



2022 FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, 29 – 31 March 2022

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UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



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Summary of Plenary Discussions and Outcomes

Second Daily Journal (Draft)

DAY 2 - Wednesday, 30 March 2022

Agenda Item 7: Implementation of normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat

The Executive Director reported on three programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2021, including on the implementation of sub-programmes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities. The depth of the competencies of UN-Habitat is evidenced in the priority of its thematic area of intervention such as community-led development in post-conflict and post-disaster situations through “*the people’s process*”, in the development and coordination of *global urban monitoring* and indicators and work on *climate change in cities*.

The Secretariat presented the resilient and robust “*people’s process*” that has been implemented in different countries in Asia-Pacific in the past three decades. This process places the affected people at the centre of the recovery process and is particularly relevant in countries facing disaster, conflict and other shocks. Most recently in Afghanistan, the successful implementation of the approach and the interplay of normative and operational activities by UN-Habitat has resulted in increased delivery of basic services, physical and social infrastructure improvements, social cohesion, safety and security and livelihoods for displaced communities.

The Secretariat also presented the UN-Habitat Global Urban Monitoring Framework, which was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission at its 53rd session in March 2022 , as part of a harmonised global urban United Nations system-wide strategy for monitoring SDGs, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), other regional, national and subnational urban programmes. The framework is being piloted in 10 countries. UN-Habitat will develop more technical assistance programs and instruments to scale up human settlements’ statistics capacities in Member States, with emphasis on ascertaining consistency of data at national, regional and city levels to guide development.

In addition, the Secretariat updated that UN-Habitat established a *Climate Action for Cities task team*, with ongoing 50 technical cooperation projects, to accelerate the implementation of the Subprogramme 3 of the Strategic Plan and in support of cities on the themes

aligned with the COP26 and the UN-SG's climate change priorities. To advance local climate actions, UN-Habitat will advance the research, innovation and action agenda and support global urban climate change policy and action. Multi-level climate actions across different levels of government were strongly encouraged, where the role and the capacity of local authorities and the establishment of local adaptation and mitigation actions are critical. UN-Habitat is in discussion with the Egyptian Presidency of COP-27 for the framing of a possible *urban thematic day* that could herald a new era of multi-level climate actions for the achievement of the Paris agreement.

Interventions

The representative of **the USA** thanked the secretariat for the report and recognized the significant efforts in the normative and operational activities. They asked what more can be done to leverage member states investments to work with local governments on increasing the delivery of urban services. The representative also requested clarification on how the Secretariat's budget constraints will limit the ability to effectively monitor with respect to the Global Urban Monitoring Framework and the related City Prosperity Index.

China mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemics continues to pose serious challenges while underpinning the key role played by sustainable urban development in the implementation of the 2030 objectives. The tangible

action of the Government of China in support of UN-Habitat was highlighted through the establishment of the Shanghai Global Award on Sustainable Urban Development. This was appraised as a means to promote urban development along with strengthening ties with UN-Habitat and other partners.

France thanked the Secretariat for the commendable work especially on the “people process” in Afghanistan in post-conflict efforts towards building resilience. France however, called upon UN-Habitat to deploy similar efforts as appropriate in Ukraine and other sites.

Kenya commended the Secretariat for the good work in integrating normative and operational work. Kenya also recognized UN-Habitat for being part of the global urban monitoring framework, similarly acknowledging the useful results from the urban safety monitoring program in European cities and requested if this would be upscaled in other countries.

Brazil expressed its appreciation for the work on normative and operational activities and requested clarification on how the Global Urban Monitoring Framework related to the previous work on localising the SDGs, which was clarified by the Secretariat.

Switzerland recognised the vital role of UN-Habitat in supporting urban population, especially those affected by conflicts and pandemics. The representative also mentioned the various programs they are supporting, but

recommended UN-Habitat to scale up policy work including with other UN agencies.



Egypt welcomed the progress made on normative and operational achievements despite the financial constraints, and expressed its pleasure to collaborate in the discussion for the preparation of COP-27.

