

28th March 2023

## Youth Intervention at the UN Habitat Executive Board Meeting, March 2023

Thank you chair for the floor.

I am Zipporah Njenga from Kenya speaking on behalf of the Children and Youth Constituency for Sustainable Communities of the Major Group for Children and Youth. The youth constituency, which has universal membership, has been engaging young people across the processes of the New Urban Agenda, review of SDG11 at ECOSOC and allied avenues in the UN system. We are excited and grateful to be represented at this Executive Board meeting on the road to the 2nd UN HABITAT Assembly later this year.

First, we thank all member states and Secretariat for their work on the Stakeholder Engagement policy. We strongly welcome the mandate provided to the Agenda 21 Major Groups and other stakeholders in draft policy. This reflects the spirit of inclusion and leaving no one behind. We call upon member states to finalize and adopt the policy swiftly.

Secondly, we call upon strengthening meaningful youth engagement in the processes of UNHABITAT. Youth engagement has made great strides in UNEA processes, with hosting of inaugural Youth Environment Assembly before UNEA 5.2, and we would like to build upon those efforts and foster bottom up engagement of young people in HABITAT Assembly and processes. We echo our call "Nothing About Us, Without Us".

Thirdly, with the review of SDG11 this year at the HLPF and upcoming mid-point of 2030 Agenda, we highlight to you that while we are halfway there, we are nowhere near. Actions to strengthen and support human settlements and communities must be urgently ramped up. Let us remember- what might be goals and targets on paper are homes and lives of people. It will be a prerequisite to create spaces for young practitioners to gain access to knowledge and information on sustainable urban development tools at all levels national, regional and global.

Finally, we are pleased to share that next month, together with UNDESA and the UN Youth Envoy office the constituency is organizing the 11th ECOSOC Youth Forum. The youth forum will comprise a dedicated thematic session on SDG11, which youth and UN are co leading jointly. We look forward to sharing our recommendations from the Forum to the subsequent meetings of UN HABITAT.

We the youth representatives are happy to be participating at the Executive Board meeting for the second time, and this time i- person since the COVID-19 outbreak. We hope that this is the first of many to come, and we reassure our commitment as the youth major group to work with all member states and secretariat in creating the sustainable, resilient and inclusive communities where children and youth from all walks of life can thrive.

Thank you for the floor.