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Follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

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Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution [75/224](#), provides an update on the implementation of the resolution and an overview of the activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme ([A/75/296](#)).

The Secretary-General summarizes the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat at the global, regional, national and subnational levels; presents a thematic and regional overview of the Programme's four subprogrammes and cross-cutting issues; and provides an update on the implementation of the new governance structure, including the United Nations Habitat Assembly, the Executive Board of UN-Habitat and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/224](#).

* [A/77/150](#).

** The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution [75/224](#), provides an update on the implementation of that resolution and an overview of the activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) since the issuance of the previous report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme ([A/75/296](#)).

2. Under the leadership of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Programme implemented the core elements of resolution [73/239](#), successfully servicing the Executive Board of UN-Habitat and one midterm high-level meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. Since 2020, it has implemented the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, ensuring the alignment of its core mandate with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN-Habitat contributed to the reform of the United Nations development system, facilitating the implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2019, and working with the Development Coordination Office to help resident coordinators to promote sustainable urbanization and localize the Sustainable Development Goals. UN-Habitat also established a transparent system of financial reporting and implemented temporary austerity measures to eliminate its deficit.

II. New governance structure and work of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, the Executive Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives

A. Background on the new governance structure

3. On 20 December 2018, the General Assembly, in its resolution [73/239](#), decided to dissolve the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and replace it with the UN-Habitat Assembly with universal membership. It retained the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat and provided for the establishment of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat as the two intersessional organs of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Assembly and the Board report directly to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

B. United Nations Habitat Assembly

4. The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, held in Nairobi from 27 to 31 May 2019, established the Executive Board of UN-Habitat and adopted its rules of procedure and the rules of procedure of the Board. The Assembly further elected the five members of its Bureau and, pursuant to rule 18 of its rules of procedure, which states that the five members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives would jointly serve as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly, further elected on an exceptional basis five members to serve on the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Furthermore, the Assembly adopted the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 (resolution 1/1) and adopted thematic resolutions on the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements (resolution 1/2); enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda (resolution 1/3); achieving gender equality through the work of

UN-Habitat to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements (resolution 1/4); and enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements (resolution 1/5). The Assembly also adopted decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of UN-Habitat, which included the provisional agenda and other arrangements for the second session of the Assembly.

5. The UN-Habitat Assembly requested the Executive Director to report on progress in the implementation of the resolutions and decision adopted by the Assembly at its second session. During the intersessional period, the Executive Director reported on the progress in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Executive Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The latest report to the Executive Board on the status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Assembly is set out in document HSP/EB.2022/8.

C. Executive Board

6. The Executive Board of UN-Habitat held its inaugural meeting in Nairobi on 30 May 2019, on the margins of the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Board established three ad hoc working groups on working methods; programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters; and stakeholder engagement policy. The ad hoc working group on working methods completed its work in line with paragraph 11 of Board decision 2019/2, and its mandate came to an end at the end of the second session of 2020. Since then, the Executive Board held two sessions in 2020 and two sessions in 2021. The first session of the Executive Board for 2022 was held from 29 to 31 March 2022 and its second session for 2022 is expected to be held from 21 to 23 November 2022.

7. To date, the Bureau has met four times in preparation for the 2022 sessions of the Executive Board. During the first session of 2022, participants discussed financial, budgetary and administrative matters, the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for 2023, the implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session, the preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the preparations for the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, among other items. The members of the new Bureau were also elected by acclamation for the period 2022–2023. The Executive Board elected Brazil as Chair; Kenya, Pakistan and Poland as Vice-Chairs; and France as Rapporteur.

D. Committee of Permanent Representatives

8. In line with General Assembly resolution [73/239](#), the Committee of Permanent Representatives made preparations for the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, including by preparing the draft rules of procedure of the Assembly and of the Executive Board and several draft resolutions and decisions for consideration and adoption by the Assembly. The Committee also reviewed the draft UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 for further consideration and adoption by the Assembly. Following their election by the Assembly, members of the Bureau of the Committee met seven times to prepare for the first open-ended high-level midterm review meeting of the Committee, held from 29 June to 1 July 2021. The outcomes adopted by the Committee at that meeting are set out in document HSP/OECPR.2021/8. At that meeting, the Committee discussed, inter alia, the

UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, the analysis of linkages between the Programme’s operational and normative activities to increase the impact of its work across the relevant outcomes of the strategic plan, and the mobilization of financial resources, within the broader resource mobilization strategy, to accelerate the further implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly at its first session, in May 2019. At that meeting, the Committee also elected the members of the Bureau for the period 2021–2023 on the understanding that it would have an opportunity, on a no-objection basis, to elect the remaining members of the Bureau upon nomination by the regional groups for the position of Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. The Committee elected by acclamation Pakistan as Chair and Colombia and the United Republic of Tanzania as Vice-Chairs. The following positions remained vacant: Vice-Chair (Western European and other States) and Rapporteur (Eastern European States). Following nomination by the respective regional groups, the election of Belgium for the position of Vice-Chair and Slovakia for the position of Rapporteur was subject to a non-objection procedure initiated on 16 June 2022.

