

Report of the Executive Director on the progress made in the Flagship Programmes

I. Introduction

1. The document highlights progress made with regards to the flagship programmes as critical instruments for advancing a more integrated approach concerning the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat in line with decisions 2022/C of the Executive Board. For each flagship programme, the report provides a short overview of the programme, outlines the strategy used and progress made, and sets out a way forward, based on current challenges and opportunities. As a tool to make the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 operational, all the Flagship Programmes cut across the Domains of Change:

- (a) Flagship Programme 1. *Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities (Urban Regeneration)*: Domain of change 1 (Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum), outcomes 1.1 and 1.3.
- (b) Flagship Programme 2. *People-Centered Smart Cities*: Domain of change 2 (Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions), outcome 2.3.
- (c) Flagship Programme 3. *RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor*: Domain of change 3 (Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment), outcome 3.3 and 1.2.
- (d) Flagship Programme 4. *Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the positive impact of urban migration*: Domain of change 4 (Effective urban crisis prevention and response), outcomes of domains of change 1, 2 and 3.
- (e) Flagship Programme 5. *SDG Cities*: All domains of change and all outcomes.

2. The report offers opportunities to the Executive Board of UN-Habitat to discuss the continued relevance of the flagship programmes to strengthen the integration of normative and operational work, to prioritize such work and to scale up their impact.

II. Flagship Programme 1: Inclusive Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities (Urban Regeneration)

A. Overview of Flagship Programme 1

3. UN-Habitat’s Flagship Programme 1: “*Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities (Urban Regeneration)*” allows for multi-stakeholder collaboration, technical assistance and resource mobilization to promote inclusive and resilient urban regeneration and to empower neighbourhoods and communities to become more inclusive, healthy and vibrant.

4. It uses urban regeneration to address spatial inequality and climate change, and to promote social value creation, environmental resilience, and shared economic prosperity. Urban regeneration represents a powerful integrative tool for social, economic and environmental impact through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for the localization of the SDGs.

B. Strategy of Flagship Programme 1

5. The flagship programme builds upon various tools and experience on urban policy, community engagement, participatory process, local economic development, mobility, climate action, urban health, basic services, and housing. It leverages a strong spatial foundation and inclusive, human rights-based processes to create strong policies that avoid, mitigate, and manage risks associated with urban regeneration.

Partnership development

6. As a convening initiative, the flagship programme supports multi-level governance, focuses on building capacity and providing technical assistance for the formulation of strategies. It also works closely with the private sector, as well as international and impact funds and investors to develop inclusive business models and benchmarks to promote public-private partnerships. Through its interactions with community groups, the flagship provides capacity building, technical assistance, and tools for community-led urban regeneration initiatives. Research institution partners co-develop normative and technical materials and training.

C. Progress of Flagship Programme 1

Programme's evolution from 2020 until WUF11

7. The focus has shifted to improving internal coordination, stakeholder collaboration, developing urban regeneration initiatives and partnership networks for non-traditional actors, and identifying resource mobilization opportunities.

8. The programme is now focusing on three main outcome areas:

- (a) Consolidated data and knowledge on spatial inclusion and climate action in cities, including data platforms, methodologies, and best practices for urban regeneration.
- (b) Strengthened global and regional networks for inclusive and climate resilient urban regeneration.
- (c) Initiatives and solutions developed and implemented by localising urban regeneration processes globally.

Initiatives and portfolio

9. Through efforts such as the development of the 'Urban Regeneration and Viruses Report: learning from past and present health crisis', the 'Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Regeneration', the 'Spatial Inclusion Indicators Framework', and the 'Spatial Inequality Monitoring Dashboard', the flagship programme is actively contributing to UN-Habitat's development of normative tools and technical guidance on urban regeneration.

10. Strengthening networks and knowledge sharing has been realized through the preparation of high-level meetings and dialogues, such as the 'Seoul Urban Regeneration International Conference' in 2020 (Report), the 'Expert Group Meeting on Urban Regeneration as a Tool for Inclusive and Sustainable Recovery' in 2021 (Report), and the 'Global Map of Urban Regeneration Initiatives'.