Morocco congratulated the Secretariat for the work in Afghanistan towards enhancing resilient settlements. Morocco welcomed the Global Urban Monitoring Framework as it would enable the localization of SDGs, supporting cities in tracking SDGs and the NUA. They asked the Secretariat to clarify the criteria used to select piloting countries including to provide further details on the plans for extending the framework's implementation after the pilot, in particular in the Global South countries.

Poland appreciated the presentation on Afghanistan which he felt demonstrated the concrete work UN-Habitat is implementing on the ground.

Agenda Item 8: High-Level Meeting of General Assembly to Assess Progress in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

The Executive Director briefed the meeting on progress made in preparation for the High-Level Meeting (HLM) on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. She noted that in March 2022, the political phase of the preparations was completed. Official documents by the President of the General Assembly have been prepared. Similarly, Member States have prepared their regional inputs. The need for statements to be action oriented was highlighted. The Executive Director encouraged participating delegates to the HLM to identify three actions that their country has taken over the past six years to implement the New Urban Agenda, as well as two commitments for the future.

The Secretariat thanked the General Assembly for passing resolution 74/224, placing the HLM in the context of other major events. The following activities of the HLM preparation were detailed:

- The Quadrennial Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda was issued this month to assure strategic alignment on a global level. The 26 countries that contributed with a national report were thanked.
- Regional Forums for Sustainable Development took place in the following regions: Asian-Pacific, Arab States, Latin America, The Caribbean, Africa, and Europe. The General Assembly requested an input document from each of these forums to improve coordination and enrich the dialogue.
- ECOSOC and the General Assembly aligned their efforts to organise a meeting on the 21st of April to analyse inequality and UN reform.
- Upcoming stakeholders' events to raise awareness of the NUA (26th and 27th of April in New York) were announced.
- The World Urban Forum was highlighted as a forum to take forward any action-oriented outcomes from the HLM.

The following issues will be discussed at the High-Level Meeting:

- The New Urban Agenda as a roadmap to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- Cities and pandemics: defining the next 'normal'.
- Housing as part of a social protection system
- Urban climate action (including work on climate, biodiversity, and pollution)
- Post-conflict and urban displacement
- Engaging local governments
- Financing sustainable urban development

Member States were urged to coordinate with New York, Nairobi and their own capitals to elevate the representation of their respective delegations to the HLM. Member States were encouraged to utilize the opportunity of the HLM.

Interventions

Brazil affirmed that cities play a key role in achieving sustainable development and explained the need to elevate the New Urban Agenda to a more transformative commitment. Brazil affirmed their participation in the HLM.

Kenya confirmed its commitment and the preparation of the national report, and thanked the Secretariat for the training received on the Voluntary Local Reviews and noted that the HLM will provide the opportunity to revitalize the implementation of the NUA.

Argentina and **Egypt** asked about the expected outcomes of this meeting.

Morocco confirmed that they had submitted their national report in which they presented the commitments for sustainable urban development, the effective means of implementation and the monitoring and follow-up mechanisms that have been set up.

Egypt recognized the role of UN-Habitat's regional office for the Arab States for the work done and encouraged all Member States to present their national report with an action-oriented approach.

France announced that it will be hosting a side event on the topic of innovation and technology for the implementation of sustainable cities. They aim to push forward the digital cities and inclusive cities programme, jointly with Germany.

Germany encouraged UN-Habitat to strategically position the HLM and WUF to make the most of the political impact and attention that will be accorded the Organization. Germany suggests that the HLM outcomes be linked to the relevance of the NUA for the implementation of SDG 11.

Poland assured the meeting of the cooperation of their delegation and asked for the confirmation of a pre or post-HLM side conference on WUF11.

Palestine expressed hopes that the results of the HLM will help the international community in COVID-19-recovery matters. Palestine mentioned it expected the HLM to present a roadmap for the implementation of work and social resilience.

Finland called the NUA a framework for climate action and highlighted that Finnish youth engagement, and noted that gender and displacement dimensions had been considered within their report. Finland has agreed on a strategic partnership focusing on SDG tools related to voluntary reviews.

Venezuela explained that they were working on the draft of the report to inform on progress and on the impact and achievement of the NUA. More than 3 million houses have been built in Venezuela in the context of strategic movement and in alignment with the Agenda.

