**Invigorate Innovation and local leadership for a sustainable urban future**

-Closing Remarks at the 19th Annual Session of Global Forum on Human Settlements

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Your excellencies, dear distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good evening!

After a full day of busy seminars and brainstorming, it's now time for Summary and Recommendation. On behalf of all the co-organizers, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the speakers, moderators, and participants! Thank you for your full support and engagement!

More than 60 outstanding speakers, moderators, and commentators from the UN and around the world participated in the one-day discussions, sharing their valuable insights. Nearly 400 participants engaged in in-depth discussions on six priority issues and proposed scientific solutions and policy suggestions. After the event, we will compile all the results and share them with everyone.

GFHS 2024 is the follow-up discussion and action implementation of the Summit of the Future.

As《the Pact for the Future》claims: “We are at a time of profound global transformation. We are confronted by rising catastrophic and existential risks, many caused by the choices we make.

Yet this is also a moment of hope and opportunity. Global transformation is a chance for renewal and progress grounded in our common humanity. Advances in knowledge, science, technology and innovation could deliver a breakthrough to a better and more sustainable future for all. The choice is ours.”

From my perspective, the key words of this annual forum are: **Innovation, leadership and urban future**.

On an urban planet, cities serve as primary arenas for delivering sustainable development and coping with the impacts of climate change. They are where nature-positive pathways can create trillions of business opportunities by 2030. Urban areas are crucial in resolving problems within our ill-system, rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and accelerating the transition to sustainability for people, the planet, and prosperity by 2030.

In this process, innovation plays a fundamental role, as it has shaped and will continue to reshape our cities and human settlements. Major leading technologies, represented by digital technologies—most notably AI and the Internet—as well as new resource and energy technologies and biotechnologies, are and will continue to greatly spur innovation in various sectors and transform the world. However, innovation must be for the benefit of people and the planet.

Integrated innovation, which focuses not only on technologies but also on governance, business models, processes, and financing, among other areas, is becoming essential. Meanwhile, innovation generally starts locally and can fuel greater efficiency, lower costs, and a better quality of life for all through replication, acceleration, and scaling.

Local leaders are an untapped power to be unleashed. Forward-looking local governments and city leaders are uniquely positioned to harness the power of integrated innovation to improve governance and enhance livability, resilience, prosperity and sustainability of cities and communities.

This annual session calls for invigorating innovation and local leadership to ensure a just, smart and green urban transformation, and to achieve a sustainable urban future for all. We urgently need to synergistically accelerate decarbonization and decoupling in cities, foster innovation and integration in urban planning and design, accelerate the circular economy towards zero-waste and zero-carbon cities, adopt effective nature-based solutions for resilient cities and communities, enhance directing and redirecting public and private funds for sustainable cities, improve the health level of urban population and empower youth to shape urban future.

As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed in his OPENING REMARKS TO THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE: We have unlocked the door. Now it is our common responsibility to walk through it. That demands not just agreement, but action. I challenge you to take that action.

Let’s take our action!

I thank you!