11. Furthermore, the programme has collaborated on urban regeneration initiatives in five sites in Lebanon, Kenya, Mexico, and Somalia. Two other major initiatives are currently ongoing, developing ISO standards for inclusive urban regeneration co-development and social value creation.

Status on budgeting and resource mobilization strategy

12. Some of the main activities have been funded by governments, including the Germany Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Construction, the Government of the Basque Country, the Regional Catalan Government, and Seoul Metropolitan Government. Discussions are ongoing with the French Urban Regeneration Agency (ANRU), Moroccan Urban Regeneration Agency (ANRUR), Institute of Planning of Fortaleza (Brazil), Hines Real Estate ESG team (Global), Clarion Group (UK), the New York University (US), and the Sustainable Urban Regeneration Lab - Bocconi University (Italy). The focus is further on the expansion of national, regional, and city-wide urban regeneration initiatives, the development of an integrated platform for spatial inclusion mapping, an atlas on urban regeneration good practices and the consolidation of regional urban regeneration hubs.

D. Way forward for Flagship Programme 1

13. The external challenges and opportunities, shown in table 1, will be addressed to move the flagship programme forward, including through a broader mobilization of the United Nations development system.

Table 1:
Flagship Programme 1: External opportunities and challenges

| <i>Opportunities</i> | <i>Challenges</i> |
|---|--|
| <p>Urban regeneration represents a super-tool for the localisation of the SDGs, NUA and UN-Habitat’s strategic plan, as it impacts almost all SDGs simultaneously.</p> <p>Governments and experts need consolidated benchmarks, data and methodologies to monitor inequality and social value creation.</p> <p>The programme has the potential to mobilise additional resources from non-traditional donors.</p> | <p>Urban regeneration is context-specific, and regions adopt different approaches to it. There is need for a global initiative with adapted regional and national frameworks, tools and methodologies.</p> <p>In certain contexts, urban regeneration is identified with a specific political agenda, making it susceptible to change and representing a challenge for sustained collaboration with governments.</p> |
| <p>14. Proposed actions to scale up the programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The programme achieved results in knowledge development, concrete urban regeneration initiatives, partnership consolidation and resource mobilisation. Its impact and output delivery will substantially increase if soft-earmarked resources are allocated to the Flagship Programme 1. (b) The importance of urban regeneration for the localisation of the SDGs needs to be more strongly communicated, showcasing the linkages between the housing, climate change and SDG priorities, and representing regeneration as a powerful tool for integrated SDG localisation. (c) For the programme to turn the increased resources effectively into results more funding is required for the flagship programmes’ secretariat to provide partners with core coordination, knowledge sharing, advocacy, project development and implementation support roles. | |

III. **Flagship Programme 2: People-Centered Smart Cities**

A. Overview of Flagship Programme 2

15. UN-Habitat’s Flagship Programme 2: “People-Centered Smart Cities” puts inclusion and sustainability at the centre of smart cities – a field that has until recently been too technology-focused and industry-driven. It promotes an approach to smart cities that starts with the people and their identified real challenges and priorities as described by cities, communities, and urban residents, thus placing the needs of people at the centre of smart city planning. The approach requires a firm commitment to human rights and inclusion and to the use of digital technologies for improvement in quality of life.

16. The Programme is working on three outcomes:

- (a) policy transformation centering people on smart cities;
- (b) financing of smart cities to achieve SDG11;
- (c) capacity building and technical assistance.

B. Strategy of Flagship Programme 2

17. The Programme brings together UN-Habitat’s work on smart cities and urban innovation. It is being implemented by a cross-functional team from the Programme Development Branch, the Innovation Section and the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) based in Hamburg, Germany.

18. The Programme has normative and operational components. The normative components guide local and national authorities, the private sector and the global development community on the adoption of people-centred smart cities approaches by providing guidance of inclusive, rights-based digital technologies in cities and communities. It is also supporting Member States in their efforts to agree on international guidance to adopt a people-centered smart city approach. The Programme implements projects to guide cities in smart city planning, apply people-centered solutions, builds the capacity of local governments to adopt people-centered smart city strategies, and, through UNITAC, delivers innovative digital technology and data solutions.

