**High Level Political Forum 2018 – Thematic Review of SDGs implementation
SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and
sustainable**

UN-Habitat Executive Director – Remarks (7mins)
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Panellists: Ms Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner, Mayor's Office for International Affairs, New York City
Mr Jean Todt, Secretary-General's Envoy for Road Safety
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Ms Meera Al Shaikh, Project Manager and member of the SDG 11 Global Council, Smart Dubai, UAE

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to first highlight three key challenges related to the implementation of SDG 11.

1. **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY (SDG 11.1).** The SDG Target related to housing is measured by deprivation in three areas: slums, informal settlements and inadequate housing. According to updated data, while the proportion of the global urban population living in slums decreased from 28% to 23%, the absolute numbers of people living in slums increased, from some 800 million people in 2000 to more than 880 million in 2015; with higher numbers recorded in the fast urbanizing sub-regions. Housing affordability varies significantly, with more than 55% of households in sub Saharan Africa (SSA) spending more than 30% of their income in housing, while in Australia and New Zealand this proportion is only 6%.

2. **URBAN SPRAWL (SDG 11.3).** Cities are rapidly expanding, with the rate of land consumption increasingly overtaking that of population growth. As of 2017, the average rate of the physical expansion of cities was about one and a half times that of population growth. The forces driving this urban expansion include, among others: population growth, rising per capita incomes, cheaper agricultural lands, efficient and car-based transport. Regions with the highest rates of urban expansion include Eastern and South-eastern Asia (6.9 per cent), Sub-Saharan Africa (5.1 per cent) and Central and Southern Asia (4.3 per cent). More attention to compact, mixed-use, walkable urban expansion will be required to accelerate achievement of this target.

3. **ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES (SDG 11.7).** Public spaces such as streets, sidewalks and parks are a key component of urban functionality. They are broadly associated with benefits such as increases in property values, retail activity multiplication, efficient transportation, city attractiveness, safety, social cohesion, health and well-being. UN-Habitat has been working with partners to standardize the methodology for monitoring public spaces. Data from more than 300 cities across the world shows that public space, including streets, are occupying an increasingly smaller proportion of land in expanding cities in Europe, North America and Oceania. Clearly, we still have to make a stronger case for the irreplaceable value of public space.

While there is mixed progress in SDG-11 implementation, there are also success stories. We find that sustainable urban development is more lasting when countries and cities are able to address multiple issues at the same time. I offer one

example of such an integrated approach that incorporates inclusion-related policy measures.

The **Spatial Development Framework of Johannesburg,** developed with support of UN-Habitat, illustrates how interlinking policy, planning and investment can deliver inclusion, sustainability and prosperity.

Based on the Mayor's vision of *Corridors of Freedom*, which addresses the historic imbalances and injustices of the apartheid regime, the framework promotes stitching together segregated neighbourhoods, clustering places of employment and residence and improving the use of existing assets, such as transport infrastructure. This translates to policy measures and projects for specific neighbourhoods such as unlocking transformation in Soweto, redevelopment of former mine wasteland and linking the rapid bus system with housing development.

The framework has resulted in investment opportunities for many actors, both private and public. It has also helped to vertically integrate local and national agendas.

Another national-level example is the **Future Saudi Cities Programme**. With the support of UN-Habitat, it provides an integrated approach to rethinking the shape of 17 cities in Saudi Arabia and, the related legal, planning and financing frameworks. In addition, the development of integrated **National Urban Policies** in Argentina, Bolivia; Angola, Liberia, Cameroon; India, Myanmar, Vietnam; Egypt, Tunisia; Serbia and Sweden is encouraging.

On the monitoring side, the local dimension of development has been recognized by Member States in all major declarations and global agendas. City

leaders and local and regional government networks are developing global, regional and national systems for localization. To support this, UN-Habitat's **City Prosperity Initiative** has over 450 cities, each collecting information on 72 indicators. The growth of this large set of cities allows for the study of systems of cities in countries and across regions, building the capacity of city managers to go beyond single urban indicators and assess wider urban policy implications at the national and regional scales.

I would like to end with a few recommendations, focusing on the **monitoring systems** for SDG-11:

We need to agree globally on the **definition of 'urban' and the 'city' as units of analysis**. This does not exist currently, although some initiatives are going in this direction. A common definition will help to standardize values and harmonize results to prevent inconsistences.

Secondly, a unique challenge for Goal 11 indicators is the need to collect city-scale data prior to countries aggregating data at the national level. Countries with numerous cities, and those with limited human resources and funds, need to adopt strategies to cope with large data demands. The **National Sample of Cities** (NSC) approach developed by UN-Habitat is a recommended solution. If adopted by countries it offers the low-cost option of monitoring fewer representative sets of cities consistently over time, and the ability to seamlessly report national-level urban performance.

Good data needs to be **disaggregated** by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and **geographic location** to understand better who is at risk of being left behind the most in implementation of SDG11. UN Agencies and partners have advanced in principles, norms and standards and the identification of gaps but should go further by preparing training modules for the collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data.

Thank you for your attention

[DRAFT Final one-minute remark after interventions from the floor to be tailored if necessary to interventions from the floor]

We need to take advantage of the guidance that the New Urban Agenda (NUA) offers to accelerate implementation of SDG 11. Most critical at this point is financing. The Implementation Facility for Sustainable Urban Development (IFSUD) being led by UN-Habitat and the World Bank will go a long way to achieving that.