

## STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN GROUP ON FOLLOW UP AND REVIEW OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

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The African Group thanks the Secretariat and the Bureau for compiling and circulating the zero draft well in advance of this session. As we stated yesterday, follow up and review is an integral part of the Quito Outcome. We believe that an agenda without a strong mechanism to support implementation and track progress is as good as dead.

The Group supports a more comprehensive and integrated package that brings coherence between the new agenda and its means of implementation. The holistic nature of human settlements agenda is critical in this regard.

The follow up and review mechanism we support must build on the unfinished business of the Habitat II agenda, human settlement dimensions of the agenda 2030 including SDG 11, Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework on Disaster and Risks Reduction among others, and complement their effective realization.

In that regard, we support the content and positive spirits of paragraphs 164-166. While paragraph 167 also looks positive, it is very weak and needs strengthening. SDG11 itself, “make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” is a new clear mandate that UN-Habitat must follow and report on.

Therefore paragraph 167 should be reframed to read.....*we acknowledge the expertise of the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat). We reaffirm its existing mandate, and entrust it to guide and drive the UN-system wide coordination of the implementation of the cities and other human settlements dimensions of the Agenda 2030 including SDG 11, Paris Climate Agreement, the Sendai Framework on Disaster and Risks Reduction.*

THE REST OF THE PARAGRAPH SHOULD REMAIN AS CAPTURED. The Group is of the view that para 168 is clear and should remain as it currently stands.

On para 169, the Group aims to streamline the operations of all Government representatives at various levels. As we are aware, in some countries, foreign policy matters is the domain of central or national governments, in others the mandate is devolved.

We can therefore strike a balance for coherence by universalizing the governing Council of the UN- Habitat to provide a platform for all Member States to take decisions, as well as to establish an all- inclusive Multi-stakeholder mechanism convened by Habitat and given mandate to convene prior meetings before the main session of the body and to submit recommendations feeding into the discussions of the Member States and decisions taken thereof.

Para 171 is not clear to us. Yesterday, the Group sought clarifications in the form of a concept note on the proposed “international Multi-stakeholder Panel on Sustainable Urbanization”. The Group does not want to create parallel institutions that will at best create policy incoherence, duplication of functions as well as consume the dwindling resources that should otherwise be channeled to the implementation of the agenda.

We believe that if this meeting does not exercise caution, then we may end up supporting the establishment of a mechanism that will dismember and undermine the UN-Habitat thereby running counter to our collective objectives of promoting UN-system wide policy coordination and coherence , expertise, knowledge and information sharing.

Therefore, we need to know the objectives, role, function, secretariat, location and mode of financing the proposed mechanism. Current multi-stakeholder engagement is coordinated by UN- Habitat in the form of Habitat II Agenda Partners as agreed in Istanbul in 1996. We are seeking information on how the panel will relate and interface with Habitat II Agenda Partners, which we believe should be renamed “*the Habitat III Agenda Partners*” at Quito.

Paragraph 171 is in the right direction. However, UN- Habitat should be the anchor body that synthesizes and processes information provided by all relevant stakeholders and condensing such information in a simple and digestible form as a “report on status of world cities and human settlements”

Paragraph 172 is a factual reflection of the previous agreements of the General Assembly and the recent regional decisions as adopted in the Abuja and Toluca Declarations. The Group fully supports strengthening of the UN-Habitat to make it fit for purpose in the implementation of the existing mandate, and those deriving from the recent international instruments that I mentioned prior as well as the New Urban Agenda.

Therefore the paragraph should be reframed to read as follows:

*We reaffirm the General Assembly resolution 56/206 on strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and other relevant General Assembly resolutions including 31/109, 32/16, 251/177 and 56/205, 67/216. 68/239 and 69/226.*

*We decide to upgrade and strengthen the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat) in Nairobi and invite the General Assembly to adopt a resolution that strengthens it in the following manner:*

1. Establishing universal membership at its governing body to give it more authority and legitimacy in decision making
2. Ensuring adequate , stable and predictable financial resources both from the regular and non-regular budget of the United Nations
3. Improving the ability of UN- Habitat to provide capacity development to developing countries and implementation of sustainable management of urban and other human settlements
4. Empowering UN-Habitat as the institution that leads and mobilizes all actors on the sustainable urbanization agenda and urban governance as well as the UN system in the implementation of mandates on urbanization and human settlements.

The elements are already in the text except with a little tweaking in bullet no 4. Finally, we support paragraphs 173-175 in their forward looking manner of involving all actors in implementing the new agenda

I thank you.