Malaysia detailed national data collected after WUF 9 in Kuala Lumpur in 2018. They are currently identifying challenges posed by the pandemic and climate change.

Armenia asked about the implementation of the NUA, particularly in light of situations in post-conflict regions.

Indonesia affirmed efforts to advance the NUA after the HLM to mainstream the issues raised. Indonesia encouraged the implementation of the NUA in all regions. They have submitted their national report with

the Asia-Pacific region and support national voluntary reporting.

Jordan explained that their official bodies and civil society groups have improved their housing sector. They cooperate with UN-Habitat through the League of Arab States and will participate in the meeting for the Ministries of Housing in the Arab Countries.

Serbia informed that they are having their National Urban Forum “Better Future for Urban Settlements” on the 11th and 12th of April.

The League of Arab States thanked the Secretariat for its continued support to Arab countries and noted that many Arab countries have handed in national reports and will ensure high-level participation in the HLM.

Agenda item 9: Preparations for the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum

The Executive Director provided an update on the preparations of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11). She highlighted that UN-Habitat is

closely monitoring the situation in Eastern Europe and that she held constructive discussions with the Government of Poland, the Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy and the City of Katowice on WUF11 organisational matters given the current situation.

Hon. Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Secretary of State, Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy presented the current state of preparations of WUF11 in Katowice. She declared the date of 26 to 30 June 2022 had not changed for WUF 11, based on a realistic assessment of the current situation.

The Secretariat updated that together with the Government of Poland and the City of Katowice, it will continue to work with all stakeholders to advance the preparations for a successful WUF11. Given the current humanitarian crisis managed by the host city, UN-Habitat is working with the Government of Poland to promote post-conflict restoration as a key feature of WUF11 programme.

The Secretariat stated that the theme of the forum, *Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future*, seeks to strengthen relationships and create linkages to accelerate the implementation of global urban commitments, grounded in the achievement of SDG11. The WUF has been an advocacy space for the latest thinking about sustainable urbanisation, as intended by the General Assembly.

It was highlighted that the UN-Habitat will continue to build momentum and coordinate with the key global meetings happening in 2022 and beyond, such as the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. These are important opportunities for promoting WUF11, and more importantly to ensure continuity and complementarity of decisions and implementation of actions.

Finally, the Executive Director announced that the City of Cairo in Egypt had been selected to host the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12). The Executive Director thanked the Government of Egypt for its commitment to host the WUF12 in 2024.

Interventions

Angola thanked Poland for its guarantees that WUF11 will take place and indicated that it looked forward to being present at the Forum.

Egypt commended Poland for the work done and indicated it looks forward to participating in the Forum at the highest level. Egypt also welcomed the official announcement on the selection of Cairo as the WUF12 host in 2024. The representative of Egypt highlighted that Egypt would continue its commitment to support UN-Habitat as the leading UN agency on the implementation of the SDG11 and the New Urban

Agenda. He noted that WUF will be back on the African continent for the first time since the opening session hosted at UN-Habitat HQ in Nairobi in 2002.

Kenya thanked UN-Habitat for ensuring adequate preparations for WUF11 and acknowledged the theme as timely and relevant

The **USA** expressed its support to WUF11 and noted they will have a strong presence.

France thanked the Chair and Poland for organizing and supporting WUF 11 and reiterated the country's support. France noted the importance of UN-Habitat's work on smart and inclusive cities and stressed the importance of leveraging WUF 11 in that respect.

Morocco thanked Poland for hosting such an important Forum and congratulated Egypt for the country's nomination to host WUF12. Morocco noted that WUF11 will take place after the High-Level Meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and asked whether the Forum will allow Member States to declare actions that are linked to the commitments taken during the HLM.

Cameroon reiterated its commitment to participate in WUF11 and noted that they organized a National Urban Forum and meetings at the local level to brief participants on WUF11.

Malaysia emphasized the WUF Alumni initiative started in WUF10 and expressed the country's wish to work together in setting the Agenda for future sessions of the World Urban Forum as former host.