Partnership development

19. The programme continues to build broad partnerships with Member States, United Nations entities, local government entities, private sector-based platforms, and other non-State actors. Since 2020, several key partnerships have been established, including with UN agencies¹, city networks², academic institutions³, foundations⁴, and regional development banks⁵. The Government of France, with support from the European Commission, hosted an Expert Group Meeting on People-Centred Smart Cities. As part of the UN Interagency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence (AI), UN-Habitat is co-leading a workstream on AI for people-centered smart cities. These build on UN-Habitat's co-lead role in the 'United for Smart Sustainable Cities⁶ (U4SSC)' initiative.

C. Progress of Flagship Programme 2

Programme's evolution from 2020 until WUF11

20. Despite limited resources, normative frameworks for adopting the people-centred smart cities approach, strategic partnerships, and the cross-functional team have been put in place. Further, a body of normative tools is being established. A series of 'playbooks' on people-centred smart cities for local and regional governments was launched at WUF11. Global research was undertaken on AI, smart city governance, and blockchain for urban development. A digital rights governance framework for cities was produced and a toolkit for local governments on digital transformation for people-centered cities was developed in collaboration with ITU and other UN agencies.

Initiatives and portfolio

21. Operational portfolio includes, for example, the following projects:
- (a) UNITAC's projects on mapping, data, and digital governance are being implemented in Brazil, South Africa, Jordan, Tanzania and Mexico.
 - (b) A 'Smart City Strategy Toolbox' is being developed and will support the development of national and local smart city policies and strategies; it focuses on implementation in Africa.
 - (c) Climate Smart Cities Challenge is currently working in 4 cities, and as an open innovation programme it has identified bankable climate smart solutions for cities.
 - (d) 'Digital Helpdesk for Cities' initiative is being piloted with four cities in Europe⁷.
 - (e) Scaling-Up People-Centred Smart Cities Programme has produced smart city policies and strategies in Nigeria, Myanmar, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Status of budgeting and resource mobilization strategy

22. During its first two years, the Governments of Germany⁸ and Sweden⁹ as well as the Open Society Foundations¹⁰ have contributed to the Programme. It has also received in-kind support from the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Edinburgh Napier University, and Mila.

23. Discussions are ongoing with the Government of Germany on 'just transitions in difficult places - digital solutions for more climate resilient informal areas and climate smart urban recovery of communities affected by crisis' in Namibia and the Ukraine, as well as embedded initiatives on climate smart cities. The second phase of the 'Scaling Up People-Centered Smart Cities Through National Urban Policies' project is being formulated with Korea. France has expressed interest in supporting the development of international

1 ITU, UNDP, UNOICT and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

2 Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, United Cities and Local Governments, Eurocities

3 Edinburgh Napier University, Mila – Quebec AI Institute, HafenCity University

4 Open Society Foundations

5 CAF – development bank of Latin America

6 <https://u4ssc.itu.int/>

7 Sofia, [Bulgaria](#); Tirana, [Albania](#); Dublin, [Ireland](#); and Brussels, [Belgium](#)

8 \$6.6 million for UNITAC

9 \$500,000 for the Climate Smart Cities Challenge

10) \$150,000 for the Digital Helpdesk for Cities

guidelines on people-centered smart cities. A discussion is ongoing with Sweden regarding additional funding for the Climate Smart Cities Challenge. Moreover, Botswana has raised the interest in establishing a UNITAC presence in Gaborone, focusing on the support of digital transformation on the African continent.

D. Way forward for Flagship Programme 2

24. See Table 2 for external challenges and opportunities that will be addressed in moving the flagship programme forward.

Table 2
Flagship Programme 2: External opportunities and challenges

| <i>Opportunities</i> | <i>Challenges</i> |
|--|---|
| Digital transformation has risen to the top of the agenda in international development. The demand for support on smart cities and related digital transformation issues continues to grow. Member States have expressed the need for international guidelines on national smart city plans, policies, and strategies. | ‘Smart cities’ are still considered to be a top-down, technology-first, industry-led approach that doesn’t consider people’s needs. The digital divide is inhibiting smart city developments. Limited resources to deliver the technical support on people-centered smart cities that is needed, particularly in Least Developed Countries. |

25. Proposed actions to scale up the programme:

- (a) Develop international guidelines on people-friendly smart cities to scale up the programme and disseminate the normative frameworks and the practices and lessons from country operations.
- (b) Build on the existing relationships with the branches, country, and regional offices of UN-Habitat to ensure sustainability and scalability of existing solutions.
- (c) Leverage existing external partnerships and identify new ones, especially from the private sector.
- (d) Increase capacity through identifying sustainable, long-term funding sources.

