REPUBLIC OF KENYA

OPENING STATEMENT BY HON. ALICE WAHOME, EGH; THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR LANDS, PUBLIC WORKS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DURING THE OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2026; NAIROBI, KENYA.

Chairperson of the Executive Board, H.E. Ms. Guo Haiyan, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to UN-Habitat;

Director General of the United Nations Offices in Nairobi, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura;

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Anacláudia Rossbach;

Excellencies;

Distinguished delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Kenya, I extend a warm welcome to all distinguished delegates and participants to Nairobi, the seat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office in Nairobi. It is a great honour for Kenya to host the Second Session of the Executive Board at this important juncture in our collective pursuit of sustainable urbanization and adequate housing for all.

This session's agenda reflects the breadth and depth of UN-Habitat's critical mandate, with key issues for consideration being: financial oversight, approving the 2027 work programme and budget, and reviewing normative, operational, and global policy outcomes. Kenya commends the Executive Director for her leadership in advancing UN-Habitat's reform agenda, promoting transparency, accountability, and results-based management, and ensuring that the organization remains responsive to the priorities of Member States. We also commend the Secretariat for its continued dedication to

delivering technical support and normative guidance that inform evidence-based policymaking around the world.

Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to highlight some of the roles and milestones the Government of Kenya has made in relation to this session's agenda: -

1. As both the host of UN-Habitat in Nairobi and a leading Member State, Kenya drives the global housing and sustainable urbanization agenda through international diplomacy, governance oversight, and domestic policy.
2. As Chair of the Executive Board's Ad Hoc Working Group on Programmatic, Budgetary and Administrative (PBA) Matters, Kenya leads consultations and reports to improve financial oversight, transparency, and results-based management.
3. Under the Affordable Housing Act (2024), Kenya created a ring-fenced domestic financing framework that lowers consumer construction costs while attracting public-private partnerships and blended finance.
4. Kenya leads Member State consultations for the 2027 UN-Habitat/budget work programme (via the PBA Working Group) and supports UN operations at Gigiri, Nairobi.
5. At the national level, Kenya continues to implement an ambitious Affordable Housing Programme, a flagship initiative under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). This programme underscores our conviction that adequate housing is both a human right and a foundation for inclusive growth, job creation, and social transformation. Through it, we seek to close the housing gap, enhance urban livability, and uplift millions of Kenyan families.
6. Partnering with UN-Habitat across 22 counties, Kenya has launched zero-waste initiatives (like the Korogocho Material Recovery Facility), provided safe water to nearly 140,000 people, and improved sanitation for over 80,000 residents.
7. Kenya actively contributes to global working groups on adequate housing by sharing best practices for integrated policies and secure tenure.

8. Kenya has continued to shape global and continental urban development policies by moving from policy dialogue to investable urban projects and showcasing its housing model.
9. Kenya hosted AUF2 in Nairobi in April 2026, carrying its outcomes directly into the World Urban Forum (WUF13) in Baku, Azerbaijan, to push for bankable urban pipelines, county-led climate resilience, and housing finance.
10. Kenya's rapid housing delivery and market uptake at the WUF13 Investor Roundtable established the country as a continental benchmark for housing finance.
11. In July 2026 in New York, Kenya worked with the Group of 77 and China to shape the Political Declaration for the New Urban Agenda, highlighting the Affordable Housing Act 2024 and public-private partnerships as solutions to bridge infrastructure gaps and create youth jobs.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As the Executive Board begins its deliberations, Kenya reaffirms its unwavering support for UN-Habitat and its mission. We encourage Member States to continue strengthening the Organization's financial sustainability, to deepen partnerships with local and regional actors, and to ensure that its normative outputs are effectively translated into concrete action at the local level. Such predictable and flexible funding is essential for institutional stability, long-term planning and effective delivery of the UN-Habitat mandate.

As host country, Kenya remains a steadfast and reliable partner, committed to providing a conducive environment for UN-Habitat's operations and for the constructive engagement of all delegations.

Let us approach this session with renewed commitment and a shared vision of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements for all. I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a successful session.

I thank you for your kind attention.