



**Statement by South Africa's Deputy Minister of Human Settlements,
Ms Zou Kota-Fredericks, MP,
on the assessment and enhancement of the effectiveness of UN-
Habitat
at the High Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat,
New York, 5 September 2017**

Mr President,

South Africa aligns itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China and the statement of the Africa Group.

We take note of the report of the High Level Panel appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations to assess and enhance the effectiveness of UN-Habitat. We would like to appreciate the hard work and detailed analysis that was undertaken by the panel, especially in view of the very short time frame of three months to complete its report.

South Africa has long argued that UN-Habitat fulfills a vital function in the UN system in supporting member states in their efforts to create sustainable human settlements and promote sustainable urbanization. Having acknowledged the critical actions that are urgently required of us to tackle rapid urbanization as a world-wide phenomenon in our deliberations in Habitat III, it is equally urgent that we reflect on the future of UN-Habitat as the focal point in the UN system for supporting the achievement of the New Urban Agenda.

We believe that the key impediment to UN-Habitat undertaking this work effectively is its dire financial situation. The current allocation from the regular budget of the United Nations is woefully inadequate and declining voluntary contributions to the organisation's core fund have forced it to concentrate on operational work based on earmarked contributions, at the expense of its core mandate and normative work. While we do not negate the importance of operational work, we believe that this needs to be complemented in equal measure with normative work. It should not be a case of "either – or", but should rather be viewed as complementary as part of an iterative cycle in which operational work informs normative work, which in turn is tested through operational work, and is documented in order to inform further normative work.

In order to allow UN Habitat to get back on its feet, it is critical that the organisation has funding certainty through regular budget allocations. In this regard, South Africa is supportive of the proposal to establish a

grouping of member states to develop proposals for funding UN-Habitat's core requirements prior to the consideration of the General Assembly resolution on strengthening UN-Habitat.

Mr President,

Furthermore, South Africa continues to assert that UN-Habitat's mandate implies a strong role in coordinating with other UN agencies in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and that strengthening its presence in New York and other UN centres is very necessary. If this is done, we do not see the need for the establishment of a new co-ordinating agency. We should rather build on the legacy and strengths of the existence of UN-Habitat for over forty years and enhance policy integration and alignment between UN entities through a proper co-ordinating mechanism, while avoiding duplication and confusion over roles and mandate.

Thank you.