III. Update on financial developments

9. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat improved conditions in order to attract funding. Building on the governance reforms, the Executive Director intensified austerity measures, maintained transparency in financial reporting and proposed a realistic budget for the non-earmarked contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2023. UN-Habitat financially closed more than 800 projects that were outstanding from 2015. In 2021, as compared with the prior year, and despite challenges in non-earmarked funding, total revenue increased by 5 per cent to \$196 million; contribution revenue increased by 17 per cent to \$179 million; technical cooperation revenue increased by 47 per cent to \$142 million; total net assets increased by 7 per cent to \$380 million; and 30 partnerships were implemented through agreements of cooperation, a 50 per cent increase. Working with the United Nations system, UN-Habitat strengthened its role as focal point for system-wide coordination of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for delivery of the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the Executive Director reached out to Governments in multiple regions to request support for UN-Habitat. While the measures have not yet enabled the Programme to meet its income requirements, they have led to improvements in the conditions needed to attract new funding.

10. Demand for UN-Habitat support for country programmes and for its normative services and products remained strong. In 2021, the income of the special purpose account of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, net of donor refunds, was \$37.5 million, while net income for regional and country programmes (technical cooperation) was \$147.2 million. Expenditure for the special purpose account stood at \$46.3 million, while expenditure for regional and country programmes (technical cooperation) stood at \$106.0 million.

11. Contributions received as of July 2022, from 16 government partners, stood at \$2.96 million, which represents 30 per cent of the authorized amount of \$10.0 million. The Executive Board, in a decision on 31 March 2022, established a baseline budget for 2023 of \$3 million for the non-earmarked contributions to the Foundation, which is 70 per cent less than the 2022 authorized amount of \$10.0 million.

IV. Activities at the global level

A. Achievements of global programmes

12. During the reporting period, the transformative tools and knowledge products of UN-Habitat strengthened the capacity of Member States to make progress on sustainable urbanization and set international standards and practices for the global community.

13. UN-Habitat launched five flagship programmes in 2020 as a key instrument to implement its strategic plan for the period 2020–2023. The flagship programmes fast-tracked integration between the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat, scaling and accelerating the impact of the Programme. The five flagship programmes are: “Sustainable Development Goals Cities” which is aimed at advancing the overall implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level by supporting cities and other local actors in developing reliable data, undertaking evidence-based planning and implementing transformative projects; “RISE-UP: resilient settlements for the urban poor”, which works to leverage large-scale investment to build urban adaptation and climate resilience in hotspots of vulnerability globally, improving the socioeconomic prosperity of communities and addressing issues of spatial inequality; “Inclusive cities: enhancing the positive impacts of urban migration”, which supports local and national authorities in creating inclusive and urban environments for all people; “Inclusive, vibrant neighborhoods and communities”, which supports urban regeneration of towns and cities with a view to addressing spatial inequality; and “People-centered smart cities”, which supports digital transformation for sustainable urbanization.

14. In response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, UN-Habitat finalized a policy guide on building back better through green and resilient basic services in a post-pandemic world and prepared a new publication on *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future*. As part of the global monitoring for COVID-19, the UN-Habitat and CitiIQ COVID-19 tracker for cities was expanded to cover 2,800 cities on local response and performance to inform local policies.

15. The UN-Habitat Global Urban Law database (UrbanLex) allowed 24,130 users to access and undertake comparative analysis of urban laws. In 2021, the database continued to be updated regularly, with 212 new urban laws from South Africa and the Syrian Arab Republic uploaded, bringing the total to 2,269. In addition, to enhance its effectiveness, visibility and wider reach, the database is now accessible in five official languages of the United Nations. UrbanLex also underwent a major revamp in 2021, and a beta version was set to be launched in mid-2022.

16. National urban policy was approved as indicator 11.a.1 of target 11.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals at the tenth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. In addition, in 2020 and 2021, several guidance materials on national urban policies were developed on monitoring and evaluating national urban policy, mainstreaming urban-rural linkages in national urban policies, and mainstreaming safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces into national urban policies. In 2021, in partnership with Cities Alliance and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the second edition of the Global State of National Urban Policy was released.

