Speech at Extended Bureau Meeting of UN-Habitat Executive Board by H. E. Vice Minister CHEN Shaowang

1 November 2026, Fuzhou

Your Excellency Madam Executive Director Rossbach,
Distinguished Members of the Bureau of UN-Habitat Governing bodies,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Good afternoon.

On behalf of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China, I'd like to extend warm welcome to all of you to Fuzhou. This year marks the 5th anniversary of the launch of the Global Development Initiative and the 10th anniversary of adoption of the New Urban Agenda. It is of great significance for convening this Extended Bureau Meeting here in China, to explore on the governance solutions of UN-Habitat and the development of human settlements across the world on the occasion of Global Observance of World Cities Day 2026.

Today, cities are facing multiple challenges, including housing shortages, climate change and inadequate infrastructure. Meanwhile, we are at a critical juncture. 2027 will mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UN-Habitat and the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 will enter a pivotal phase that connects the past with the future. This is an important moment for UN-Habitat to reflect on its development, take stock of its achievements and lessons learned, as well as highlight its contributions to governance of human settlements in the world. It is also a crucial period of building consensus among member states, expanding partnerships, strengthening governance efficiency and elevating global human settlements agenda to new heights.

For a long period of time, China has always been firmly supporting UN-Habitat in playing an important role in advancing global human settlements. Today, I'd like to make three observations on the agenda items.

First, greater prominence should be given to World Cities Day and Shanghai Award, to advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

World Cities Day is the first international day designated by the United Nations with focus on cities. Since its establishment by UNGA resolution in 2013, global observance each year has been held on annual themes, attracting increasing participation from countries and cities around the world. World Cities Day has played an important and positive role in guiding international attention to key challenges and priorities in urban development, facilitating exchanges of experience among cities and building partnerships for cooperation.

The Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities, namely Shanghai Award, is an important international award established by UN-Habitat with China's support, to recognize outstanding urban practices in sustainable development. Since its inception in 2023, the Award has continued to enhance its influence. 92 cities from 34 countries submitted applications this year. The Shanghai Award recognizes cities for the impact, sustainability, innovation and

replicability of their practices. It provides examples that other cities can learn from and replicate in addressing common challenges, helping translate global development goals into local action. Outstanding practices of award-winning cities have been included in UN-Habitat's flagship publications, including the Shanghai Manual. The World Urban Forum and thematic events of World Cities Day have also provided platforms for sharing the experiences of award-winning and shortlisted cities, turning urban practices into knowledge that can be shared widely. Fuzhou, as one of the award-winning cities in 2023, proposed the establishment of the International Coalition for the Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities, with a view to building an enduring cooperation network among award-winning cities and bringing together efforts of stakeholders in urban development.

At the same time, we recognize that World Cities Day and the Shanghai Award have huge potential in expanding partnerships, disseminating knowledge and engaging more developing countries and cities, which deserve the continued commitment and careful nurturing from UN-Habitat. As UN-Habitat approaches its 50th anniversary of founding, we suggest a greater prominence be given to the role of World Cities Day and the Shanghai Award, and kindly ask UN-Habitat Secretariat to systematically review the progress of relevant work, comprehensively assess its outcomes and draw lessons from experience. On this basis, a dedicated review report could be prepared and submitted to EB (Executive Board) or CPR (Committee of Permanent Representatives). We propose further improving the working mechanisms and clarifying the way forward, so as to continuously enhance the combined impact of World Cities Day and Shanghai Award and better support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

Second, the coordination among UN-Habitat's governing bodies for governance efficiency should be further strengthened.

The UN-Habitat Assembly, EB and CPR are the three principal governing bodies of UN-Habitat. They have distinct responsibilities and areas of focus, but share the same overarching objective: enabling UN-Habitat to better fulfil its role as the focal point for human settlements development within the UN system. We propose further strengthening regular mechanisms for communication and coordination among these bodies, particularly in agenda preparation, policy review, implementation of decisions and follow-up on results. This will help ensure consistency in priorities and policy directions.

As the incumbent Chair of EB, China has worked with UN-Habitat Secretariat to expand this Bureau meeting to include the President of the Assembly and the Chair of CPR, as well as the Chair of the ad hoc working group. The aim is to provide an opportunity for exchanges among the governing bodies. Looking ahead, we hope that similar coordination meetings can be held, to further strengthen cooperation among the governing bodies and enhance UN-Habitat's governance efficiency. China stands ready to maintain close communication with all sides, proactively serve as a bridge, and help the governing bodies carry out their responsibilities in a coordinated manner. We will support UN-Habitat in making the most of its expertise and unique role.

Third, greater emphasis should be placed on capacity-building and experience-sharing, to support the implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan.
UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 focuses on housing, land and basic services. To implement it effectively, we need to bring together member states, partners, financial and technical resources, and build collective capacity to address practical challenges. In particular, greater efforts are needed in experience-sharing and capacity-building.

China released its national report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda this year. The report systematically reviews China's achievements in eradicating poverty, advancing new-type urbanization and improving human settlements, from three dimensions of social, economic and environmental sustainability. China also supports the establishment of UN-Habitat China Office. The Office will be officially inaugurated in Beijing on 3 November. China is more than willing to work with UN-Habitat to better connect Chinese cities, research institutions and professional expertise for the practical needs of developing countries, with reliance on the platform of China Office. Within the framework of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan, we will conduct joint research, capacity-building and demonstration projects, providing a practical platform for South-South cooperation. We will deepen exchanges with member states and carry out policy research and technical cooperation in priority areas, including housing improvement, urban regeneration, green buildings and resilient development. Our goal is to help countries and cities in need strengthen their capacity for self-reliant development.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Advancing human settlements worldwide calls for our collective efforts. China will join hands with all sides to implement the four global initiatives and serve as a staunch force in supporting the UN and UN-Habitat. Through closer cooperation and more practical actions, we seek to advance adequate housing for all and ensure that the benefits of urban development reach more people in a fair and equitable manner. In doing so, we will make new contributions to building a community with a shared future for humanity.

In closing, I wish this meeting every success and all of you a productive and pleasant stay in China.

Thank you.