The African Group reaffirms its commitment to constructively engage in the next phases of the Working Group’s mandate.

I Thank you

Agenda item 4

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

We emphasize the urgent reality that Africa continues to experience rapid urbanization, the expansion of informal settlements, limited access to basic services, low involvement of Central Governments and a disproportionately low share of international housing assistance. These challenges are compounded by climate vulnerabilities, constrained local government capacity, and structural financing gaps.

The African Group calls for the following:

- I. A substantial scaling-up of investments in slum upgrading and affordable housing, reflecting the magnitude of Africa's needs.
- II. A more equitable global distribution of housing finance, correcting the current imbalance in international allocations and ensuring that support is commensurate with demographic realities and development challenges on the continent.
- III. A context-sensitive global monitoring framework, with indicators and methodologies that reflect African needs,
- IV. Strengthened land governance and secure land tenure systems.
- V. Integration of climate resilience and disaster-risk considerations into housing strategies, recognizing that African cities and human settlements are among the most vulnerable to climate shocks.
- VI. Alignment of global frameworks with Africa's Agenda 2063 and other regional outcomes,
- VII. A shift from isolated, project-based interventions to systemic, programmatic approaches, linking policy, data, governance, financing and implementation for sustainable impact.

Mr. Chairman

Excellencies

The African Group expresses its appreciation for the intent of the Executive director to maintain and promote the integrity of UN-Habitat through her due diligence procedure before the full operationalization of the Sustainable Cities and Communities Foundation (SCCF). For Africa and other developing regions, having diverse, consistent, and sustainable funding is crucial and we cannot overemphasize the current financial challenges especially with the Non-earmarked contributions. As we encourage Member-States to rise to this responsibility, we as an organization need to manage those existing financial instruments, we established collectively with the secretariat to enable sustainable funding.

As we expect the organization to adhere to its core mandate, we kindly remind us all that in the last session of 2023 Member-States provided a mandate to UN-Habitat to operationalize the SCCF. However, prior to granting approval, UN-Habitat had conducted background checks, including compliance mechanisms with UN system regulations. The agreement had already been approved by the Executive Board, however the SCCF has not been operational since the start of its ten (10) year contract with UN-Habitat because of the absence of an advisory board. We also understand that on the 14th of March 2025, the then Chair of the Executive Board forwarded a Note to the secretariat of UN-Habitat with copies to Member-States of the Bureau informing of a request received from the SCCF inviting Member-States to indicate interest to be part of a new Advisory Board. Our understanding is that the process of establishing the advisory board could not be concluded because of the intended due diligence. We would appreciate a clear understanding of the reason behind the due diligence exercise and your findings with recommendations.

In as much as the African Group finally accepted the intent for a due diligence exercise at the first session of the Executive Board for 2025, it wasn't in alignment with the initial request of the group to allow the SCCF to properly begin the operationalization of its' mandate while we evaluate its' progress with the possible options of further directives,

contract amendments or termination. The African Group kindly reminds this Bored that at the first session of the Executive Board for 2025 according to document HSP/EB.2025/CRP.Rev.1, Member-States requested the Executive Director to update us and invite the relevant accredited stakeholders to attend the briefing on every first session of each year on the SCCF with the understanding that with such information and possible recommendations from the ED, if there is a need for an amendment of the contract, improvement or termination, Member-States can direct the Executive Director in the same manner as we did in 2023 when we gave the approval for the establishment of the binding contract.

Finally, the African Group wishes to kindly remind Member-States, the Secretariat and stake-holders that at this democratic dispensation, it would not subscribe to any form of unilateral decision in amendment or termination of any contract that was originally established through a collective prosses.

Mr. Chair,

The African Group reaffirms its commitment to constructively engage in the next phases of the Working Group's mandate.

Thank you.

Agenda Item 5

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,**

The African Group appreciate the effort of the Executive Director and her team in presenting the Organization's financial situation and for updates on:

- a. On the implementations of the UN80 initiative for structure, staffing, budgetary planning and responsibilities of UN-Habitat; and

- b. The monitoring framework of the strategic plan 2026-2029 that was shared with the Executive Board for information;

Mr. Chair, for the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 to be fully implemented, member States are encouraged to make their regular contributions to UN-Habitat in order to reduce the financial risk that threatens continuity in critical programme areas such as housing, climate resilience, informal settlements upgrading, and post-conflict urban recovery, which are central priorities for African countries.

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,**

The African continent is home to some of the fastest-growing cities in the world, the largest concentration of informal settlements, and communities that are most vulnerable to climate shocks.

However, as the report clearly shows, Africa continues to suffer from a lack of financial contributions and international support even though it is the region most in need of assistance from UN-Habitat.

The African Group reaffirms its strong commitment to the mandate of UN-Habitat. However, to respond effectively to the scale of Africa's urban and housing challenges, the Organization must be equipped with adequate, predictable and flexible resources. We therefore call on all Member States and partners to work collectively to strengthen the financial foundation of UN-Habitat, in line with its mandate and the expectations of developing countries.