IV. Flagship Programme 3: RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor

A. Overview of Flagship Programme 3

26. UN-Habitat’s Flagship Programme 3: “RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor” addresses one of the greatest challenges for climate adaptation – how to build resilience for the three billion people living in vulnerable climate hotspots¹¹ and the one billion living in informal settlements. Despite the efforts so far, urban vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by climate change.¹²

27. The objective of the programme is to mobilize large-scale investments in resilience to provide national and local governments and communities with the resources, knowledge, capacity, and policy environment required to accelerate climate-resilient actions. It improves adaptive capacities of poor urban communities by reducing climate disruptions to livelihoods, protecting them from the costs of climate disasters, and improving basic services. The programme also advocates for the integration of urban vulnerability and climate change adaptation issues into city-wide and national frameworks.

28. The programme works on the following main outcomes:

- (a) Achieving a breakthrough in adaptation and resilience for the over three billion people highly vulnerable to climate change globally.

¹¹ IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Chapter 8.

¹² IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Chapter 12.

- (b) Redirecting climate finance to local-level and large-scale investments in resilience for the most vulnerable urban poor.
- (c) Creating the enabling policy environment, knowledge transfer, and capacities to build local resilience through multi-level governance and cooperative partnerships.

B. Strategy of Flagship Programme 3

29. RISE UP implements innovative, feasibility-proven, and bankable resilience solutions for the urban poor and for the natural and built environments. It advocates for the integration of pro-poor urban climate action in national and city climate policies, plans and commitments, global climate action, and finance architecture. The programme seeks to increase investment and financing for inclusive pro-poor adaptation projects in urban vulnerability hotspots, focusing on small and medium-sized cities in developing and transition countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It enhances the capacity of all levels of government and core partners to coordinate multi-level governance action towards building the resilience of the urban poor, including accessing and mobilizing resilient investments.

Partnership development

30. The programme builds on the global multi-partner initiative on Building the Climate Resilience of the Urban Poor (BCRUP), launched at the Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in 2019.

C. Progress of Flagship Programme 3

Programme's evolution from 2020 until WUF11

31. Since 2020, RISE UP has integrated its objectives across the agency's normative and operational work and brought the urgency of the most vulnerable to several events: Urban October 2021 contributed to the Race to Zero campaign. UN-Habitat has also joined the Race to Resilience Campaign. During COP26, together with the Local Government and Municipal Authority, a Constituency to the UNFCCC, UN-Habitat supported the integration of "Multi-level Governance and Cooperative Action" into the Glasgow Pact. At the World Urban Forum 11, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation which will second an Urban Heat Officer to UN-Habitat.

32. The relevance of the flagship programme has been highlighted at several high-level events: Urban October 2020 and 2021, Innovate4Cities conference 2021, COP26, the first session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board, AfriCities 2022, and WUF11.

Initiatives and portfolio

33. To date, RISE-UP's portfolio has grown to USD 89.8 million including climate action efforts in some 20 cities in 17 countries financed by Adaptation Fund, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Asian Development Bank, International Climate Initiative, Germany, and Stiftelsen Stockholm International Water Institute.

Status of budgeting and resource mobilization strategy

34. Two projects have raised the opportunity for additional normative and global projects: A proposal designed with support from SIDA builds an integrated approach to strengthening climate action, improving the urban environment and resilient settlements for the urban poor in Madagascar, Malawi, and the Solomon Islands. A project financed by the 14th Tranche of the UN Development Account focuses on building capacities of African, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS for green, resilient, and pro-poor pandemic recovery.

35. The projects in the pipeline, aligned with the Executive Director's priorities - adequate housing, cities and climate change, and localizing the SDGs - and financed by Adaptation Fund, will mobilize USD54,000,000 in Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Iran, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka.

