

Statement by the State of Palestine before the third session of the executive board of UN-Habitat.

Item 11 of the provisional agenda* Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities and the engagement of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster

Distinguished Executive Director, Chair of the Executive Board, representatives and delegates.

Mr, Chair,

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statements made by Malaysia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Philippines, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific.

The State of Palestine express its appreciation to the Executive Director's exemplary leadership during her tenure. We acknowledge her fruitful efforts and guidance of this programme, fostering trust among Member States, and enhancing the programme's ability to deliver, notably the impactful work carried out by the programme within the State of Palestine. We extend our best wishes for the ED, and success in her future endeavors.

Mr. Chair,

It is with profound concern that we address the aggression by Israel, the occupying power, in particular in the Gaza Strip, a situation that highlights the dire need for the work carried out under UN-Habitat's sub-programme of Urban Crisis Prevention and Response. The work to be carried out under this sub-programme is not merely a matter of policy; it is a lifeline for countless Palestinians, in the occupied Palestinian Territory, grappling with the challenges of urban crises.

Mr. Chair,

Apart from the unjustifiable death toll and injuries among civilians mostly women and children, the devastating consequences of the war have resulted in the widespread destruction of homes and civilian buildings, leading to the displacement of countless individuals. To date, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicates that nearly 1.7 million people in the Gaza Strip have been internally displaced, taking shelter in conditions that pose multiple threats due to communicable diseases. More than 46,000 housing units have been totally destroyed or severely damaged. Entire Towns and neighbourhoods have become practically uninhabitable. About 300 school buildings have sustained considerable damage. 70% of the Gaza Strip's hospitals serving a population of 2.4 million are totally out of service. Sewage water treatment, and solid waste management have been severely hampered or stopped completely

Mr. Chair,

This large-scale use of disproportionate force against a population under protection according to Geneva Conventions, has not only undermined years of development efforts but also egregiously disregarded the principles outlined in the New Urban Agenda, and the global commitment to sustainable urban development. It is imperative to emphasize that in implementing the New Urban Agenda, particular attention must be given to addressing the unique challenges faced by countries in conflict situations and those under foreign occupation.

Mr. Chair,

It is with great sorrow that we must acknowledge the loss of life of more than one hundred UN personnel operating in Gaza Strip and the injury of hundreds of others. Mr. Zeyad Elshakra, the head of the UN-Habitat Country Programme in

Palestine, was severely wounded during the ongoing conflict, and our thoughts and prayers go out to him and his family.

Mr. Chair,

In the light of the aforementioned, we reiterate our steadfast commitment to collaborating closely with UN-Habitat to advance our shared objectives of urban development, crisis prevention, and the promotion of inclusive communities, and we urgently call upon UN-Habitat and its partners to acknowledge and address these critical developments by spearheading reconstruction efforts for the State of Palestine, particularly in the Gaza Strip and alleviating the immense suffering faced by its people. It is essential to underscore the mandate of UN-Habitat in this regard, and we call on the Executive Board to adopt the proposed paragraph under draft decision 2023/B on “implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN- Habitat” presented by the State of Palestine and endorsed as a common position of the Arab States and supported by a considerable number of members of this body.

Thank you, Mr. Chair