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Executive Board of the United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme  
First session of 2021  
Online, 7 and 8 April 2021

## Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on the work of its first session of 2021

Rapporteur: Mr. Dragan Županjevac (Serbia)

### I. Introduction

1. The Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/239 of 20 December 2018, on implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat.

2. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the two sessions of 2020 of the Executive Board were held online: the first on 29 June and 29 July 2020 and the second from 27 to 29 October 2020. At the latter session, the Executive Board decided, in paragraph 10 of decision 2020/6, that its first session of 2021 would be held on 6 and 7 April 2021. The Bureau of the Executive Board, however, at its meeting of 11 January 2021, recommended that the session be rescheduled to 7 and 8 April 2021, so that the meeting did not coincide with Easter.

### II. Opening of the session

3. The first session of 2021 of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat was opened at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 7 April 2021, by the Chair, Mr. Jafar Barmaki (Islamic Republic of Iran). The Chair outlined the arrangements for the online session on the basis of recommendations made by the Bureau of the Executive Board. He explained that simultaneous interpretation into the six official languages of the United Nations would be available for six hours daily during the session.

4. A minute of silence was observed in memory of people who had recently passed away, specifically Mr. John Pembe Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; Mr. Peter Joseph Francis, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to UN-Habitat; and Ms. Tatiana Khabarova, Programme Manager in the UN-Habitat office in Moscow.

5. Opening statements were delivered by Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; Ms. Martha Delgado Peralta, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly; Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; and Mr. Charles Hinga Mwaura, Principal Secretary of the State Department for Housing and Urban Development of Kenya.

6. Following the statements, a short video was shown on the work of UN-Habitat goodwill ambassador, French footballer, Mr. Blaise Matuidi.

### III. Organizational matters

#### A. Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the first session of 2021

7. The Executive Board adopted the agenda for its first session of 2021 on the basis of the provisional agenda (HSP/EB.2021/1) and the annotated provisional agenda (HSP/EB.2021/1/Add.1), as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the first session of 2021;
  - (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its second session of 2020.
3. Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups.
4. 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.
5. Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions relevant to the work of UN-Habitat, issued since the last session of the Executive Board.
6. Status of and discussion on the draft annual work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2022.
7. Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus disease pandemic.
8. Implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
9. Progress made by UN-Habitat in the implementation of the United Nations development system reform.
10. Annual report on action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace.
11. Annual report on action by the Executive Director to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of UN-Habitat.
12. Election of officers.
13. Provisional agenda for the next session of the Executive Board.
14. Other matters.
15. Closure of the session.

8. The Executive Board agreed to follow the proposed organization of work and timetable for the first session of 2021 of the Executive Board, as set out in the annex to the annotated provisional agenda (HSP/EB.2021/1/Add.1). Draft decisions for consideration by the Executive Board as recommended by the Bureau of the Executive Board were presented by the Chair and circulated in a conference room paper.

## **B. Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its second session of 2020**

9. The Executive Board adopted the report on the work of its second session of 2020, held from 27 to 29 October 2020 (HSP/EB.2020/28).

## **C. Attendance**

10. The session was attended by representatives of the following 33 Member States of the UN-Habitat Executive Board: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United States of America.

11. The session was also attended by the following observers that are States Members of the United Nations: Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Czechia,

Eritrea, Finland, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

12. The session was also attended by the following observers that are members of specialized agencies of the United Nations: European Union, State of Palestine.

13. The session was also attended by the following observers: Holy See.

#### **IV. Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups**

14. Introducing the item, the Chair recalled that the ad hoc working group on working methods had completed its work at the end of the second session of 2020. He noted, furthermore, that the Executive Board would not benefit from a briefing by the chair of the ad hoc working group on stakeholder engagement policy given that the ad hoc working group had not met for any substantive work, on the basis of paragraph 5 of Executive Board decision 2020/6 on the methods of work of the Executive Board and the workplan of the Executive Board for 2021, in which the Executive Board had recommended that the working group should resume its work once in-person meetings were possible. The Chair recalled that he had convened an organizational meeting of the ad hoc working group on the stakeholder engagement policy on 24 February 2021 for the purpose of endorsing a chair and co-chair of the working group, as recommended by the Bureau at its meeting held on 11 January 2021, and that he had had to adjourn the meeting owing to a lack of consensus among members of the working group on the interpretation of paragraph 5 of decision 2020/6.

15. The chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters, Ms. Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan), provided a briefing on the work of that group.

16. Following the briefing, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Egypt, United States. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Eritrea, speaking on behalf of the group of African States.