17. As part of the implementation of UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, UN-Habitat supported nine countries in Africa between 2019 and 2021 in integrating urban-rural linkages in their policy processes, including the piloting of normative

tools. Two compendiums of case studies on urban-rural linkages, with 9 and 17 case studies, respectively, have been released to share practices that could be replicated and/or provide lessons in other contexts. Capacity-building and awareness on urban-rural linkages have also been implemented in the project countries. The Urban-Rural Linkages Handbook was also released, to guide Member States in the integration of urban-rural linkages into their policy development and implementation processes. UN-Habitat also developed tools to help local and national governments to scale up efforts to achieve target 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on making public spaces more safe, inclusive, accessible and green.

18. UN-Habitat issued *Participatory Incremental Urban Planning*, a toolbox to support local governments in developing countries to implement the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and to provide guidance for planning in contexts of constrained capacity. The new Sustainable Development Goal project assessment tool enabled cities to assess their planning instruments in relation to sustainable planning principles.

19. In 2019, the Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance strengthened the capacity of water utilities, to the benefit of over 1 million users. During 2021, over 30 cities worldwide applied the Waste Wise Cities tool and can now collect baseline solid waste data to close gaps, make evidence-based decisions and formulate action plans. Membership of the Waste Wise Cities programme expanded to 223 local governments as members and 53 affiliates in 2021. The African Clean Cities Platform grew to 97 member cities and 42 member countries.

20. UN-Habitat developed tools to strengthen capacities of governments and other stakeholders to implement evidence-based and participatory sustainable housing policies and strategies in accordance with the right to adequate housing. It continued its cooperation with human rights monitoring bodies by, inter alia, supporting the inclusion of the right to adequate housing in the universal periodic reviews. UN-Habitat also served as secretariat for negotiations on General Assembly resolution [76/133](#) on inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of COVID-19, which was adopted by consensus, and was tasked to support the Secretary-General in the preparation of the consequent progress report. UN-Habitat also launched, together with partners, the first global initiative to support homelessness enumeration.

B. Global advocacy

High-level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

21. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/224](#), the President of the General Assembly convened a high-level meeting on 28 April 2022 to assess progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The preparatory process for the meeting was informed by the strategic guidance of the President of the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization. The quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and deliberations of five regional forums for sustainable development served as the pre-session documents for the high-level meeting. An Economic and Social Council special meeting, held on 21 April 2022, provided a platform for Member States to review inequality, United Nations reform and other select aspects of the New Urban Agenda based on the findings of the quadrennial report. A series of side events, organized by Members of the Advisory Committee, further informed the discussions during the high-level meeting on issues such as housing, climate action and localization, and included the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

22. The high-level meeting was action-oriented. The programme consisted of statements by leaders of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, and a plenary segment to which 87 Member States inscribed. The “Leading locally” segment marked a precedent for the General Assembly in engaging associations of local and regional governments in intergovernmental processes. Municipal leaders from Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa shared the challenges and strategies of implementing the New Urban Agenda with delegates, speaking on behalf of the 28 mayors who attended the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments on 27 April 2022. Other segments, including one led by the regional commissions, highlighted innovative actions to achieve sustainable and equitable urbanization and provided concrete proposals for mobilizing actions of the United Nations system, the transportation industry, professional associations, grass-roots movements and the business community.

23. UN-Habitat coordinated and supported efforts by countries in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Several Member States called for further support for UN-Habitat to carry out its mandate and committed to providing political support to UN-Habitat and the Agenda by launching the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization and the New Urban Agenda. In his summary of the high-level meeting, the President of the General Assembly highlighted actions declared by Member States to advance the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in five key areas: (a) the provision of adequate housing and basic services, (b) urban climate action and environmental protection, (c) urban displacement and crises, (d) urban prosperity and sustainable finance and (e) multi-level governance and localization.

World Urban Forum

24. The World Urban Forum, established by the General Assembly in its resolutions [56/205](#) and [56/206](#) and convened by UN-Habitat every two years since 2002, is the world’s premier conference on cities and sustainable urbanization. The eleventh session of the Forum, focused on the theme “Transforming our cities for a better urban future”, was held in Katowice, Poland, from 26 to 30 June 2022, bringing together more than 17,000 people. The Forum is a participatory and non-legislative United Nations conference. The eleventh session featured an extraordinary dialogue on urban crisis prevention and response and special sessions on the social dimension of post-conflict reconstruction and urban recovery. It also had dedicated space for networking for all actors involved in urban crisis response, including the Ukraine crisis response. Over 1,000 applications were received for partner-led events contributing to raising awareness about sustainable urbanization, generating collective knowledge, discussing innovative solutions and increasing multi-stakeholder cooperation.

25. *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities* was launched at the Forum’s eleventh session. The report provides greater clarity and insights into the future of cities based on existing trends, challenges and opportunities, as well as disruptive conditions, including the valuable lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggests ways that cities can be better prepared to address a wide range of shocks and transition to sustainable urban futures.

