



# REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## High-Level Political Forum

Thematic Session “SDG 11 and interlinkages with other  
SDGs - Sustainable cities and communities”

Statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat,  
Sustainable Urbanization, and the New Urban Agenda

Statement by Ms. Joanna Skoczek,  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland  
to the United Nations

New York, 13 July 2023

Mister President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization, and the New Urban Agenda - a group of 50 Member States from all regions of the world working together to elevate the importance of sustainable urbanization for the attainment of the agreed global agendas.

Mister President,

The SDG 11 synthesis report states that by 2030, we will not meet key SDG 11 targets without major shifts in urban policy and investments. Delivering on SDG 11 matters because humanity's present and future is urban. Now is the time to think, plan, and act urban. Everyone's ability to pursue a healthy, productive, and peaceful life is directly tied to where we live.

In April last year, the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda positioned the New Urban Agenda as a road map for attainment of the SDGs, the commitments of the Paris Agreement, and other global agendas. The bottom line of the statements of 83 country delegations was clear: If we get it right in cities and communities, we can achieve the goals we have set ourselves.

Five priorities emerged from the actions and commitments that Member States declared to accelerate its implementation: adequate housing, urban climate action, crisis resilience, localization, and financing. The second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, held in Nairobi in June this year, advanced global policy guidance in these five areas. The ten adopted resolutions provide directions to steer sustainable urban development and the achievement of the SDGs at the local level. Particularly the resolutions on Adequate Housing and on Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums that contribute directly to the attainment of target 11.1, make an important contribution to this Forum and beyond.

Mister President,

The SDG 11 Synthesis report states that rescuing SDG 11 is possible but requires transformative actions that depart from status quo, business-as-usual responses. These include national urban policy, inclusive urban planning, and an urban data revolution.

To harness the power of urbanization, it will be crucial for us to establish national urban policies that are integrated into our long-term national planning and economic development strategies. Rather than respond to its manifestations on an ad hoc basis, we must use urbanization to bring about balanced territorial development, sustainable infrastructure investments, and digital access and connectivity.

We must invest in subnational and local governments, ensuring they have the capacity to plan, invest, govern, and deliver urban basic services to foster social inclusivity, climate resilience and biodiversity. This should include increasing the fiscal space for local management and creating mechanisms to coordinate actions and investments across national and sub-national government levels.

A third transformation required to rescue SDG 11, is an urban data revolution. Our ability to establish national policy and practice inclusive urban planning depends on our ability to collect and analyze data at the local level in an inclusive manner. This will involve utilizing innovations in information and communications technology to combine spatial, area-based data with demographic and health data that captures our lived and built environment. The development of international guidelines on people-centred smart cities as a non-binding framework for developing national and local smart city regulations, plans and strategies would ensure that digital urban infrastructure and data contribute to making cities and human settlements sustainable, inclusive and prosperous and respectful of human rights.

The New Urban Agenda provides clear guidance on how to respond to the risks of rapid urbanization and how to tap into the opportunities for achieving all SDGs when we plan, manage, govern, and finance cities and human settlements in a way that makes them inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. If we act now on the three areas of housing, climate, and crises in the urban context, and increase our efforts in countries and cities to localize the SDGs, we have a chance to get back on track in the commitments we have made to this and future generations.