

AGENDA ITEM 2

Statement by the Ambassador of Colombia in Kenya at the Third Session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat in 2023

Nairobi, Kenya, 28 November 2023

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Delegates, all protocols observed

As the Ambassador of Colombia, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat for her invaluable report and outstanding mandate. Colombia recognizes and deeply appreciates the numerous efforts made to advance UN-Habitat following the institutional and financial crisis the organization faced. Thanks to her effective and committed management, UN-Habitat has not only overcome these challenges but now looks towards a promising future. Her leadership has been crucial in ensuring that UN-Habitat's mission for sustainable urban development and improved quality of life for all continues to strengthen. Our country is proud to support and collaborate with UN-Habitat thanks to her inspiring leadership. We wish you the best in your future endeavors, confident that you will continue to make significant contributions in your future roles.

Today, I am deeply honored to address this distinguished Executive Board today as the Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia in Kenya. On behalf of the Government and the people of Colombia, I wish to convey our heartfelt appreciation and enthusiasm for our recent designation as a Member of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat as a country of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC).

Colombia views this appointment as a significant responsibility and a testament to the trust and confidence of the international community in our nation's commitment to advancing the goals and principles of UN-Habitat. We fully recognize the importance of UN-Habitat's mission in promoting sustainable urbanization, equitable access to urban services, and the development of inclusive, resilient cities and human settlements.

We would also like to commend UN-Habitat for its efficient and transparent handling of the nomination process, which culminated in our designation. The absence of any objection from the international community is a testament to the cooperative spirit that prevails within this esteemed organization.

Moreover, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the Republic of Costa Rica for its gracious decision to step down and make way for Colombia's participation in the Executive Board. This act of goodwill exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among nations and underscores the shared commitment to the mission of UN-Habitat.

Colombia is committed to actively engaging with all Member States, partners, and stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Executive Board. We believe that through cooperation, shared knowledge, and collaborative efforts, we can address the complex urban challenges facing our world today.

We look forward to actively participating in the important work of this organization and collaborating with all of you to achieve our shared goals.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 4

Statement by the Ambassador of Colombia on Welcoming the Scalability Model

Mr Chair,

Distinguished delegates, all protocols observed.

I am pleased to welcome and acknowledge the efforts made in the development of the scalability model for the non-earmarked budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. This report, presented in accordance with the request outlined in decision 2023/11, provides valuable insights into how the program plans to enhance its capacity upon the approval of a higher budget level.

The scalability model has been a subject of discussion and refinement, as evidenced by the previous reports that laid out its initial methodology and thematic pillars. I commend the dedication and meticulous work put forth by the team responsible for its development.

I wish to express Colombia's support for the continued development and implementation of the scalability model for the non-earmarked budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. This model is a crucial tool for enhancing the program's impact and effectiveness, and we look forward to its successful implementation in alignment with the organization's strategic goals.

Additionally, while Colombia has made significant strides in its urban development, it is important to mention that the issue of inclusion remains a significant obstacle for our country. Therefore, we request UN-Habitat to continue its work in promoting regional inclusion and emphasize the importance of regional architecture and strengthening.

In the scalability model, Colombia kindly asks the secretariat to elaborate on how the reach of this scalability model can be expanded to have an impact "closer to the point of delivery," thus ensuring a greater influence on the regions.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 5

Statement by the Ambassador of Colombia on Subprogramme 1: Reduced Spatial Inequality and Poverty in Communities Across the Urban-Rural Continuum

Thank you very much Mr Chair.

We want to thank the secretariat for this presentation. Colombia supports the Draft Work Programme and the Draft Budget for 2024. We particularly welcome the Subprogramme 1, aimed at reducing spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum. This subprogramme aligns closely with Colombia's national goals and aspirations, and it is a testament to the United Nations' commitment to addressing pressing issues that resonate deeply with our country.

We specifically applaud and align with the approach presented in Result 3 of this subprogramme, focusing on the creation of inclusive cities and communities through urban regeneration.

In the proposed program plan for 2024, it is of utmost relevance to acknowledge the profound challenges faced by many cities and towns, where multiple deprivations overlap, leading to concentrated socio-economic and spatial exclusion. These areas experience higher levels of poverty, unemployment, crime, and heightened vulnerability to environmental hazards and shocks. Colombia recognizes the urgent need to address these pressing issues.

As highlighted in the lessons learned from this subprogramme, community involvement in all phases of urban regeneration processes is a crucial factor for success. We firmly believe that community participation must be an integral part of the initiatives supported by UN-Habitat. Our experience has demonstrated that the active engagement of communities that have endured aggravated forms of discrimination, particularly in urban contexts, is an indispensable condition for achieving sustainable inclusion.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 7

Statement by the Ambassador of Colombia in Kenya on Agenda Item 7: Principal Obstacles to the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda by Member States

Nairobi, Kenya, 29 November 2023

Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much to the secretariat for the presentation which addressed the principal obstacles to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by Member States.

Since Habitat III Colombia has been diligently incorporating and aligning the principles and commitments of the New Urban Agenda into our national programs, plans, and actions. We recognize the transformative potential of this agenda in shaping the future of our cities and human settlements.

On March 31, 2021, Colombia proudly presented its first voluntary report on the progress made in implementing the New Urban Agenda. The report provided a valuable opportunity for Colombia to assess our achievements and challenges in promoting sustainable urbanization and inclusive urban development.

Colombia firmly acknowledges that the New Urban Agenda represents a common ideal. We believe in the power of urbanization to drive social and economic progress, foster innovation, and improve the quality of life for our citizens. We wish to praise the importance of mainstreaming the New Urban Agenda into national policies and planning processes.

