

Statement at
The 1st Session of 2025 Executive Board
The United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)
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Delivered by Ann Wanjiru Mbuthia

on behalf of

Violet Shivutse, Huairou Commission Governing Council Chair

Honorable Chair, Excellencies, and Representatives of Stakeholder Groups

Firstly, thank you for this opportunity to deliver our Statement at this First session of the 2025 Executive Board Meeting of UN-Habitat.

My name is Ann Wanjiru Mbuthia, representing the Huairou Commission, a global movement of grassroots women's organizations supporting women and their communities in 41 countries leading a transformative agenda for inclusive resilience and gender justice. We started in 1995 with our participation in the preparatory process of the Habitat II Conference, and continue as a strong partner of UN-Habitat, we bring the constituency of women with a focus on organised grassroots groups.

We congratulate the Executive Director and her team for the successful organising and participation of activities held at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women meeting (CSW69) held in New York earlier this month, in particular the Side Event "adequate Housing for all women and girls: Gender Transformative Approaches to Housing". The session was timely as it relates very well with the key priorities of the theme of the CSW69 reviewing the Beijing Platform for Action ahead of the review of SDG5 which will take place at this year's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July.

We would like to once again welcome the support and leadership of the Executive Board in the proposed timely focus of the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026-29 on: i) adequate housing, ii) land, and iii) basic services for all. This is strategic as they are the foundation to ensuring sustainable urbanisation, which no other UN agency is working on.

As an organisation that is working on women's empowerment and leadership, specially building capacities of women in poor urban, rural and indigenous informal communities, tackling access to adequate housing, land and basic services are key and relate to meeting the challenges of poverty eradication, mitigating and adapting to environment and climate change, as well as building resilience communities to prepare and response to any calamities and conflict situation. The seven aspect of adequate housing – tenure security, basic services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, and cultural adequacy are of concerns to all women and their families in their considering their housing needs.

We urge that gender lens as well as women's empowerment and leadership be a cross-cutting elements the 3 of the 5 means of implementations: i) integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investments and finance; ii) participatory multi-level governance and localisation of the SDGs; and iii) knowledge, data, digitalisation and capacity building.

As a founding member and active partner of the World Urban Campaign, we hope that the Campaign partners will be engaged to support the other 2 means of implementation: partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication, as well as in effective resource mobilisation. The World Urban Campaign has more than 300 partners from 14 partner constituent groups including the private sectors, and philanthropies, and many of the partners made up from these diverse groups have been with the Campaign and supporting the agencies in many forms though their contribution are seen as indirect and not calculated in monetary forms, except for a few that give direct finance contributions. Let us consider using the World Urban Campaign as a platform strategically to achieve desired outcomes for the upcoming Strategic Plan.

Once again, we urge to put care together with empowerment of women and the communities as key levers with flagship programming to ensure cities and human settlements evolve into sustainable, equitable and resilient spaces and communities where no one and no community is left behind.

As a long-time partner of UN-Habitat, the Huairou Commission is always ready to partner, support and work together. We hope the Executive Board supports UN-Habitat's BOLD implementation plan that emphasize empowering of stakeholders, including grassroots groups and women, in its joint activities and partnerships, from the design, to implementation and finally the monitoring, for effective multi-level governance and impactful outcomes.

Thank you.