Agenda item 10: Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session

Highlights of the outcomes of the implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan for the year 2021

The Executive Director stated that the annual report on the implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan for the year 2021 is currently being finalized and will be published by the end of April 2022. She further highlighted the key role of the Organization in preparing the Secretary-General's Quadrennial Report in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which is now available, and in preparing the Cities and Pandemics report. UN-Habitat's important contribution to localizing

the SDGs with normative guidance, technical assistance, and strategic partnerships on Voluntary Local Reviews was also presented.

The Secretariat stated that UN-Habitat had both reformed and repositioned itself, by proposing a new organizational structure that strengthened integrated programming and increased synergies. The Agency has aligned itself to the wider UN Secretary General reform and responded to the rising demand of cities for more technical support in the adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as focusing more on online learning products.

The Secretariat also underlined the three-lens approach in implementing the Strategic Plan, based on evidence from studying the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic while focusing on the geography of vulnerability and risk, crisis response planning and long-term planning strategies.

The Secretariat noted that the annual report for 2021 will look at four priority areas for the implementation of the Agency's mandate, namely alleviating poverty and inequality, enhanced and shared prosperity, strengthened climate action, preventing and responding to urban crises. Finally, it was highlighted that UN-Habitat developed an indicator monitoring guide to evaluate progress to the Core Domains of Change Indicators for monitoring the influence of normative work.

Implementation of resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session

Resolution 1/2 on the UN System-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements

The Secretariat informed that an Urban Safety Monitoring tool was developed for local governments and noted that UN-Habitat is also working with other UN entities to develop voluntary practical guidance notes with the aim to build a Safer Cities Programme toolkit.

It was highlighted that UN-Habitat received seed funding from the UN trust fund for human security to further support the peer review process of the implementation of the System-Wide Guidelines. Both Mexico and South Africa will fund piloting in ten of their cities in 2022. The Secretariat noted that Member States were encouraged to provide additional financial support to allow cities to participate in the peer reviews.

Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The Secretariat stated that the capacity-building strategy was accompanied by an implementation plan for the period 2021–2024. In addition, UN-Habitat has developed a guide to delivering capacity-building using digital tools, including the UN-Habitat Learn page.

UN-Habitat now offers a large choice of online courses, such as the detailed series on monitoring urban Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Collaboration with universities and training institutions has continued and an inventory of current partnerships and potential for innovative collaboration with academic institutions was established.

Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

The Secretariat informed that the UN-Habitat's Project Review Committee continuously undertook project reviews to ensure gender and other social inclusion considerations in all programmes and projects. The social inclusion and cross-cutting thematic areas of the 2020–2023 strategic plan were made a prominent feature in the Environmental and Social Safeguards System. The UN-Habitat Policy and Plan for Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women in Urban Development and Human Settlements 2014–2019 has been revised to ensure alignment with the current strategic plan.

Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

The Secretariat briefed the Board about its work on urban-rural linkages with several partners including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Cities and Local Governments, Songyang County in China, and the University of Nairobi. The Secretariat further noted UN-Habitat had advised 220 experts in Cameroon, Guinea, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania on how to enhance data collection, analysis and reporting on urban-rural linkages. It also provided a brief on knowledge production on this topic noting that UN-Habitat had released a synthesis report on “Urban-Rural Linkages and COVID-19: Lessons for Resilience and Recovery from Crisis”.

Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of UN-Habitat

The Secretariat informed that between July and December 2021, UN-Habitat held monthly consultative meetings with stakeholders through the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) to seek advice and support. In addition, UN-Habitat established an online portal with information on its partnerships to enhance

transparency and to recognize interactions. The Secretariat also noted that the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy met for its second meeting on 23 March 2022 and is working on developing a UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement policy.

The Secretariat called upon champions to support each resolution in all regions.

Interventions

Kenya commended the Secretariat for its work on the first domain of change of the Strategic Plan, namely reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, including urban regeneration programs. The representative noted the launch of the Nairobi River initiative, an urban regeneration programme. She expressed the country's appreciation for the work of UN-Habitat with respect to COVID-19 community responses in informal settlements, the development of sustainable urban mobility plans, and the collaboration with training institutions.

