



WELCOME REMARKS BY MR. CHARLES M. HINGA, CBS, THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN -HABITAT ON TUESDAY, 29th MARCH 2022.

**President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly Ms. Martha Delgado,
Chair of the Bureau of the Executive Board H.E Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki,
Director General of the United Nations Offices Nairobi Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura,
The Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted to be with you this morning for the First Session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat for the year 2022. On behalf of the Government of Kenya, host of UN-Habitat and the United Nations offices at Nairobi (UNON) **I welcome the distinguished delegates and wish you all fruitful deliberations.** Allow me from the onset to congratulate the **Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif** on her re- election as the Executive Director and assure her of our support as she continues to provide leadership to this important organization tasked with the vital role of championing sustainable urban development. I also wish to appreciate the outgoing Chair of the Bureau of the Executive Board the Ambassador of Poland **His Excellency Marek Rohr-Garztecki** and his team for ably steering the work of the Executive Board.

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates,

The world is urbanizing rapidly with urban areas being home to over 55% of the world's population. It is projected that by 2030, the world will have 43 mega cities with over 10 million inhabitants. Moreover by 2050 two thirds of humanity, will be living in urban areas. Currently over 80% of the global GDP is generated in urban areas. These statistics underscore the importance of having well-planned and managed cities, towns and human settlements. The role of UN-Habitat is, therefore, crucial in promoting sustainable cities and human settlements, and enabling Member states to effectively harness the transformative power of urbanization.

I wish to recognize the progress made by UN-Habitat and its governing bodies towards the implementation of the decisions of the first UN-Habitat Assembly and appreciate progress made on Programmatic, Budgetary and Administrative matters, mainstreaming of the UN reforms system and the integration of the normative and operational activities.

We note the recent interventions under the Covid-19 response initiative which were instrumental in promoting social inclusion and bridging the inequality gap and call for efforts to be refocused on post recovery .

We are confident that the vision of a better quality encapsulated in the Strategic Plan under the four domains of change will help create well planned cities and help address issues related to poverty, social exclusion, spatial inequality, climate and environmental concerns.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The continued decline of the Non-Earmarked contributions is a matter of concern and this meeting needs to provide strategic direction to enable UN-Habitat to effectively implement its Strategic Plan **2020-2023**. The Current situation requires us to collectively demonstrate commitment in shaping the future of this organization. We urge the Secretariat to aggressively reach out to Member States and partners to support the resource mobilization strategy and the Partner and Pledge for Sustainable Urbanization event at the World Urban Forum in June 2022. In the meantime, we call on Member States to render their support to UN-Habitat in seeking additional funding on the regular budget from the office of the United Nations Secretary General which will also open up posts that are currently frozen.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are encouraged by the use of the UN-Habitat flagship programmes as vehicles to fast-track integration between the Normative and Operational activities and calls for continued capacity-building initiatives, use of digitization of tools and virtual e-learning programmes, in line with the UN-Habitat capacity-building strategy. In this regard we appreciate UN-Habitat for workshops conducted last year for Kenya's National Habitat Committee and County Urban Directors in Training Workshops on Monitoring and Reporting of the New Urban Agenda. Furthermore, We look forward to the Signing of the new Kenya Habitat Country Programme for **2022-2025** which will further strengthen local implementation of the New Urban Agenda and complement our own Urban Development Policy and legal framework, Housing and Slum upgrading & prevention policies as demonstrated by the prioritization of housing as one of the four pillars in Kenya's Medium Term Plan dubbed '*Kenya's Big Four Agenda*'.



Allow me to also appreciate efforts made by UN-Habitat in utilization of regional collaborative platforms and ongoing cooperation with the regional economic commissions to assist Member States in preparing their input for the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to review implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

We welcome the African Ministerial Session on Sustainable Urbanization to be held on **Friday 1st April, 2022** and look forward to generating a common position that will guide deliberations at the General Assembly.

As I conclude I wish to invite you all to the **9th Africities Summit in Kisumu on 17th -21st May, 2022** with the theme *“the role of Intermediary cities in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063”*. We are looking forward to receiving your delegations as we foster conversations and share learning experiences on the role of Intermediary Cities in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

I wish you fruitful deliberations as we deliberate on substantive decisions that will guide and strengthen UN-Habitat’s role in the attainment of Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements.

I THANK YOU

**CHARLES M. HINGA, CBS
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

