

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY STATE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DURING THE SECOND SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UN-HABITAT TO BE DELIVERED ON 27TH OCTOBER 2020 DURING THE OPENING SESSION.

**President of the UN-Habitat Assembly,
Chair of the Executive Board,
Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

Director General UNON

Heads of delegations

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am glad to be part of this second Session of the Executive board meeting of UN –Habitat Assembly and for the privilege to make welcome remarks. Being host of UN-Habitat, and on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, let me take this early opportunity to extend a warm welcome to you all, to this session.

Allow me on the onset to congratulate the new bureau on its election and for its good work in organizing this session, as I assure them of Kenya’s continued support in coordinating the work of the Executive board. Let me also thank, the Executive Board together with its ad-hoc committees, the Committee of permanent representatives, the Executive Director and the Secretariat for their continued work in ensuring the successful preparations and convening of this session of the Executive board amidst the challenges of Covid 19

Distinguished delegates,

We are holding this session at a time when the global pandemic has negatively ravaged economies of many countries, reversing economic gains, while at the same time putting pressure on Governments to provide basic services and safety nets especially to vulnerable members of society. This notwithstanding, the pandemic has served as a

strong reminder of the importance and urgency of prioritising urban and human settlements development now than ever before, as witnessed by the difficulties faced by Governments in their efforts to stem its spread, and particularly in densely populated urban and informal settlements, that in most cases lack basic infrastructure.

Given the urban-centric nature of the pandemic and the rapid global urbanization rate, UN-Habitat's relevance and key role as lead global agency in promoting sustainable urbanization and human settlements and as a global focal point in implementation of the New Urban Agenda cannot be over emphasized. Its existence provides an anchor for member states to leverage on its normative work and technical expertise in promoting sustainable human settlements.

Distinguished Delegates,

This second session of the executive board is very key as it provides us with an opportunity to evaluate progress made in the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the first Habitat assembly, review the report on working methods of the Executive board, consider budget, programmatic and administrative matters of UN-Habitat, as well as progress on the stakeholders engagement policy among others, all aimed at reinvigorating UN-Habitat.

In view of the mandate of the agency of ensuring "better quality of life for an urbanizing world, Kenya notes and welcomes the ongoing reforms at UN-Habitat under the new governance structure, and envisages that its outcome will result in a robust and responsive well resourced institution with an enhanced capacity to enable it deliver its mandate effectively and efficiently. I am aware of the financial constraints being experienced by the organization occasioned by the continued imbalance between the non-earmarked and earmarked funding and limited financial resources by member states. This has also been exacerbated by delay in remittance of majority of member states contributions to UN-Habitat due to reallocation of resources to fight the Covid 19 pandemic. .

However, despite the above challenges, allow me to reiterate that the visibility of UN-Habitat cannot be attained against a backdrop of dwindling resources as is being

witnessed currently. To this end, and as we engage for the next three days, I wish to urge members to deliberate and adopt resolutions and decisions that will ensure predictable financial resources through increased budgetary allocation from the UN regular budget, supplemented by increased voluntary non earmarked contributions by member states as well as innovative resource mobilization measures by the agency itself so as to facilitate timely implementation of decisions taken. In addition the decisions we adopt should also ensure that the agency attains appropriate staffing levels and exercises prudent utilization of available resources to ensure impact is realised

In this connection, allow me to thank member states and partners that pledged to support UN-Habitat during the Habitat Assembly and have honoured their pledges and those that have continued to remit their voluntary annual contributions to the Habitat foundation. On this note, I wish to confirm Kenya's commitment in supporting the work of UN-Habitat which is demonstrated through the increase of our voluntary contributions from USD 70,000 to USD 100,000 since 2019. I wish to confirm that we have paid up for the year 2019 and I assure this gathering that Kenya will remit USD 100,000 for 2020 before the end of the year.

As I conclude I wish to take this opportunity to I urge all member States and key donors to consider increasing their non earmarked contributions to support the Work of UN-Habitat and to those that pledged to honour their pledges so as to enable the agency to conduct its mandate effectively. With these remarks, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish every one of us fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.

Charles Hinga
Principal Secretary
State Department of Housing and Urban Development