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UN-HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

SPEECH

Speech by the Executive Director of UN- Habitat at the World Cities Day 2026 Ministerial Segment in Fuzhou, China

31 October 2026

Excellencies, Ministers,
Allow me to sincerely thank all Ministers and high-level representatives for the valuable insights and national experiences shared during this Ministerial Segment.

Today's discussion has demonstrated a strong political commitment to addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing our cities and communities: access to adequate housing.

Although countries face different realities, the discussions revealed a remarkable convergence of views. We have heard that housing cannot be addressed in isolation. It must be connected to land, infrastructure, basic services, public spaces, mobility, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability and resilience.

This integrated approach is increasingly shaping urban policy across the world and reflects a growing recognition that housing is both a social imperative and a strategic investment in sustainable development.

What has emerged from today's discussion is a shared understanding that urban regeneration is a powerful vehicle for transformation. When implemented through people-centred and inclusive approaches, regeneration revitalizes neighbourhoods, improves living conditions, stimulates local economies and enhances resilience to climate and other urban risks. It also

offers an opportunity to strengthen social cohesion and ensure that cities remain places of opportunity for current and future generations.

Perhaps the strongest message we have heard today is that solutions already exist. Across regions, governments are developing innovative policies, mobilizing new partnerships and investing in more inclusive urban futures.

The challenge before us is not to identify what works. Rather, it is to accelerate implementation, scale successful practices and ensure that the benefits of urban transformation reach those who need them most, especially communities in informal settlements and slums.

As we conclude this segment, I am encouraged by the leadership demonstrated by Member States and by the spirit of cooperation that has characterized our discussions.

The commitments voiced today provide a strong foundation for continued collaboration between national governments, local authorities, communities, development partners and the private sector.

I came from Mexico, where I have just announced the dates for the fourteenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF14). It will take place in Mexico City from 31 July to 4 August 2028. I hope to see you there.

Let us move forward with a renewed determination to translate policy into practice and ambition into action on the ground.

Thank you.