However, we must also address certain challenges that hinder effective mainstreaming and implementation. In addition to the challenges posed by rapid urbanization, inequality, and environmental degradation, the dual burden of a high number of indicators and the persistent lack of funding poses significant hurdles for Member States. In this regard, we warmly welcome UN-Habitat's efforts in addressing these challenges and particularly refer to the commitment to focus on providing more accessible and locally contextualized normative tools and services for reporting. This approach aligns with Colombia's vision of tailoring urban solutions to our specific challenges and needs.

Additionally, the issue of language proficiency represents an obstacle, as many of the tools that support implementation, monitoring, and reporting require proficiency in English. This challenge is particularly pronounced in a country like Colombia, where a minority of the population is English-speaking.

Colombia believes that language should not be a barrier to the meaningful participation of all Member States in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. We encourage the development of multilingual resources and the provision of technical assistance to bridge this gap.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 8

Statement by the Ambassador

Welcoming the Report of the Executive Director on Preparations for the Development of the Strategic Plan for the Period 2026–2029

Thank you Mr Chair,

Colombia commends the Executive Director for presenting this comprehensive report, which outlines a clear and well-structured roadmap for the development of the Strategic Plan, taking into consideration the decisions made during the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023. These decisions underscore the importance of aligning UN-Habitat's planning cycle with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations System.

We appreciate the inclusive and consultative approach outlined in the report for the development of the next Strategic Plan. It is imperative that we learn from past experiences and consider lessons from ongoing evaluations and assessments, such as the mid-term review of the current Strategic Plan and the Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment. Colombia recognizes the significance of data-driven decision-making, and we fully support the intention to strengthen the evidence base for the Strategic Plan by gathering empirical data from various sources, including reports on the New Urban Agenda and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework.

Furthermore, Colombia acknowledges the importance of the Strategic Plan in supporting the implementation of resolutions adopted at the second United Nations Habitat Assembly. In particular, Colombia emphasizes its keen interest in the resolution on biodiverse and resilient cities, which aims to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning. We believe that this resolution holds great significance for our country, given our rich biodiversity and the need to ensure sustainable development that respects and protects our natural environment.

Colombia is actively engaged in ongoing consultations with the president of CAF (Development Bank of Latin America) to collaborate on a CAF-funded project. We emphasize the importance of unifying efforts and building upon existing projects undertaken by various regional development banks. Specifically, this project acts as a forerunner to pilot initiatives focused on biodiverse and resilient cities, potentially playing a key role in advancing the objectives of the aforementioned resolution. We encourage other regional development banks to join member states in supporting the implementation of such resolutions.

Colombia stands ready to contribute constructively to the development of the Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2029. We look forward to engaging in meaningful discussions and consultations throughout this process to ensure that the plan effectively addresses the challenges and opportunities facing urban development in the coming years.

Thank you for your attention.

AGENDA ITEM 11

Thank you Mr Chair,

Colombia commends the work of the secretariat on the report presented at this point of the agenda presented by the different speakers. The Secretariat has managed to provide a comprehensive overview of the progress made in advancing our mission to support sustainable urban development and resilience, with a particular focus on the SDG Cities flagship program and the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative. We believe that the SDG Cities program can serve as a platform for sharing our experiences in territorial peace-building, fostering collaboration, and promoting inclusive development in post-conflict areas.

The SURGe initiative, aligns closely with Colombia's commitment to climate action, urban resilience, and peace. Colombia places great importance on the territorial experience of peace-building, a journey that has been central to our nation's history. As a country with a deep commitment to achieving lasting peace, we recognize that sustainable urban development and resilience are integral components of our peace-building efforts. We are eager to contribute our experiences and expertise in peace-building in the territories to support cooperation at the regional and global levels, particularly in the context of South-South cooperation.

It is heartening to learn that discussions are ongoing to establish national initiatives in Colombia as part of the SDG Cities program. We are eager to leverage this initiative to not only advance our progress toward the SDGs but also to share our knowledge and experiences in territorial peace-building with other countries engaged in similar endeavors.

We stand ready to contribute to South-South cooperation in peace-building and look forward to collaborating and supporting these programs in ways that benefit our cities and promote sustainable development.

Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM 12

Statement on Agenda Item 12: Report of the Executive Director on the Status of Preparations for the 12th Session of the World Urban Forum

Nairobi, Kenya, November 29, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Colombia commends the Executive Director for presenting this comprehensive report on the preparations for the 12th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF). We see the WUF as an essential platform for international dialogue and cooperation on urban issues and have high expectations for WUF 2024, scheduled to take place in Cairo.

Colombia is keen to participate at the highest level in the upcoming World Urban Forum to reaffirm our steadfast commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda. We acknowledge the importance of these international commitments in shaping the future of our urban areas and are committed to their realization both nationally and globally.

We warmly welcome the selected theme for WUF 12, "Localization of the SDGs." Colombia believes that localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial for their effective implementation. Colombia has been active by hosting national urban forums since 2022. These forums have been invaluable for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and exchanging of best practices. Colombia set a global milestone by being part of the alumni of the World Urban Forum held in Medellín in 2014.

Therefore, Colombia understands the vital role of regional and national urban forums in setting the stage for the success of WUF 12. These forums act as innovation laboratories and catalysts for urban development, empowering local stakeholders, promoting ownership of the SDGs, and enabling the exchange of ideas and experiences that can shape global urban policies.

Thank you.