17. The Executive Board adopted part (a), on reports of the Executive Board and its ad hoc working groups, of decision 2021/4, on methods of work of the Executive Board and workplan of the Executive Board for the year 2021. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

#### **V. 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**

18. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the reports of the Executive Director on the interim financial status of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2020 (HSP/EB.2021/2); on the staffing of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2020 (HSP/EB.2021/2/Add.1); on the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan (HSP/EB.2021/2/Add.2); on the staffing of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2020, including staff update, equitable geographical distribution and gender parity (HSP/EB.2021/2/Add.3); and on the ongoing restructuring of UN-Habitat (HSP/EB.2021/3).

19. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the financial, budgetary and administrative matters concerning UN-Habitat. Representatives of the secretariat gave presentations providing further detail, including on the financial status of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2020, with an update as at 31 March 2021; the 2021 financial austerity plan; resource mobilization efforts, including implementation of the resource mobilization strategy; the staffing of UN-Habitat and actions to improve gender and geographic diversity; and the restructuring of UN-Habitat.

20. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Argentina, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Portugal, Serbia, Sweden, United States. Statements were also delivered by the representatives of Eritrea, speaking on behalf of the group of African States, and Switzerland. The Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director and the representatives of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

21. The Executive Board adopted decision 2021/2, on financial, budgetary and administrative matters of UN-Habitat, including the improvement of the internal management, policies and procedures of UN-Habitat and action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any

other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

## **VI. Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions relevant to the work of UN-Habitat, issued since the last session of the Executive Board**

22. Introducing the item, the Executive Director noted that no reports had been issued by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions relevant to the work of UN-Habitat since the previous session of the Executive Board.

23. The Executive Board took note of the information provided.

## **VII. Status of and discussion on the draft annual work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2022**

24. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2022 (HSP/EB.2021/4).

25. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the status of the draft work programme and draft budget for 2022. Representatives of the secretariat made presentations providing further detail. A statement was also made by Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Finance and Budget in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

26. Following the statements and presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Egypt, Germany, Poland, Sweden, United States. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Eritrea, speaking on behalf of the group of African States. The Executive Director, Mr. Ramanathan and the representatives of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

27. The Executive Board adopted part (a), on the work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2022, of decision 2021/1, on the status of the draft work programme and the draft budget of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for 2022; implementation by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of the UN-Habitat planning cycles with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

## **VIII. Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus disease pandemic**

28. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report of the Executive Director entitled “Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat: focus on the Prosperity Fund Global Future Cities Programme, the project entitled “Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19” and the Lebanon country programme” (HSP/EB.2021/5) and to the report on the response by UN-Habitat to the COVID-19 pandemic (HSP/EB.2021/INF/2).

29. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the two reports. Representatives of the secretariat gave presentations providing further detail on the Prosperity Fund Global Future Cities Programme, the project entitled “Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19”, the Lebanon country programme and the response by UN-Habitat to the COVID-19 pandemic.

30. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Poland, Sweden.

A statement was also delivered by the representative of Malaysia. The Executive Director and the representatives of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

31. The Executive Board adopted part (b), on implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, of decision 2021/3, on implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly and reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020, as well as the subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus pandemic. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

## **IX. Implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

32. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on the status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its first session, namely resolution 1/1 on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme strategic plan for the period 2020–2023, 1/2 on the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements; 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; resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements; resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements; and decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/EB.2021/6).

33. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the matter and representatives of the secretariat made presentations providing further detail.

34. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Cameroon, Canada, Sweden. The Executive Director and the representatives of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

35. The Executive Board adopted part (a), on implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Assembly of the United Nations Humane Settlements Programme at its first session, of decision 2021/3, on implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly and reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020, as well as the subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus pandemic. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

## **X. Progress made by UN-Habitat in the implementation of the United Nations development system reform**

36. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the reports of the Executive Director on the implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations (HSP/EB.2021/7) and on the alignment of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review with the UN-Habitat planning cycles (HSP/EB.2020/16/Add.1). The secretariat had also prepared a short text for the Board consolidating and analysing all the information related to the alignment of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review with planning cycles of UN-Habitat, shared in a conference room paper.

37. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the two reports. Representatives of the secretariat made presentations providing further detail.

38. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Canada, Egypt, Germany, Kenya, Serbia, Sweden, United States. Statements were also delivered by the representatives of Eritrea, speaking on behalf of the group of African States, and Finland. The Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director and the representatives of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

39. The Executive Board adopted part (c), on implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations, and part (b), on alignment of the

quadrennial comprehensive policy review process with UN-Habitat planning cycles, of decision 2021/1, on the status of the draft work programme and budget for 2022; implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of UN-Habitat planning cycles with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process.

