Global Strategic Dialogue Series Mannheim

Accelerating the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in Cities: Enhancing the role of the private sector

"The Way Forward" by Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director

Tuesday, 26 March 2019, 11:15 approx.

Honourable Mayor of Mannheim and Team
Distinguished partners and friends
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of UN-Habitat, I would like to begin by once again thanking the Honourable Mayor Mannheim and his Team, for their dedication in jointly organizing, spearheading and coordinating this two-day Global Strategic Dialogue. I believe this Dialogue has been a great success, an eye-opening conversation, that I personally have learned immensely from.

Over the past two days, I have seen thinkers and strategists join hands with policy and decision-makers, in order to reflect on way to create synergies that go up and beyond their role as leaders in their respective organizations. This Dialogue provides the opportunity for these important discussions to take place, with a view of ensuring that sustainability becomes the spring board for a paradigm shift in the way we develop our cities.

Discussions over the past two days have repeatedly advocated the importance of Sustainable Development Goals' bonds, ethical banking and financial tools that are attractive to investors interested in urban sustainability. Yet bringing together these options to *all* countries requires strong governance mechanisms, collaboration and emphasis on uniting often diverging viewpoints. This is the basis for how we can all work together to deliver *true value* from our respective activities.

Before I share with you **THREE** key take aways that I have personally absorbed during this Dialogue, with a view to suggesting "The Way Forward"

of where we go from now, I would like members of the audience to briefly propose a few of their own … [**audience participation**].

Thank you for your very insightful contributions… I would like to complement with the following:

One: There are tremendous opportunities for positive collaboration between the public and private sectors, which are necessary to ensure that the SDGs are achieved. However, if we continue with the status quo of how we do things we will not see transformative change. If we are serious about creating a better place for our children and future generations, we need a paradigm shift. Therefore, we need the right kind of regulatory framework which will ensure that profit making is not at the expense of our collective well-being. The stakes are too high for business as usual and for more declarations. This Dialogue has led the way in identifying real projects and initiatives which will win us the future.

Two: The role of the private sector is investing in innovation and scaling up urban solutions cannot be under-estimated. The Dialogue has shown that we need to harness the entrepreneurial spirit to ensure we are able to move the needle moving towards greater sustainability. We should celebrate companies that are moving in this direction and we need to appeal to investors to ensure they are investing to create true value. Short term profits do not narrow income inequality, and, in the long term, we all lose out. UN-Habitat's City Prosperity Initiative will be able to provide evidence-based indicators to give both city governments and institutional investors the ability to rate and monitor the outputs of their investments; for the private sector, the CPI is a helpful tool to build a new roadmap towards greater opportunities in the urban infrastructure that is yet to be built.

Three: Finally, I would like to exhort all of you to think seriously, not only about the financial outcomes of urbanisation, but to think in a more holistic

manner. In our upcoming World Cities Report, the working theme is, “The Value of Sustainable Urbanisation.” Here the outcomes can be measured from social, economic and cultural perspectives. All are extremely necessary if we are to achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG 11. I would like to invite all of you here to participate in the making of the World Cities Report 2020, as any strategy that we are hoping to develop, needs to be syndicated and developed in partnership. In this case, with the private sector and civil society.

Before closing, I would like to share with you that UN-Habitat is developing a private sector engagement strategy to ensure the inclusion of all stakeholders in urban development. As the focal point in the United Nations System on urban, we consequently have the role to facilitate and to bring together local and national authorities, Non-Government Organizations and companies. To facilitate this, we will establish a business network and a business council to inform this work.

Furthermore, through UN-Habitat’s Capital Advisory Platform and the Implementation Facility for Sustainable Urban Development, we commit to working with you to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its seventeen goals. It is my hope that through such delivery mechanisms, this is the way forward for UN-Habitat, together with our partners can work to make *cities better clients, and investors better financiers.*

I urge you to continue this discussion through concrete, innovative collaborative ways to engage beyond this edition of the Dialogue Series. It is indeed my hope that the next time we convene as a group, new partnership will have been established to report on specific issues that tackle head-on the challenges of sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat’s first Assembly taking place in Nairobi in May this year, and the World Urban Forum next year in Abu Dhabi, provide excellent opportunities to do so. Next month in New

York, UN-Habitat will also convene a high-level UN roundtable on sustainable floating cities, engaging the private sector on this very interesting concept.

I hope you will see this Dialogue as the very first step in a longer-term relationship with UN-Habitat. As our network of business, industry, investors and start-ups with whom we work grows, *you* will be part of the unique first group that helped set this process in motion, and on behalf of UN-Habitat I would like to express my appreciation for this.

Thank you all for your commitment and participation in this Dialogue.

Thank you.