



**Twenty-sixth session**  
Nairobi, 8–12 May 2017

## **Draft proceedings of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its twenty-sixth session**

### **I. Organization of the session (agenda items 1–4)**

#### **A. Opening of the session**

1. The twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) was opened at 11.20 a.m. on Monday, 8 May 2017, by Mr. Michal Mlynar, President of the Governing Council.

2. Welcoming participants, he drew attention to the particular significance of the current session as the first to be held following the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in October 2016, at which Heads of State and Government, ministers and high representatives had adopted the New Urban Agenda.

3. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, delivered by pre-recorded video; Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the United Nations General Assembly; and Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya.

4. The Director-General, in her statement, said that the Secretary-General of the United Nations was determined to change the narrative about the African continent and that the United Nations Office at Nairobi, which hosted both UNEP and UN-Habitat, the only two United Nations programmes to be headquartered in the global South, was well equipped and prepared to contribute to that change. A few days after taking office, the Secretary-General had attended the twenty-eighth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2017, at which he had conveyed a message of solidarity with and respect for African leaders and said that he wanted to introduce more flexibility, accountability, decentralization and simplification in the way the United Nations conducted its business.

5. In his statement, the Executive Director of UNEP said that the future of humanity was urban and that half of humanity was already living in cities, with the rate fast approaching 60 per cent globally and already at around 80 per cent in Latin America. Although such development should be celebrated given that urbanization was closely linked to poverty reduction, he said that cities worldwide needed to address common challenges involved in creating greener cities, protecting and developing parks, establishing mass transit systems and improving waste management, among other things, and that UN-Habitat played a critical role in providing assistance and support to that end. He noted that investors had set their sights on the green economy, highlighting their anticipation of a greener future. In order to accelerate the move towards that greener future, he emphasized the need to establish a circular economy and strengthen partnerships between Governments, the United Nations and the private sector, as well as within the United Nations, as requested by the Secretary-General.

6. In his statement, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat expressed profound gratitude to the Government of Kenya for its constant support as host of UN-Habitat and said that the New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito in October 2016, paved the way for a paradigm shift towards a new model of urbanization designed to sustain the significant socioeconomic transformations it would trigger in the coming decade, especially in Africa. Urbanization was inevitable and offered an unmissable opportunity for prosperity, growth and development, with no one left behind provided that the process was properly managed, failing which it could pose a risk to peace and security. The New Urban Agenda was thus an action-oriented plan constituting a framework of cooperation for addressing the complex challenges of sustainable urbanization by, among other things, generating new urban employment and forms of livelihood. Those challenges could not be tackled in isolation, however, and one of the innovative approaches promoted by the New Urban Agenda was the concept of dialogue between central and local government.

7. UN-Habitat had over 40 years of internationally recognized expertise in urbanization and human settlements, boasted the combination of normative and operational capacities as one of its greatest assets and was a global focal point for sustainable urbanization. It was therefore well equipped to support the delivery of the New Urban Agenda and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 11, on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as well as other Goals with urban components. He looked forward to working with participants on the draft revised strategic plan for the period 2014–2019 and to their support in strengthening the work and capacities of UN-Habitat with a view to enhancing its responsiveness, effectiveness and accountability. In that context, he welcomed the establishment by the United Nations Secretary-General of the high-level independent panel tasked with undertaking an evidence-based assessment of UN-Habitat, including formulating recommendations for its strengthening. The panel members, he said, would witness the transformational results in sustainable urban development achieved through UN-Habitat programmes, including thanks to the engagement of a broad range of partners and stakeholders worldwide, who had also contributed voluntary efforts towards the development of the New Urban Agenda. It was through such effective choice, quality design and public commitment that socioeconomic and environmental progress and positive outcomes from sustainable urbanization were accomplished. The New Urban Agenda therefore stood as a vital tool for the planning, design and financing of sustainable cities around the globe.

