

## **Summary of the fifth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on stakeholder engagement policy of the Executive Board**

**Wednesday, 5 October 2022** – 10:00 – 12:00 East Africa Time – Conference Room 4

**Chair:** Mr. Patrick Egloff  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland to UN-Habitat

### **Agenda item 1 - Adoption of the Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am EAT. The working group adopted the provisional agenda for its fifth meeting without any change as follows:

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda
2. Continuation of discussions on the draft stakeholder engagement policy, chapters 5-9
3. Any other business

### **Agenda item 2 – Continuation of discussions on the draft stakeholder engagement policy, chapters 5-9**

- i. The Chair thanked the Member States and stakeholders for their inputs and comments, and recalled that during its last meeting held on 21 September 2022, the ad hoc working group discussed chapters 1 to 4 of the zero draft of the stakeholder engagement policy, namely the [Zero Draft](#), which can be accessed [here](#).
- ii. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to continue discussions on chapters 5 to 9 of the Zero Draft, noting that after the meeting, the Secretariat would have sufficient feedback and inputs to work on a revised draft, including contributions received during the meetings held on 21 September 2022. He further recommended that there was still time for Member States to send their comments in writing to the Secretariat.
- iii. The Chair noted the placeholder under Chapter 5 of the Zero Draft and recalled that the ad hoc working group agreed during its last meeting to discuss the accreditation at a later stage, most likely after the second session of the Executive Board for the year 2022.

### **Chapter 6 – Benefits for accredited stakeholders**

- iv. The Secretariat, in providing an introductory briefing, noted that stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes would not only bring benefits to stakeholders but also to UN-Habitat and Member States as well.
- v. The Secretariat further noted that benefits for stakeholders were likely to accrue from their continued engagement in the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Executive Board, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and in the related ad hoc working groups, including the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters and the ad hoc working group on stakeholder engagement policy.
- vi. The Secretariat also noted that stakeholders had often expressed a need for engagement in policy and programme design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The Zero Draft allowed for continuous engagement by stakeholders, including possible dialogues with the Chairs of the Bureaux and with the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and also

participation in regular briefings on the preparatory processes for meetings of the Governing Bodies, including contribution to the setting of the agenda, access to public information and documents and coordination amongst stakeholders, to name just a few.

- vii. The Secretariat acknowledged that stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes could strengthen their contribution to policy development and decisions and also create an incentive for them to contribute substantially towards implementation of the decisions and programmes approved by UN-Habitat Governing Bodies. It may also present an opportunity for collaboration not only with UN-Habitat and Member States but also with other stakeholders working on relevant issues led by other UN agencies. Such an opportunity might also unlock the potential for in-kind and financial support for UN-Habitat work.

**After the briefing by the Secretariat:**

- viii. One Member State drew attention to item 6 g) of Zero Draft Chapter 6 which reads as follows: “*Contribution to agenda setting by written submissions to the Bureaus of the relevant governing bodies through the UN-Habitat Secretariat*”, and proposed that the “*written submissions*” referred to in the paragraph be also circulated to all Member States.

**Chapter 7 – The role of UN-Habitat**

- ix. The Secretariat noted that the role of UN-Habitat had been made explicit in the Zero Draft. Key amongst various responsibilities of UN-Habitat was the mobilization and facilitation of stakeholders towards accreditation to UN-Habitat Governing Bodies, using existing platforms and other approaches. The World Urban Forum, the World Urban Campaign, Urban October with World Habitat Day, and World Cities Day celebrations would be key events to identify new stakeholders to be invited to the sessions and meetings of the Governing Bodies.
- x. The Secretariat indicated that existing advisory boards and networks, including the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE), the Advisory Group on Gender Issues, the Habitat Professional Forum, regularly get involved in meetings and sessions of UN-Habitat Governing Bodies and could encourage other organizations to consider participating in such gatherings.
- xi. The Secretariat underlined that UN-Habitat would foster dialogue amongst stakeholders and Member States, working closely with representatives of stakeholders and advisory groups established pursuant to decisions of Governing Bodies to ensure inclusion and diversity and the receipt of timely information about ongoing and planned activities, sessions and meetings. It would include support for the organization of the global stakeholder forum, consultations, briefings, and surveys on stakeholder engagement.