Agenda Item 6

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,**

The African Group commends the Executive Director for the presentation of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat for 2027, which is aligned with the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and reflects a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable urbanization.

The Group notes with appreciation several key strengths of the proposed work programme.

Firstly, the strong focus on housing, land, and basic services is particularly relevant to the African context, where rapid urbanization continues to outpace the provision of adequate housing and infrastructure. The emphasis on the transformation of informal settlements and the expansion of access to basic services responds directly to the pressing needs of our region, where over 1.12 billion people globally live in slums and informal settlements.

Secondly, the integrated approach across subprogrammes—linking urban planning, finance, governance, and service delivery is commendable, as it reflects the interconnected nature of urban challenges in Africa and supports more coherent and sustainable interventions.

Thirdly, the programme’s prioritization of capacity development, data, and digitalization is welcomed, as it will strengthen evidence-based policymaking and enhance the ability of Member States to monitor progress and implement the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.

Fourthly, the emphasis on partnerships and SDG localization is of particular importance, as it promotes inclusive, multilevel governance and facilitates the mobilization of diverse stakeholders and resources at the local level.

Notwithstanding these positive elements, the African Group wishes to highlight some areas of concern.

Firstly, the work programme appears to be overly ambitious relative to the level of predictable and sustainable financing available, particularly given its reliance on extrabudgetary resources. This raises concerns regarding the feasibility of implementation, especially in developing Countries.

Secondly, while the programme addresses financing mechanisms, it does not sufficiently articulate concrete, scalable solutions for resource mobilization tailored to the needs and realities of African countries, where access to finance remains a major constraint.

Thirdly, despite the recognition of informal settlements as a key challenge, there is a need for greater operational clarity and prioritization in terms of large-scale, transformative interventions that can significantly reduce the housing deficit in Africa.

Fourthly, the increasing emphasis on digitalization and advanced data systems, while important, may risk widening capacity gaps between countries unless accompanied by adequate technical and financial support for implementation at national and local levels.

Fifthly, the programme could further strengthen its focus on South-South cooperation and African-led solutions, which are essential for ensuring context-specific, sustainable, and scalable urban development models.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the African Group puts forward the following recommendations:

- i. The Group calls for the strengthening of a dedicated and well-resourced mobilization framework, including innovative financing mechanisms and enhanced engagement with development finance institutions, to support implementation in Africa.
- ii. The Group further recommends that UN-Habitat prioritize large-scale programmes on housing and informal settlement upgrading,

with clear targets, measurable impacts, and increased technical support to Member States.

- iii. The Group encourages the organization to enhance capacity-building efforts, particularly in the areas of digitalization, data systems, and urban finance, ensuring that no country is left behind in the transition towards smart and data-driven urban development.
- iv. The Group also calls for greater emphasis on South-South and triangular cooperation, including the sharing of best practices and successful African experiences in housing, land management, and urban planning.
- v. The Group underscores the importance of ensuring that the implementation of the work programme is fully aligned with national priorities and driven by country ownership, with a focus on delivering tangible and impactful results at the local level.
- vi. Finally, the African Group stands ready to engage constructively towards the improvement and successful implementation of the draft work programme for 2027.

The African Group wants to thank the Executive Director for providing updates on the support to Brazil and Tunisia conflict affected areas including Gaza and Ukraine.

The Group remains committed to constructive engagement to ensure reforms leading to equitable and effective delivery.

Thank you for your attention.

Agenda Item 7:

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

The African Group commends the Executive Director for the comprehensive report on the highlights of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat for the period July to December 2025, as contained in document HSP/EB.2026/9.

The Group welcomes the alignment of the reported activities with the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, particularly the focus on **housing, land, and basic services** as a central driver for addressing poverty, inequality, and climate vulnerability, which are critical challenges across the African continent.

The Group further takes note with appreciation of the progress made in advancing **slum and informal settlement transformation**, including the development of subregional initiatives such as the SADC strategy and the operationalization of the work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All. These efforts are highly relevant to Africa, where informal settlements remain a dominant feature of urbanization.

The African Group also welcomes the expansion of **technical tools and platforms**, including the *Our City Plans* platform, urban labs, and capacity-building initiatives under the UN-Habitat Learn platform, which contribute to strengthening planning, data, and implementation capacities in Member States.

The Group notes with appreciation the progress made in promoting **localization of the Sustainable Development Goals**, including through the Local 2030 Coalition and the SDG Cities programme, as well as efforts to enhance **multilevel governance, partnerships, and**

climate action, including the roll-out of the SURGe initiative in the African region.

The African Group further commends the continued efforts to advance **knowledge, data, and digitalization**, including the development of tools such as the GeoAI Toolkit, while emphasizing the importance of ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for developing countries.

Notwithstanding these positive developments, the African Group wishes to highlight several concerns.