8. In his remarks, the President of the United Nations General Assembly said that, in aiming to make cities and human settlements more inclusive, resilient and sustainable, the action-oriented New Urban Agenda was an important complement to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Fidelity to the latter and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals offered the best hope for a secure future insofar as they represented the master plan for the sustainability of human life and were inextricably linked to the health, vitality, quality and success of urban settlements. In the light of their substantial contribution to national economies and the many communities attracted to their midst for a variety of reasons, cities were assuming an increasingly critical role but their housing, sanitation and other standards remained inadequate for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Unmet expectations could fuel violence, to which women and children were often the most vulnerable, while the damage to the natural environment from carbon emissions, pollution, waste and poor planning was pushing humanity closer to the precipice of unsustainability.

9. The session's focus on opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda was therefore timely and integral to common progress. Upcoming events such as the second annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 were further examples of the tangible opportunities that must be embraced for creating more sustainable, just and inclusive societies. The clear appetite for change should therefore be harnessed through advancing a rights-based, people-centred approach to development; increasing global public awareness of the essential actions of transformation captured in the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda; taking steps at the national and international levels to unlock the trillions needed to finance that transformation, including the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable investment and facilitating early private-sector involvement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; strengthening multi-stakeholder action and collaboration, particularly in cities; embracing technology and innovation; and ensuring that the United Nations was fit to facilitate such engagement and support countries in need.

10. In the interest of the common good, he urged support for the anticipated United Nations reform proposals in the areas of development, peace and management, which would undoubtedly have an impact on the work of UN-Habitat. He likewise urged all participants to engage in the forthcoming high-level meeting of the General Assembly to be held in August 2017 in order to hear responses to

the proposals of the Secretary-General and his high-level panel concerning the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the strengthening of UN-Habitat. The discussions would be crucially important, he said, to ensuring that the United Nations was able to assist progress and catalyse change in the world's cities and human settlements through its support for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, which were deeply connected.

11. In his keynote address, Mr. Kenyatta said that the current session of the Governing Council was a milestone for UN-Habitat as the first to be held since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, adding that the latter provided the basis upon which to review the Programme's mandate and positioning within the United Nations system. Calling on participants to show the leadership needed to seize the opportunities and address the challenges inherent to its implementation, he said that the first step was to send out a strong political message of support and that Kenya, which remained fully committed to UN-Habitat, would work constructively with colleagues in that regard. The fact that the world's urban population was set to increase by an estimated 3.5 billion people by 2050, almost 90 per cent of them in Africa and Asia, was a matter of great concern to all. Urbanization in Kenya, whose capital city was projected to grow to 6 million by 2030, had, he said, been greatly influenced by the creation of 47 counties and the new county governments would be crucial to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at the national level. His Government, in line with the 2030 Agenda, was promoting integrated regional and urban planning and management, together with the use of new, sustainable, technologies for environmentally friendly housing construction and green energy for human settlements.

12. Collaboration, partnership and a willingness to share with others the lessons learned in such areas were key to achieving the paradigm shift and the common vision of the links between economic growth, standards of living and environmental sustainability encapsulated in the New Urban Agenda, and the first step, in his view, was to empower UN-Habitat to serve as the focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements with adequate and predictable resources. To that end he urged fellow member States to follow the example of Kenya at the previous session of the Governing Council and increase their voluntary contributions. UN-Habitat, for its part, needed to reform its organization and structure and to develop more innovative resource mobilization strategies. He therefore welcomed the appointment by the United Nations Secretary-General of a high-level panel of experts to conduct an evidence-based, independent assessment of the Programme and looked forward to considering the panel's recommendations, which would help to make UN-Habitat more effective, efficient and accountable in its decision-making, in the discussion of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at the high-level meeting to be held at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

13. In concluding, he commended the Executive Director of UN-Habitat on his key contribution as Secretary-General of Habitat III, congratulating him on the success of the Conference and bidding him farewell in the light of the end of his tenure in 2017, and declared open the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat.

14. The text of the Secretary-General's message is reproduced in annex II to the present proceedings.

15. Following the opening statements, the World Habitat Awards for 2016–2017 were presented. The first winner was the Nubian Vault Foundation, which had implemented a successful programme for the development of appropriate housing in the Sahel region as part of its work to provide affordable, sustainable housing for as many people as possible. The second winner was More than Housing, a Swiss housing cooperative providing homes for people from a wide range of backgrounds and income levels, in which context it also worked to promote an ethos of initiative-taking and self-organization.

