

Second meeting of the Joint Bureaux of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat

Wednesday, 29 June 2022

17:00 hours-18:30 hours

Katowice, Poland

Presiding over the meeting: Hon. Martha Delgado Peralta, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. **Present at the meeting** Hon. Martha Delgado Peralta, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President of the UN-Habitat Assembly for the period 2019-2023, opened the meeting at 17:10 hrs.

The following members of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly were present:

Hon. Martha Delgado Peralta, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

H.E. Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland to UN-Habitat.

The following members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives were present:

H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat.

H.E. Mr. John Simbachawene, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of the United Republic of Tanzania to UN-Habitat.

H.E. Ms. Monica De Greiff Lindo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia to UN-Habitat.

The following members of the Bureau of the Executive Board were present:

H.E. Mr. Silvio Albuquerque, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil to UN-Habitat and Chair of the Executive Board.

H.E. Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland to UN-Habitat.

H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat.

H.E. Ms. Jean Kimani, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to UN-Habitat.

Mr. Clement Payeur, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of France to UN-Habitat.

The following Representatives of Member States were present:

Ms. Lucianara Andrade Fonseca, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil to UN-Habitat.

Mr. Luiz Keppe, Delegate of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. Rodolfo Osorio, Delegate of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Hugo Isaak, Delegate of the United Mexican States.

Ms. Natalynne Maingi, Delegate of the Republic of Kenya.

The following members of the UN-Habitat Secretariat were present:

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director.

Mr. Raf Tuts, a.i. Deputy Executive Director and Director, Global Solutions Division.

Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies.

Mr. Neil Khor, Chief of Staff.

Mr. Chris Williams, Director of UN-Habitat Liaison Office, New York.

2. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly welcomed all participants to the meeting and expressed her appreciation to the immediate former Chairs of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the Executive Board and acknowledged their work in establishing a steady foundation for the governance structure of UN-Habitat, including their leadership in preparing for the sessions of the governing bodies.
3. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly reiterated the importance of the work of the CPR and the Executive Board as the intersessional bodies of the UN-Habitat Assembly in guiding the Executive Director of UN-Habitat towards a stronger position in her implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
4. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly recalled that rule 28 of the [rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly](#) provides for the possibility of a joint Bureau meeting as follows “the respective Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Executive Board may, to coordinate their activities, conduct joint Bureaux meetings”.
5. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly noted that the joint Bureaux meeting is of particular importance to establish a solid work plan for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly scheduled for June 2023. In addition, the Chair proposed the following areas of discussion for the meeting: (i) the exchange of any pertinent views on Member States’ oversight of UN-Habitat, (ii) reflecting on progress made in actualizing the new governance structure of UN-Habitat, (iii) to seek opportunities to further strengthen the oversight role of each of the Governing Bodies including their coordination and (iv) to look into the possibility of a Joint Bureaux meeting of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat at a future date.

Agenda item 1: Overview by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly on her activities thus far and her expectations of the oversight bodies, namely the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Executive Board in light of the upcoming second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023.

6. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly (President) noted that cities still have a long way to go to be sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous for all. She noted that at various meetings

such as the 26th session of the Conference of Parties on Climate Change (COP) held from 1 to 12 November 2021 and the most recent United Nations Oceans Conference held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal, the key message supported by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other United Nations (UN) Agencies continues to be ‘leaving no one behind. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly further noted the need to act urgently.

7. The President emphasized that towards the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, it is crucial to leverage the outcomes emanating from the significant meetings such as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (HLM), the Special Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the New Urban Agenda, other national and international gatherings and UN-Habitat inter-sessional meetings of the CPR and the Executive Board.
8. The President concluded by recognizing the Executive Director’s efforts are positively driving the Organization and she further expressed her gratitude to the Secretary-General for providing UN-Habitat with an opportunity to regain its financial position by prioritizing it for a regular Budget increase in 2023.

Following the overview by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the discussions highlighted the following:

9. One Member State indicated that coordination meetings of the Bureaux of the governing bodies are important towards strengthening the role of UN-Habitat and very welcomed. The Member State recalled that the COVID-19 pandemic had delayed some of the Organization’s activities, not long after the new structure was established. The Member State further affirmed that sometimes Members did not seem to be fully aware of the role and mandate played by UN-Habitat within the UN system. Therefore, Member States require more concrete examples of initiatives being implemented by UN-Habitat to help strengthen the understanding of what UN-Habitat does and also while showcasing the impactful work of UN-Habitat.
10. The Bureau welcomed the briefing by the President.

Agenda item 2: Briefing by the Executive Director on the financial status of the Organization, the outcome of the recently concluded high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the establishment of the “Friends of UN-Habitat Group” by the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, the ECOSOC meeting of 21 April 2022 and linkages to the road to the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2022.

