



**STATEMENT BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT, UHURU KENYATTA, EGH, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE UN-HABITAT FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR) DELIVERED BY HON. FARIDA KARONEY, EGH CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF LANDS AND PHYSICAL PLANNING ON 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021.**

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**President of The General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir**

**President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, H.E. Ms. Martha Delgado,**

**Director General UNON, H.E. Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura,**

**Executive Director, UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

**Chair for the Biennium of the CPR, H.E. Beyene Russom, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea,**

**Heads of Delegations,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am delighted to join you at this First High-Level Midterm Review meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all delegates. Your participation at this meeting is key to ensuring continuity in the work of the UN-Habitat.
2. Let me recognize the presence of the President of the **76<sup>th</sup>** session of the United Nations General Assembly, **H.E Mr. Volkan Bozkir** and warmly welcome you to Kenya and our capital city Nairobi,



***‘The green city in the sun’***, which hosts the United Nations Office at Nairobi (**UNON**), the only United Nations Headquarters in the Global South, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (**UN- Habitat**) and the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**).

3. I wish to recall that the UN-Habitat Assembly held in 2019 replaced the UN Governing Council following the endorsement of the resolution **73/239** by the United Nations General Assembly in December, 2018 establishing a new Governance Structure in order to transform UN-Habitat’s Governance, provide oversight and enhance organization’s efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of its mandates. I note that this High-Level meeting is as a result of the recommendations from the decisions of these meetings. I am confident that through the support of all Member States, we will have a revitalized and reinvigorated organization. I am also aware that the First Session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board for this year was concluded two months ago. This is a confirmation that the transformative pace set by the first United Nations Habitat Assembly, has taken effect as intended. Let me take this opportunity to thank the **Executive Director, Ms. Maimounah Mohd Sharif** and her team for the excellent organization of these meetings.

### **Distinguished Delegates**

4. We live in a rapidly urbanizing and globalized world, with cities being home to about 55 per cent of the world’s population. It is predicted that the world will further urbanize over the next decade, to approximately 60.4 % by 2030. This figure is expected to grow exponentially 68 % by 2050. Kenya is also urbanizing rapidly at an estimated rate of 4.23% per annum, at 54% projected growth urbanization level by 2030.
5. If well harnessed, urbanization is a positive transformative force that contributes to structural and economic transformation of Cities and States.



It is evident that sustainable urbanization is central to overall development and acceleration of growth and shared prosperity. Well-planned, managed, and financed cities and towns promote resilient cities that improve the quality of life of all residents. However, if not well managed, urbanization manifests itself in overcrowding, poverty, and the growth of slums and informal settlements.

6. In this regard, shelter delivery is fundamental to sustainable development. Affordable housing remains an elusive target with 1.6 billion people or 20 per cent of the world's population currently living in inadequate housing.

One billion of this population resides in slums and informal settlements. Most informal settlements lack social and basic infrastructure such as clean water and sanitary facilities. This scenario has been as a result of inadequate resource allocation and low investment in housing and urban infrastructure. Financing for housing, urban management and service delivery is a key outstanding issue that calls for stakeholders in urban development to come up with sustainable solutions. As a Country my Government has been working diligently to formulate and implement solutions that address housing shortages in Kenya, and has prioritized affordable housing as one of the **“Big Four (4) Agenda”**.

7. The role of UN-Habitat as the lead agency in promoting sustainable towns and cities and adequate shelter for all cannot be underestimated. We rely on UN-Habitat to provide data, knowledge, innovative solutions to tackle challenges posed by sustainable urbanization especially in a changing world. This calls for an adequately resourced organization with sufficient and predictable funding, coupled with appropriate staffing levels to enable it deliver on its mandate.



Kenya has continuously supported UN-Habitat and has consistently honoured her voluntary contributions to the UN-Habitat non-earmarked fund foundation. The survival of UN-Habitat and successful delivery of its normative work heavily depends on the Member States' contributions. I therefore wish to call upon all Member States to renew their commitment by pledging and paying up their financial commitments towards the UN-Habitat non-earmarked fund foundation.

I further urge the UN Secretary General to consider increasing the allocation from the United Nations regular budget appropriations and call upon the Executive Director to enhance her efforts in mobilization of resources and leverage on political goodwill of member states in managing the financial challenges facing the organization.

### **Excellencies,**

8. The Global **COVID-19** pandemic has presented new socio-economic dimensions in the management of cities which have been the epicentres of **COVID-19**. This has caused disruptions in economic and social dimensions, to the urban poor, calling for a complete paradigm shift in approaches to urban governance.

The high-level dialogue on "**Cities and pandemics**" to be held during this meeting represents an important step in providing to Member States an opportunity to share experiences, insights and exchange best practices on the pandemic and its implications on the resilience of cities.

I am confident that the dialogue, will come up with pragmatic solutions on how to improve existing programs, projects and policies in addressing future health crisis and resilience of cities in the emerging post-pandemic scenario.



I wish to appreciate the **Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif** and her team for developing the Covid-19 response plan and mobilizing funds to support member states in combating the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, my Government has initiated a National Hygiene Programme to cushion the urban youth and women across country. This programme has benefited over three hundred thousand youths.

9. My Government is committed to actualizing the **“Building Climate Resilience of the Urban Poor (BCRUP) initiative”**. To this end, I wish to encourage Member States of the United Nations to consider adopting this noble initiative with the objective of building climate resilient cities and towns.

This is in recognition of the role of Cities as engines of economic growth and as consumers of natural resources, which contribute largely to pollution of the environment through greenhouse gas emissions and production of liquid and solid waste. Balancing all three Sustainable Development dimensions of social, economic and environmental protection is key.

### **Distinguished delegates**

10. I am aware that one of the key objectives of this meeting is to review the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) as adopted in 2016 in Quito.

The New Urban Agenda represents a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future. Its enactment complements effective and timely realization of other internationally agreed goals as well as Kenya’s economic blueprint, Vision 2030. The New Urban Agenda calls upon all Member States to carry out periodic reviews to track progress, assess impact and ensure its effective and timely execution. I commend UN-Habitat’s support to Member States in ensuring that this objective is actualized.



To this end, my Government has submitted its first voluntary quadrennial report on the New Urban Agenda and is committed to the continuous realization of these noble goals. I urge member states to submit their national voluntary reports on the New Urban Agenda.

11. I note that this meeting will also review the progress on the implementation of resolutions and decisions approved by UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019 in particular, the resolution on United Nations system-wide guidelines on safer cities and human settlement and reiterate that security is a key component of urbanization. Insecurity continues to pose a major threat to sustainable urban development globally. In complementing the work of UN-Habitat, Kenya as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) calls for collective action to address urban crimes. My Government has also put in place a number of mechanisms to promote safety and security in our urban areas and towns.

### **Distinguished delegates**

12. As you review the progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan **2020-2023**, it is important that you work to prioritize the key mandates of the organization. Kenya remains fully committed to the work of **UN-HABITAT** and is ready to contribute constructively to support its objectives. I am optimistic that the review meeting will identify gaps in the program of work and financial status of the organization and provide guidance in the enforcement of the second phase of the plan.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

13. As I conclude, I urge you to take full advantage of these three (3) days to engage pro-actively in reviewing the work of the organization and provide recommendations for further improvement in the realization of the aspirations of Strategic Plan.



I wish to reassure you of my Government commitment in supporting the work of UN-Habitat and in promoting Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

**Thank you**