40. The Executive Board agreed that there was a need to continue consultations on the various options for the alignment of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process with the UN-Habitat planning cycles and recommended that the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board continue its discussions and report thereon to the Executive Board at its second session of 2021. It was agreed that the Executive Director would seek the views of the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly on the matter.

## **XI. Annual report on action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace**

41. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace (HSP/EB.2021/8).

42. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the report. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation providing further detail, including that there were no reports of allegations and no investigations that were ongoing at that time related to sexual exploitation and abuse and that there was one report on sexual harassment in the workplace which has been referred to OIOS. Some of the actions taken by UN-Habitat included training and the development of the Model Code of Conduct.

43. Following the presentations, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Argentina, Sweden, United States. The Executive Director and the representative of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

44. The Executive Board adopted decision 2021/2, on financial, budgetary and administrative matters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including improvement of its internal management, policies and procedures and its actions to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

## **XII. Annual report on action by the Executive Director to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of UN-Habitat**

45. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on actions to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of UN-Habitat (HSP/EB.2021/9).

46. The Executive Director delivered a statement on the report. A representative of the secretariat made a presentation providing further detail.

47. Following the presentation, statements were made by the representatives of the following Member States of the Executive Board: Sweden, United States. The Executive Director and the representative of the secretariat responded to the issues raised.

48. The Executive Board adopted decision 2021/2, on financial, budgetary and administrative matters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including improvement of its internal management, policies and procedures and its actions to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

### **XIII. Election of officers**

49. In accordance with rule 9 of its rules of procedure, the Executive Board elected the officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board to serve, as of the closure of the first session of 2021, for the period 2021–2022, as follows:

Chair:	Poland
Vice-Chairs:	Egypt
	France
	Pakistan
Rapporteur:	Chile

50. The Executive Board adopted decision 2021/5, on the election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the term 2021–2022. The decision is set out document HSP/EB.2021/11.

51. In accordance with the arrangement agreed during the first session of the Executive Board in May 2019 (HSP/EB/1/4), the Executive Board took note of the change of the representation of the Asia-Pacific States in the membership of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat, with Bahrain replacing Indonesia for the final two years of the four-year membership term.

52. A statement was made by the representative of the following Member State of the Executive Board: Indonesia. Statements were also delivered by the representatives of Bahrain and Oman.

### **XIV. Provisional agenda for the next session of the Executive Board**

53. The Executive Board adopted part (b), on the date and agenda for the next session of the Executive Board, of decision 2021/4, on the methods of work of the Executive Board and workplan of the Executive Board for the year 2021. The decision is set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

54. The Executive Board agreed that the Bureau of the Executive Board would, at the appropriate time, provide guidance on whether the next session would be held over two or three days.

### **XV. Other matters**

55. A statement was delivered by the representative of the following Member State of the Executive Board: Republic of Korea.

### **XVI. Outcomes of the session**

56. A statement was made by Mr. Ahmed Raafat Hanafy, Vice-Chair of the Executive Board (Egypt), in his capacity as chair of the open-ended consultations on the draft decisions for consideration by the Executive Board at the present session.

57. At its first session of 2021, the Executive Board adopted the following decisions, which are set out in document HSP/EB.2021/11.

(a) Decision 2021/1: Status of the draft work programme and the draft budget for 2022; implementation by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of the UN-Habitat planning cycles with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process, comprising:

- (i) Part (a): Work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2022;
- (ii) Part (b): Alignment of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process with the planning cycles of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme;
- (iii) Part (c): Implementation by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations;

(b) Decision 2021/2 on financial, budgetary and administrative matters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including improvement of its internal management,

policies and procedures and its actions to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace;

(c) Decision 2021/3 on implementation of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly and reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020, as well as the subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus pandemic, comprising:

- (i) Part (a): Implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its first session;
- (ii) Part (b): Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat;

(d) Decision 2021/4 on the methods of work of the Executive Board and workplan of the Executive Board for the year 2021, comprising:

- (i) Part (a): Reports of the Executive Board and its ad hoc working groups;
- (ii) Part (b): Dates and agenda for the next session of the Executive Board;

(e) Decision 2021/5: Election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the term 2021–2022.

## **XVII. Closure of the session**

58. The Executive Director of UN-Habitat delivered a closing statement. A statement was also made by the representative of the following Member State of the Executive Board: Poland.

59. Following his closing remarks, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.10 p.m. on Thursday, 8 April 2021.

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