

National Statement

Second Session of United Nations Habitat Assembly

Ms. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be part of the second session of UN-Habitat Assembly. The Assembly assumes significance as all member states are deliberating for the first time after the global crisis of Covid-19 that threatened the very future of humanity. India stands committed to engaging with the UN-Habitat, international organizations, and other stakeholders to address the challenges of urbanization and global crises in a sustainable manner.

2. It is particularly satisfying to note that the international efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11, by making cities and other human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable have been strengthened over the last few years by the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements. Today, I thank the UN-Habitat for this opportunity to share our views on the timely theme of '*A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises*'. I am happy to share India's vision for achieving the commitments agreed upon, for sustainable development of housing and urban development, and the human settlements at large.

3. India is among the largest urban systems in the world. More importantly, the new urban infrastructure which India is building needs to be green and resilient. India has taken the lead in defining the contours for facilitating planned urbanization, based on the principles of cooperative federalism to achieve social inclusion, economic growth, and environmental sustainability for her people.

4. Urbanization in India has become an important determinant of rapid economic growth and poverty reduction. Urban areas generate over 2/3rd of the country's GDP

and account for about 90% of government revenues. We are, therefore, fully conscious of the challenges and opportunities offered by the ongoing urbanization and global crises that threaten the very future of humanity and the fate of our planet. Rapid and unplanned urbanisation is severely challenging the government to provide adequate and sustainable provisioning of basic services, including affordable housing, water and sanitation, and transport, among others. India affirms its commitment to the larger goals of urban equity and eradication of poverty; inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all; productivity, competitiveness, diversification, and innovation; and urban resilience. Urban development remains a shared responsibility of the different tiers of government and of the public and private sectors.

5. Urban areas in India face multi-pronged challenges including climate change & pollution, coupled with global economic challenges which have deep environmental, social, and health impacts. We remain confronted by a complex ecosystem of urban challenges in ensuring housing for all, technology-based solutions to enhance service delivery, better mobility and greener transport, smart governance, and in doing more with less. To address these challenges, institutions, and organizations are reorienting themselves by adopting new strategies, approaches, and technologies.

6. India has embarked upon the journey of the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of urbanisation ever undertaken in the world, by initiating a range of policy interventions, under the leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

a) The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Housing for All Mission was launched in 2015 for construction of affordable houses for all eligible beneficiaries in urban areas by providing Central Assistance. It adopts demand driven inclusive approach, providing equal opportunity to all, irrespective of gender, caste, creed or religion. It promotes women empowerment by providing the ownership of houses in the name of female members. Upto May 2023, 12 Million affordable houses have been sanctioned with an investment of around ₹8.19 trillion. Construction has started in 11.1 Million houses; of this, 7.5 Million houses have been completed and delivered. About 1.6 Million houses are being constructed using identified new technologies. This special intervention is

appropriately integrated with finance, technology, and governance components, along with people- centric focus.

b) The Sustainable Development Goal 6 relates to ensuring availability and sustainable management of Water and Sanitation for all by 2030. In the pursuit of realizing this, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched on 25 June 2015 in selected 500 cities and towns across the country. The Mission focuses on water supply; sewerage and septage management; storm water drainage; green spaces and parks; and non-motorized urban transport. A set of Urban Reforms and Capacity Building have been included in the Mission. AMRUT 2.0 has been launched on 1st October 2021 with a focus on making the cities 'water secure' through rejuvenation of water bodies, urban aquifer management, and reuse of used water. Providing tap water in 4,902 cities and improving sewerage / septage management in 500 AMRUT cities are major objectives of AMRUT 2.0. A Drinking Water Survey is also a component of the Mission. This survey has been undertaken in 485 AMRUT cities w.e.f. 15th December 2022 to instill healthy competition among cities for better delivery of water services.

c) India is successfully implementing the largest sanitation and hygiene program in the world - the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban, which was launched on 1st October 2014 as a pioneering urban sanitation program aimed at eradicating open defecation and establishing efficient solid waste management practices. Under the mission, 95% city wards are practicing Door-to-Door collection of waste, 89% wards are practicing source segregation and 76% of waste generated is being processed. 4,355 cities have been certified as Open Defecation Free (ODF). The Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, launched on 1st October 2021, aims to transform urban cleanliness by making all cities 'Garbage Free' by 2026, focusing on comprehensive solid waste and used water management.

