

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. CHOL AJONGO, AMBASSADOR OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
DURING THE 3RD SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEETING ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2023**

The Chair of the Executive Board,

Madam Executive Director,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the African Group in Nairobi, I thank you for the opportunity to address this 3rd Session of the Executive Board for 2023. We are delighted to participate in this first fully in-person meeting of the Executive Board since the outbreak of COVID-19. We hope that the physical interactions within the meeting rooms and in the corridors will enrich our discussions and contribute to better outcomes of this meeting.

Excellency Chair,

This Executive Board meeting is significant as it is the first since the conclusion of the adjourned 2nd session of the UN-Habitat Assembly held in June 2023.

We wish to commend the Secretariat, the Bureaus of the Assembly, the Executive Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the excellent preparations of the adjourned 2nd session of the Assembly and look forward to participating in the resumed 2nd Session in 2025.

The adjourned session of the assembly culminated in the adoption of key outcomes including the ministerial declaration and 10 resolutions that aim to strengthen UN-Habitat and support Member States in addressing the challenges of urbanization and human settlements. We welcome the detailed roadmap presented by the Secretariat on their implementation and call for equal implementation of all resolutions, including those tabled by the African Group.

Further, the group calls on the Executive Board to support the operationalization of the Urban Action Funding Window established by the resolution on *Equitable financing and effective monitoring of the implementation of resolutions*, as a key enabler for monitoring and implementation of all resolutions in a balanced manner.

Excellency Chair,

The group has fully participated in the working group meetings and secretariat briefings held prior to this Board meeting. We, therefore, look forward to robust discussions and clear decisions on various issues and hope that the outcome of the 3rd Session will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

On the Programme's budget for 2024, we support the proposed budget which has increased from USD 3 to USD 4 million with a scalability model of up to USD 12 million. We note that the budget increment will largely contribute to enhancing the Programme's capacity to support Member States in reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Further, the group welcomes the call for the reactivation of the UN-Habitat Emergency Fund and encourages the Secretariat to elaborate on possible actions necessary.

We take note of the report of the Board of Auditors on the operations of UN-Habitat for the year ended 31 December 2022 and its findings and recommendations. While the Board noted a lack of material deficiencies in the Programme's accounts and records, it highlighted the need for improvement regarding budget management, financial management, project management, information and communications technology (ICT), human resources management, and strategy management. The group urges the secretariat to fully implement the recommendations of the Board of auditors to enhance budgetary, financial, and administrative processes within the Programme.

The Group also commends the secretariat for the due diligence report on the Sustainable Human Settlement Foundation and welcomes the recommendations made in the report aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in the foundation's work and its relationship with UN-Habitat.

We welcome the efforts to tap into private sector investments to generate adequate resources for the Programme to effectively implement its mandate. We urge the Executive Director to ensure that the recommendations of the due diligence report are fully implemented.

As a region, we are proud that the 12th World Urban Forum will be hosted in an African country in 2024, for the Second time ever. We wish to express our support to Egypt as it prepares to host the forum and call on the Secretariat and all Member States to work together towards a successful 12th World Urban Forum.

We are also pleased to announce that the African Union and UN-Habitat are working together to host the inaugural Africa Urban Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia prior to the World Urban Forum in 2024. We hope that the outcomes of the Africa Urban Forum will enrich the debates during the World Urban Forum.

Excellency Chair,

The Group is aware that the current term of the Executive Director, Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif, will end in January 2024 and had previously expressed its support for the extension of her current term by two years.

We wish to thank the Executive Director for her selfless service to the Programme and to Member States in the last six years. Ms Maimunah has been a critical pillar in the transformation of the Programme both in its governance structure and financial position. We still believe that UN-Habitat and the UN system would benefit from her immense leadership skills and expertise on urbanization and human settlements.

Excellency Chair,

The Group takes this opportunity to thank you for your committed leadership as the chair of the Executive Board since you took office in 2022. We note that this Executive Board meeting will mark the end of Brazil's term and in line with the rules of procedure, the African region is expected to take up the position. The Group is ready to take up the leadership of the Board and will present its nominee for the Chair. As I conclude, I wish to express the Group's readiness to positively engage in the discussions of the various agenda items. We look forward to successful deliberations and wish to assure the Group's commitment to work towards a stronger, more effective Programme.

Thank You.