

Statement by Mr. Masayuki Kitamoto,
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Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
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<Opening>

Thank you Honorable Chair,
Your Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing our sincere gratitude for having this important conference, the twenty-sixth session of UN-Habitat's Governing Council here in Nairobi, where the 6th Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD VI) was held last August hosted by the Republic of Kenya.

Let me also express my deepest sympathy to those who have been affected by the recent drought which severely hit the "Horn of Africa" including Kenya, the host country of this conference. This disaster has brought catastrophic famine to the area, and in this regard, I would like to show my highest respect for the efforts provided by various governments, agencies and to the people who have taken measures against this crisis.

The Government of Japan in their efforts to offer assistance, made a decision in March 2017 to implement the urgent grant assistance amounting to 26 million US dollars for food and nutrition supply, and for the improvement of water and sanitation facilities to some Middle East and African countries, including Kenya, which suffered from the

serious drought. The contribution was remitted at the end of last month.

<NUA>

Last October the New Urban Agenda (NUA) was adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) that was held in Quito, Ecuador. This Agenda stands as a remarkable accomplishment following a series of international agreements, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, which were all adopted or agreed upon in 2015.

Throughout the Habitat III process, Member States, international organizations including UN agencies, and related stakeholders among others actively discussed the roles and challenges of cities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 11, “Sustainable Cities and Communities”.

The New Urban Agenda, which is the fruitful outcome of these discussions, incorporates our collective wisdom, not only to solve the problems caused by rapid urbanization, but also to sustain prosperity for all of us into the future. Therefore, one of the responsibilities for Member States, international organizations and relevant stakeholders among others is to implement this Agenda.

<Platform>

At the Habitat III meeting, Japan proposed to establish a Platform for sharing experiences and expertise on designing and implementation of national/regional spatial planning, and received significant interest from a number of countries. During this Governing Council, Japan would also like to provide presentations on this issue.

In addition, we are considering to sponsor a conference as a side event on the occasion of the 9th World Urban Forum, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in

February next year, in order to frame the outline of the Platform with UN-Habitat, OECD and those countries which have interests on this topic.

Moreover, in order for the launch of the Platform, the Government of Japan is now closely consulting with UN-Habitat to host the “International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning First Global Symposium 2018”.

<Closing>

This Governing Council is the first meeting after the adoption of the outcome document of the Habitat III, and we, the participants to this Governing Council, are expected to make further discussions on housing and urban development under the theme of “Opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda”. Japan would like to contribute to the implementation of the Agenda in various areas, cooperating closely with UN-habitat, Member States and relevant stakeholders, and promoting the Platform on national/regional spatial planning.

We are informed that UN-Habitat faces serious financial problems, which may include the risk to undermine the capacity of UN-Habitat. In order for appropriate implementation of the New Urban Agenda related programmes and projects, we would like to emphasise the importance on UN-Habitat’s actions towards the challenge by taking measures such as fiscal consolidation.

The Agenda also describes the submission of an evidence-based and independent assessment of UN-Habitat to the Secretary-General, which will be the basis for consideration at the high-level panel convened by the President of the General Assembly this August. I would like to reiterate the importance of the assessment to be conducted completely independent from UN-Habitat, and also hope that fruitful discussions regarding this issue will be accumulated at this session of the Governing Council.

Thank you.