

UN Habitat, first meeting of the Executive Board of 2023

28-29 March 2023

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Colleagues,

Good morning.

First, I would like to emphasise the importance of the normative and operational work of UN Habitat. We heard the Presentation on SDG certification and important feedback from MS, which important to take into account. we also heard several testimonies from the ground on cities cooperation with UN Habitat and on their efforts to implement SDGs. We appreciate these positive examples. UN Habitat normative and operational activities extends further, it also includes an important mandate to support cities when they face challenges, such as natural disasters or conflicts. For example recently UN habitat offered help to Turkiye, Syria, Mozambique and Malawi, and others affected by disasters. We commend this work. It is in this context I will now make a statement on behalf of a group of countries.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Colleagues,

I am making this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada, European Union and its Member States, Japan, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the Unites States of America.

We welcome the first UN Habitat Executive Board meeting of the year and express our gratitude to the Executive Director and the Secretariat for inclusive preparations for this meeting. We look forward to continue fruitful discussions today.

In the context of UN Habitat's mandate to support countries affected by disasters and conflicts, we recall that it has been more than a year, since Russia launched its full scale aggression against Ukraine. As the UN Secretary General has repeatedly stated, this is a clear violation of the UN charter. Its impacts have been devastating - in early 2023, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) found that 40 percent of the country's total population needs humanitarian assistance.

The destruction of critical infrastructure as a result of Russia's aggression has seriously affected people's access to housing and basic services including water, electricity, heating and health care. A Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment conducted by the World Bank, the European Union and the Government of Ukraine found that the housing sector is the most affected by the war. The Government of Ukraine faces multiple challenges: from meeting the immediate needs of population including the large number of displaced people to long term, sustainable recovery and reconstruction of urban areas and communities in an inclusive, resilient, safe way.

We recall the UNGA resolution A/RES/ES-11/6 from February this year titled "Principles of the charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive just and lasting peace in Ukraine" and reaffirm our

strong commitment to the resolution. We demand that Russia immediately end its destruction of Ukraine's urban areas and critical infrastructure and we express our solidarity with Ukraine and its people.

Emphasising UN Habitat's extensive experience in supporting countries affected by conflict, we welcome its further engagement in Ukraine, especially regarding response and recovery activities, in full coordination with the government of Ukraine and with the other UN bodies.

I thank you, Chair.