

**GRULAC STATEMENT**  
**United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly).**

**“A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises.”**

Nairobi, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Thank you Mr. President,

Dear Excellencies, Ministers, other high-level representatives of Member States, Madame Executive Director,

I am pleased to address the UN-Habitat Assembly as Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries in Nairobi.

GRULAC reiterates its firm support for the critical work undertaken by UN-Habitat in supporting sustainable urbanization and in assisting Member States, at all levels of government, to achieve the SDGs in times of global crises and to implement the New Urban Agenda, adopted in our Region, in Ecuador, in 2016.

The challenges we face today are immense. Rapid urbanization, social inequality, the cost-of-living crisis, urban insecurity caused by transnational organized crime, economic and debt crises, environmental challenges, and climate change, and other ongoing global crises have created an urgent need for action. We must come together to forge a path toward a sustainable future. Multilateralism, characterized by cooperation and shared responsibility, is the key to tackling these complex issues effectively.

GRULAC reaffirms its support to UN Habitat, as the UN Focal Point for sustainable urban development. GRULAC also commends Executive Director Maimunah Shariff and her team in the

reconstruction of UN-Habitat and regaining Member States' trust on the Program. Despite the many challenges, the results achieved are impressive, as exemplified by the first surplus in the non-earmarked budget of the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation in twelve years; the mobilization of around USD 540 million for the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and the progressive resumption of the Program's visibility as a central entity for meeting the needs of the poor and most vulnerable residing in cities and human settlements in different parts of the world.

Our region is working actively in the promotion of sustainable urbanization. In this sense, the Forum of Ministers and Highest Authorities of Housing and Urbanism of Latin America and the Caribbean – MINURVI met in Argentina, in April 2023. MINURVI renewed its commitment to the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs and to continued implementation of processes of urban planning, land use regulation and housing policies, with a view to benefit people in vulnerable. To that end, the region called on multilateral financial institutions, including the GEF, GCF and Adaptation Fund, to increase their support to sustainable urban development and adequate housing in GRULAC countries.

Mr. Chair,

Climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk management, and disaster response are essential to urban planning activities in Latin America and the Caribbean and a necessary condition to promote sustainable development. Moreover, recognizing the value of incorporating biodiversity and resilience into urban planning is also important for promoting communities that are both socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

We highlight the complementarity between the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UNFCCC and the Paris

Agreement.

Furthermore, sustainable urban development can only be achieved with the active involvement of all stakeholders, including local governments, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples, academia, and the private sector. We must create platforms and mechanisms that enable meaningful participation, ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities, women in all their diversity, persons with disabilities, children, youth, elderly, LGBTQ+ people, and indigenous peoples are heard and valued. Gender perspective-planning and inclusive decision-making processes lead to more equitable outcomes, fostering social cohesion and resilience.

Along those lines, advancing the localization of the SDGs and multi-level partnerships between national and subnational entities will also play a crucial role towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Cities and local governments are at the forefront of the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national sustainable development strategies, including in key areas such as urban planning, provision of housing and slums and informal settlements transformation. Therefore, they need to be adequately supported and empowered in the pursuit of our commonly agreed goals.

In this matter, we thank the work of UN-Habitat in supporting cities in applying participatory planning methodologies in their effort to become more inclusive and enhance the positive impact of urban migration for host communities across Latin America.

Mr. Chair,

Effective multilateralism requires robust partnerships and collaboration. Governments may collaborate to share best practices, exchange knowledge.—As an example, GRULAC is committed to strengthening the platform for exchanging experiences and

knowledge to advance in common solutions in the region, where all countries incorporate development resilient to climate change and with low carbon emissions through harnessing financing opportunities from all sources and instruments, that consider the limited fiscal space and debt sustainability for sustainable housing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As we move forward, we must continually monitor our progress, assess the impact of our actions, and adjust our strategies accordingly. Regular reporting and transparency are essential to ensure accountability and maintain momentum. Regularly sharing our successes and challenges allows us to learn from one another and inspire greater action.

Moreover, multilateralism is fundamental to facilitating the mobilization of financial resources to support sustainable urban development. We call on International financial institutions, development banks, and developed countries to contribute the necessary funding and financial access for infrastructure projects, capacity building, and technological innovation to promote sustainable urbanization in developing countries. By investing in sustainable urban development, we address immediate challenges, create long-term economic opportunities, and improve the quality of life for millions of people.

GRULAC expresses its support to the role of UN Habitat's Assembly as the main intergovernmental process where Member States identify the urban challenges affecting our world and agree on the main strategies to tackle them, in a spirit of international cooperation. In that regard, we value the draft resolutions introduced by all Member States, both developed and developing countries. GRULAC remains open to assess each one of them on their own merits and considering their potential to contribute to sustainable development across the globe.

Through inclusive and effective multilateralism, we can overcome the challenges of our time and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Let us seize this opportunity to build environmentally friendly, socially inclusive, and economically vibrant cities.

As southern countries, and according to our capabilities, we are taking actions to face the threats and concerns to achieve the sustainable development goals in the context urbanization. Thus, as GRULAC, we also hope this Assembly turns an opportunity to share experiences, points of view and good practices.