

Thank you, Madame/Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Urbanization is a major driver of innovation, development and economic well-being. But also of slums, diseases, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

Our common challenge is to build vibrant and resilient cities and towns. UN-Habitat has made great contributions to this end. Through its many programs and projects, it has helped create and develop livable and more sustainable human settlements.

And it has done so by integrating the hopes and visions of youth. The voices of tomorrow's city dwellers must be heard in decision-making processes today. Therefore Norway has included a youth representative in our delegation.

The main questions we face at this Governing Council is firstly what role we foresee UN-Habitat to play in the follow-up of the post 2015 summit in New York later this year and Habitat III in October 2016. And secondly what must be done to make the organization fit for those tasks.

Norway is not confident that UN-Habitat can play the role it ought to in the follow up of the SDG-Summit and Habitat III. In our opinion, the governance structure of UN-Habitat is too ineffective, the donor base for core support too narrow and the organizational weaknesses too evident.

Madame/Mr. Chair

Norway is committed to working towards a stronger, more efficient and more relevant UN-Habitat. Our judgement of the organization cannot be based on words alone, but on delivery of results.

For my government it is essential that this Governing Council reach agreement on reform of UN-Habitat's governance structure. We need an operational and efficient governance structure where

member states get a better oversight of the earmarked project portfolio in order to ensure alignment with the organization's mandate, strategic priorities and Programme of Work and Budget.

Increased oversight is also needed with regard to resource mobilization and implementation of external evaluations.

As important, we need to see increased confidence in UN-Habitat from existing as well as new donors and partners. UN-Habitat needs to greatly strengthen the mobilization of core funding including broadening the base of core donors. Today Norway remains one of only a few countries contributing to UN-Habitats general purpose foundation. We are glad to hear that Kenya will increase its core funding. But more countries need to step forward.

Finally, all recommendations in the OIOS report on UN-Habitat's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, must be followed up in an urgent and coherent manner. The report highlights several areas where fundamental improvements are required for UN-Habitat to be able to carry out its mandate.

Norway will pay specific attention to the follow-up of the OIOS recommendations concerning improved results-based management, increased collaboration and partnership within and outside the UN system, better documentation of results, and enhanced transparency and accountability. We are looking forward to hearing more about the steps UN-Habitat has taken so far. And we need to see further steps in relevant resolutions from this Governing Council.

Madam/Mr. Chair,

Norway would like to see a strong and effective UN-Habitat that can be in the forefront of meeting tomorrow's urban challenges. To be able to do that, we believe major changes are urgently needed. Unless we see such changes, it will be difficult for Norway to continue supporting UN-Habitat the way we do today.

Thank you.