

HIGHLIGHTS OF KENYA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MID-TERM REVIEW MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO UN-HABITAT HELD FROM 29TH JUNE- 1ST JULY 2021.

The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) held its inaugural first open-ended high-level midterm review meeting from 29 June to 1 July 2021.

The meeting was opened by the Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) where she highlighted the significance of hosting the first CPR meeting since the reform of UN-Habitat's governance structure and the establishment of the UN-Habitat Assembly through General Assembly Resolution 73/239. She appreciated efforts by the Government of the Republic of Kenya in extending the vaccination programme to the United Nations community and its support in building a new hospital facility in the fight against COVID-19. She noted the important role UN-Habitat play in executing its mandate particularly at a time when cities are at the frontline of the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the United Nations General Assembly graced the occasion where he commended efforts by UN-Habitat for supporting cities in fighting the COVID 19 pandemic through the Covid-19 Response Plan. The President of the General Assembly underscored the importance of land-based revenue to fund green recovery and urged Member States to support the Strategic Plan highlighting the need to incorporate local governments in actions towards the achievement of the SDGs. He called upon global leaders to raise the significance of sustainable urbanization with a specific focus on greening cities, addressing the digital divide and the need to invest in sustainable infrastructure. He further brought members to speed on the upcoming High-Level Meeting to be convened during the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in 2022, stating that the review on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda will be a watershed moment for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable urbanization.

The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, Hon. Farida Karoney made a statement on behalf of H.E Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya. In the statement, the President welcomed the first high-level midterm review of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) as a sign of transformative progress in the governance of UN-Habitat and acknowledged the meeting as an opportunity to identify gaps and provide guidance for the implementation of the second phase of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan.

The President's statement reiterated Kenya's continued support to UN-Habitat through its Voluntary Contributions to the Non-earmarked funds and called upon other Member States to participate in strengthening UN-Habitat as a fully-fledged UN entity through their contribution to non-earmarked fund which would enable UN-Habitat undertake its normative and operative activities. The statement pointed out the need for the UN Secretary-General to increase budgetary allocations from the United Nations regular budget and called upon the Executive Director to enhance her efforts in mobilization resources to UN-Habitat.

The President welcomed the planned dialogue on Cities and Pandemics as an important part of the agenda for the meeting. He called upon the Member States to come up with pragmatic solutions on how to improve existing programmes, projects and policies in addressing future crisis and resilience of cities in the emerging post-pandemic scenario.

Kenya's National Statement was delivered by Mr. Charles Hinga, the Principal Secretary State Department for Housing and Urban Development where Kenya supported the five flagship programs under UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan which include: People centered smart cities, Resilient settlements for the Urban Poor, Inclusive vibrant neighborhood and communities, enhancing positive impacts of Urban Migration and Sustainable Development Goal Cities which are critical in guiding Member States to achieve sustainable urban development. Kenya also supported the implementation of UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for the period 2020–2023 and urged member states to honour their Voluntary contribution to the UN-Habitat Non –Earmarked fund to enable UN-Habitat carry out its normative and operative activities and enable resources and programmes to be spread to areas where they are needed.

During the Plenary Session, Kenya through her Permanent Representative Amb. Jean W. Kimani made interventions supporting the Quadrennial Report of the Secretary General's Update on Progress on implementation of the New Urban Agenda which has acted as a key accelerator for addressing challenges and renewing progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The New Urban Agenda has assisted Several Countries in the piloting and integration of pro-poor and fit-for-purpose housing, land and property surveying and registration with programs benefiting over 100,000 direct beneficiaries. The Permanent Representative also highlighted some of the grave challenges faced by UN-Habitat pointing out the Institutions challenges on staffing and lack of financing in implementing the Strategic Plan and called on other member states to support UN-Habitat as the premiere International Organization dealing with Human Settlements.

Kenya appreciated UN-habitat work during the COVID 19 pandemic which developed a project portfolio composed of 75 projects in 37 countries and 300 cities, benefiting more than 10 million people. UN-Habitat assisted member states in profiling urban contexts and mapping of data collection from 1,700 cities which informed decision-making and improved coherence in responses to the pandemic. The response by UN-Habitat to COVID-19 ensured that the most vulnerable and high-risk urban communities have access to water, sanitation, food, housing and health services.