36. It is critical for the flagships' growth to strengthen the programme secretariat who manages the replication of and knowledge transfer from the country-level investments, through increased core and earmarked funding

D. Way forward for Flagship Programme 3

37. RISE UP resource mobilization strategy identifies priority areas for resilience as well as strategic countries where there is a budget potential exceeding USD 500 million for the programme.

38. A Knowledge Management Strategy, interlinking UN-Habitat, offices globally, has been made to facilitate the mainstreaming of the flagship across the agency and to institutionalize its emerging best practices and lessons.

Table 3

Flagship Programme 3: External opportunities and challenges

| <i>Opportunities</i> | <i>Challenges</i> |
|--|---|
| Mature Adaptation Fund portfolio. Existing experience, tools, and methodologies. Scale up the partnerships reanimated at WUF11 during COP27 through the COP27 presidential initiative. Increase human resources and expert pool of the programme. | Reduction in financial resources. Limited knowledge and capacities of local governments on how to access climate finance for local levels and realize resilience for the urban poor. |

39. Proposed actions to scale up the programme:

- a. Define strategic partnerships by analyzing existing expertise, experience, best practices, and lessons learned.
- b. Increase resource mobilization by disseminating success stories to relevant stakeholders.

V. Flagship Programme 4: Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the Positive Impacts of Urban Migration

A. Overview of Flagship Programme 4

40. Since the establishment of Flagship Programme 4: “Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the positive impact of urban migration” in 2020, the number of people forced to flee their homes has steadily and dramatically increased, hitting new records. As of May 2022, 100 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide due to conflicts, food insecurity, the climate crisis and other emergencies¹³. The programme aims to harness the positive impact of migration and displacement in urban areas. Its relevance has been stressed by the UN Secretary General in recent global guidance and agreements on displacement. To achieve the ambition of making the urban environment more inclusive for migrants, internally displaced (IDPs) and host communities, UN-Habitat launched a 4-year Global Programme on Migration at WUF 11. The programme was developed to operationalise the flagship programme, by promoting evidence-based approaches as basis for normative and operational work of UN-Habitat on urban migration.

B. Strategy of Flagship Programme 4

41. The programme encompasses two outcomes:

- (a) Improved **knowledge** (based on data and normative frameworks and tools) informing integrated and inclusive solutions for urban migrants, displaced people, and their host communities.

¹³ UNHCR, 2022

- (b) Innovative, integrated and people-centred **solutions** are scaled to respond to migration and displacement challenges and opportunities in urban areas through area-based approaches.
- (c) Capacities of UN-Habitat Headquarters and Regional Offices will be strengthened to support the implementation of the global programme in ten pilot countries in the next two years. Capacity building efforts will also be deployed in support of local and national governments, as well as operating partners.

Partnership development

42. Partnerships are at the core of the programme approach to build and share knowledge. UN-Habitat has already engaged with key actors such as UNHCR, IOM and the World Bank. UN-Habitat and UNHCR identified areas of collaboration and launched a series of internal webinars to better share their areas of expertise and explore potential field collaboration. Senior Programme Adviser has been deployed from UNHCR to UN-Habitat for the initial period of one year to support the Flagship programme at the Headquarters.

43. UN-Habitat is also part of several regional and global networks and platforms for global advocacy, outreach and knowledge sharing activities on urban migration, such as the GP2.0, the United Nations Network on Migration, the Global Refugee Forum, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the World Bank Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the Global Alliance on Urban Crises.

C. Progress of Flagship Programme 4

Programme's evolution from 2020 until WUF11

44. Since the programme's launch at WUF10, its focus has primarily been on programme development in migration and displacement-affected contexts in cooperation with key partners. In East and Horn of Africa region, UN-Habitat has collaborated with UNHCR in a review of Housing-Land-Property (HLP) issues and in assessing the possibility of inclusion of UN-Habitat in the Solutions Initiative for South Sudan and Sudan refugee situation. In Latin America, UN-Habitat has developed a joint programme with UNHCR and IOM, using evidence-based approaches to reduce the vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants and increase the resilience of host communities in six Latin American and Caribbean countries.

45. In 2022, UN-Habitat contributed to interventions in countries facing large scale and often protracted displacement, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kenya, and Mozambique. The contribution of UN-Habitat to the work of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement was reflected in the report to the Secretary General in September 2021 and in the Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. The key role of local governments in identifying and implementing durable solutions to internal displacement has been affirmed in both documents as well as the increasingly urban character of displacement.

