

**Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations  
Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)  
Surabaya, 25-27 July 2016**

**Joint Statement of the United Nations Regional Commissions**

**Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)  
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)  
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)**

Co-Chairs,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to deliver to you this joint statement on behalf of the five United Nations Regional Commissions, namely

The Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA)

The Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Habitat III represents a unique occasion to re-evaluate and recast urban policy in order to harness the transformative potential of urbanization, and to do so within sustainable boundaries. It also provides an opportunity to operationalize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by member States last year. From a sustainable and inclusive urban development perspective, Habitat III will define how cities, towns and villages are planned and managed, in order to fulfill their role as drivers of sustainable development, and hence shape the implementation of new global development goals.

As the regional arm of the United Nations Secretariat, the Regional Commissions provide a critical platform to support governments to evaluate regional trends, share national experiences, identify priorities, develop capacity and translate global commitments into policy responses. Regional Commissions often undertake such work in partnership with other arms of the United Nations, and of course UN-Habitat, and beyond.

The regional commissions are uniquely positioned to promote and implement development agenda of the United Nations in regions. With their convening power and proximity to member States, they serve as inclusive regional intergovernmental platforms for deliberating and adapting universal norms and global frameworks to regional and country contexts, and as a dynamic and effective nexus between the global and national levels. These platforms promote policy coherence and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, with a holistic multisectoral approach, and are often the means of devising common strategies to address collective challenges, as well as to share knowledge, experiences, good practice and lessons learned. Regional commissions also provide a greater voice to subregions and countries in special situations, including LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and countries in conflict. This is vital in differentiating responsibilities, targeting responses, ensuring inclusion and promoting shared prosperity within and among the regions. Regional Commissions are already mandated to play a critical role in the follow-up and review of global commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In order to achieve impact, it is vital for the New Urban Agenda to build upon and reinforce the SDGs and to facilitate the localization and operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, it will be important to leverage and make full use of regional platforms and mechanisms, including the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

In conclusion, Co-Chairs,

The Regional Commissions would like to take this opportunity to reiterate their commitment to working in close partnership with the Habitat III secretariat, UN-

Habitat, including at the regional level, and all other concerned bodies and agencies, to support member States in the preparatory process for Habitat III.

The regional dimensions will be critical for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, as highlighted by the Habitat III regional reports, as well as experience in implementing the outcomes of previous Habitat conferences. The regional level provides a vital bridge between global frameworks and national development agendas. In this regard, regional commissions have a key role both in terms of implementation, follow up and review of the New Urban Agenda at the regional level given their universal coverage, convening power, intergovernmental nature and strength, and broad-based cross-sectoral mandate and expertise.

Co-Chairs, on behalf of the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations Secretariat, I thank you for the opportunity to address distinguished delegates gathered here today.