The Group notes with concern that **resource constraints continue to significantly limit the implementation of key mandates**, particularly in critical areas such as land management and tenure security, where progress has reportedly stalled due to lack of funding.

The Group also underscores that, despite progress in normative development, there remains a need to **scale up operational activities on the ground**, particularly in Africa, where the demand for tangible interventions in housing, infrastructure, and informal settlement upgrading is urgent.

Furthermore, while digitalization and innovation are advancing, the Group emphasizes that **capacity gaps and unequal access to technology** may hinder effective implementation unless accompanied by adequate support.

The African Group also notes that **resource mobilization efforts, while improving, remain insufficient and heavily reliant on voluntary contributions**, raising concerns regarding predictability and sustainability of funding for priority programmes.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the African Group recommends the following:

- i. Strengthening **predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing**, including increased core funding and effective operationalization of mechanisms such as the urban action funding window;

- ii. Scaling up **operational, country-level interventions**, particularly in housing delivery, informal settlement upgrading, and basic service provision in Africa;
- iii. Prioritizing **land management and tenure security programmes**, given their critical importance and current underfunding;
- iv. Enhancing **capacity-building and technology transfer**, particularly in digitalization, data systems, and urban planning tools, to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness;
- v. Expanding **African-focused programmes and subregional initiatives**, building on existing frameworks such as SADC and other regional platforms; and
- vi. Strengthening **partnerships with development finance institutions and regional banks** to unlock innovative and large-scale financing solutions for sustainable urbanization in Africa.

To conclude, the African Group reiterates its commitment to working constructively with UN-Habitat to ensure that its normative and operational activities effectively respond to the priorities and realities of the African continent and deliver tangible results for its people.

Thank you

Agenda Item 8
Mr. Chairman
Excellencies

The Group thanks the Executive Director for the comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly through the Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2029. We appreciate the structured approach adopted in aligning implementation with the five outcome areas, as well as the strategic focus on housing, land, and basic services.

The African Group notes with appreciation that the strategic focus on adequate housing, land, and basic services is well aligned with Africa’s development priorities, particularly in addressing the rapid growth of informal settlements and urban poverty across the continent.

We also commend the progress made in advancing integrated urban and territorial planning, including initiatives on sustainable infrastructure, climate resilience, and urban regeneration, which are essential for building inclusive and resilient African cities.

Furthermore, the emphasis on localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, participatory governance, and capacity-building initiatives is particularly relevant for strengthening national and local institutions in Africa.

The African Group also recognizes the efforts to expand partnerships, promote knowledge-sharing, and develop digital tools, which can support innovation and evidence-based policymaking across our region.

However, Mr. Chair,

The Group remains concerned about several critical challenges highlighted in the report.

First, the persistent and significant financial constraints continue to hinder the effective implementation of key mandates. The report clearly indicates that important areas, such as land management, have stalled due to lack of resources, which has direct implications for African countries where land governance is central to sustainable urbanization.

Second, there remains a gap between normative development and operational delivery. While we acknowledge the development of guidelines, platforms, and frameworks, there is a need for more tangible, large-scale interventions on the ground, particularly in informal settlement upgrading and service provision.

Third, the African Group notes with concern the limited scale and uneven distribution of implementation efforts, and calls for greater clarity on how Africa is prioritized in programme delivery and resource allocation.

Fourth, while digitalization and smart city approaches are important, insufficient attention is given to bridging the digital divide in Africa, which may limit inclusivity and impact.

Fifth, the reliance on voluntary contributions and partnerships raises concerns regarding the predictability, adequacy, and sustainability of funding, particularly for African countries facing fiscal constraints.

Mr. Chair,

In light of these observations, the African Group wishes to propose the following recommendations:

1. Enhance and prioritize financing for Africa, including the full operationalization and capitalization of the urban action funding window, with a focus on countries in special situations.
2. Accelerate the transition from normative frameworks to implementation, ensuring that policies and tools are translated into concrete projects with measurable impact on the ground.

3. Ensure equitable geographical distribution of programmes, with increased allocation of technical assistance, pilot projects, and investments in African countries.
4. Strengthen capacity-building efforts, tailored to the specific institutional and technical needs of African national and local governments.
5. Address the digital divide, by supporting infrastructure development, digital literacy, and inclusive access to technology in urban areas.
6. Promote alignment with continental frameworks, particularly the African Union Agenda 2063, to ensure coherence and maximize development outcomes.
7. Improve transparency and reporting, including clearer data on regional allocation of resources and results achieved in Africa.
8. Secure predictable and sustainable funding, including increased core resources and reduced overreliance on earmarked voluntary contributions.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, the African Group reaffirms its strong commitment to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of sustainable urban development. We stand ready to work constructively with UN-Habitat and all partners to ensure that the Strategic Plan 2026–2029 delivers concrete and transformative results for the people of Africa.

I thank you.