Introductory Statement by Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director

Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Nairobi, 6 December 2018

Agenda Item 10
Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to introduce the draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025, as we are seeking its endorsement by this august body.

The document before you has been thoroughly discussed with the CPR Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work. We organized a half-day retreat on 27th September 2018 and met on 5th and 29th November 2018.

The comments we have received from Member States have been addressed in the document. For example:

On the niche and added value of UN-Habitat, in the document, paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 state what UN-Habitat’s niche is. In addition, each Domain of Change contains references to UN-Habitat’s added value.

On the focus of the Agency during the period 2020-2025 and “doing less better”, we have revised the number of outcome areas from 16 to 12.

On leveraging non-UN partnerships, including with the private sector, each Domain of Change contains reference to non-UN partnerships.

The document also addresses a number of other key questions raised, including on (i) the drivers of change; (ii) housing and slum upgrading; and (iii) communication and advocacy, to name but a few.

Furthermore, during the discussions, questions on the capacity of UN-Habitat to deliver on this ambitious Strategic Plan were raised.

We have acknowledged that the Plan is ambitious. It is so because the Plan is positioning UN-Habitat as a center of excellence and a transformational Agency. Our ambition is a translation of our urge to address urbanization challenges and opportunities and achieve impact everywhere we are present, including through strategic partnerships. It also represents a new spirit! A new UN-Habitat! We hope to continue to count on your support.
In the same vein, questions were raised on UN-Habitat’s mandate on peace.

UN-Habitat is not proposing to expand its work to prevent armed conflict by engaging in peace-building diplomatic activities. Our contribution is rather on reducing causes of conflict by promoting social and spatial equality. This is in line with the Secretary-General’s call on strengthening the humanitarian, development and peace nexus across the United Nations. It is also in line with resolution 26/2 of the 26 Session of the Governing Council on “Enhancing UN-Habitat’s role in urban crisis response”.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

I salute the positive spirit that prevailed during the consultations.

In this regard, I would like to thank the European Union and its Member States for their support to our focus on climate action. I thank the United States of America for advocating for an increased focus on resilience and for appreciating the theory of change approach we have used to formulate the Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

I would like to thank the African Group for supporting UN-Habitat positioning as a center of excellence and innovation.

Overall, during these meetings, the innovative approach we have used to formulate the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was recognized as sound and logical.

More importantly the meetings with the CPR Subcommittee have enabled us to agree with the Member States on the areas of work that will compose UN-Habitat’s strategic focus for the period 2020-2025, including the four (4) Domains of Change:

1. Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum;
2. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and
4. Effective urban crisis prevention and response.
Between these four (4) Domains of Change, twelve (12) strategic outcomes have been identified. They are presented in the document.

In addition, the important issues of Human rights; Gender; Children, youth and Older Persons; and Disability also figure prominently in the draft Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

As you are aware, this Strategic Plan is part of an overall reform effort of the Agency that includes 4 axes:

- the reform of the governance architecture,
- the internal change process,
- the organizational restructuring, and
- the strategic plan itself.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the extraordinary support we have received from the CPR on all these axes, as well as the commitment shown to help UN-Habitat bounce back.

The Strategic Plan that is before you today for endorsement, is the result of a large internal and external consultative and participatory process.

- Internally, we have had more than 100 meetings and town halls with both HQ and our field-based colleagues. We have received more than 600 written individual comments.

- With our UN sister agencies, 11 entities (UN Women, IFAD, UNICEF, WHO, IOM, FAO, UNISDR, Peace Building Support Office, UNDP, UNHCR, ESCWA) have been involved in the process and we have received from them 111 individual sets of comments. Many of these agencies have stated that the document is a strong and clear statement of UN-Habitat's intent and that they support the defined focus that the strategy has taken, aligned with the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank have already expressed interest in partnering with UN-Habitat.
Regarding partners or stakeholders, 11 networks were engaged, and we have received 265 sets of written comments. Many have stressed appreciation for a stronger involvement of private actors and civil society in UN-Habitat endeavours, which is particularly welcome in areas of policy, such as the delivery of affordable housing.

The feedback received throughout this process has been extremely positive and new areas of partnerships have emerged.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,

The work on the Strategic Plan does not end with the endorsement we are seeking today.

In this regard, between now and the Governing Council or the UN-Habitat Assembly scheduled for May 2019, we will:

1. Edit, format, layout and translate the draft strategic plan into all UN official languages;

2. Develop communication tools with tailored language and visuals for different audiences, including grassroot networks;

3. Finalize the annexes, notably:
   - results framework;
   - impact communication strategy;
   - partnership strategy;
   - typology of human settlement demands;
   - concept papers on flagship integrated programmes;
   - accountability framework; and
   - resource mobilization strategy.

I have no doubt that we can continue to count on your support and guidance, as we deliver this work.

Thank you, Excellencies.