Upon the invitation by the President, the Executive Director provided her briefing in two parts:

a) Update on the financial status of UN-Habitat

9. The Executive Director highlighted that despite the financial situation, UN-Habitat continues to progress on implementing the [Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#). The Executive Director further noted that through resource mobilization efforts, UN-Habitat was able to raise \$3.9 million in additional core funding contributions from the Member States. The Executive Director continued by highlighting some of the pledges made by the Member States such as \$250,000 from Benin, \$20,000 from Burkina Faso, \$1 million from Germany, \$50,000 from Ghana, \$10,000 from Malawi, \$3 million from Mexico, \$150,000 from Namibia, \$100,000 from

Portugal, \$7,500 from Somalia, \$5 million from Turkey, and \$250,000 from Zambia. The Executive Director expressed her gratitude to the Member States for their support as it shows their belief in UN-Habitat's mandate and its relevance to sustainable urbanization.

10. The Executive Director noted that UN-Habitat remained in a strong financial position across the totality of funding sources, of which 6% came from assessed contributions and 94% from voluntary contributions. She expressed that UN-Habitat's earmarked funding remains particularly strong, with our operational portfolio making a real impact on the ground in all regions, and in turn, informing UN-Habitat's important normative products, and policy guidance, SDG coordination, and overall leadership in sustainable urbanization.
11. She also acknowledged that two key changes have been made in the formulation of UN-Habitat's budget for 2023. First, the Executive Board has agreed to a realistic baseline level of a non-earmarked foundation budget of \$3 million in 2023, which will be scaled up upon receipt of additional funding. That budget level contrasted with the past decade when budgets of the non-earmarked foundation had been between \$10M and \$25M. The current three million baselines reflected the reality of how much Member States have contributed to the Foundation non-earmark historically. Second, the requested increase in the regular budget from New York included the proposed conversion of seven posts from the foundation budget, at an annualized cost of \$1.2M, which will be decided by the Fifth Committee later in the year, and for which the collective support of Member States in the Committee will be vital.
12. The Executive Director reiterated that the purpose of the realignment was to ensure the sustainability of the Programme, safeguarding the successful delivery of our mandated normative and intergovernmental activities.

b) Outcome of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly held on 28 April 2022 and expectations for the upcoming second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly

13. The Executive Director noted four action areas that emerged out of the HLM:
 - a. **Affordable and well-serviced housing** – many Member States at the HLM called upon the international community for assistance, unable to counter the growing housing deficit and glaring gaps in basic service delivery, to alleviate poverty and social inequality.
 - b. **Climate adaptation and mitigation** – Member States at the HLM noted that car usage and construction in cities are causing a large share of the global CO2 emissions, and climate change's effects disproportionately affect the urban poor urban sprawl contributes to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. UN-Habitat works with cities to promote resilient and low carbon building and planning standards, resources, and capacity building.
 - c. **Conflict response** – Member States at the HLM emphasized that in 2021 more than 84 million people had been forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and climate change. Many pledged to amplify the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in post-conflict scenarios and for the international development community to guide post-conflict reconstruction, including urban recovery frameworks.

- d. **Multi-level governance and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals** – Member States emphasized that few local governments are equipped to respond to multiple crises. UN-Habitat has been actively working with neighborhood organizations, cities, and national governments to improve multi-level urban governance systems to localize the SDGs and respond to the complex global political environments.
14. The Executive Director indicated that the four emerging thematic areas were in line with UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2023 and she desired to see the discussions remain active with the governing bodies of UN-Habitat.
15. Furthermore, the Executive Director noted that the success of the HLM began with the preparatory process under the President of the General Assembly, and in close coordination with the President of ECOSOC was the establishment of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat Co-Chaired by Botswana and Slovakia. The Group of Friends of UN-Habitat is currently 41 countries members since its official launch. The Executive Director further called on the support of Member States to join the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat as a platform for the Member States to discuss how to ensure reliable and adequate funding for UN-Habitat.
16. The Executive Director further outlined that after the HLM, UN-Habitat leveraged other meetings to advance discussions on the HLM outcomes, such as the Africities Summit held from 17 to 21 May 2022, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali held from the 20 to 25 June 2022, to expand knowledge on the role of intermediary cities, the G7 summit as well as the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 11). She noted that these meetings offered avenues to enable Governments and other constituencies opportunities to advance the four key thematic areas.
17. In addition, the Executive Director acknowledged the need to utilize international processes to promote relevant action areas, for example organizing an urban climate track for COP27 with the support of the Prime Minister of Egypt. Similarly, the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023 as well as the second “SDG Summit”, i.e. the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly to be convened in September 2023 during the General Assembly high-level week in New York will feature Sustainable Development Goal 11 will be important pillars for crystalizing the outcomes of the HLM and for further strengthening the momentum for accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
18. With regards to the preliminary expectations for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023, the Executive Director highlighted the following:
 - a. **Dates and Agenda for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly:** the dates for that session as well as the Agenda were set through decision 1/3 of the Assembly at its first session in 2019 and can be accessed here. However, the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly may wish to review the provisional agenda, in light of all the upcoming meetings, to recommend any amendments if warranted. The agenda is very important in guiding the discussions and outcomes of that session.
 - b. **The theme of the UN-Habitat Assembly:** the practice has been that the theme of the UN-Habitat Assembly, as it was previously with the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, is guided by emerging thematic areas including areas of significance to participants from the WUF11. It is expected that the Bureau will guide the

