

Statement of World Blind Union
Session of the UN-HABITAT Committee of Permanent Representatives
June 29- July 1, 2021

Dear Excellencies, partners, colleagues

1. I am Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius, Program Officer for the World Blind Union's Global Program for Inclusive and Accessible Urban Development. I am also member of the Executive Council of the General Assembly of Partners, a self organized platform of 17 partner constituent groups. At GAP I am a co-chair of its constituent group of persons with disabilities. I am also one of the new members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE).

Today I speak to you on behalf of the World Blind Union and on behalf of other accredited organizations within the General Assembly of Partners (GAP). I wish to focus on what we as stakeholders view as next steps to accelerate engagement:

2. The World Blind Union appreciates the work of UN-Habitat in creating the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) and in supporting the first Global Stakeholders' Forum in May 2019 as first steps in defining the UNH stakeholder engagement policy. The 2019 Global Stakeholders' Forum's declaration committed civil society to collaborating with member states on the implementation of the *New Urban Agenda* and sustainable urban development.
3. We commend the success in implementing the *UN Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023* with its focus on local actions within the four domains of change: reducing spatial inequalities and poverty; enhancing shared prosperity; strengthened climate action, and effective urban crisis prevention. It is encouraging to see the alignment with the commitments as per the New Urban Agenda.
4. We thank the Member States who ensured multi-stakeholder engagement in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and urban SDGs, and further commend UN-Habitat for their continued support including through development of guiding tools and for conducting capacity building workshops at all levels.
5. In addition, with regard to progress on advancing the stakeholder engagement policy following the preliminary efforts by UN-Habitat, We applaud the member states for approving the detailed draft partnership strategy annexed to the *UN Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023* containing UN Habitat's pledge to draft a development plan to implement the strategy https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/06/draft_partnership_strategy.pdf (V.15). Further, we appreciate the beginning of its implementation evidenced by the inclusion of SAGE representatives at the Expert Group Meeting held 8-10 June to align *the State of the World Cities Report* with World Urban Forum II Dialogues
6. We hope that a decision will be made at this meeting to resume Member States deliberations and validation of the draft Stakeholder Engagement Policy.

Moving forward,

7. The World Blind Union respectfully requests that the UN-Habitat and its governing bodies continue the preliminary consultation on the WUF programme by
 - a. inviting representatives of a diversity of stakeholder and constituency groups to be members of the WUF II programme and advisory committee and
 - b. developing WUF11 contents including; Dialogues, Assemblies, Roundtables and Special Sessions) with their participation from the beginning of deliberations
8. We also respectfully requests that UN-Habitat continue to work with member states, on implementing commitments made in the *New Urban Agenda* and involve diverse stakeholders in formulating the the upcoming Quadrennial Report..

Finally,

9. We are one example of all the committed stakeholders who remain fully committed to actively support UN-Habitat in advancing meaningful stakeholder engagement – as we will all be needed – in creating better lives for all where no one and no place is left behind from urban progress.

We wish you a continuously successful session.