

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

Habitat III, Quito, 17-20 October 2016

Joint Statement of the United Nations Regional Commissions

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the five United Nations Regional Commissions, namely ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and UNECE

(The Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the UN Economic Commission for Europe).

Let me first thank the Government and people of Ecuador for warm hospitality here in beautiful Quito.

First, we would like to thank all those that negotiated long hours on the text of the New Urban Agenda which recognizes **the important role of regional organisations in the implementation**, follow up and review.

The Regional Commissions **welcome in particular the integrated approach of the New Urban Agenda, which promotes close links in the implementation with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the Paris Agreement and other important global political frameworks. As recognized in the 2030 Agenda, we Regional Commissions have a key role both in terms of implementation, and the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level given our universal coverage, convening power, intergovernmental nature and strength, and broad-based cross-sectoral mandate and expertise.

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,

notably the Regional Fora on Sustainable Development convened by the Regional Commissions as platforms for peer learning, addressing regional priorities and linking the national and global levels.

In preparation to the Habitat III Conference, the Regional Commissions, in cooperation with regional offices of UN-Habitat and with valuable contributions from national and regional experts, other UN and international organisations, have prepared **Regional Reports on Housing and Urban Development to inform the global process tasked with the preparation of the NUA on regional urban trends, challenges and priorities**. These reports are based on the analysis of urban development and housing issues at national and regional levels. The reports have been ready for long, but we still wait for them to be formally published by the HABITAT III secretariat. However, I hope you have had an opportunity to consider their findings and recommendations.

While urbanization processes greatly differ from one region to another, allow me to highlight three major trends based on the reports:

- First, **the growing social and spatial inequalities within and among the cities**, which points to the need to promote social cohesion and ensure inclusive urbanization beneficial to all;
- Second, **the increasing role of cities** as engines of economic growth and transformation as well as important actors in the implementation of sustainable housing and urban development policies;
- Third, **insufficient capacity of local authorities**, and lack of institutionalized cooperation between different levels of governments and sectors, are among key bottlenecks to the effective implementation of these policies, especially in developing countries and countries with transition economies.

We, at the Regional Commissions, are actively working with national governments to strengthen the cooperation among cities and their networks and across sectors. In this endeavor, we work closely with UN-Habitat and many other UN organisations. In addition, we have further strengthened our strategic partnerships with regional and subregional organisations such as the African Union, the League of Arab States, ASEAN, the European Union, and others.

With our convening power and proximity to member States, we 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. We promote policy coherence and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, with a holistic multisectoral approach, to devise common strategies to address collective challenges, as well as to share knowledge, experiences, good practice and lessons learned. We 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 social cohesion and shared prosperity within and among the regions.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm the commitment by the UN Regional Commissions to working in close partnerships with all relevant stakeholders to promote the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

Thank you.