## **B. Attendance**

16. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented: *[to be completed]*

17. The following States not members of the Governing Council were represented: *[to be completed]*

18. Observers to the UN-Habitat for *[to be completed]* also participated.

19. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: *[to be completed]*

20. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also attended: *[to be completed]*

### **C. Election of officers**

21. At its 1st plenary meeting, on the morning of Monday, 8 May 2017, the Governing Council elected the following officers for the session:

President:

Mr. Venkaiah Naidu (India)

Vice-Presidents:

Mr. Franz Marré (Germany)

Mr. James Macharia (Kenya)

[*To be nominated*] (XX)

Rapporteur:

Mr. Andrey Chibis (Russian Federation)

22. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 9 May 2017, it was agreed that the representative of Colombia would provisionally assume the position of Vice-President for the duration of the current meeting, pending the election of a Vice-President by the Latin American and Caribbean States.

### **D. Credentials**

23. In pursuance of rule 16, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, the Bureau reported to the Council at its 5th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday 10 May, that it had examined the credentials submitted by delegations attending the twenty-sixth session of the Council and had found them to be in order. The Council approved the report of the Bureau on credentials at the same meeting.

### **E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

24. At its 1st plenary meeting, on the morning of Monday, 8 May 2017, the Governing Council had before it the provisional agenda for the session (HSP/GC/26/1).

25. The Governing Council adopted the following agenda for its twenty-sixth session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Credentials.
4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
5. Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including coordination matters.
6. Review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).
7. Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council.
8. Work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 2018–2019.
9. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report of the session.
12. Closure of the session.

### **F. Organization of work**

26. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Governing Council established a sessional committee of the whole, chaired by Mr. Macharia (Kenya), to which it allocated agenda items 5, 6 8 and 9. The Council would be free to consider issues arising under items 5 and 7 and other items during its plenary meetings.

27. The work of the plenary meetings for the first three days of the session was divided into two segments: a high-level segment, featuring general debate by ministers and other high-level representatives, would be held on the first and second days, and a dialogue of Governments with local authorities and other partners on the special theme of the session would be held on the third day.

28. The Governing Council also established a drafting committee to consider the draft resolutions submitted to the Council. It was agreed that the draft resolutions recommended by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and presented in plenary by its chair, Mr. James Kimonyo (Rwanda), would first be considered by the Committee of the Whole, which would submit them to the drafting committee for further consideration, and that, following their consideration by the drafting committee, they would be submitted to the Council through the Committee for possible adoption at a plenary meeting.

29. In considering the agenda items, the Governing Council had before it the documents listed for each item in the annotations to the agenda for the session (HSP/GC/26/1/Add.1) together with a list of those documents arranged by item (HSP/GC/26/INF/1).

## **G. Policy statement by the Executive Director**

30. In presenting his policy statement, the Executive Director said that he was looking forward to working with the incoming Bureau and member States in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at a crucial time for the future of UN-Habitat and sustainable urbanization worldwide. The preparatory process for Habitat III had provided an opportunity for a deep and insightful analysis of the evolution of urbanization over the previous twenty years, which had revealed the rapid pace of urbanization that had led to some 60 per cent of the world's population living in cities in 2016. The trend had lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, including in China, where the dual process of industrialization and urbanization had driven growth, innovation and job creation. With most urban growth currently taking place in developing countries, Africa, and especially sub-Saharan Africa, was expected to lead the rate of urbanization in the next twenty years.

31. In the lead-up to Habitat III, UN-Habitat had prepared a representative global sample of cities – a study of 200 cities worldwide with populations of more than 100,000 inhabitants. A detailed analysis of the sample had shown that land consumption for urbanization was outstripping urban population growth, leading to unchecked urban sprawl and a decreased density of urban dwellers per urban area. The trend represented a challenge to sustainable urbanization as it increased the cost of services per capita with a consequent impact on urban economic sustainability; it led to a rise in energy consumption, which affected environmental sustainability; and it dispersed populations into segregated neighbourhoods, which eroded social sustainability. In addition, the decrease in adequate urban planning and design in the most rapidly growing cities had led to a rise in informal settlements and unplanned areas. Moreover, in both the developed and developing countries, large segments of the population lacked access to adequate and affordable housing, which increased urban inequality and had a negative impact on people's general well-being, threatening social cohesion in cities and human settlements.

