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Statement

by

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at

**Economic and Social Council Special Meeting Sustainable Urbanization and the
Implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

**Roundtable 2: “UN Systemwide Strategy for Sustainable Urbanization to assist
Member States in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”**

New York, 21 April 2022

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Colleagues,

This year UNECE has the coordination role of the Regional Commissions, and the contributions of the Economic Commission for Europe will reflect the joint perspective of all five commissions today.

RCs play a critical role in the implementation of the NUA. RCs work with partners, regional coordination mechanisms, resident coordinators, UNDP, UN-Habitat, etc. to implement the NUA and the urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in the five regions. We also work very, very closely with city and local authorities to this end. Furthermore, this year, we have included progress towards the NUA in the five regional fora on sustainable development, which the RCs convene each year and whose results feed into the High-Level Political Forum.

Multilevel governance is key to the effective implementation of the NUA. National governments set overarching policy agendas.

Effective implementation highly depends on localization mechanisms.

Cities are well-positioned to put specific needs of communities at the centre of response and development. **To listen to cities, planning along with them and systematically including communities into decision-making is thus an important practice.**

This is what Regional Commissions help to do.

Building on our experiences in directly supporting various UN intergovernmental processes, the RCs are using existing institutional mechanisms to strengthen the engagement of local governments in intergovernmental processes. We build bridges between the NUA and the SDGs, bringing local development issues to the regional level and facilitating local-national-regional dialogue. The Forum of Mayors in UNECE is a case in point.

If you want to learn more about our work, I invite you to consult the paper we have developed to complement the Quadrennial report released last month: [The Regional Commissions report on the progress on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda \(2019-2022\)](#). It highlights our work and the action-oriented initiatives in our respective regions.

Let me present just a few highlights of our relevant work.

On Informal Settlements and Housing, UNECE has:

- The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing adopted in 2015,
 - **Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030** adopted in 2021, a
 - Guidelines for the Formalization of Informal Constructions and the COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements.
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- In collaboration with Housing Europe and UN-Habitat, UNECE produced the #Housing2030 Study;
- Lastly the second Forum of Mayors this April brought together Mayors and vice mayors from 44 cities with 500 participants representing cities and member States from the UNECE region and beyond, other UN partners, NGOs and academia.

On Smart and Green Cities and Urban Planning: ECLAC has:

- a project to accelerate the implementation of urban climate action plans in partnership with the Global Compact of Mayors;
- A Regulatory framework for electromobility;
- The Project “Inclusive, sustainable and smart cities and the Big Push” on urban mobility.

On COVID-19 and City Resilience:

There is a joint regional commissions UNDA project on building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19.

- **ECA** implemented this project in Accra, Harare, and Yaoundé.
- Data was collected on economic performance and gaps were identified.
- Economic Recovery and Resilience Plans were then drafted providing policy recommendations for recovery and resilience.

On SDG Localization and Local Reporting:

- **ESCAP** has developed the Asia Pacific Regional Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews (2020). Support to VLRs was also given through the UNDA project on Integrating SDGs in Local Actions in 5 cities in the region; and through the Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy.

On Capacity Building:

- **ESCWA** has carried out national and regional capacity building and consultative workshops on urban issues namely, urban resilience, SDG localization, the NUA and Smart Sustainable Cities;
 - An Illustrated handbook on the NUA was developed in Arabic, as was an E-learning crash course on the NUA and a course on building urban economic resilience
 - The ESCWA-academia partnership **Academic Network for Development Dialogue has a Paper Series, with** urban development as one theme of focus.
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Again, these are just some examples. You can find many more in the paper I mentioned earlier. My colleague Paola Deda is there with you in the room should you have any questions.

Finally, I invite you all to our upcoming panel on “*Bolstering the roles of urban professionals, local and national authorities in localizing and implementing the New Urban Agenda*”. It will take place at the **High Level Meeting of the General Assembly** on 28 April 2022 and all RCs will be present along with local governments from each region.

We look forward to our continued cooperation.