Cameroon commended the Secretariat for its prompt response to the COVID-19 pandemic which enabled the Government of Cameroon to have a localised response to COVID-19. The representative also highlighted the collaboration with the International Labour Organisation to build water reservoirs and boreholes and the work

with national institutions to mainstream the provision of clean water. Cameroon further noted the ongoing negotiations between the Ministry of Health and UN-Habitat for the provision of technical assistance and the construction of boreholes.

Morocco asked whether the Secretariat could provide a world map that displays the initiatives, programs, actions, and activities of UN-Habitat worldwide. They would like to see the work done in the priority areas at the sub-regional level.

Agenda item 11: Implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations

The Executive Director highlighted the unprecedented steps taken by the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General to guide efforts by UN-Habitat to implement reforms of the development system and management of the United Nations. UN-Habitat has used the UN Task Force on Future of Cities to implement

the UN reforms and is currently developing draft terms of reference for the SG's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments. UN-Habitat's regional representatives have been deepening their cooperation with the five regional economic commissions in preparation of the UN Regional Collaborative Platforms and the Regional Forums for Sustainable Development. The Executive Director regretted the impact of the lack of non-earmarked funding on the work of UN-Habitat at the country level and confirmed her agreement with the Development Coordination Office to initiate joint urban programming in select countries.

The Secretariat reported that the UN Systemwide Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development was used to orientate UN-Habitat's bilateral cooperation agreements with UN entities, facilitate the establishment of the UN Task Force on the Future of Cities and accommodate the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. UN-Habitat also strengthened the development-humanitarian-peace nexus by implementing the Secretary-General's Executive Committee (EC) Action Plan on Land and Conflict and the EC Action Plan on Internal Displacement.

The Secretariat briefed that UN regional collaborative coalitions continued their cooperation with regional economic commissions, while at the country level, UN-Habitat continued to benefit from the work with regional coordinators, country teams, and cooperation frameworks. The UN-Habitat project portfolio was leveraged to encourage joint programming, as encouraged by the SG's development coordination

office. The importance of the balance of project and non-project staff was stressed, as was the organizational structure, integrating headquarters, regional representation, and field operations.

The Secretariat set out its aim to work in countries where it had a field presence and could leverage projects to develop programs, and also in countries where the field presence was currently weak, but where there exists a strong demand within the country and from the UN Resident Coordinators. Current donor governments were called upon to support this initiative.

Interventions

The **USA** suggested that priority should be given to fundraising efforts that will stabilize staffing and that UN-Habitat should work with donors to relocate existing staff in countries that need UN-Habitat's intervention.

Poland enquired about how the decision not to open more regional offices would impact the request to situate a regional office in Central/Eastern Europe.

Statements by Stakeholders

Ms. Violet Shivutse, Huairou Commission Governing Council Chair, briefly detailed the work of Huairou in supporting women to lead a transformative agenda for

inclusive resilience and gender justice. She called on UN-Habitat to enhance and invest in its engagement and partnership with organised grassroots and women groups as key elements to advance gender-responsive governance.

She further highlighted how women were disproportionately affected by impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of women's groups and organized grassroots communities was foregrounded as means to respond to disasters and chronic stressors. Member States were called on to invest and resource UN-Habitat to lead in the development and implementation of gender responsive urban policies.

Prof M Siraj Sait, Co-Chair of the UN Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE), updated the Executive Board on progress stakeholders were making toward joint implementation of UN-Habitat strategies and plans at the local, national, and regional level. The role of stakeholders in the creation of the UN Secretary General's Quadrennial Report, the NUA Platform, global urban monitoring, urban climate action and in preparation of various reports, concept notes and agendas, was also highlighted.

He further noted that the upcoming UN-Habitat Global Stakeholder Consultations will be unprecedented in bringing together different stakeholders in advance of the High-Level Meeting of the New Urban Agenda and WUF11. SAGE also noted with appreciation the extensive consultations carried out by Mr. Patrick Egloff,

Deputy Permanent Representative o of the Swiss
Confederation and Chair of the ad hoc working group on
stakeholder policy.



Credits:

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