32. The relationship between high-quality urbanization and development had been emphasized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want," and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Recent analysis of the contribution of urbanization to increased prosperity had revealed that the transformation towards a post-industrial, service-sector economy derived from the substantial economic value, and thus greater wealth, that was generated in cities as a result of economies of agglomeration. With regard to the relationship between urbanization and climate change, the higher rate of fossil fuel consumption in cities as a result of urbanization represented a significant environmental challenge in many parts of the world, requiring a robust commitment to the decarbonization of energy systems worldwide.

33. The New Urban Agenda incorporated lessons learned from urban crises and ways in which such crises could be overcome, and advocated a commitment to three focus areas: urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; and urban economy and municipal finance. It also called for strong cooperation between central, subnational and local levels of government, and the use of national urban policies.

34. Urbanization had been recognized as a value-generating process, an accelerator of development and an endogenous source of wealth in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. As a result, some member States had requested UN-Habitat to provide technical support in accelerating their substantive urban improvement

processes, and UN-Habitat was exploring triangular linkages with development banks and cities to elaborate innovative methods of financing for sustainable urbanization. As part of its strategies, UN-Habitat was implementing the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019 with an emphasis on the fundamentals of urbanization in order to better serve the requirements of member States and cities around the world. With seven subprogrammes, five regional offices, four priority areas and four cross-cutting issues – gender, youth, climate change and human rights – the strategic plan provided an efficient and flexible mechanism for productively assigning resources to projects, exploiting synergies and breaking down organizational silos, and enhancing coordination between normative and operational activities.

35. In closing, he emphasized the significant efforts that had been made by UN-Habitat to reduce costs, increase efficiency and boost productivity across the Programme, and drew attention to the increased demand from member States for UN-Habitat support as well as the substantial decrease in non-earmarked contributions in the current biennium 2016–2017. The strengthening of UN-Habitat was fundamental to fulfilling the ambitions of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda and he called on member States to support the Programme, in particular through a marked increase in non-earmarked contributions.

## **H. Working group on programme and budget**

36. Ms. Julia Pataki (Romania), chair of the working group on programme and budget established by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, pursuant to resolution 25/7, to strengthen the oversight role of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, reported on the work that the group had undertaken in completing its mandate and highlighted the constructive outcomes, the challenges encountered and the group's recommendations.

37. Regarding the outcomes she said that the working group had, among other things, provided for more frequent and direct interaction with the secretariat; fostered a greater two-way flow of information, in particular on operational and financial aspects of the Programme; and enabled member States to gain greater insight into the secretariat's operations, procedures and reporting, thus leading to enhanced cooperation and mutual understanding.

38. Among the challenges she drew attention to the fact that, inter alia, the relative infrequency of meetings had given member States a fragmented oversight process; that there had been insufficient follow-up to and reporting on the implementation of recommendations; and that information had not been shared widely and in a timely manner with all member States.

39. In response to those and other challenges, the group recommended that its mandate be extended into the next biennium; that more regular meetings be considered to ensure continuous monitoring; that it be requested to develop an implementation and follow-up process for its recommendations; and that the secretariat, for its part, be requested to improve the quality and timely delivery of updates, reports and other documentation to member States.

## **I. Work of the Committee of the Whole (agenda items 5, 6, 8 and 9)**

40. The Committee of the Whole established by the Governing Council at its 1st plenary meeting was chaired by Mr. Macharia (Kenya), one of the three Vice-Presidents of the Council. At its 1st meeting, on the afternoon of Monday, 8 May 2017, the Chair informed the Committee that it would consider agenda items 5, 6, 8 and 9.

41. *[to be completed]*

## **J. Work of the drafting committee and adoption of resolutions**

42. *[to be completed]*

## **II. High-level segment and dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council (agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8)**

### **A. High-level segment**

43. The Governing Council took up agenda items 5–8 at its 2nd plenary meeting, on the afternoon on Monday, 8 May 2017, at which time it began the high-level general debate on those items. The general debate continued at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on Tuesday, 9 May 2017. A summary of the general debate by the President of the Governing Council is set forth in annex III to the present proceedings.

