



UN-HABITAT
Mid term Review of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
29 June- 1 July 2021

Statement delivered by Patrick Egloff, DPR Switzerland

Mr. Chair
Madame Executive Director
Mr. President of the UN-General Assembly
Madame President of the UN-Habitat Assembly
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Switzerland aligns itself with the statement delivered by WEOG.

The Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the new strategy of UN-Habitat is an important milestone of UN-Habitat's new governance structure adopted at the first Habitat Assembly in 2019.

When adopting the new strategy and the program of work, we saw a lot of positive dynamics and commitment of Member States and of UN-Habitat under its new leadership to re-direct UN-Habitat to a new path of success. There was – and still is – broad agreement that in an increasingly urban world, the answer to global challenges must be found in urban settings. Be it climate change or sustainable development, migration or poverty reduction, if the world manages to tackle global problems at an urban level, it will be successful at global level as well. Undoubtedly, UN-Habitat has a key role to play within the UN-system when it comes to support urban structures and to scale up urban solutions to a global level.

Now, it is a good moment to take stock on the implementation of UN-Habitat's strategy, to evaluate the organization's trajectory and to assess where UN-Habitat needs further guidance to improve its performance and impact. This is why Switzerland attaches great importance to this mid-term review. Switzerland regrets that this mid-term review solely bases its analysis on UN-Habitat's own assessment and that an external evaluation is planned for next year. Switzerland suggests that future mid-term reviews benefit from the recommendations of various assessments, including external ones.

Switzerland commends UN-Habitat and its Executive Director on the different structural reforms implemented both at Headquarters and in the field. Switzerland particularly welcomes the re-opening of the liaison office in Geneva, which allows UN Habitat jointly with the Geneva Cities Hub to promote debates on sustainable urban development and to engage with a large number of multilateral actors and cities' representatives and networks, including by sharing of good practices in support of SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

Switzerland recommends that this good example of multi-stakeholder engagement on urban issues be replicated in other fora, including the UN-Habitat's governance structure. The development of a stakeholder engagement policy of UN-Habitat is an important step in this regard and Switzerland will fully engage in this process.

Since the adoption of the new strategy in 2019 Switzerland has supported UN-Habitat projects with a total amount of about USD 20 million in the following areas: integrated urban planning, including in migration and displacement contexts, labor migration, effective land management as well as institutional capacity building for sustainable urban development.

UN-Habitat has shown good leadership and program management from Nairobi Headquarters, and an excellent involvement of local offices and experts to ensure relevant and context specific approaches, which are well aligned with government priorities and harmonized with other development programs.

Switzerland also funds UN-Habitat indirectly through joint UN programs. UN Habitat's expertise on urbanization is an added value to these joint programs. Switzerland encourages UN-Habitat to engage in the UN Development Systems Reform by injecting its expertise into Common Country Assessments and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and by contributing to joint UN programming.

Switzerland encourages UN-Habitat to strengthen its position in regional and global policy dialogues on inclusive urbanization, the implementation of the new urban Agenda and on questions related to urbanization and migration. There is untapped potential for UN-Habitat to develop its technical expertise into policy recommendations for an increasingly urban world. Switzerland welcomes UN-Habitat's leadership role in the UN Task Force on the Future of Cities and hopes that this Task Force formulates recommendations in view of strengthening UN-Habitat's system-wide policy role.

Mr. Chair,

We must not disregard the fact that the UN-Habitat's financial situation has not evolved as we all have hoped for. While project funding has developed well, partly also due to UN-Habitat's comprehensive reaction to the Covid-pandemic, core funding has not picked up, jeopardizing UN-Habitat's ability to deliver on its normative mandate. Apparently UN-Habitat has not been able to fully re-build trust of donors.

This mid-term review provides an opportunity to give UN-Habitat the necessary guidance to re-establish this trust. According to Switzerland the current strategy is still valid and should not be changed, yet we recommend that UN-Habitat will present more focused work plans to its Executive Board. In particular, Switzerland recommends that UN-Habitat:

- presents proposals on how to tackle the problem of significant underfunding in certain domains of change, including by shifting or discontinuing activities and projects that do not attract sufficient interest from Member States
- evaluates the so-called flagship programmes on the basis of results achieved, including donor attraction, and makes proposals on their continuation or discontinuation
- shows how it engages in the UN reform process

Switzerland looks forward to interesting exchanges during this mid-term evaluation.