

**Closing Speech of Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director of UN-Habitat
Resumed First Session of the Executive Board Meeting of UN-Habitat
29 July 2020**

Your Excellency Mr. Chairperson,
Members of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat and State Members of the United Nations,
Distinguished delegates,

Please allow me to record UN-Habitat's gratitude for your support to the Organization in the past year. We are particularly grateful for the continued support of the out-going Bureau, including at the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the 10th session of the World Urban Forum and through the on-going COVID-19 Pandemic.

Your Excellency Chair,

Please allow me to also record my thanks to you personally for your leadership and guidance and that of the United States of America as Chair of the Executive Board for the period 2019 and 2020 during which we have had two formal sessions of the Executive Board spread in four sittings in May 2019, November 2019, June 2020 and July 2020. Through some 7 Bureau meetings you presided over in 2020 alone and the numerous informal consultations, you have successfully led the Bureau in preparing for the sessions of the Executive Board especially in these unprecedented times in which COVID-19 has affected how we all conduct business.

Let me also record UN-Habitat's gratitude to the other Bureau members, Argentina, China, Malawi, and Russia for your time and efforts to help us rebuild this Organization. Working closely with the Bureau, I believe, the Executive Board is now on a steady foundation since its establishment in May 2019. It has been an exciting experience full of lessons which we can all carry forward in strengthening the functioning of the Board.

To the incoming members of the Bureau of the Executive Board, let me take this opportunity to welcome all of you and assure you of my commitment to work with you for the good of our Organization and the duty we have towards Member States. As you know, the Board plays a crucial oversight role, particularly over our work programme and budget.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates

We look forward to receiving your guidance through the Ad-hoc Working Group on Programmatic Budgetary and Administrative Matters with regard to prioritizing our activities and budget for the year 2021. As the distinguished delegate from Germany told us during the session held on 29 June 2020, we need to learn to do more with less even as we keep our focus on the important mandate of the Organization in delivering the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda through our strategic plan 2020-2023. We also look forward to engaging with the Member States more actively, and to ensure that we meet your expectations both in terms of impact and in terms of communicating that impact to you and through you.

Let me return to the importance of the Foundation non-earmarked trust fund. I acknowledge that we need to continue working harder to attract a deeper and wider pool of contributors, including multi-year pledges and contributions which will be key. We are only six months into the new

organizational structure, and I believe you have heard during this session that we have a multi-prong strategy to diversify funding within the resource mobilization strategy. We count on you as allies and advocates for UN-Habitat in this direction to leverage our outreach. We are also looking forward to additional funds and contributions this year and we are grateful for the Member States contributions from Barbados, Botswana, China, Dominican Republic, France, Japan, Malawi, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan and the United States of America and pledges made in 2020 from Kenya Norway, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Senegal and Sri Lanka. We look forward to going beyond the twenty countries who gratefully supported us last year. Now is the time to fund UN-Habitat to lift off. I can only promise you more sweat and tears to deliver our mandates.

Distinguished delegates,

To support Member States and cities to solve challenges and advance sustainable urban development, we will this week be launching a Catalogue of Services with a sampling of UN-Habitat's areas of expertise and tools in order to deepen our engagement Members States and Partners and to inform of the opportunities available to collaborate with UN-Habitat as well as accelerate resource mobilization efforts to support our normative work. A brochure with an overview of the key offerings has already been uploaded on our website.

As the Board has set the date of the next Executive Board session on 27-29 of October, the Secretariat has started preparing for that important during which the Board is expected to take important actions, among others, consider and approve the work programme and budget for 2021. Hopefully we can meet in person then. We will work closely with the newly elected Bureau in those preparations and also with our colleagues at UNON. In this regard allow me to thank H.E. Madam Zainab Hawa, the Director General of UNON for her continued support of UN-Habitat as well as the UNON Division of Conference Services at UNON for their expertise and commitment to service the Executive Board sessions. We trust that by the next session we will have the option of simultaneous interpretation for online meeting fully in place in the event we are not able to meet in person.

Finally, allow me to thank my team led by Mr Victor Kisob, the Deputy Executive Director and also my colleagues Raf Tuts, Christine Knudsen, Gary Landes and Neil Khor, who led working teams to prepare for this meeting. Let me take the opportunity to thank Mr Chris Mensah, and the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies for their dedicated support. Not forgetting Kamal, Leon and David who provided ICT support throughout the meeting. As most of you know, preparations for this meeting had anticipated an in-person component within the UNON Complex in Gigiri, Nairobi which, until yesterday was still in motion with a lot of work already accomplished. For this I wish to thank most sincerely our UNON colleagues from Conference Services, Medical Services, IT, Central Support Services, Facilities Management and, the Security and Safety departments.

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates

On behalf of UN-Habitat receive our appreciation for your time and commitment, please stay safe and I look forward to our session in October 2020, where I hope to be able to welcome all of you in person in Nairobi.

Asante Sana.

Thank you.