d) The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) was launched on 25 June 2015 with the objective of providing core infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment, and ensuring a decent quality of life in cities through the application of 'smart solutions'. 100 cities

across India were selected to be developed as Smart Cities, through a two-stage competition process. With this mission, India aims to realize its promise to create inclusive and sustainable cities through innovation and data-driven governance, to enhance the quality of urban life in 100 Smart cities. Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCCs) have been operationalized in all 100 Smart Cities, which act as the nerve center of the city, monitoring and managing urban activity through the use of digital technologies, data analytics, and smart infrastructure. The Smart Cities had transformed their ICCCs into COVID-19 war rooms for real-time monitoring and effective management of the pandemic using technology.

e) The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) was launched in 2014-15 to reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households on sustainable basis in 790 cities. The scheme's coverage has been extended to all statutory towns, to be decided by the respective States/Union Territories. The Mission addresses multiple dimensions of urban poverty by developing strong community-based organizations, providing placement oriented skill training and subsidized loans for self-employment ventures, supporting street vendors' livelihoods and establishing shelters for the urban homeless.

f) The Prime Minister's Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme was launched on 01 June, 2020 to facilitate micro-credit to Street Vendors in urban areas so that they can restart their businesses which were adversely impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Till May, 2023, 4.5 million loans amounting to Rs. 56 billion have been disbursed. During the pandemic of Covid-19, the scheme played a vital role in uplifting the economic conditions of street vendors, inclusive urban development, poverty alleviation, promotion of digital payments and adoption of sustainable business practices & technologies among the Street Vendors.

g) Climate change is one of the major challenges that the world faces today. The cities are thought to be one of the main contributors to climate change. India has taken the initiative called National Mission on Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) to reduce the carbon footprint of cities. NMSH aims at (i) Promoting low-carbon urban growth towards

reducing GHG emissions intensity for achieving India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), and (ii) Building resilience of cities to climate change impacts and strengthening their capacities to 'bounce back better' from climate related extreme events and disaster risks. The first version of NMSH released in 2010 has now been revised in the context of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and New Urban Agenda (NUA). The revised NMSH has identified five thematic areas, namely (i) Energy and Green Buildings, (ii) Urban Planning, Green Cover and Biodiversity, (iii) Mobility and Air Quality, (iv) Water Management, and (v) Waste Management. Key mitigation and adaptation strategies to facilitate the development of a sustainable habitat have also been recommended under each thematic area. NMSH 2.0 also lists out enabling climate actions, which are intended to address the overarching framework to facilitate adoption and implementation of the sector-wise climate action strategies. These include strategies pertaining to Urban Governance, Capacity Building, Data, Technology and Innovation for the mission. Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF), a first-of-its-kind assessment framework with 28 climate-relevant parameters across the five thematic areas, will serve as a tool for cities to assess their present situation vis-à-vis objectives and targets of NMSH 2.0.

7. For India, sustainable development is not a destination, but a dynamic process of adaptation, learning, and action with greater synergies between the economy, society, and the natural environment. The speed, scale, and complexity of urbanization demand new solutions and innovative systems that can play an important role to ensure a faster transition towards a better future. In the context of India's commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, with a focus on 'sustainable cities and human settlements for all in times of global crises', India has evolved an agenda that would enable its transformation. For effectively implementing its vision of the new urban agenda, India would rely on certain levers to make cities work towards greater productivity, inclusion, sustainability, and rural-urban linkages.

8. It would not be an understatement to say that India's urban agenda is one of the defining projects of our century. The broad aim is to create an ecosystem to encourage

innovations for accelerated action and realign the paradigm from 'provision of services' to integrated planning and holistic development, plus citizen engagement and participation; thus taking the idea of service provision various notches higher to improve operational efficiencies.

9. As a country we are striving towards replicating and sustaining these innovations on a large scale. We are making sustained efforts in strengthening the capacities of our local governments over the long term. We believe that innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration are keys so that initial results become widely institutionalized, and fully embedded into the local system. India would be happy to share its experiences and learn from the experiences of member states in improving the quality of life of millions of people in this ever-urbanizing globe.

10. Since its inception, India has supported UN-Habitat in its campaign and programs towards the contribution of sustainable development of human settlements across the world. India recognizes and fully supports the role and expertise of UN-Habitat as a focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, in collaboration with Member States, local authorities, and other United Nations system entities. India also makes an annual financial contribution of USD 150,000 to the General Purpose Funds of UN-Habitat. To achieve a sustainable urban future and accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the role of UN-Habitat would be crucial. For this, an equally interconnected response, through reinvigorated, more networked and inclusive multilateralism is needed. The UN-Habitat needs to globally engage with all relevant stakeholders to identify innovative approaches and priorities, which can address the integrated development of human settlements on a sustainable basis. India strongly feels that this is the time to strengthen the UN-Habitat with regard to its roles of capacity building, advocacy, and engagements on the ground. We reiterate our commitment to stand by all the efforts towards promoting sustainable development of human settlements for the welfare of citizens at large.