

**2022 First session of the Executive Board
of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
29-31 March 2022**

Agenda item 3: Reports of the Chairs of the Ad-Hoc Working Groups of the Executive Board

Statement by

**H.E Ms. Saqlain Syedah
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN-Habitat and
Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group on
Programmatic Budgetary and Administrative matters**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to brief the Executive Board at this session.

Excellencies,

As may be recalled, the Executive Board through its Decision 2019/2 paragraph 7 established the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters to assist and advise the Executive Board.

As suggested by the relevant Agenda item, today I would like to brief you on the work carried out by the working group since the end of the 2021 second session of the Executive Board which was held 15 to 16 November 2021.

The working group has met 7 times since that last session of the Executive Board in November 2021 and in line with its mandate, discussed the following topics:

1. The orientation and priorities for the work programme for 2023
2. The draft work programme and budget for the year 2023
3. The normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat
4. The draft outcomes to be considered by the Executive Board at its first session for the year 2022

Mr. Chairman
Excellencies

As is the expectation for the working group to assist and make recommendations to the Executive Board, I wish to highlight the recommendations of the working group from its meetings on the above topics.

1. I will first start with the recommendations on the Work programme and Budget for the year 2023

You would recall that the Executive Board at its second session in 2021, through its Decision 2021/6, requested the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters to discuss (i) a draft work programme of UN-Habitat for 2023 for timely submission to the United Nations Controller and (ii) a draft budget for UN-Habitat for 2023, in line with the Executive Director's recommended budget of \$12 million for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation non-earmarked budget for 2023 and other extrabudgetary resources, for timely submission to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Excellencies,

I wish to report that the ad hoc working group has recommended the following with respect to the work programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2023:

At its **twenty-second meeting held on 26 January 2022**, the working group discussed the main orientations and prioritization for the development of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2023.

At that meeting, the ad hoc working group discussed the priorities of the organization towards the development of the Work Programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2023, basically to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the areas of focus and potential catalytic actions for the development for the work programme for the year 2023.

The Secretariat also informed the ad-hoc working group that on 9 December 2021, the Executive Director informed the Bureau that it had received new guidance from the Secretary General and the UN-Controller with respect to the timeline for preparations and submission of the work programme and budget for the year 2023 to New York. Specifically, the Executive Director informed the the Bureau that guidance from the United Nations Controller on the 2023 Regular Budget would

only be received from the UN Controller in mid-February 2022. In that respect and in order to avoid delays in the preparation for the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2022, and based upon the update provided by the secretariat updated the Bureau recommended that the Secretariat prepares in the interim, for consideration of the Executive Board, a paper on the “UN-Habitat work programme priorities for 2023 in line with the Strategic Plan 2020-2023” as a fully translated pre-session background document in the six UN languages to be availed four weeks prior to the session. The Bureau further recommended that this document be complemented by a full draft of the 2023 work programme and budget document, to be availed to Member States two weeks prior to the session as a pre-session document but in English only.

Based on the feedback of the working group, the Secretariat has prepared a paper on the priorities for the work programme of UN-Habitat for 2023 in line with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 which is as set out in document HSP/EB.2022/3 and will be discussed under Agenda item 6 of this session.

At the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth meetings of the working group held on 11 and 17 March 2022, the Secretariat reiterated its areas of focus for the proposed work programme of UN-Habitat for 2023, and also presented the budget requirements for the year 2023. The Secretariat also brought to the attention of the working group that since the 2021 second session of the Executive Board, it had received new update from the United Nations Secretary-General of a possible arrangement for an increase in the UN-Habitat Regular budget, taking into account the expectations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly if an increase of the regular budget allocation to UN-Habitat for 2023 were to be considered.

The Executive Director informed as that indeed, Secretary-General has agreed to prioritise UN-Habitat in the 2023 regular budget of the United Nations, with the proposal of additional posts. It is common knowledge for everyone including the Fifth Committee and the ACABQ that over a period of many years now, the non-earmarked contributions from Member States to the Foundation has fallen far short of the budget ceilings approved by the Executive Board. For instance, the total budget for the non-earmark approved for the year 2020 was to \$18.9 million and out of that amount only a total of \$4.4 million was received. Secondly, the approved levels of budget for 2021 and 2022 by the Executive Board was \$10 million and \$12 million respectively but \$3.0 million received in 2021 in voluntary contributions. We are still waiting to see what 2022 will bring. The facts remain that we have fallen far short of the budget we approved when one considers the level received in the last years.

The Secretary-General, has informed accordingly the Executive Director that in order to consider a possible Regular Budget increase for UN-Habitat in 2023, by the ACAQ and the 5th Committee, the Executive Director should provide in its 2023 draft budget a projection of the non-earmarked budget ceiling that represents the real receipt of contributions by Member States based on the 2021 level. This advice is significant for the Secretary-general to demonstrate the dire situation of the Organization in its ability to implement its mandate.

