



**The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum
WUF10 Press Conference
Press Centre**

**Statement by
Maimunah Mohd Sharif
United Nations Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

Wednesday, 29 May 2019, at approx. 14:15 hours

Excellency Mohammed Al Kadar Al Ahmed, Executive Director for Strategic Affairs, Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Distinguished delegates and guests,

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to the WUF10 Press Conference!

Kindly allow me to recognize your presence in Nairobi for the Assembly and your outstanding efforts in putting up such a magnificent interactive booth at the Urban Solutions Expo tent – its already a hit - I have no doubt that most visitors to the booth are already yearning for WUF10 in Abu Dhabi.

WUF10 will take the sustainable urbanization debate to a new level in what promises to be an event that will have an impact for years to come. There are rather high expectations from the Forum in terms of making a lasting contribution to new ideas and solutions in line with the theme '**Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation.**'

WUF10 will provide Abu Dhabi another platform to showcase its achievements as a global hub for innovation and cultural exchange, connecting East and West. Abu Dhabi being the home of over 190 nationalities offers a special combination of features in its urban identity as an open, progressive city - the first Arab city to host the Forum.

Excellencies, you may wish to know that I established a WUF10 Task Team (with sub Task Teams on various work streams) in January 2019 to engage the agency in its entirety on WUF10.

In preparing for WUF10, UN-Habitat's WUF Coordinating Unit of the Partnerships & Advocacy Branch, External Relations Division has undertaken several coordination missions to Abu Dhabi to work with DPM on various issues, namely, a) familiarize UN-Habitat with the WUF10 venue, b) engage the DPM team and its consultants on content generation, c) visa, d) availability of hotels at reasonable rates and e) security issues, among others.

In December 2018, UN-Habitat undertook a mission to assess the exhibition space and branding needs of the conference facility and to jointly craft a communication strategy with the host. In early February 2019, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) undertook a security inspection of the



conference venue for the purpose of providing the required security clearance. A second and final security mission to clear the venue is planned for end June 2019.

Mobilization and Advocacy for WUF10 has started in earnest - it began with the promotion of WUF10 during UNEA (the UN-Environment Assembly) in March 2019 and now at the UN-Habitat Assembly - another momentous occasion to promote WUF10. I have also learnt that DPM together with UN-Habitat's Regional Office for Arab States organized a successful Pan Arab Urban Development Symposium (PAUDS) on 29th March 2019 in Abu Dhabi to mobilize the Arab region for WUF10. I do understand that DPM will be briefing the Arab countries on PAUDS in a side event on Tuesday May 28, 2019.

Excellencies, I would like to suggest the establishment of a WUF Alumni of host cities. The idea of moving WUF from one city to another without due recognition of the WUF legacies would not do justice to the millions of dollars expended on WUFs. I have invited the Malaysian Minister of Housing & Local Government to the podium to encourage her to kick start such an initiative. I have tasked my colleagues to invite all host countries present at the Assembly to brainstorm on the idea (with the support of UN-Habitat WUF Secretariat).

Excellencies, to conclude I would like to seize this opportunity to thank you and your delegation for taking the time to undertake the trip to Nairobi to attend the First UN-Habitat Assembly, set up an impressive interactive Exhibition booth as well as sponsor an Iftar and reception.

I look forward to UN-Habitat's continued engagement with the City of Abu Dhabi during the buildup towards the tenth session of the World Urban Forum.