**B. Dialogue on the special theme for the twenty-sixth session**

44. At its 5th and 6th plenary meetings, on Wednesday, 10 May 2017, the Governing Council held a dialogue on the special theme for the session, “Opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda”, under agenda item 7. The dialogue comprised an opening session followed by three sessions on the sub-themes of the dialogue, as follows: (a) sub-theme 1: promoting access to adequate and sustainable housing; (b) sub-theme 2: integrated human settlements planning for sustainable urbanization; and (c) sub-theme 3: synergies and financing for sustainable urbanization. The discussion sessions featured a moderator and a panel of speakers, presentations by the panellists, comments from the floor and reactions from the panellists. A summary of the dialogue is set forth in annex IV to the present proceedings.

**III. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council (agenda item 9)**

45. *[to be completed]*

**IV. Other matters (agenda item 10)**

46. *[to be completed]*

**V. Adoption of the report of the session (agenda item 11)**

47. *[to be completed]*

**VI. Closure of the session (agenda item 12)**

48. *[to be completed]*

## **Annex I**

### **Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its twenty-sixth session**

*[to be completed]*



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## Annex II

### **Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its twenty-sixth session**

Thank you to all participants at this UN-Habitat Governing Council for your commitment to a more sustainable future.

We live in a century of unprecedented urban growth. For the first time in history, cities are home to more than half of humanity. By 2050, two out of every three people on earth will live in urban areas.

I welcome your focus on implementing the New Urban Agenda, which can foster greener, cleaner, safer and more inclusive cities.

With the right approach, urbanization can address inequality, economic stagnation, climate change and disasters.

That will advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

To realize a life of dignity for all, we need cities that are free of crime, pollution and poverty – cities where diversity is celebrated and the social fabric is strong.

We will work together with the Governing Council to strengthen UN-Habitat's capabilities to support countries in realising this vision.

Thank you.

## Annex III

### Summary by the President of the high-level debate

1. Many representatives expressed their commitment to the goals of UN-Habitat, and thanked the organization for assisting them to achieve national objectives with regard to cities and human settlements. There was widespread appreciation of the commitment and contribution to the global urban agenda of Mr. Joan Clos and Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director respectively, and many offered them best wishes on their imminent departure from UN-Habitat.

2. Several representatives said that the theme of the meeting – “Opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda” – was timely and appropriate to maintain the commitment demonstrated at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held in Quito in October 2016 and expressed support also for the three sub-themes on promoting access to adequate and sustainable housing; integrated human settlements planning for sustainable urbanization; and synergies and financing for sustainable urbanization.

3. Many representatives outlined their goals and aspirations for human settlements, at all levels from local to global and recognized the role of sustainable urbanization in the process of socioeconomic transformation. There was agreement that cities should be well managed, through the adoption of a holistic approach that ensured harmonization of the various strands of urban development. Cities should be inclusive, accommodating all inhabitants, including the marginalized and vulnerable, and providing opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential; they should be safe and secure; they should be energy efficient and climate friendly; they should offer good accessibility and connectivity, through the application of articulated and well planned public transport systems; they should be environmentally sustainable, and should provide adequate open spaces for recreation; and they should ensure the adequate provision of public services. Several said that housing was worthy of special attention, given its dominant presence in the urbanized space, and the basic human need for and right to affordable, good-quality housing, with security of tenure. Several highlighted the role of cities as drivers of national economic and social development, and the need to ensure policies and strategies that enabled them to fulfil that role, including through the delivery of education and training that provided citizens with the skills to contribute to the wealth and well-being of the city. All of those aims required effective governance that promoted collaborative and inclusive approaches, that was sensitive to the needs for equity, human rights and gender equality, and that supported innovative solutions to pressing urban challenges. Lastly, efficient institutional mechanisms and structures were required to ensure that cities and human settlements functioned properly, in line with the policies and strategies that had been put in place.

