Fourth UN Environment Assembly – "National Statements"
UN-Habitat Executive Director Statement

15 March 2019, between 10:00 and 13:00, Conference Room 2
[Speaker Number 18/30]

Partnering with UN-Habitat to Achieve
More Environmentally Sustainable Urban Development

Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Partners, Friends
Colleagues from the United Nations
Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all! Habari za asubuhi!

In this statement, on behalf of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, I wish to express UN-Habitat's openness to **partnering** with UN Environment, member states and all stakeholders, to address the pressing urban environmental challenges of our time.

The **urban** dimension of the environment can no longer be ignored. Today 55 per cent of the world's population is urban, and demographers project that by 2050 two-thirds of people will live in cities. Increasingly, cities are where people live and make choices. Where they bicycle or drive to work. Where they recycle or send waste to the garbage dump.

Where their homes are high and dry, or vulnerable to flooding and sea level rise.

The world – and UN-Habitat – is increasingly aware of the **urban** dimension of the environment. In the **New Urban Agenda**, achieving "environmentally sustainable urban development" is one of Member States' "transformative commitments". In two months', time, the first ever UN-Habitat Assembly will take

place, and it will approve a new **Strategic Plan** for UN-Habitat for 2020-2025**.** In this Plan, we have proposed that "strengthened climate action and improved urban environment" be adopted as one of our four key Domains of Change.

Innovative approaches are also key to a more sustainable future. In informal settlements in the ***Solomon Islands*** and ***Fiji***, UN-Habitat has piloted the use of drones and handheld devices to speed up and scale up the assessment of the environmental vulnerabilities of marginalized communities. And the **Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**, on whose Board I am pleased to serve, is now setting innovation as one of its four Strategic Goals. Networks of cities such as the Global Covenant offer an indispensable platform to disseminate innovative practices among the otherwise fragmented community of mayors and local leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen, the recent Special Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on 'global warming of 1.5 degrees' sent us a clear message: we must act **now** to save our planet from the most devastating impacts of climate change.

Let us partner together to achieve a more environmentally sustainable and better urban future.

Thank you for your attention. Asante Sana!