choice of the theme of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly considering the outcome of the HLM as well as the WUF 11 Declared Actions. The secretariat stands ready to support the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly in guiding the process of the choice of the theme.

- c. **The Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat:** The CPR during its open-ended meeting for a high-level midterm review held in June 2021 found that the current strategic plan 2020-2023 remained relevant. In addition, the Executive Board during its second session of 2021 recommended that the UN-Habitat Assembly may consider extending the current strategic plan by another two years to cover the period 2024- 2025. This will also help with aligning the strategic plan with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review process (QCPR).
 - d. **Support to normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat:** about the work by the Executive Board both on the work program and budget of UN-Habitat and in discussing the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat as standing items during its regular meetings, UN-Habitat intends to utilize the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly to strongly demonstrate the impact of UN-Habitat's work by showcasing its activities in collaboration with relevant partners. To achieve this, UN-Habitat will require support from the UN-Habitat Assembly.
19. The Executive Director informed Member States that she established an internal task force that will analyze and come up with a briefing paper of the key messages emerging from important meetings such as WUF11 and COP 27, to name just a few. In this way, the briefing paper will inform the dialogue between Governments and partners during the session of the UN-Habitat Assembly and will also offer specific opportunities to address the issues identified through the international conferences.
20. The Bureau welcomed the briefing by the Executive Director.

Agenda item 3: Briefing by the Chair of the CPR on its activities including the out come of the CPR high-level mid-term review and expectations for an open-ended meeting to prepare for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023, and discussions on key issues for consideration at the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Upon invitation by the President, the Chair of the CPR provided the following briefing:

- 21. The Chair of the bureau of the CPR welcomed future coordination meetings of the Bureaux of UN-Habitat governing bodies as a platform for exchanging substantive ideas and outcomes on how to strengthen the work of the Organization.
- 22. The Chair recalled that the CPR held its first open-ended meeting for a high-level midterm review from 29 June to 1 July 2021, establishing a steady foundation for the CPR as part of implementing the request by United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/239. More than 300 participants took part in the meeting, both virtually and in person, including the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, ministers and ambassadors, and other representatives of Member States. At that meeting, the CPR reiterated that the 2020-2023 strategic plan of UN-Habitat was still relevant.

23. At that meeting, the CPR acknowledged the efforts made by the Executive Director, considering the financial constraints, to strengthen integrated programming and synergies, therefore, contributing to different outcomes across the strategic plan. The CPR encouraged the Executive Director to further adjust and strengthen support to the Member States in responding to new vulnerabilities and risks in terms of resilience and climate change and called upon the Executive Director to strengthen the analysis of linkages between the Organization's operational and normative activities to increase the impact of its work across the relevant outcomes of the strategic plan. The Chair of the CPR indicated that this analysis is to be presented to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session in June 2023 for further consideration.
24. At that meeting, the CPR also reiterated the need for the Executive Director to report to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session and to the Executive Board on the mobilization of financial resources, within the broader resource mobilization strategy, to accelerate the further implementation of the resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session in May 2019.
25. The CPR also requested the Executive Director to facilitate a dialogue with the Member States and relevant stakeholders on how to scale up the financing of capacity-building activities, review different sources to finance and leverage capacity-building efforts, and report to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session on relevant action taken.
26. At that meeting, the CPR recommended that the dates of its second open-ended meeting in preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly shall be 29 May to 2 June 2023 and also recommended a provisional Agenda for the second open-ended meeting of the CPR in preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, considering the decision by the UN-Habitat Assembly to hold its second session from 5 to 9 June 2023. The provisional Agenda for the second open-ended meeting of the CPR in preparation for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly can be accessed [here](#). The CPR also reviewed the provisional agenda for the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly which can be accessed [here](#).
27. The Chair of the CPR also conveyed that the Bureau of the CPR during its meeting held on 15 June 2022 recommended that the themes of potential resolutions to be adopted by the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023 could include SDG cities, housing, localizing SDGs, climate adaptation and climate change, and development of international guidelines on people-friendly smart cities.
28. The Chair of the CPR also indicated that the Bureau of the CPR intends to engage all Member States early enough in the preparations for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. He further noted that the current CPR Bureau members are committed to working with their respective regional groups in encouraging voluntary contributions to guide and support efforts to finance the work of UN-Habitat and allow for the full implementation of its 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

Agenda item 4: Briefing by the Chair of the Executive Board on the activities of the Executive Board including its recent sessions.