46. The programme has actively supported response to climate change induced displacement, both through operational and policy work, such as leading the Urban Track of the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative. UN-Habitat has been participating in the technical team that follows up on the report published in March 2022, through the Urban Summit from 26 to 28th July 2022 and in the COP27 in November 2022.

47. UN-Habitat has been assigned as a co-lead of the Housing Land and Property Area of Responsibility under the Global Protection Cluster.

Initiatives and portfolio

48. New country and regional programmes have been initiated in all regions. In 2022, UN-Habitat Ukraine response planning was added to the Eastern Europe engagement. To better coordinate and align the approaches, the flagship programme is strengthening the corporate capacities on durable solutions to internal displacement and on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus through design of online courses in collaboration with global GP2.0 and OECD-DAC networks.

Status on budgeting and resource mobilization strategy

49. Additional core resources or voluntary contributions are needed to initiate or support research and data collection, adapt the most relevant tools, and strengthen UN-Habitat's engagement from local to global levels. Seed funding is also important to scale up programme development support in line with demand. The global programme on urban migration estimates that the cost for supporting programming in one of the ten priority areas amounts to approximately 480'000 USD per year.

D. Way forward for Flagship Programme 4

Table 4

Flagship Programme 4: External opportunities and challenges

| <i>Opportunities</i> | <i>Challenges</i> |
|---|---|
| Extensive field level portfolio in all regions. Existing experience, tools, and methodologies. Partnerships reanimated at WUF11 New support needs emerging in Eastern Europe and Ukraine in particular | Dramatic and steady increase in the number of displaced people/migrants globally Limited knowledge and capacities of local governments on how to address challenges caused by displacement/migration |

50. The programme will pursue the implementation of the global programme on urban migration by strengthening its work on data and to better inform the capacity building needs and programming. The review and analysis of the current portfolio will be finalised to identify best practices for scaling up, replication and contextualization and contribute to overall strategic direction of the programme.

51. As a result, UN-Habitat will identify ten priority geographical areas where there is the greatest need and opportunity for UN-Habitat to add value to wider United Nations' efforts in addressing urban migration and displacement challenges across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

VI. Flagship Programme 5: SDG Cities

A. Overview of Flagship Programme 5

52. UN-Habitat's Flagship Programme 5: "SDG Cities" is a response to the need for accelerated action on the local implementation of SDGs during this Decade of Action. It centers on the ambitious goal of supporting over 1000 cities to accelerate their achievement of the SDGs and the impact this would have on a billion lives. The programme recognises and incentivises exceptional achievement of cities through SDG Cities Certification.

53. The programme adheres to a four-tracked sequence: (a) data collection and analysis, (b) strategic planning, (c) the strengthening of local institutions, and (d) the financing and implementation of high impact projects. Ultimately, the programme bolsters local economic opportunities while improving environmental sustainability and reducing social inequality.

B. Strategy of Flagship Programme 5

54. The programme is achieving scale by providing cities with (a) an online bank of tools for data collection and analysis, institutional capacity development, and access to a Cities Investment Facility that prepares projects for investment and matchmakes to sources of finance; and (b) technical support hubs that backstop participating cities at each stage of the SDG City cycle. It mobilises the global initiative through national multi-city partnerships including with UN Country Teams, and global implementation windows including Women-Led Cities, which is supported by women-led businesses and philanthropies, Capital Cities Initiative, Youth and Sport, City Networks (Commonwealth and Francophone networks planned), and Faith Communities. Some of the windows will be managed as franchises, with UN-Habitat providing materials, resources and certification for partners to lead the delivery.

Partnership development

55. The Flagship initiative is undertaken in partnership with Global CEO Alliance, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Global SDG Index Institute (UNGSII) Foundation, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), World Economic Forum, Erasmus University, national and municipal governments, international and national networks of cities as well as investors.

