

## **UN-Habitat and EIB strengthen cooperation to improve cities and provide handwashing facilities to prevent COVID-19**

- **UN-Habitat and European Investment Bank enhance support for sustainable urbanization across Africa and around the world**
- **New agreement recognises financing for well-planned cities that deliver jobs, reduce poverty and reflect climate change**
- **Cooperation in Mwanza to provide handwashing and community health education to reduce spread of COVID-19 in informal settlements**

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Agency for Human Settlements and the European Investment Bank, the world's largest international public bank, have agreed to increase cooperation to support sustainable urban investment across Africa and globally.

The new partnership enables shared best-practice, technical experience and support for urban projects to improve lives in cities. It will help cities tackle climate change, address poverty and gender inequalities and improve economic opportunities and social infrastructure.

UN-Habitat and the European Investment Bank also confirmed plans to provide handwashing stations and public health information for thousands of local residents in the Tanzanian city of Mwanza.

"UN-Habitat and the European Investment Bank share a good track record of enabling and supporting transformational urban investment around the world. UN-Habitat looks forward to working closely with the EIB and other international finance partners to ensure that cities can be a better place to live for future generations. Our teams on the ground in East Africa are already ensuring that the impact of long-term investment to improve water and sanitation around Lake Victoria can help to reduce the spread of coronavirus in Mwanza." said Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

"New investment in cities must deliver benefits to citizens by successfully tackling broader challenges facing urban communities. Strengthened cooperation between UN-Habitat and the EIB will benefit millions of people living in cities across Africa and around the world by enhancing the impact of new investment to deliver sustainable development, climate action, health, education and economic opportunities in the years ahead," said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

"The European Investment Bank is committed to supporting high-impact urban investment with global partners and local authorities around the world. We are pleased that the closer partnership between the EU Bank and UN-Habitat is already delivering results in East Africa and ensuring that vulnerable

communities will be more resilient to the coronavirus pandemic in the coming months," he added.

### **Tackling the spread of coronavirus in Tanzania**

UN-Habitat and the EIB will provide 14 dedicated handwashing stations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in informal settlements in the Mwanza region of northern Tanzania. Two thirds of people in the regional capital live in informal settlements and COVID-19 cases have already been confirmed in Mwanza.

"Rapid action is essential to slow the spread of corona virus and ensure that public health measures can better protect vulnerable communities. Around Lake Victoria the EIB is pleased to work with local and international partners to transform access to clean water and provision of improved sanitation. The quick response of Tanzanian authorities and UN-Habitat to provide handwashing stations demonstrates how well-managed cities can react to new challenges. The EIB, as part of Team Europe, looks forward to strengthening support for investment that improves lives and opportunities in cities across Africa in the months and years ahead," said Ambroise Fayolle, European Investment Bank Vice President

"Public health is a priority for the Mwanza Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority and our close cooperation with UN-Habitat, European Investment Bank, AFD and KfW has transformed access to clean water and improved sanitation in our region in recent years. We welcome the rapid response to ensure that new handwashing stations can be rolled out in poor communities, as part of Tanzania's national engagement to reduce the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. The new handwashing stations demonstrate joint action between Tanzanian and international partners at a time of need," said Leonard Msenyele, acting Manager Director of the Mwanza Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority.

The multiple tap handwashing stations will each include a 5,000 litre water tank, wash basins and soap will be placed in public places, markets and health centres. The new handwashing stations will be managed by trained volunteers from the local community who will provide guidance on effective handwashing. The volunteers will be provided with personal protective equipment, including face-masks and gloves, to reduce the risk of infection.

The Mwanza scheme will be supported by public health and education activities, including proper hygiene and handwashing practices.

The project will be implemented by the Mwanza Urban Water and Sanitation Company (MWAUWASA) which will also install 100 additional water standpipes in vulnerable communities and suspend water disconnections for the duration of the coronavirus pandemic.

The investment is part of the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation project that is supporting large scale investment in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. This is helping local partners to improve water infrastructure and is supported by UN-Habitat, the European Investment Bank, French Development Agency (AFD),

German development bank (KfW) and the European Commission.

**Background information:**

Last year the EIB provided more than EUR 3 billion for new investment across Africa.

In recent years the EIB has supported transport, health, education, energy, water, climate action and business investment in hundreds of African towns and cities, including in Addis Ababa, Bamako, Cairo, Cape Town, Dakar, Kigali, Nairobi, and Tunis.

Ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic the European Investment Bank commissioned a new video to show the benefit of water investment for local communities.

<https://www.eib.org/attachments/events/joint-communique-africa-day-04032020.pdf>