

National statement

**by Permanent Secretary Juhani Damski, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
in UN Habitat Assembly-2**

- Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Mme Executive Director, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- Finland appreciates the location of the UN-Habitat headquarters in beautiful Kenya. Thank you so much for hosting us here.
- The world is facing unprecedented challenges that extend beyond national borders. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution affect us all and have a significant impact on particular groups of people living in urban areas.
- Solving the crises requires multilateral cooperation, science, knowledge sharing and capacity building, in addition to actions taken on the national and local levels. The time to act is now and it is time to act together.
- The focus of UN-Habitat's work is extremely important to implement the New Urban Agenda and to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- In this second UN Habitat Assembly, Finland is pleased to see a strong environmental focus in the resolutions in front of us, for example, on biodiversity, climate change and the SDG localization. At the same time, the resolutions related to housing, slum upgrading and urbanisation address very important key themes for UN-Habitat and require solutions.
- When implementing these resolutions, it is important that we work across sectors, as well as between governments, and engage all stakeholders. In particular, I would like to highlight the importance of including the youth in these efforts, as they are the ones that will live in the planet that we leave behind. We also need to engage the private sector and work together with the non-governmental organizations.
- It is equally important to ensure broad participation and therefore Finland is pleased to be able to support developing country participation to this Assembly.

- Finland highly appreciates its on-going cooperation with UN-Habitat under the *Finland – UN-Habitat Strategic Partnership on SDG Localisation*. Our successful partnership started last year. We look forward to continuing this partnership, which we had the pleasure of presenting today in a side-event.
- Finland also collaborates with UNEP and UN Habitat in the field of sustainable buildings and construction. The work continues in the framework of Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, with circularity as a new priority.
- I thank the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director for all the support to date in preparing for the Open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Second Session of the UN Habitat Assembly.
- We look forward to achieving a successful outcome from the Assembly, including the Ministerial Declaration that will help us move the urbanization agenda forward to ensure that the current and future generations will have a sustainable, resilient and healthy planet to live in.
- Thank you.