4. There was consensus that the achievement of those goals and aspirations faced a wide array of challenges. A large and growing number of urban dwellers still lived in slums and informal settlements. Urban development agendas were being compromised by lack of funding and resources. Certain problems had taken on increasing prominence in recent years, including the flows of migrants, refugees and displaced persons, the threat of terrorist activity, and the destruction of urban settlements due to armed conflict, all of which were threatening urban stability, governance and the provision of services. All the challenges facing urban settlements were exacerbated by the rapid rate of urbanization that was particularly being experienced by the developing countries, with rural–urban migration swelling the ranks of city dwellers. In those circumstances, the provision of decent, affordable housing presented a formidable challenge. Other problems highlighted by representatives included congestion, pollution, environmental degradation, poverty and the overloading of urban services and amenities. In addition, there was often a lack of capacity and resources at all levels of government to deal with the challenges facing cities and other settlements.

5. A number of representatives placed progress on human settlements in the context of recent international agreements and accords that embraced the urban agenda within the wider framework of sustainable development, and recognized the interconnectedness of all aspects of social, economic and environmental advancement. Such agreements included the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets; the Paris Agreement on climate change; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Of particular pertinence was Sustainable Development Goal 11, on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, which was closely linked to the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III, and for which UN-Habitat would need to provide effective support to Member States for its implementation, monitoring and reporting. One representative said that the achievement of

Sustainable Development Goal 11 would entail quality organization and coordination, and the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders at local, national, regional and international levels.

6. Several representatives highlighted actions being taken at the regional level to support the national implementation of actions in the human settlements arena. The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD), for example, was addressing rapid urbanization in the region and strengthening South-South cooperation; the Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development was a consultative mechanism to promote housing policies and strategies for sustainable urban development in Arab countries under the auspices of the League of Arab States; the Union for the Mediterranean had supported five flagship projects on sustainable urban development in selected countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea; and the Economic Commission for Europe had agreed on the Geneva Charter on Sustainable Housing in October 2015 to improve the sustainability of housing through effective policies and actions at all levels, supported by international cooperation.

7. There was general agreement on the importance of Habitat III and its outcomes, particularly the New Urban Agenda, which was viewed as a major milestone in the history of efforts to improve the urban environment, and a significant framework for action on human settlements in the coming decades and for promoting an integrated and cross-sectoral approach. Several representatives said that their countries shared the vision of the New Urban Agenda. One representative said that the initiative would help Member States to achieve increased access to decent shelter, reduce inequalities, promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, achieve gender equality, improve human health and well-being, foster resilience, and protect the environment. Another representative said that the New Urban Agenda marked the first step towards improving methods of planning and governing urban areas in a manner directed towards social inclusion and urban poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and resilient urban development. Many representatives highlighted the strong linkages between the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, which would complement the cross-cutting and holistic character of the Sustainable Development Goals. One representative said that the New Urban Agenda had been translated into the local language of his country in order to increase its accessibility.

8. There was agreement that the goals of the New Urban Agenda could only be achieved through effective action by UN-Habitat in collaboration with all stakeholders, including both State and non-State actors, supported by political will from policymakers and decision makers. One representative drew attention to the need for coordination between countries and sectors as well as strengthened synergies within the United Nations system in the implementation of the Agenda. Several representatives stressed the need for sufficient resources to fully implement the Agenda. The need to “localize” the Agenda, so that its application was tailored to national and local circumstances, was stressed by a number of representatives. There was support for the basic principle of the Agenda that no one was to be left behind in the efforts to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and improving the inclusion of all stakeholders, including youth, women and vulnerable groups, in the implementation of the Agenda. One representative praised the recognition of World Cities Day as one of the initiatives to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. A number of representatives said that the upcoming ninth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018, which would bring together global experts in all aspects of urban settlement, offered a major opportunity to assess early progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda and to shape future efforts to resolve the urban settlement challenges facing the planet.

