

**The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Speech
on the Sidelines of the Meeting**

Agenda of the Second Session of the UN-Habitat Conference

Good morning, Mr. President

Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Participants.

I am honored to meet you today, speaking about the urban renaissance in my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which has made great efforts in urban planning since the sixties, and development is still continuing in all cities of the Kingdom.

In 2016, the Kingdom participated in the third Habitat Conference with a delegation headed by His Excellency the Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs, and Housing, many important initiatives were presented in the Kingdom during that period, which were suitable for living well-being and urban sustainability, and were a different stage for development.

In the same year, the Kingdom launched Vision 2030, which set important aspirations and targets for our country, and constituted an important shift in defining the horizon we seek and the dreams we want to achieve. The vision came to emphasize diversifying the economy, focusing on the culture and entertainment sector, initiatives and plans to facilitate housing ownership, openness to tourism and foreign investment, benefiting from new technologies, and empowering women and youth. All this is in order to improve and elevate the quality of life of our citizens and all visitors to our country, including residents and tourists. The Saudi Vision 2030 encouraged the acceleration of sustainable development plans, and we began to witness unprecedented leaps in all fields. It also increased our ambition with continuous work that we derive from the support, empowerment, and work of our wise leadership, which enabled us in the urban field to transform our cities into interactive urban systems that enhance the common values of living, comprehensiveness, and sustainability.

Since the launch of the vision and the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, we now have many success stories and lessons learned in urban development that we can share with the world. for example:

- **The Green Riyadh Project**, (part of the Saudi Green Initiative), aims to increase green spaces in urban areas from 1.5% to 9%, and plant 7.5 million trees in the streets by 2030.
- The **"Downtown Jeddah" Project**, which aims to take advantage of Jeddah's strategic location and history as a gateway to the Red Sea. It also aims to build-on competitive advantages, inspired by the place's deep history and culture, to enhance the site's diversity and social authenticity.

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen:

- Since the beginning of the housing program (which is one of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 programs), it has served more than one million and 400 thousand Saudi families, within the framework of creating cities with a distinct urban environment suitable for their residents, and seeking to raise the percentage of ownership to 70% by 2030 , by launching many initiatives and support packages, diversifying residential products, and enhancing the real estate supply.
- One of the main priorities that enhance the quality of life in housing projects is the adoption of "new directions and principles of sustainable urban development" in the planning and design of cities. With another major priority being to focus on "Humanizing Cities".
- The Municipal Sector, which provides more than 40% of services in Saudi cities, through 17 secretariats and 268 municipalities, has a fundamental role in the development and management of cities. The smart cities strategy has been adopted in the municipal sector, through which we seek to provide more than 200 approved smart services. on artificial intelligence and data, in different fields.
- With the concerted efforts possible in our country, especially with regard to raising the quality of life in our cities, the Quality-of-Life Program was launched in 2018 (which is one of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 programs) to improve the quality of life of the residents and visitors of the Kingdom, by building and developing the environment necessary to create more vital options that enhance positive lifestyles and increases the interaction of citizens and residents with society. The

program was able, in a short period of time, through several sectors, to enhance the quality of life, some of which were represented in sports, culture, heritage, arts, entertainment, and the like.

- Finally, I am pleased to confirm the appreciation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the efforts made by the United Nations Human Settlements Program in supporting all countries by sharing pioneering experiences and providing technical support that motivates everyone to cooperate in supporting the program to enable it to implement its new strategy.
~~2017~~

Thank you.