The Secretariat informed the working group that this guidance received from the Secretary General would obviously impact the tentative ceiling of the Foundation non-earmarked budget for 2023 as initially recommended by the Board in its Decision 2021/6, as a budget of 12 Million as it currently stands gives the impressions that is the expected funds and if so, why would the Organization need any intervention from the Secretary-general, ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. The Executive Director has been very clear that she has appealed to many of us last year and pleaded for the higher increase in the ceiling for 12 million. The reality, however, is that those funds have not been for the coming as we were to go by past experience. Now she is faced between a rock and a hard place case. Either she continues with the aspirational 12 million, or consider the possible increase of Regular budget, hence the 3 million.

This is why in the document that the Secretariat presented to the ad hoc working group, paragraph 15.92 provides a reduction of foundation non-earmarked contributions to \$3 million for 2023, and not \$12 million, and reads as follows : “The proposed budget for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to be funded from non-earmarked contributions for the year 2023 is \$3.0 million. This budget level has been aligned to the voluntary contribution levels received from the Member States in recent years”.

Member States deliberated with a view to reaching consensus on a recommended budget for the year 2023 but there was no agreed conclusion on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023.

The ad hoc working group did, however, further recommend that the Secretariat should submit the document to the UNON Division of Conference Services, with the understanding that the submitted version does not represent the conclusions of the discussions held by the ad hoc working group or any recommendations by the working group and that the bracketed text within this document signifies that there is no agreement on the bracketed wording or paragraphs. The ad hoc working group recommended that any changes or recommendations subsequent to these meetings will be reflected in the form of a Conference Room Paper to be availed to the Executive Board at its first session of

2022. There was an agreement to hold a meeting again on 21 March 2022 to try and come to a consensus .

At the twenty-sixth meeting of the working group held on 21 March 2022 the ad hoc working group continued its discussions on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023 there was no agreed conclusion on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023.

At the twenty-seventh meeting of the working group held on 28 March 2022 the ad hoc working group continued its discussions on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023 and recommended that [the foundation non-earmarked contributions be of \$3 million for 2023] / [there was no agreed conclusion on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023.]

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Accordingly, on this matter and following those four meetings I wish to specifically highlight that the ad hoc working group:

- i. supported the proposed work programme for 2023, which aligns with the 2020- 2023 Strategic Plan and its continued focus on the normative work.
- ii. Did not reach a consensus on the proposed draft budget for the year 2023, with the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation non-earmarked budget of a maximum of \$3 million.
- iii. The working group noted that some Member States would consult further with their respective capitals on the matter.

Mr. Chairman,

The draft work programme and budget is before this session as document HSP/EB.2022/4 for further consideration by the Board under agenda item 6.

2. I will now move to the recommendations on the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat.

Excellencies,

The working group met for its **twenty-third meeting on 14 February 2022** to discuss the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat.

At that meeting, the Secretariat informed updated the working group on UN-Habitat's new initiatives in both normative and operational activities. Specifically, the "people's process" in Afghanistan, the global urban monitoring framework to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat's work on cities and climate change following the Innovate4Cities Conference held in 2021 and the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of Parties (COP26), which will be discussed at this session of the Board under agenda item 7.

The working group acknowledged UN-Habitat's professionalism and its strategic positioning in the implementation and delivery of its normative and operational activities.

3. Finally, I would now like to brief you on the informal consultations on the draft decisions towards the 2022 first session of the Executive Board.

Following the request from the Executive Board in paragraph 7 of its Decision 2021/8, the Secretariat provided draft technical inputs in an Annex II to the annotated provisional Agenda for the session.

The Secretariat circulated accordingly the annotated provisional Agenda as set out in document HSP/EB.2022/1/Add.1 in the six official languages of the United Nations on 4 March 2022, in line with the rules of procedure.

In response to the recommendation by the Bureau of the Executive Board at its meeting on 9 December 2021 and 2 February 2022, the working group lead the informal consultations on the draft decisions towards the 2022 first session of the Executive Board.

I now have the distinct honor to present to this first session of the Executive Board the draft decisions for further consideration as contained in the document HSP/EB.2022/CRP.2. "Proposed draft outcomes for consideration by the Executive Board at its first session of 2022."

In that document, there are four draft decisions to be considered by the Executive Board as follows:

- i. **Draft decision 2022/[A]:** Draft work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2023, and financial, budgetary and administrative matters of UN-Habitat
- ii. **Draft decision 2022/[B]:** Implementation of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
- iii. **Draft decision 2022/[C]:** Methods of work of the Executive Board and the workplan of the Executive Board for 2022

- iv. **Draft decision 2022/[D]:** Election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the term 2022–2023

I have formally handed the version of the above draft decisions as at 28 March 2022 as contained in document HSP/EB.2022/CRP.2 to the Chair of the Executive for further consideration by the Board at this session.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Before I conclude, allow me to take this distinct opportunity to sincerely thank Member States for their active participation in the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters. It has been an honour to work with you all.

Thank you, Excellencies.

Thank you very much Chair.
