

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, distinguished guests, Ministers, ambassadors and delegates, all protocols observed,

Good morning.

Mr. President:

- Let me congratulate the organizers of this assembly and the host country for this historic and successful assembly.
- What is also very noteworthy is the achievement of the current Director, Madam Maimunah Mohd Sharif, in guiding UN-Habitat through this very difficult period and enabling an organization which is more successful, more relevant, and more needed than ever before in this rapidly changing world. Madam Director, we thank you for that.

Mr. President:

- Somalia has one of the world's youngest populations, with 8 out of 10 Somalis younger than 35 years of age. Decades of conflict and recurrent environmental disasters have transformed the demography from rural to urban dwellers resulting in one of the highest urbanization rates across Africa at a rate of 40%¹.
- If current trends continue, by 2040, 62% of Somalia's population will live in cities.
- Multiple crises, such as natural factors, climate change, as well as internal displacement caused by drought, armed conflict and insecurity threaten and still threaten the very future of Somalia.
- As a nation transitioning out of protracted conflict, we share a similar experience with other similar nations.
- Currently, there are more than 2.6 million people living in protracted internal displacement in cities across Somalia

¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/somalia/overview>

- Another 1 million Somalis are in displacement in neighbouring countries, bringing the total displaced population to approximately 20% of the current estimated population of Somalia.
- The displacement especially impacts children, youth, and women through a lack of education, access to health services and livelihoods.

Mr. President:

- The 4 domains of change and the 3 transformative commitments highlighted in the UNHABITAT strategy are particularly important. We need to ensure that nations who are undergoing transition and post-conflict societies have that strong approach and support and the tools for effective urban crisis prevention and response.

Mr. President:

- Recognizing the importance of urbanization the high youth population, IDP's, refugees, and the impact it has on the sustainability of cities in Somalia; the government of Somalia has made urbanization a central priority for rebuilding the urban infrastructure, although the gap between the need and available resources are beyond the comparison.
- The government has taken strides to support the Accelerating Transformation of Informal Settlements in Somalia by ensuring that it is aligned with the national development frameworks including the National Development Plan and the Government Roadmap for Development. Our expectation is that 2030 will be too early for us, but we will not hesitate to achieve as much as possible.
- The Ministry and the UNHABITAT Somalia country office are now in the process of developing an Urban Policy, as well as the strategy and implementation plan for Somalia to support the development of adequate urban systems, affordable housing, and the institutional capacity to cope with the increasing population demands on our cities.

Mr. President: to conclude my remarks:

- The slogan of the Urban Agenda, '**Leave no one - *and no place* - behind**'
It is important to continue to make space for discussions that reflect the challenging realities of urbanization in transition states.
- We are excited by the opportunity to do so with our partners and the wider global community.

Thank you all!