

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

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Chair,

I would like to thank the Habitat III Secretariat and the representatives of the Policy Units that presented some of the key recommendations for Habitat III. We appreciate this opportunity of expressing Norway's views on the New Urban Agenda.

It is Norway's view that the New Urban Agenda is action-oriented, and that it brings the urban relevant SDGs and targets to the next level – and provide advice and recommendations on how to operationalize them.

Further, it is important for Norway that the environment and health dimensions are among the issues defining the New Urban Agenda. Since Habitat II in 1996, the major challenge of climate change has grown in severity. Most people are aware of this, especially with the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the signing ceremony that took place in this building last Friday.

(Check against delivery)

Another environmental challenge, air pollution, is now the second biggest killer of the world with 7 million deaths per year. But it is a silent killer, which yet does not make the headlines that often. Both climate change and air pollution are serious threats to health. According to the WHO, one quarter of all deaths globally is linked to the environment. One quarter. These environmental challenges are primarily urban challenges – and they need urban solutions.

Norway believes that the health dimension has been largely missing in the deliberations of the New Urban Agenda so far. We know that the health sector has a major role to play in supporting urban policies that protect the climate, improve air quality and promote health and well-being.

We need Clean and Healthy cities – this must be at the core of the New Urban Agenda.

The New Urban Agenda must include a strong commitment to protect health and the environment, and prevent disease.

Thank you.