26. The eleventh session of the Forum provided opportunities to promote the President’s summary and annex of actions of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Ministers, local governments, professionals and grass-roots and other constituencies utilized the 8 constituent assemblies and 10 round tables of the session to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

27. The outcome of the session was the Katowice Declared Actions, a compendium of commitments prepared in consultation with stakeholders on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, to accelerate progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The twelfth session of the Forum will be held in Cairo in 2024.

National urban forums

28. Pursuant to paragraphs 41 and 92 of the New Urban Agenda, national urban forums are national-level, multi-stakeholder platforms for debating policy on sustainable urban development and promoting wide participation in decision-making processes. They ensure that there are coordinated national contributions to and effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda in order to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Over 20 national urban forums were convened in, among others, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Malaysia, Nepal and Viet Nam, in addition to a Pacific Urban Forum.

Urban Agenda Platform

29. UN-Habitat developed the Urban Agenda Platform to enable Member States and local and non-State actors to monitor and report progress made in implementing the New Urban Agenda. The online global Platform was launched on World Habitat Day, 1 October 2020. A one-stop shop for both reporting and learning, the Platform facilitates knowledge exchange, builds interaction and supports capacity-building to establish communities of practice for sustainable urban development. It consolidates data from the Quito Implementation Platform, designed for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), and the urban best practices database, which hosts over 5,000 practices from different awards schemes.

30. The Platform also contains national reports on progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. It tracks commitments made at the World Urban Forum and enables the sharing of data, knowledge materials and practices on urban aspects. The Platform features the New Urban Agenda Illustrated and other learning resources. It facilitated the Secretary-General's quadrennial report on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, submitted in 2022. It also contributed to the implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development and to the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. The Urban Agenda Platform is designed to promote the outcomes of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the New Urban Agenda, bridge the biennial session of the World Urban Forum, host the Katowice Declared Actions and facilitate preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, in 2023.

31. The quadrennial report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 3 of Economic and Social Council resolution [2017/24](#) and in accordance with General Assembly resolution [71/235](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years. Prepared in consultation with more than 40 partners, including non-governmental organizations, the report served as the pre-session document of the Economic and Social Council special meeting on 21 April 2022 and the General Assembly high-level meeting on 28 April 2022.

World Habitat Day and World Cities Day celebrations

32. The theme for World Habitat Day 2020, at the start of Urban October, was "Housing for all: a better urban future" and the global observance was held in

Surabaya, Indonesia. The theme for World Habitat Day 2021 was “Accelerating urban action for a carbon-free world” and the global observance was held in Yaoundé.

33. The theme for World Cities Day 2020, at the end of Urban October, was “Valuing our communities and cities” and the global observance was held in Nakuru, Kenya. The theme for World Cities Day 2021 was “Adapting cities for climate resilience” and the global observance was held in Luxor, Egypt, with the Prime Minister of Egypt in attendance.

World Urban Campaign

34. The World Urban Campaign has grown into a global platform of 210 UN-Habitat partners, conducting new Urban Thinkers Campus series. In 2020, over 6,500 people participated in 78 Urban Thinkers Campuses, including 42 that made recommendations on the COVID-19 response. In 2021, 6,100 people took part in 27 events focusing on climate action.

C. Other partnership activities

35. In 2021, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, selected seven new members to join the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, which advises her on engaging partners effectively to support the achievement of the urban dimensions of the sustainable development agenda.

36. UN-Habitat stakeholders organized constituent assemblies ahead of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum and contributed to thematic events during the session to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration for advancing the 2030 Agenda.

37. UN-Habitat strengthened its cooperation with local authorities by working with United Cities and Local Governments and the regional commissions, as well as directly with cities to promote voluntary local reviews. The work of UN-Habitat on voluntary local reviews rests on its capacity to link local reviews and dynamics with global advocacy and intergovernmental processes such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the World Urban Forum.

38. The Global Alliance for Urban Crises, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and chaired by UN-Habitat, developed a new strategy for 2021–2024 and led the development of an urban crisis track and the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. The Alliance also took over the urban humanitarian response portal of the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action and integrated it into its website (www.urbancrises.org).

39. The Executive Director set up the Council on Urban Initiatives, in partnership with the University College London Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, and London School of Economics and Political Science Cities. Constituted initially by an international group of eighteen pioneering mayors, practitioners, designers, activists and academics, the Council has a mission to position urban issues at the heart of global debates, influence agendas at the highest levels of the United Nations and international community and promote experimentation to overcome barriers to innovation and progressive policymaking at the city level. The Council’s work is organized around three ambitious interconnected challenges: the just city, the healthy city and the green city.

