UNITED FOR SMART SUSTAINABLE CITIES

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CLOSING REMARKS

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ITU-T STUDY GROUP 20 CHAIRMAN AND U4SSC CHAIRMAN

Dear Colleagues and Friends

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening

As the sixth Meeting of U4SSC draws to a close, I would like to thank the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and other 14 UN bodies, who remain committed to supporting a new urban paradigm by providing a credible global platform for the exploration of smart sustainable city strategies and solutions.

It has been a privilege for serving as the Chairman of this ever-growing network of multidisciplinary actors within the city domain.

The strong strategic partnerships built through U4SSC's work aim to ensure that municipalities better understand the needs of their inhabitants in order to better implement a city vision aimed at enhancing quality of life and effective use of ICTs.

Combining the unique perspectives and expertise of the participants, U4SSC is able to provide an active ground for framing optimal guidelines, use-cases and productive services relating to the fourth industrial revolution technologies including AI, IoT, Big data, blockchain, etc, to facilitate the evolution of smart cities.

The world is currently facing unprecedented circumstances with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has imposed challenges on citizens' daily lives. In this scenario, the concept of smart sustainable cities is gaining greater attention to solve complex problems associated with global health.

This has called for the re-imagining of people-centric cities that are more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable for improved health-based governance. Taking the leap of faith, U4SSC already has a dedicated Thematic Group focussed on supporting economic recovery resilience in the advent of COVID-19. Additionally, comprehending the hurdles faced in the establishment of smart cities during the pandemic, the other Thematic Groups have also been touching upon aspects relating to procurement and innovative financing in the era of COVID.

Understanding the complexity of planning and implementing smart city strategies, U4SSC has also been supporting relevant stakeholders with their respective smart city journeys by helping with the implementation of the U4SSC Key Performance Indicators which enable cities to conduct self-assessment and monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. As of today, more than 150 cities including Dubai, Singapore, Valencia, Mashhad, Moscow, and Daegu have implemented these KPIs, with more cities expected to follow suit in the coming years.

As we stand today, the U4SSC continues to serve as a gateway for partnership building between cities, governments, private sector and NGOs.

We were able publish 5 new deliverables since the last U4SSC meeting.

All this would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of all the U4SSC Leaders and the 17 United Nations entities, who have helped keep the U4SSC afloat during the testing pandemic times and ensured that work continues for revitalizing the global smart city partnerships and sharing knowledge, with the aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Last but not the least, we are also lucky to have you all – the U4SSC participants who continue to contribute to the activities of U4SSC, with the same level of zest and optimism as you did before the pandemic, which has allowed for us to effectively further the global discourse on smart and sustainable cities and complete our deliverables.

However, there is still a long way to go given the intricacies and dynamic nature of the smart city ecosystem. There remain several gaps to be addressed in the long-lasting journey to the creation of a smart city.

In this quest, we hope to continue receiving your active participation and support.

I will now close this address by thanking the U4SSC Secretariat, namely Cristina, Gulnara and Robert and the other UN colleagues of this pathbreaking initiative, with the hope of meeting you all in-person during the next U4SSC Meeting.

Thank you and if you want, please feel free to join the Episode 10 of ITU's webinar series on Digital transformation for cities and communities jointly organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) which will be dedicated to the role of digital technologies on aging and health and will start at 16.00h today. ITU has included the link on how to join this webinar in the chat.

Have a lovely evening and I now declare the meeting closed.