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**Executive Board of the United Nations**

**Human Settlements Programme**

**First session of 2021**

Online, 7 and 8 April 2021

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Financial, budgetary and administrative matters,  
including the implementation of the resource mobilization  
strategy in accordance with the strategic plan and a  
proposal on geographical and gender balance.**

## **Ongoing restructuring of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. In February 2018, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) launched a reform process to transform the governance and strategic and substantive focus of the Programme, underpinned by the following four pillars:

- (a) A new governance architecture;
- (b) The development of a new strategic plan;
- (c) An internal change process;
- (d) An organizational restructuring.

2. The first session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly) was held in Nairobi from 27 to 31 May 2019. During its first session, the UN-Habitat Assembly adopted a new strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 and the Programme initiated its internal change process.

3. UN-Habitat remains actively engaged in the implementation of the fourth pillar of reform, an organizational restructuring designed to maximize fulfilment of its mandate to support Member States and partners to implement and monitor the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda at the local, subnational and national levels, to leave no one and no place behind.

#### **II. Organizational structure and staffing**

4. Full implementation of the new organizational structure involves the alignment of the Programme's presence at locations away from headquarters to ensure optimal deployment of an array of regional policy and operational assets to help countries to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

5. A principal objective of the process is to identify means by which to optimize the support provided by UN-Habitat to Member States in mobilizing for a decade of action, including through enhanced financing, and the strengthening of national implementation and the institutions necessary to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

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\* HSP/EB.2021/1.

6. Alignment of the UN-Habitat programmatic presence will be further informed by the imperative from Member States for the overall reform of the United Nations development system to encourage integrative, effective and agile ways of working to ensure impact at the country and regional levels. The ultimate goal of restructuring the regional architecture is to enable the organization to best leverage its assets and deliver on its integrated mandate as part of “one coordinated United Nations”. In that respect, UN-Habitat will be guided, inter alia, by reports of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on repositioning the United Nations development system.<sup>1</sup>

7. The Executive Director wishes to bring to the attention of the Executive Board a directive from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on procedures for the establishment of United Nations offices away from headquarters, which are as follows:

(a) The head of the relevant entity (in the present case, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat) should consult with and seek approval in principle from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for the establishment of the proposed office. The initial consultation will provide an opportunity for consideration of institutional policy or political aspects, including any offer of financial or in-kind support from the prospective host Government;

(b) Should such initial approval be provided by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the technical, financial and legal aspects of the proposed sub-office, as well as the necessary legal instruments, may be discussed with the relevant offices and departments of the Secretariat;

(c) The Office of Legal Affairs will provide legal assistance to the establishing entity in the negotiation of the host country or other office agreement with the host Government, as well as any related financial and administrative agreements;

(d) The establishing entity (in the present case, UN-Habitat) will be responsible for reporting to legislative bodies, including the General Assembly, as needed and deemed appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> See A/75/79-E/2020/55. The operational activities for the development segment of the Economic and Social Council provides overall coordination and guidance to the United Nations development system to assess whether the objectives, priorities and strategies of the system respond adequately to the policies formulated by the General Assembly, including the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.