V. Outcomes at the regional, national and subnational levels in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

A. Cooperation with the regional commissions and regional collaboration mechanisms

40. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat deepened its cooperation with the five regional commissions, making use of the collaboration mechanisms of the Organization's emerging regional architecture and of joint programming supported by the United Nations Development Account, and aligning with regional ministerial conferences on housing and urban development. The commissions, as well as the regional representatives of United Nations entities, are crucial to reaching out to Member States and other urban stakeholders in each region and thereby contribute to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and to accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. Together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions, UN-Habitat is leading discussions on the connection between voluntary local and national reviews to provide recommendations on how to strengthen multilevel governance for Sustainable Development Goal reporting. This led to volume 2 of the Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews, released in 2021. A two-day expert group meeting on the new generation of voluntary local reviews organized by UN-Habitat, United Cities and Local Governments and the Madrid City Council, with more than 300 experts, led to groundbreaking content for these guidelines.

42. At the regional level, UN-Habitat advanced the United Nations system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development by working closely with the regional commissions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Development Coordination Office and other United Nations entities as part of the emerging regional collaborative platforms and regional forums for sustainable development. Consequently, in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and Latin America, sustainable urbanization has featured among the issue-based coalitions, and urban monitoring is anchored in many regional knowledge hubs. For instance, aligned work with regional networks and public institutions such as the Ministers and Higher Authorities of Housing and Urban Development of Latin America and the Caribbean proved to be an effective strategy to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-Australia Development Cooperation Programme Phase II, UN-Habitat has been working with ASEAN to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Urbanization Strategy in Asia. In partnership with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and others, UN-Habitat delivered the Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development 2021–2022, targeting newly elected or appointed mayors from eight countries.

B. Normative and operational work at the regional, national and subnational levels

43. UN-Habitat has been active in 90 cities and helped more than 2.32 million people enjoy safe access to more than 137 upgraded public spaces through the Global Public Space Programme. In 2021, interventions helped 42,500 people access safe and inclusive public spaces and 470,000 people were supported with capacity development initiatives. Over 35 cities in 18 countries have used the city-wide public space assessment toolkit. European partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities have developed a self-assessment benchmarking tool as part of their Action Plan of

the Urban Agenda Partnership on Security in Public Spaces. Considering almost 200 indicators, this city safety self-assessment and benchmarking tool was piloted and tested in six European cities in 2021.

44. UN-Habitat provided technical assistance on urban-rural linkages to Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and the State of Palestine. The Global Future Cities Programme provided city-level planning support to Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Türkiye and Viet Nam. UN-Habitat provided technical assistance on metropolitan and regional management in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Colombia, El Salvador, Mali, Mexico and Spain. UN-Habitat provided advisory services in the enhancement of legislative frameworks in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tajikistan. The Law and Climate Change Toolkit was used in Colombia and India.

45. Slum upgrading and strategic policy interventions were supported in 190 cities in 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Five million slum dwellers benefited from the UN-Habitat Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme, with over 800,000 having improved tenure security (2008–2021), while 2.9 million people in slums and informal settlements in 45 countries gained access to basic services (2020–2021).

46. UN-Habitat supported water operators' peer partnerships, which involved 658 water operators globally exchanging knowledge on non-revenue water, operations and maintenance service to low-income areas and asset management.

47. UN-Habitat, in collaboration with ministries and agencies, enhanced local revenue collection by supporting governments in issuing 830,000 occupancy certificates and 720,000 municipal service charge invoices between 2017 and 2020. The City Investment Facility has financed Sustainable Development Goal projects in 55 cities through an online portal that shares information with global investors to improve project preparation for investment vehicles.

48. Taking advantage of increased digitization, UN-Habitat continues to promote better use and collection of data to enhance sustainable urbanization. The United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities was used to develop data and artificial intelligence tools for informal settlements management and resilience in Brazil, Jordan and South Africa, and a digital transformation tool for African cities.

49. The Adaptation Fund portfolio executed by UN-Habitat grew to \$88.5 million in 2021, supporting climate adaptation and resilient infrastructure in south-eastern Africa, Cambodia, Fiji, Jordan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Mongolia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Solomon Islands, the Syrian Arab Republic and Viet Nam. Climate Change Adaptation support was initiated in the Asia-Pacific region, including in Cambodia, Fiji, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Solomon Islands using nature-based solutions.

50. In 2021, UN-Habitat supported the development of national urban policies in 14 countries through training, technical drafting, stakeholder mobilization and dialogue, policy review and evaluation. UN-Habitat and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability supported cities in accelerating climate action through the promotion of Urban Low Emission Development Strategies (Urban-LEDS II) project, covering more than 60 cities worldwide through the initiative.

51. UN-Habitat assisted urban recovery interventions in States affected by conflict such as Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the

State of Palestine, as well as the Sahel region. In Yemen, housing, job opportunities and vocational training were provided to over 4,000 people as 600 houses for low-income families were being rehabilitated. In the Philippines, following the siege and destruction of the centre of Marawi city, approximately 1,000 houses were built or are currently under construction. UN-Habitat also prepared a publication entitled “Guidance for responding to displacement in urban areas”.

