



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**OPENING STATEMENT BY HON. ALICE WAHOME, EGH; THE CABINET SECRETARY
FOR LANDS, PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE FIRST
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT
21st – 22nd APRIL 2026 IN GIGIRI, NAIROBI**

**Chairperson of the Executive Board, H.E. Ambassador Sebastian Groth;
Director General of the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura;
The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach;
Excellencies;
Distinguished delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is my distinct honour, on behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, to extend a warm welcome to all distinguished delegates and participants to Nairobi, the global headquarters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Kenya is delighted to host this First Session of the Executive Board at this pivotal moment in our shared endeavor to advance sustainable urbanization and adequate housing for all.

The agenda before us is both timely and comprehensive. It encompasses the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, the draft work programme and budget for 2027, the update by the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, and other critical items. These discussions take place at the mid-point review of the New Urban Agenda, adopted at Habitat III in Quito in 2016, offering us a vital opportunity to accelerate progress toward resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cities and human settlements.

Kenya commends the Executive Director, Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, for her steadfast leadership in driving UN-Habitat's agenda forward with transparency, accountability, and results-based management. We equally commend the Secretariat for its unwavering dedication to providing technical support and normative guidance that enable evidence-based policymaking across the globe.

Distinguished Delegates,

Kenya continues to provide leadership in the global discourse on sustainable housing and urban development. Earlier this month, from 8th to 10th April 2026, we successfully hosted the Second Africa Urban Forum in Nairobi, convened by the African Union Commission with technical support from UN-Habitat, under the theme “Adequate Housing for All: Advancing Socio-Economic and Environmental Transformation towards the realization of Agenda 2063.” The Forum produced the Nairobi Declaration, which consolidates Africa’s common position ahead of the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum next month in Baku, Azerbaijan. We look forward to amplifying Africa’s voice on the global stage.

Just days ago, Kenya, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and UN-Habitat, launched a 5.2 million United States Dollar initiative to promote low-carbon and nature-positive urban development in Nairobi. This underscores our commitment to building inclusive, resilient, and future-ready cities.

At the national level, Kenya is implementing an ambitious Affordable Housing Programme, a flagship initiative under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). Adequate housing is both a fundamental human right and a catalyst for inclusive growth, job creation, and social transformation. With over 279,000 housing units currently under development and an annual target of 200,000 units, the programme is delivering tangible results. Through the transition to the Milestone Model, we have significantly enhanced affordability—reducing costs to consumers to KSh 50,000 per square meter—while ensuring inclusion of social housing units and integrated social facilities such as schools and health centers, in line with the principles of complete human settlements.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Kenya remains deeply committed to the mandate of UN-Habitat and to supporting the agency in delivering transformative change in cities and human settlements worldwide. We call upon Member States to further strengthen the Organization’s financial sustainability, expand partnerships with local and regional actors, and ensure that its normative guidance is effectively translated into concrete, impactful action at the local level.

As the host country, Kenya will continue to be a steadfast and reliable partner, providing a conducive environment for UN-Habitat’s operations and for the constructive engagement of all delegations.

As we begin our deliberations, let us be guided by a spirit of multilateral cooperation and shared purpose. Let us be bold in our vision, pragmatic in our actions, and resolute in our commitment to equity, sustainability, and human dignity.

The outcomes of this session will shape the future of cities and communities far beyond these walls. I wish you all productive deliberations and a successful session.

I thank you.