

**Summary of the fourteenth meeting of the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and Administrative matters of the Executive Board
Wednesday 24 March 2021 – 14:30 – 16:30 East Africa Time (EAT)**

Chair: H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2.31PM (EAT)

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board (“The Ad-Hoc working group”) adopted the provisional agenda for its fourteenth meeting as follows:

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda;
2. Continuation of discussions on the on the alignment of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process with the planning cycles of UN-Habitat;
3. Any other matters

After the adoption of the Agenda, the meeting considered Agenda item 2, namely continuation of discussions on the alignment of the QCPR process with the planning cycles of UN-Habitat.

2. Continuation of discussions on the alignment of the QCPR process with the planning cycles of UN-Habitat

i. Under this item, the Chair recalled the discussions of the Ad-Hoc working group held on 3 March 2021 where the Secretariat provided a briefing on scenarios 2 and 3 for the alignment of the QCPR process with the planning cycles of UN-Habitat, as prioritized by the Executive Board during its 2020 second session in paragraph 15 of its Decision 2020/3, as follows:

- Scenario Two: Retain the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for the full term, develop an Interim two-year Strategic plan for the period 2024-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029
- Scenario Three: Extend the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 by another two years to the period 2020-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029

These scenarios are reflected in document [HSP/EB.2020/16/Add.1](#) .

- ii. The Chair further recalled the suggestions formulated by Member States during the meeting of the Ad-Hoc working group held on 3 March 2021, which included:
- a) Possibility of empowering the Executive Board, pursuant to Rule 25 of UN-Habitat Assembly’s Rules of Procedure, to approve the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan on an exceptional basis;
 - b) Possibility of empowering the Executive Board to approve the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan on a permanent basis which would require an amendment by the UN-Habitat Assembly of its Rules of Procedure;
 - c) Some members had highlighted that the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan is a universal document. Considering that the UN-Habitat Assembly has a universal membership whereas the Executive Board has a limited membership with 36 members, there is a need to be circumspect about granting a mandate to the Executive Board to adopt the UN-Habitat Strategic Plans;
 - d) Possibility of holding a scaled back UN-Habitat Assembly in either 2023 or 2025, based on the experience from UNEP on its alignment and the scale down of UNEA5 due to COVID-19;

- e) Possibility of holding a virtual scaled down UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023 only to adopt the alignment scenario that would have been recommended by the Executive Board. The session in 2025 would then consider the outstanding issues;
 - f) Possibility of combining the 2023 and 2025 sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly to serve as a solution to the costing implications.
 - g) Some Member States shared some concerns regarding staying for 6 years without holding a session of the UN-Assembly, noting that that would be too long.
- iii. The Chair recalled that at its meeting held on 3 March 2021, the Ad-Hoc working group requested the Secretariat to provide additional information on the different cost implications for the next session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, including scenarios for holding the Assembly on-line, with a shortened Agenda or fully fledged.
- iv. The Chair recalled that the scenarios on the cost implications for the next session of the UN- Habitat Assembly was circulated on 23 March 2021 to Member States. The document can be accessed [here](#).
- v. The Chair reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to hear from the Secretariat on the cost implications for holding a UN Habitat Assembly session and based on that information, the Ad-Hoc working group would hopefully formulate a clear recommendation with respect to prioritization of Scenarios 2 and 3 and further discussions would continue during the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2021 where the final decision would be made.
- vi. The Secretariat provided a briefing on additional information on the cost implications of holding an UN- Habitat Assembly. The full presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following suggestions from Member States:

- i. The document on the cost implications for holding a UN Habitat Assembly session as prepared by the Secretariat was circulated late on 23 March 2021 to the Ad-Hoc Working group and Member States did not get enough time to consult their Capitals on the matters;
- ii. The financial information contained in the document provided by the Secretariat is partial and the Secretariat should produce a more detailed document which includes the grand total cost of the first session of UN Habitat Assembly held in May 2019, which the Secretariat screened and can be found on page 3 below.
- iii. More clarity was required on the detailed and total cost of an UN-Habitat Assembly session as the decision on the duration of a session will be made taking into consideration the costs implications.
- iv. The decision to be taken was on the sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly to be possibly held in 2025 or 2027 as the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly was already scheduled for June 2023 and it is during that session that Member States will be expected to decide when the third session should take place. Therefore, it is important that the Secretariat, in a detailed document, lists the downstream impacts of the different scenarios, so that Member States can report to their Capitals.
- v. A Member State expressed that the delegation was not in a position to make any recommendation with respect to the prioritization of Scenario 2 or Scenario 3 within the context of the on-going Ad-Hoc working group meeting that day and that the delegation does not foresee the Executive Board making a recommendation during its first session to be held from 7 to 8 April 2021, because the topic deserved more discussions before expressing a clear recommendation.
- vi. It was also emphasized that the President of UN Habitat Assembly and the UN-Habitat Assembly Bureau should be consulted on this matter which has implications on the cycle of sessions of the UN Habitat Assembly.
- vii. The Secretariat was requested to provide an updated version of document [HSP/EB.2020/16/Add.1](#) which was considered by the Executive Board during its 2020 second

session. The updated version should include the different scenarios, their costs implications, reflect all views expressed by Member States during the twelfth meeting of the Ad-Hoc working group held on 3 March 2021 and the fourteenth meeting on 24 March 2021, and lists the pros and cons of every scenarios.

The Secretariat responded to the highlighted issues as follows:

- i. The Secretariat reiterated that the figures were provided by the Division of Conference Services (DCS) and that the scenarios described do not include extra budgetary resources usually associated security, temporary structures, medical coverage, side events, exhibition, branding and other non-mandated activities which are highly variable and depend on what Member States would recommend. In this respect, the Secretariat also clarified that it would provide a detailed cost of the Assembly after the Ad-Hoc group provides guidance on the scope of the Assembly depending on the scenario it will recommend.
- ii. The Secretariat provided a summary on cost estimates for the UN-Habitat Assembly, clarifying as follows:

TABLE 1: COST ESTIMATES FOR THE NEXT SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY						
	UNHA 2 (2 days) Virtual	UNHA 2 (2 days) On-site	UNHA 2 (3 days) Virtual	UNHA 2 (3 days) On-site	UNHA 2 (5 days) Virtual	UNHA 2 (5 days) On-site
1.REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES (RB)	301,048	272,350	466,508	463,206	647,901	620,847
2.EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES (XB)	1,022	14,099	1,504	21,138	2,506	29,509
Grand Total (RB+XB) in USD	302,070	286,449	468,012	484,343	650,408	650,356

NOTE ON TABLE 1:

The above scenarios do not include extra budgetary resources usually associated security, temporary structures, medical coverage, side events, exhibition, branding and other **non-mandated activities** which are highly variable.

TABLE 2: ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY held for five days from 27 to 31 May 2019		
	Amount	Note on source of funds
1.REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES (RB)	696,993.18	Conference Services Regular Budget
2.EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES (XB)	993,882.63	UN-Habitat XB resources: i. USD 145,189.67 from Programme Support Costs ii.USD 848692.96 from UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund
Total Expenditure in USD	1,690,875.81	

- ii. The Secretariat explained that Ad-Hoc working group is to recommend a Scenario to the Executive Board which then would report to UN Habitat Assembly. Should the Executive Board not being able to make any recommendation with respect to the prioritization of scenarios, there would

nothing precluding the Committee of Permanent Representatives given its mandate to prepare for the sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly to discuss the recommendation and consult with the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly before the UN Habitat Assembly.

3. Any other matters

- i. The Chair presented to Member States the schedule for the next meeting as follows:
 - **Monday 29 March 2021:**
 - 14:00 pm– 16:00 pm:**
 - a) Continuation of Informal consultations on the draft decisions towards the 2021 first session of the Executive Board
- ii. The Secretariat recalled that draft Decision 2021/1 to be possibly adopted by the Executive Board at its 2021 first session contains in its section (c) a language on the alignment of the QCPR with the UN-Habitat planning cycles. As there is no clear recommendation reached, the Ad-Hoc working group may not consider the language during its meeting held on 29 March 2021.
- iii. The Secretariat further noted that the Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group is expected to report on the work of the Ad-Hoc working group to the Executive Board during its upcoming 2021 first session and taking into account that the time needed to process and issue an official pre-session document will not allow an updated document to be issued prior to the upcoming session of the Executive Board, the views expressed on the alignment of the QCPR with the UN-Habitat planning cycles would be included in the report of the Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group to the Executive Board under Agenda item 3.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:25 PM (EAT)