

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement

by

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at

Plenary

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Honorable President of the Habitat Assembly,
Madame Executive Director,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, I would like to express our deepest appreciation to all who were involved in the preparation of the second UN-Habitat Assembly.

Unfortunately, we have been hit by a real cascade of crises in recent years - starting with a much longer-than-expected coronavirus pandemic, which was added by the energy and food crises. Today, the security situation has changed dramatically across Europe. All of this has a significant impact on both natural and urban environments, as well as on our activities. We will, through the multilateral system, including UN Habitat, seek solutions to help rebuilding countries affected by natural disasters or by war. In this respect, we condemn the violation of the UN charter and express our unwavering support to Ukraine, its independence and its full territorial sovereignty.

However, despite the crises, we cannot put aside our daily responsibilities, including the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. On the contrary! We believe, all these crises better mobilize our communities in order to build greener, healthier, and more resilient cities. Cities and local governments play a pivotal role in achieving progress on the New Urban Agenda as a pathway to the 2030 Agenda.

In my opinion, the circular economy offers a new perspective to build a more sustainable, carbon neutral and resilient society. Along with the

energy transition, waste and pollution are designed out, efficient material and resources management in cities is increasingly becoming a priority.

For instance, Estonian capital Tallinn conceives the circular economy as a means to contribute to environmental goals while creating opportunities for jobs and stimulating innovation through a systematic approach. Awarded a title of the European Green capital this year, the Tallinn city aims to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Everyone is welcome to Tallinn to participate at the European Green Capital 2023 events throughout the year!

I am convinced that collaboration is the power and the core of lasting change. That is why Estonia submitted the resolution to the UN-Habitat Assembly to proclaim 20 September as an International World Clean Up Day. The World Clean Up Day is a well established international civic movement that has engaged more than 73 million people from 191 countries in cleaning up litter and mismanaged waste. Marking it in the UN calendar would directly contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the work for a cleaner planet. I invite you all to support the movement by co-sponsoring the resolution!

To conclude, I would like to highlight, that if we like to see greener, healthier, and more resilient cities, it is necessary for everyone to fulfil their role.

Thank you!