9. Many representatives highlighted efforts being made in their countries to resolve urban issues and to bring about improvements in all aspects of life in cities and towns. Some referred to the role of national urban policies in sustaining such efforts. Several said that decentralization and devolution of responsibilities to local authorities had helped localize the urban agenda and develop tailored solutions to local challenges. An integrated approach involving all stakeholders, including communities, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, had proved effective in mobilizing resources and expertise. Several representatives spoke of supportive legislation, regulatory measures, policies and strategies that had assisted in formulating and implementing measures in the areas of planned urban growth, housing development, upgrading informal settlements, preventing slums and urban sprawl, social housing schemes, investment in infrastructure, mobilization of resources and environmental protection. The generation of revenue to finance the provision of essential services was viewed as a particular challenge, with some referring to public-private partnership as a positive approach. The role of partners and donors in supporting the elaboration of national policies and programmes for sustainable urban development was acknowledged. One representative said that in his country, the application of a spatial development framework had proved a useful tool in making spatially sound investment decisions, and a housing development fund was being operationalized to help mobilize low-interest funding to ensure affordable housing for targeted income groups. One representative explained how a road funds authority had been created in collaboration with the private

sector, civil society and development partners. Another representative said that his country had launched a citizen's charter to help basic services to reach all inhabitants. One representative stressed the importance of support for countries to assist rebuilding in post-conflict circumstances. Another representative said that it was important to maintain the cultural identity of settlements through sympathetic modernization. Lastly, one representative said that his country had produced a document on architectural policies as guidance on various models of housing development.

10. The need for adequate financial and other support to achieve national targets for sustainable urban development, particularly for developing countries, was highlighted by a number of representatives. One representative urged UN-Habitat to also improve the housing conditions of the rural population, referring to the "providing urban amenities to rural areas" principle initiated in India. One representative highlighted that most internally displaced persons came from rural areas. Several stressed that the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should form the basis of international assistance. Sharing best practices and knowledge, technology transfer, South-South cooperation, investment in scientific research, and capacity-building were all suggested as means of assisting countries in achieving their national targets. One representative said that the lack of adequate and predictable resources to support the work of UN-Habitat was of great concern, particularly the dwindling amounts of non-earmarked funding, which was compromising the ability of the organization to deliver on its mandate. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the importance of providing adequate financial and human resources to UN-Habitat, while urging the organization to address its weaknesses with a clear-headed approach.

11. Some representatives announced their sponsorship of, or support for, resolutions before the Governing Council at the current session. One representative urged that participants limit any resolutions they put forward to the mandate of UN-Habitat and the goals of the New Urban Agenda, and avoid politicization.

12. On the way forward for UN-Habitat, several representatives welcomed the evidence-based and independent assessment of the organization, as requested in the New Urban Agenda. The independence of the assessment was underlined as being crucial to the exercise by one representative. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that inputs from the Nairobi-based Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat should be factored in, given that Nairobi was the headquarters of UN-Habitat. In addition, when considering the organization's biennial work programme, the Governing Council should ensure that the interests and priorities of developing and least developed countries were fully taken into account. Another representative said that the request, in the New Urban Agenda, that the outcome of the assessment include recommendations to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and oversight of UN-Habitat was timely, and of great importance to improve the governance structure and financial capability of the Programme. Representatives of United Nations entities underlined the opportunities offered by sustainable urbanization, for example, in creating a market space, improving connectivity, addressing risk behaviour and social problems in informal settlements and promoting inclusive industrialization.

13. Several representatives emphasized the partnership enjoyed by their countries with UN-Habitat. On the future role of UN-Habitat, some representatives expressed concern about the commitment of stakeholders to the objectives of the organization, and urged UN-Habitat to make concerted efforts to play a full role in pushing forward the sustainable urban development agenda. One representative, stressing the need for strong commitment and renewed vision, urged that parties make greater efforts to support UN-Habitat at the ministerial level. One representative noted that the 2016 evaluation undertaken by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network had been largely positive, concluding that UN-Habitat provided strong leadership on sustainable urbanization, while observing that performance could be strengthened and improved in some areas. In that regard, it was important that budget projections were realistic, in order to restore donor confidence. Another representative called for UN-Habitat to demonstrate strong leadership, strategic vision and constructive engagement with member States. Yet another representative said that UN-Habitat should modernize how it thought and worked and should respond to requests to increase its transparency and accountability.

## **Annex IV**

### **Summaries by the President of the Governing Council of the dialogue on the special theme of the twenty-sixth session**

*[to be completed]*

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