

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. CHOL M.U AJONGO,
AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN ON BEHALF
OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE 2ND SESSION OF UN-
HABITAT ASSEMBLY, ON 5TH JUNE 2023, IN GIGIRI, NAIROBI**

THE CHAIR OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY,

MADAM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

On behalf of the African Group in Nairobi, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to address this 2nd Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly. I wish to thank the Government of Kenya for the hospitality extended to our respective delegations since their arrival in Nairobi.

Excellency Chair,

The members of the African group are delighted to participate in this Assembly. As a second session of the assembly, it marks the coming of age of the new governance structure of UN-Habitat that was adopted in 2018 and the confirmation of the UN-Habitat Assembly as the ultimate multilateral forum on urbanization and human settlements issues.

The theme of the assembly, the various thematic topics, and the agenda items will provide us with an opportunity to address some of the most pressing issues in urbanization and human settlements.

The group is pleased that adequate and affordable housing, urban climate action, Urban crises recovery, localization of SDGs, and finance and prosperity are top on the agenda of the Assembly. All these are important issues for Africa and the world. It is therefore our expectation that the assembly will come up with key decisions and concrete actions to address them.

In an attempt to propose solutions to some of the challenges affecting our region and the world, the African group and its member states have proposed a number of resolutions for adoption by the assembly. The resolutions cover diverse and relevant areas such as adequate housing, Urban planning, and sustainable infrastructure, Human settlements resilience framework, urban climate resilience, the transformation of informal settlements and slums, as well as equitable financing and monitoring of resolutions.

The group wishes to express appreciation for the support it has received during the negotiation process of these resolutions during the Open-ended as well as the informal sessions of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

We invite all member states to continue engaging with us positively on these resolutions and to provide support for their adoption by the assembly and subsequent implementation.

We also express support for the resolutions proposed by other member states and look forward to discussing each of the resolutions and engaging in a constructive manner on their content and capacity to promote sustainable urbanization.

Excellency chair,

The African Group has always advocated for a strengthened UN-Habitat that is fit for purpose in addressing the ever-rising challenges of urbanization and human settlements.

We, therefore, support the decision to align the planning cycle of UN-Habitat with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. It's our expectation that this alignment will allow the program to leverage the performance planning and reporting synergies with the General Assembly and other UN entities. We also support the convening of a resumed assembly session in two years' time and the third regular session in 2029.

The group also joins the consensus to extend the term of office of the current Assembly bureau and the Executive Board membership for two years.

We hope that this will allow the Executive Board to prepare the strategic plan for the next period before the resumed session of the assembly in 2025.

The African group recognizes that for the organization to deliver on its mandate effectively, there is need to provide the necessary financial resources. While the urbanization challenges the organization is tasked to address in its normative and programmatic work are daunting, the organization's regular budget and non-earmarked foundation continue to be underfunded.

The Group notes the positive trend in contributions by Member States to the non-earmarked foundation budget during the previous year and thanks all member states who continue to remit their contributions. The Group also appreciates the efforts by the Executive Director to implement expenditure control measures and spearhead an intensive resources mobilization strategy that resulted in a budgetary surplus in 2022.

With the adoption of a new governance structure, we believe the organization is on a firm path to improve its governance processes and urge member states and donors to support UN-Habitat to implement its mandate, especially by increasing non-earmarked contributions.

Excellency chair, distinguished delegates,

Our region is urbanizing at a fast rate with the urban population expected to triple by 2050. However, rapid urbanization is not matched by sufficient job creation or structural transformation to meet the needs of our ever-rising urban population.

While we appreciate UN-Habitat for the support given to our region, we call for the strengthening of the capacity and presence, both at the country and regional level, of the regional office for Africa to efficiently support the rapid urbanization process in our region.

We also note the need for strengthened collaboration between UN-Habitat and regional institutions on issues pertaining to human settlements and sustainable urbanization. The ongoing collaboration between UN-Habitat and African Union in developing the continental framework on urban Resilience is a clear example of the wide scope for collaborative efforts.

We call on UN-Habitat to work closely with regional institutions such as the African Union and the various regional economic blocks to elevate the urban agenda in Africa.

The group welcomes the ongoing preparations to host the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF 12) scheduled to take place in Egypt in 2024. It is noteworthy that this will be the second time that the forum will be held in Africa.

We wish to express our support to Egypt as it prepares to host the forum and call on the secretariat and all member states to work together towards a successful 12th World Urban Forum.

Excellency Chair,

As I conclude, I wish to express the group's appreciation to the Executive Director for her commitment in turning around the organization especially financially through sound management policies and enhanced accountability.

We look forward to a successful Assembly and urge members to take bold decisions that will drive actions toward the full implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the sustainable development goals on building sustainable cities and communities.

THANK YOU.