C. Collaboration with the United Nations development system

52. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to coordinate the implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development at the global, regional and national levels and across development, peace and humanitarian operations.

53. In 2022, questionnaires for United Nations entities were developed to improve system-wide reporting and global reporting on sustainable urbanization in the preparation of the second quadrennial report on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Nineteen entities, as well as over 30 resident coordinator offices, provided input.

54. At the request of the Statistical Commission, UN-Habitat developed the global urban monitoring framework to harmonize existing urban indices and tools and advance an agreed universal framework to track the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and other urban-related Sustainable Development Goals. The framework, which was adopted by the Statistical Commission in early 2022, supports voluntary local reviews and the preparation of urban data for common country analyses. Development of the framework led by UN-Habitat involved partners from the United Nations system, cities and local governments, national Governments, civil society and research institutions.

55. UN-Habitat has been strengthening and updating its strategic partnerships with different United Nations entities to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development, at the global, regional and country levels. New agreements were concluded with UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the World Health Organization (WHO).

56. In 2020 and 2021, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Executives Board, the Senior Management Group and the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs focused attention on sustainable urbanization and the New Urban Agenda. Decisions taken by those bodies resulted in the preparation of the Secretary-General’s policy brief on COVID-19 in an urban world, which provided the framework for the UN-Habitat report *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future*. They also led to the establishment of the United Nations Task Force on the Future of Cities, chaired by UN-Habitat, comprised of 22 United Nations entities and involving the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments in select sessions. The Task Force provided input to the Secretary-General for the preparation of his report entitled “Our Common Agenda” and specifically the recommendation to establish the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, followed up with further development of the terms of reference for the proposed Advisory Group.

57. UN-Habitat reinforced its participation in the new strategic results groups of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. UN-Habitat contributed to the definition of indicators for reporting on system-wide contribution to Sustainable

Development Goal achievement and provided input and tools for integrated policy support, with an emphasis on leaving no one behind, human rights and resilience.

58. UN-Habitat has taken on a leadership role in the Local2030 Coalition for the Decade of Action. Launched by the Deputy Secretary-General in September 2021, this eight-year, United Nations-led, multi-stakeholder initiative will accelerate the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development at the local level. At its first meeting, in February 2022, the coalition steering committee approved a two-year workplan anchored at the country level in the United Nations resident coordinator system. UN-Habitat will be co-chairing the Coalition for the duration of its mandate and, for year one, UNDP will act as its co-chair. With the coalition, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional commissions will promote local voluntary reviews to increase advocacy and action, and to enhance the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals at the subnational level. UN-Habitat will provide technical support for voluntary local reviews, Sustainable Development Goal assessments and mobilization of financing for the Goals, utilizing its flagship programme on Sustainable Development Goal Cities.

59. UN-Habitat has worked closely with the Development Coordination Office to promote sustainable urbanization at the country level by participating in global webinars organized with resident coordinators. The Development Coordination Office and UN-Habitat agreed to accelerate joint urban programming at the country level in two or three countries in each of the Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, utilizing the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum and webinars. In June 2022, 12 resident coordinator offices and 9 United Nations entities participated in the eleventh session of the Forum to discuss enhanced urban programming, in view of the opportunities and challenges identified by resident coordinators.

60. As a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN-Habitat supported the results groups on humanitarian-development collaboration and localization. UN-Habitat also facilitated consultations with local governments for the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, initiated by the Secretary-General, and contributed to the development of the Secretary-General's action agenda on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Regional-level collaboration

61. UN-Habitat regional representatives participated actively in the regional collaborative platforms and the regional forums for sustainable development, creatively integrating regional city networks and regional ministerial forums on housing and urban development. UN-Habitat contributed to issue-based coalitions, peer support groups and regional knowledge hubs. Regional focal points were also identified for small island developing States and a regional strategy on slum upgrading was developed for the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Caribbean multi-country office.

62. Regional representatives utilized the regional forums for sustainable development and ongoing cooperation with the regional commissions to assist Member States in preparing their input for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (April 2022).

Country-level collaboration

63. Demand from Member States and United Nations resident coordinators for assistance on national urban policies, urban economy, land, urban planning, urban basic services, informal settlement upgrading and related urban issues has grown in

all regions, and UN-Habitat engagement in United Nations country teams has expanded.

64. UN-Habitat is a member of 70 of the 131 United Nations country teams, as a resident or non-resident entity. To date, it has engaged in the preparation of common country analyses and United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks in over 70 countries and is a signatory of most of the 50 new-generation development cooperation frameworks. Engagement with joint work programmes is extensive. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, for example, the joint work programme reflects an urban agenda component, while in Sao Tome and Principe, UN-Habitat contributes to the social cohesion and inclusive growth components.

