"A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL IN AN URBANIZING WORLD"





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FOREWORD



Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to present UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2023.

The basis of the Plan is UN-Habitat's new vision of "a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world". This vision is encapsulated in the Plan's 4 domains of change namely:

- Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban - rural continuum;
- Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
- Strengthened climate action and improved urban
 environment; and
- Effective urban crisis prevention and response.

Whilst the formulation of the Plan was a major task, I expect its implementation to be both challenging and rewarding. For the agency, we now have a robust and clear strategic focus to guide our work in positively transforming lives in cities and communities around the world. We are also well-positioned to take a leading role in this mission for we have a significant presence in Asia and Africa where 90 per cent of urban growth is forecasted to happen in the next 30 years. In fact, by 2050 seventy per cent of the world population is predicted to live in urban settlements.

Well-planned and well-governed cities are therefore the future as they will help address issues related to poverty, social exclusion and spatial inequality, shared prosperity, climate and the environment, and various forms of crisis. This was reinforced in Quito in 2016 at Habitat III, when Member States adopted the New Urban Agenda, a framework that contributes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sustainable urban development can have a positive catalytic impact on development and deliver improved living conditions for those furthest behind. Well-planned urbanization resulting in efficient cities and towns can help drive the sustainable development agenda across social and cultural change, environmental protection and economic growth. In addition, sustainable urban transformation presents an opportunity to work with all types of actors and communities, particularly those traditionally excluded from such processes. But we must act now.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan must continue to reflect our new vision and renewed focus on impact. Consequently, we are firmly moving beyond only focusing on processes and outputs to being more outcome and impact-oriented. In this regard, the implementation of the Plan will be driven through global flagship programmes, which will have the benefits of (i) reducing fragmentation in our work, including a better connection between normative and operational elements; (ii) increasing predictability of funding and enhancing flexibility in the implementation of priorities agreed in the Strategic Plan; (iii) establishing long term partnerships as well as donors and countries commitment; (iv) strengthening visibility and global positioning; and (v) enhancing horizontal and vertical integration of sustainable urbanization concerns.

The successful implementation of flagship programmes will require the identification of "champions" including countries and cities that will strongly promote and provide global visibility to our strategic programmes. Internally, we will need to develop (i) a thorough programme implementation manual, with state-of-theart procedures, workflows and capacity building; and (ii) a monitoring and evaluation system, including an online interactive platform accessible to all partners. In addition, we will establish multi-partner trust-funds, which will constitute the financing vehicles of the flagship programmes.

The Strategic Plan 2020-2023, which strongly contributes to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, is the result of a large internal and external consultative and participatory process, which started in April 2018 and culminated in May 2019 in the adoption of the Plan by the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Internally, we organised more than 100 meetings and town halls with both Headquarters and our field-based staff. With our UN sister agencies, 11 entities (UN Women, IFAD, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, FAO, UNISDR, Peace Building Support Office, UNDP, UNHCR, ESCWA) were involved in the process. Moreover, eleven networks of partners were engaged. The feedback received throughout this process was extremely positive and new areas of partnerships have emerged.

I recognise that the Strategic Plan 2020-203 is ambitious. It is so because it repositions UN-Habitat as a major global entity, a centre of excellence and innovation that (i) refocuses its niche as the thought leader and go-to agency setting the global discourse and agenda on sustainable urban development, (ii) drives political discussions, (iii) generates specialised and cutting-edge knowledge, (iv) shapes technical norms, principles and standards, and (v) acts as a multiplier in the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practices in getting cities and human settlements right.

Our ambition is a reflection of the urgency to address the challenges of urbanization and capitalise on opportunities to achieve impact wherever we are present, including through strategic partnerships and active participation in the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

The Strategic Plan 2020-203 represents a new spirit! A new UN-Habitat! Together we can contribute to making sure no one and no place is left behind.

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, (UN-Habitat)

INTRODUCTION

In its resolution 26/3, adopted at its twenty-1 sixth session, in May 2017, the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) requested the Executive Director to consult and work closely with the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the preparation of a results-oriented six-year strategic plan for the period 2020-2025¹ and present it to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session. Accordingly, the present document sets out the Strategic Plan for 2020-2023, which was endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its seventy-first regular meeting, on 6 December 2018 and subsequently approved by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session organized from 27 to 31 May 2019 in Nairobi.

2. The Strategic Plan for 2020–2023 repositions UN-Habitat as a major global entity, a centre of excellence and innovation. In that respect, the organization is refocusing its niche position as the "thought leader" and the go-to programme for issues pertaining to its work, setting the global discourse and agenda on sustainable urban development, driving political discussion, generating specialized and cutting-edge knowledge, shaping technical norms, principles and standards, and acting as a multiplier in the exchange of knowledge, experience and best practice in getting cities and other human settlements right.

3. Chapter 1, entitled "Changing for increased

5. Chapter 3, entitled "New ways of working", sets out the main points of the implementation arrangements for the Strategic Plan, full details of which are provided in companion documents to the present Strategic Plan.

The process of developing the Strategic Plan 6 has taken into account General Assembly resolution 70/1, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants; and the New Urban Agenda. It has also factored in lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2014–2019 and considered the internal change process currently being carried out by UN-Habitat, as well as the overall reform process of the United Nations, particularly the reform of the United Nations development system. Furthermore, the preparation of the Strategic Plan has been marked by an unprecedented inclusive and participatory process, which involved Member States, UN-Habitat staff in Nairobi and in the field, agencies of the United Nations system, and networks of partners and stakeholders.

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