C. Progress of Flagship Programme 5

Programme's evolution from 2020 until WUF11

56. Since its launch in at WUF10 in 2020, SDG Cities has developed a bank of digitized tools, including institutional diagnostic and capacity development tools and spatial data tools. It has established a City Investment Facility, which prepares and matchmakes SDG Impact Projects with diverse sources of finance. With the tools now well advanced, SDG Cities is piloting them in ten cities across four continents. During WUF11, UN-Habitat proceeded to onboard a broader group of 25 cities. In 2022 country programmes will be established in minimum of ten cities in Ghana, Tunisia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Malaysia, bringing the total number of cities to roughly one hundred.

57. As SDG Cities prepares to go to scale it will establish four global hubs: City Monitoring, City Performance, Investment, and Certification. The onboarding and certification function is currently handled by the World Urban Pavilion in Canada. The global hubs will serve as centres of excellence, providing training, technical backstopping, networking, and technical resources to participating cities and partners. In addition, the programme proposes a series of six implementation windows, organized by constituency thematic groups: National Groupings, Local Government Networks, Cities in Least Developed Countries, Youth Networks, Women-led Businesses, and Faith Communities.

Initiatives and portfolio

58. Highlights of the programme's portfolio include SDG Cities Pilot cities (Mafra, Portugal; Kasarine Ennour, Tunisia; Shanghai, China; Penang, Malaysia; La Paz, Bolivia and Kyebi, Ghana), Global SDG Cities Conference series, digitised tools, and the City Investment Facility.

59. During 2022, the programme has been working towards initiating SDG Cities national programmes in Bolivia (4 cities), Ecuador (14 cities), Colombia (5 cities), Ghana (10 cities), Tunisia (10 cities), Morocco (6 cities), Malaysia (10 cities in partnership with Urbanice).

Status on budgeting and resource mobilization strategy

60. Some of the national programmes initiated during 2022-2023 are expected to be funded by national authorities (Ecuador, Malaysia) or by regional governments (Colombia) with the support of development banks. Others will be supported by donors (such as Ghana and Tunisia). The Women-Led Cities Initiative will be funded by be a consortium of women-led philanthropies and companies. For the Youth and Sports window, discussions are underway with a philanthropy and with individual high net worth sports stars; for the faith window, foundations supporting inter-faith activities have been approached.

D. Way forward for Flagship Programme 5

61. Aligned with the United Nations Global Urban Monitoring Framework the programme is setting up debates to propose a model of SDG Cities Certification to be recognized across the UN system.

62. In parallel, the programme will work closely with the Local 2030, the UN system wide initiative to support localising the SDGs. Specifically, SDG Cities national programmes and implementation windows will benefit from the Local 2030 hubs that will provide thematic expertise. These hubs will be bolstered by the provision of digital tools developed by the SDG Cities Programme.

Table 1
Flagship Programme 5: External opportunities and challenges

| <i>Opportunities</i> | <i>Challenges</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------|

| | |
|---|---|
| Demand for SDG Cities Certification | The need for dedicated resources at the central level |
| Demand for technical assistance | to support mobilising implementation windows and |
| Demand for finance for high impact projects | overall coordination |
| Interest of financiers to engage with the flagship and invest in SDGs in cities worldwide | |

VII. Conclusion

63. As reported to the Executive Board in the Second Session of 2021 (WUF11), the progress on these programmes has been unbalanced due to financial constraints. However, the focus on strengthening partnerships and on resource mobilization, culminating in well-attended sessions at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum in Katowice in Poland, has enabled the programmes to gain more traction, generating positive projections for the achievement of each one of the programmes goals and targets.

64. Moving forward, there is an urgent need to drive additional capacities and expertise towards core capacity to drive the flagship programmes. Secretarial support can be organized across the flagship programmes. Better programme coordination will allow more effective planning of strategic partnerships across the flagship programmes, especially regarding joint resource mobilization, integrated work in priority locations. A stronger focus on programme development support to relevant sub-regions is also needed.

65. Further convergence across UN-Habitat's global programmes and the flagships to deliver more integrated and tailored solutions between climate change, migration, smart cities, and urban regeneration and resilience is needed.

66. As key instruments for the integration of the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat and being aligned with global priorities as set out in the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, the flagship programmes have demonstrated their potential of achieving impact at scale through assistance to Member States and development partners. In order to increase impact, the flagship programmes need to expand on their strategic partnership successes and gain increased soft- or hard earmarked funding support from Member States.