Upon invitation by the President, the Chair of the Executive Board provided the following briefing:

29. The Chair of the Executive Board recalled that the Executive Board held its first session of 2020 for one day on 29 June 2020, online due to the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic. At that session, which was Chaired by the United States, the Executive Board focused mostly on financial budgetary and administrative matters and the draft work program and budget for the year 2020, among other items. The Board suspended that session and resumed on 29 July 2020 to elect the Bureau for the period 2020/2021. Iran as Chair, Chile, Egypt, France as vice chairs, and Serbia as rapporteur. That session took a very significant step on how the Board should adopt decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic by consensus the Board agreed to adopt decisions via a silent procedure when the Board is not in session. The Chair noted that this was very significant because it demonstrated the Executive Board's adaptability to changing situations.
30. The Chair recalled that the Executive Board continued to monitor the implementation of various resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly during its first session and considered the concept note on the implementation of a review process for the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements; the draft capacity-building strategy; and stressed the importance of supporting partner countries with capacity-building to enhance existing human and organizational skills to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, Goal 11.
31. The Chair informed that in 2021, the Executive Board focused on three priority areas namely adequate, accessible, and affordable housing and basic services, climate crisis, building resilience, and localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Board also had a briefing by the Executive Director on actions to update and improve the internal management, policies, and procedures of UN-Habitat within the context of accountability. In response to the briefing, the Board requested the Executive Director to share the responsibilities and the accountability framework with the Member States, together with an update on its implementation of which five outcomes were adopted by consensus and can be accessed here.
32. In 2022, the Chair recalled that the first session of the Board for 2022 was held in a hybrid format from 29 March to 31 March 2022, enabling both online and in-person to participate, and was chaired by Ambassador Marek Rohr-Garztecki. That session, inter-alia, focused on the preparations for the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and preparations for the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. That session also elected a new Bureau with Brazil as chair. The next session will be held from 21 November to 23 November 2022 and UN-Habitat plans to focus substantively on harnessing the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the ECOSOC meeting before that and the outcome of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum towards the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Following the briefing by the Chair of the Executive Board, the discussions highlighted the following:

33. One Member State suggested looking at whether the newly established governing structure of UN-Habitat could be improved. The Member State urged the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing three-tier governance structure and the cost implication of servicing the meetings of governing bodies to an already financially strained Organization.
34. Several Member States recalled that in 2018, Member States negotiated by consensus the establishment of the new governance structure of UN-Habitat and that as such the current structure should be given time before questions on its effectiveness are addressed. Several

Member States further noted that the governing bodies have, in large part, been operating remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed that it was not the appropriate time to open new discussions about reforming the governance structure of UN-Habitat. They felt that the new structure still needed more time to solidify.

35. Several Member States however welcomed any ideas and recommendations for improving the existing governance structure through informal discussions or regional group meetings.

Agenda item 5: Discussions on the resource mobilization and fundraising efforts for UN-Habitat.

36. The President noted the efforts by the Executive Director to reduce the Organization's deficit and took note of the remaining gaps in financing UN-Habitat, particularly the role of Member States in providing voluntary contributions.
37. The President recalled that one of the functions of the Executive Board outlined by the rules of procedures as endorsed by the UN-Habitat Assembly is to guide and support efforts to finance the work of UN-Habitat.

Following the briefing by the Chair, the discussions highlighted the following:

38. A Member State recalled the decision adopted by the Executive Board during its first session of the year 2022, recommending that the non-earmarked budget for 2023 be of an amount of \$3 million following a decreasing overall trend of finances in recent years. Member States also noted that the Chair of the Executive Board has established a new working group on resource mobilization matters that will be open to all Member States to offer insight and recommendations on how to assist the Secretariat in raising the resources needed for the effective functioning of UN-Habitat.
39. One Member State raised concerns over the disparities between earmarked and non-earmarked resources and considered it essential to have adequate non-earmarked contributions for the healthy functioning of the program rather than a donor-driven program.

Agenda item 6: Any other matters

40. Upon the invitation of the President, the Executive Director requested the support of Member States at the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly concerning the proposed Regular Budget increase for UN-Habitat for 7 additional posts for the 2023 budget of UN-Habitat. The Executive Director informed Member States that the 2023 draft budget of UN-Habitat had already been reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and that the outlook was positive.

The second meeting of the Joint Bureaux of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat was adjourned at 18:15 hours.