



**WELCOME REMARKS BY HON. ALICE M. WAHOME, THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR LANDS,
PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DURING THE 3rd SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2023**

Chair of the Bureau of the Executive Board, H.E Silvio Albuquerque;

**Director General of the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, Ms. Zainab Hawa
Bangura;**

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif;

Excellences;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to join you during this Third Session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat for the year 2023. On behalf of the Government of Kenya, I wish to welcome you to this meeting which is the first fully in person Executive Board meeting since the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic. We are grateful that the pandemic is behind us.

Allow me on the onset to congratulate the Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif and the secretariat, the Ad-hoc committees and the Bureau of the Executive Board for the excellent preparations put in place for this meeting.

I also wish to take this early opportunity to thank the Executive Director for her commitment and dedication to duty since her assumption of office in January 2018. Ms Maimunah will go down in history as a strong woman who steered the organisation during a transformative period of UN-Habitat. As the Executive Director, Madam Maimunah coordinated the operationalisation and the work of the new governance structures including the Executive Board, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The Executive Director has also worked tirelessly with the Member States to spearhead a resource mobilisation and financial management strategy that has culminated in improved financial position of the organisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

This Executive Board meeting is significant as it is the first one since the conclusion of the adjourned 2nd Session of UN-HABITAT Assembly held in June this year. The Assembly was a resounding success with the adoption of key decisions and a total of 10 resolutions covering the entire spectrum of the UN-habitat mandate. It is my expectation that the adopted decisions, including the measures taken to align the UN-Habitat planning cycles with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review cycle, will invigorate the organisation.

As a key player in the implementation of the Key outcomes and decisions of the Assembly, the Board has its work cut out for it. I urge this meeting to therefore set the pace in expediting the implementation of the key decisions made during the Assembly.

As Kenya, we recognise the need for the organisation to have sustainable and predictable funding to implement these decisions and effectively achieve its mandate. Kenya has been at the forefront in remitting its annual contribution of USD 100, 000 every year and to provide support to the hosting of UN-Habitat meetings in Nairobi. During the 2nd Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly held in June this year, Kenya provided financial and in-kind support valued at over USD 420,000 towards the successful hosting of the Assembly.

I note that you will deliberate on the financial status of UN-Habitat and the draft budget for 2024. I call on all member states to contribute to the budget of the organisation to enable the secretariat implement the Assembly decisions and undertake its normative and programmatic work.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In a rapidly urbanising world, opportunities and challenges abound. On one hand, urbanization has resulted in socio-economic transformation of cities, municipalities and towns. On the other hand, rapid increase in urban population without corresponding expansion in infrastructure, social amenities and employment opportunities has contributed to increased poverty, inequalities and squalor in our cities. Further, member states still face many obstacles in achieving key targets of the Sustainable Development Goals including SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. The role of the normative and programmatic work of UN Habitat therefore remains key in promoting sustainable cities and human settlements.

In Kenya, under the devolved system of government, the county governments and various municipalities have benefited from UN-Habitat initiatives. One of such initiatives is the development of a 'Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis' tool to increase locally generated revenues. We believe this tool is going to achieve its objective of facilitating increased investment to cities as it allows optimizing their own revenues generation and quantifying revenue leakages while identifying points for management reforms.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Government of Kenya has prioritized affordable housing as a key pillar of the Bottom-up Economic transformation agenda. It targets to deliver 200,000 low-cost housing units annually, with an emphasis on slum upgrading and prevention and increasing social housing. I wish to express my appreciation for the support given by UN-Habitat in the government's efforts and look forward to continue partnering with UN-Habitat and other partners to achieve the vision for adequate housing for all.

Kenya is also cognizant of the negative effects of climate change in our cities and urban areas and especially on the poor populations who mostly inhabit vulnerable areas of our cities. Kenya therefore continues to champion the implementation of the Building Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor (BCRUP)" initiative which was launched during the UN-Climate Action Summit in 2019. We urge UN-Habitat to work with Member States and other partners towards the implementation of the initiative, with the aim of enhancing the resilience of the urban poor to shocks precipitated by climate change.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Kenya is proud to host the United Nations Office in Nairobi, the headquarters of UN-Habitat and UNEP, among other United Nations agencies. I wish to express the government's commitment to provide all the necessary support to UN-Habitat and other UN agencies based in Nairobi to facilitate their effective operations.

As you begin your deliberations, I wish you fruitful discussions at this Third Session of the Executive Board for 2023.

I THANK YOU.