65. Collaboration with individual United Nations entities at the country level is driven by substantive convergence and supported by global agreements and frameworks for collaboration. While the agreement with thematic entities is extensive at the global level, potential for further strengthening systematic bilateral engagement at the country level has been identified, as part of the enhanced country-level programming initiative.

66. Joint programming in urban crisis response and recovery involved UNHCR, as well as the International Organization for Migration, and resulted in innovative urban assessment tools, the promotion of local-level responses and the engagement of local governments as first-line respondents in Burkina Faso, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Central America.

67. Perhaps the best demonstration of system-wide coordination on urbanization is the United Nations response to COVID-19. UN-Habitat and WHO promoted health responses in informal settlements, applying planning tools for public health. UN-Habitat and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee developed guidelines on humanitarian measures taken in response to COVID-19 in informal urban areas. UN-Habitat led the workstream for resilient communities of the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19. The UN-Habitat COVID-19 response plan, implemented in 13 countries, is based on inter-agency cooperation and includes a joint interim technical note with UNICEF on water, sanitation and hygiene.

D. Cross-cutting issues

68. In the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, UN-Habitat elevated climate change to a full subprogramme, consolidated gender, youth and human rights issues, and included older persons and persons with disabilities in the section on human rights and social inclusion.

Gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women

69. Since 2016, a gender equality marker has been applied to all projects, as mandated in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, leading to improvements in women's empowerment across the project portfolio. In addition, the differential needs of women and men are considered across different practice areas. UN-Habitat launched *Her City: A Guide for Cities to Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Planning and Design Together with Girls* to ensure all actors implement gender-inclusive projects.

70. Gender parity was achieved again for panels at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum.

Human rights

71. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to review all its projects through the Programme Review Committee against human rights criteria. In response to COVID-19, UN-Habitat advocated the protection of members of vulnerable urban communities, including those at risk of violent forced evictions, and the effective exercise of the right to adequate housing, in accordance with the right to an adequate standard of living.

Climate change

72. UN-Habitat, with the Global Covenant of Mayors and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, organized the Cities and Climate Change Science Innovate4Cities Conference, with almost 200 sessions and nearly 7,000 participants from 159 countries, to accelerate knowledge and innovation for urban climate action.

73. At the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Glasgow in November 2021, UN-Habitat presented original research showing that 84 per cent of updated nationally determined contributions had strong or moderate urban content, a rise from 69 per cent in 2016. Strong urban content increased from 16 per cent in 2016 to 45 per cent in 2021, and a stronger emphasis on adaptation and mitigation indicates the important role that national Governments attribute to local climate action.

Children and youth issues

74. UN-Habitat meaningfully engages children and youth in sustainable urbanization through programmes such as the One Stop Youth Resource Centre Programme. Currently, centres in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Türkiye and Uganda provide safe spaces, which have, since 2012, enabled over 500,000 young people to access health and recreation services, job skills and leadership training. The UN-Habitat Global Public Space Programme is especially designed to promote discussion among diverse age groups. Through Minecraft, placemaking and other methodologies, spaces and places are created that promote intergenerational dialogue and exchange. Children are given special consideration before, during and after evictions and resettlements within the UN-Habitat housing rights activities portfolio. An expert group meeting on ageing and inclusion was held with the support of the subnational government of the Basque Country, Spain, and focused on improving the living conditions of the elderly in cities.

Older persons and persons with disabilities

75. UN-Habitat promotes safe and inclusive access to basic services, public transportation, public space, housing and land, where people of all abilities are welcome. Universal accessibility is one of the principles that guides the work of UN-Habitat. The Programme partners with representative groups and individual rights holders, national and local governments, relevant United Nations entities and civil society to maximize impact and to ensure that the right to adequate housing and accessibility to land of persons with disabilities is promoted, respected and protected. The eleventh World Urban Forum set a new standard of accessibility and reconfirmed that accessibility and universal design are integral parts of the solution to the challenges of urbanization, including urban crisis, and constitute the agent of transformative action for a more equitable urban future.

VI. Observations and recommendations

76. Among the accelerators of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, the New Urban Agenda is of crucial importance. Five key areas to accelerate sustainable urbanization emerged from the quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. They were prioritized by Member States during the deliberations of the high-level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in April 2022 and are expected to guide the work of UN-Habitat beyond the current period of the strategic plan.

77. Adequate housing and basic services are still not universally available. People-centred and place-based strategies for housing construction, finance and governance systems are key to advancing sustainable urban development for all, for instance through national urban policies that tie the provision of adequate housing to a broader plan for urbanization and include secondary and intermediary cities and basic social services, as well as public space and mobility.

