Executive Director’s Briefing to the CPR

Statement

By

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Executive Director

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Thank you very much. Allow me to add my voice to the condolences raised by the Chair of the CPR and pass my heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Kenya following the recent tragic attack in Garissa, which saw a lot of innocent students lose their lives and injured many others. We are united in our feelings of compassion with Kenya at this tragic moment.

In my report, I would like to comment on three aspects. We are preparing for the Governing Council and the PrepCom of Habitat III. The other is a statement about the missions that we have done within the last few months since last year, and finally a short summary of what is happening in relation to the implementation of IPSAS and UMOJA, as this is really occupying a lot of our staff time.

In relation to the preparations of the Governing Council and PrepCom of Habitat III, I think that I do not need to explain extensively, since most of you have been involved in this process, and you know how well the work is advancing. We have a very important process of consultations, and I would like to thank the co-facilitators and the Chair of the CPR on the continued work to make this process possible.

We all understand that the next Governing Council is the last one before Habitat III. This is strategic, and it is very important that we come out of this Governing Council with a united UN-Habitat and with a strong support to the programme and activities of our institution.

In relation to the missions that I have undertaken in the last few month, I would like to inform you that we went to Rwanda together with some of you in the field visit in February. We were received by the authorities of Rwanda and by the President himself. I think it was a very important mission that gave us the opportunity, as we had before in Mozambique, to know how the practice and work of UN-Habitat in the field represent sustainable urban planning. I would like to also thank the DED for the support she gave to all the members of the CPR and all the staff of UN-Habitat for making this visit successful.

I would also like to communicate to you that I visited Germany at the end of January. I had the opportunity to meet German government officials, including the Federal Environment Ministry, and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in order to increase our strong relationship.

I also had a meeting with the Executive Secretary for UNFCCC, the Mayor of Berlin and other partners. This mission was very positive and has enhanced the relationship with Germany which, as you know, has come back to the financing of UN-Habitat’s non-earmarked foundation and for Habitat III. For that we would like to thank the Government of Germany very much.

I also visited Khartoum, in the Republic of Sudan, upon the invitation of the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Physical Development. During my stay in Khartoum, I held technical discussions with the Sudanese government on ways to support the government in enhancing
sustainable urban development, planning and design. I signed a new memorandum of understanding with the Ministry and discussed the national preparations for Habitat III. We also met with the officials of the Darfur Regional Authority to discuss about our projects in the region. Remember that those projects were presented clearly in one of the reports of our activities in the field. We also discussed about the projects that we are engaging with them.

I was very pleased with how the government is advancing a more comprehensive approach to the urbanization, along the principles advocated by UN-Habitat and especially the use of urbanization as a tool of diminishing territorial tensions, taking advantage of the cosmopolitan culture that urbanization provides.

I also visited Japan to participate in the Third World Conference of Disaster and Risk Reduction which agreed on the Sendai Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction strategies 2015-2030. I had several meetings to promote the importance of sustainable urbanization in Disaster and Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation. During my visit, I also held meetings with senior officials of the Government of Japan and I would like to thank the Government for the kind hospitality extended to us.

I would also like to recognize the continued support of the Government of Japan to projects in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction, including to projects implemented by UN-Habitat.

I look forward to working even extensively with all of you in the coming months hoping that we can have success in the Governing Council in the coming days.

I must also say, in relation to IPSAS and Umoja processes here in the Nairobi duty station, we will witness the next big step happening on 1st of June when Umoja is going live that implies that IPSAS will be fully implemented. For the past six months we have worked to adapt IPSAS in the accounting systems and to implement new tools and requirements of UMOJA. This is taking a lot of time and effort from our staff, but we are fulfilling all the demands regarding the implementation and now we can say that there are no additional problems and we will be ready to implement UMOJA on the 1st of June.

I would like to mention the recent mission to Addis, where UN-Habitat was represented by the DED and the Regional Director for Africa in the important meetings that took place last two weeks ago. This was in organized by the African Union, where the DED had the opportunity to contact the Chair, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, for the next African Heads of States Summit to consider the topic of its next meeting to be “Urbanization in Africa”. I think that this is very important and we think it will elevate the rank of the debate in the continent about urbanization. I would like to conclude by thanking the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and Ghana who joined our staff members in Addis Ababa during the meetings with the African Union.

Thank you.