78. Urban climate action and environmental protection must be accelerated to meet the global goal of carbon neutrality by mid-century and achieve the breakthrough on climate adaptation. Many cities are already taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build urban resilience and support the most vulnerable communities, recognizing that climate change can aggravate displacement and will increasingly contribute to migration to urban areas. Multilevel governance systems must be strengthened to enhance the implementation of urban climate responses, scale innovations in small and intermediate cities, provide access to sustainable finance and integrate adaptation, settlement upgrading, resilience and basic service provision into one workstream.

79. Urban displacement and crises have become an enduring feature of our urban world. Most refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons are no longer being accommodated in dedicated camps but are seeking shelter and economic and social opportunities in cities. There is an urgent need to amplify the implementation of the New Urban Agenda during crisis response and recovery and for the international development community to provide guidance on urban recovery and reconstruction, including using urban profiling and urban recovery frameworks.

Urban prosperity and financing for sustainable infrastructure

80. Over the past decades, fiscal decentralization has increased the role of local governments in providing public services and generating tax revenue. However, the ability of subnational governments to expand local revenues or tap external finance for sustainable urban transformations is often restricted by national legislative frameworks and limited capacity. The lack of a financial system that works for all urban residents protracts the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. People-centred technologies may increase transparency and enhance basic service provision, citizen participation in decision-making and local economic development.

Multilevel governance and localization

81. The New Urban Agenda plays a crucial role in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as it provides the road map for their localization. Effective multilevel governance, a whole-of-government approach and whole-of-society engagement can advance sustainable urban development.

At the global level, UN-Habitat coordinates mechanisms that localize the Goals, including the Local2030 Coalition. UN-Habitat also supports the United Nations Task Force on the Future of Cities, ensuring that the United Nations system opens up to a networked multilateralism.

82. Increased collaboration in the United Nations system to support Member States in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda is encouraging, notably the advancement of the United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development. Recognition of the pivotal role that local governments play in sustainable development is also important, as evidenced by the extraordinary urban response to COVID-19, which has had a particularly significant impact on cities. Governments are invited to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and to support data and analysis, integrated policy, capacity-building and inclusive partnerships with national and local governments. Given that the joint efforts of all levels of government are essential for the realization of sustainable urbanization, the increased participation of local and regional governments in the implementation of the Agenda is welcomed. UN-Habitat is committed to supporting efforts by countries to implement the Agenda, focusing in particular on national urban policies, national and local government dialogue, urban planning capacity-building, and the urban economy and finance.

83. The work of Member States to support the strengthening of UN-Habitat is appreciated, in particular through General Assembly resolution [73/239](#) establishing the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board. The participation of 124 States in the first session of the Assembly demonstrated the capacity of that intergovernmental body to provide strategic direction and advance global urban policy. The first three sessions of the Board showed that Member States have greater oversight of UN-Habitat, including with regard to workplans and budgets. In addition to institutional reforms approved by the Executive Director, the enhanced governance structure has ensured that UN-Habitat is more trusted, transparent, accountable, effective and efficient. In adopting the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, the Assembly aligned the work of UN-Habitat with poverty eradication, economic transformation, climate action, and peace and security, which are shared objectives of the 2030 Agenda. The latest strategic plan also makes the work of UN-Habitat more relevant and accessible to other entities of the United Nations system, Member States, and local and non-State actors.

84. The active engagement of the regional commissions and other United Nations entities on the issues of sustainable urbanization within the emerging regional architecture of the United Nations system is encouraging. Regional action plans for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, issue-based coalitions on sustainable urban development and knowledge hubs that include urban diagnostic tools and regional ministerial forums on housing and urban development are effective mechanisms through which UN-Habitat can mainstream sustainable urban development at the national level, by providing implementation guidance that is regionally appropriate. It is recommended that the United Nations system, regional entities and Member States continue to support those mechanisms in order to achieve results at scale.

85. The Executive Director has addressed underfunded budgets for the non-earmarked contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, but the financial situation of UN-Habitat remains of concern. While allocations to the overall portfolio of UN-Habitat technical cooperation projects financed by earmarked contributions have remained stable at approximately \$200 million, the Programme's tool development, policy

advisory services, advocacy, outreach and programme development support financed through general purpose funding has decreased to less than \$3 million in 2021. The imbalance between earmarked and core funding poses challenges for UN-Habitat in continuing to strengthen its organizational structure, ensure proper balance between operational and normative work and utilize the United Nations reforms to promote sustainable urban development at country level. The lack of adequate funds for core normative work undermines the ability of the Programme to implement its strategic plan. Member States are therefore encouraged to contribute financially, in particular through non-earmarked funds, to the efforts of UN-Habitat to catalyse collaboration on urban issues across the United Nations system.