**There was no comment from Member States and stakeholders on draft Chapter 7.**

**Chapter 8 – Responsibilities and obligations of accredited stakeholders**

- xii. The Secretariat noted that it was always useful for partners to know their responsibilities and obligations for the partnership to thrive well.
- xiii. The Zero Draft outlines the basic responsibilities and obligations to foster the relationship. Key amongst them would be the need to respect the rules of procedure of the Governing Bodies, where decision-making would be the prerogative of Member States, although stakeholder input would enrich such decisions. In addition, there was also the need to follow

the guidance on registration for the meetings and seating arrangements.

- xiv. The Secretariat emphasized that during the intersessional period, stakeholders would be expected to play their part in consonance with the engagement mechanisms established for that purpose. Stakeholders would also provide feedback on how the relationship was progressing and what needed to be improved through surveys and group discussions.

**After the briefing by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted that:**

- xv. With respect to item 8 d) which reads that “*Support a Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism and its operationalization while adhering to the guiding principles, especially self-organisation, transparency, responsibility and accountability without exclusion of some groups*”, one Member State indicated that it was of utmost importance for the Secretariat to clarify what it means by “*Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism*” and what Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism encompasses to avoid possible overlap with the Zero Draft.
- xvi. Similarly, on the same item, one Member State sought further clarification on the language “*without exclusion of some groups*” and requested further explanation on what that phrase meant. One Member States further suggested that the major groups and other stakeholders working with UN-Habitat be specified and defined in the Zero Draft so as to give clarity to the wording of item 8 d).
- xvii. With respect to item 8 e) which states that “*Commitment to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination while respecting the need for individualism and collectivism*”, one Member State sought clarification on the concept of *individualism and collectivism*. After a response by the Secretariat as reported in paragraph xxi below, the Member State stated that the concept of individualism and collectivism was too strong and suggested that it be deleted or formulated and replace the sentence with “*Commitment to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination while respecting their specificities*”.
- xviii. Another Member State suggested that the background documents on establishing groups of stakeholders referred to in the Zero Draft, be inserted into the text.
- xix. One Member State further suggested that item 8 c) on “*Regular communication with UN-Habitat and exchange of information including reporting on activities relevant to UN-Habitat mandate and programme of work every four years*” and item 8 f) on “*Provision of feedback on stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes through stakeholder satisfaction surveys, focused group discussions, consultations, and other means as necessary*” be moved to the draft Chapter 5 on accreditation, because it relates more to requirements that stakeholders should meet before being accredited. After a response from the Secretariat as reported in paragraph xxvi below, the member suggested that the sequence of requirements be rearranged and more requirements be added to the list, including the need for stakeholders to submit reports of their work on a regular basis.

**In response:**

- xx. The Secretariat clarified that UN-Habitat engages with a lot of different stakeholders and that the intention of para 8 d) was to emphasize that the Stakeholder Engagement Mechanisms should be open to everybody with no exclusion of any group.
- xxi. The Secretariat noted that with respect to item 8 d) and reference to the concept of *individualism and collectivism*, the language was put in to emphasize that while accredited organizations could participate in the meetings and sessions of the Governing Bodies, they

could still maintain their specific autonomous independence and position. In the same breadth, accredited organizations could also work collectively with other groups and organizations to give a specific position on an agenda item that a Governing Body would be discussing.

xxii. The Secretariat outlined sixteen of the major groups and other stakeholders as follows:

- 1) Local and regional governments
- 2) Women
- 3) Children and youth,
- 4) Business and industry
- 5) Professional organizations
- 6) Research and academia
- 7) Workers and trade unions
- 8) People with disabilities
- 9) Indigenous groups
- 10) Farmers
- 11) Older persons
- 12) Philanthropists and foundations
- 13) Media.
- 14) Parliamentarians
- 15) Civil society organizations
- 16) Grassroots and informal sector organizations

xxiii. Nine major groups were adopted by Agenda 21 in 1992. The Secretariat noted that the list evolved with time as more groups were recognized. The New Urban Agenda further recognized additional groups, which included migrants, refugees, and volunteer groups as part of the major groups and other stakeholders.

xxiv. The Secretariat recalled that Rule 68 of the [Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly](#) also refers to Habitat Agenda partners and other stakeholders. Habitat Agenda partners emanated from Habitat II in 1996. Within the Zero Draft, UN-Habitat would streamline the terminology currently used to refer to the partners that UN-Habitat engages with.

xxv. The Chair noted that the Secretariat would prepare a short paper on current UN-Habitat Stakeholders Engagement Mechanisms which would be circulated to the working group prior to the next meeting.

xxvi. The Secretariat clarified that stakeholders must meet certain established criteria to be accredited to ECOSOC or the UN-Habitat Assembly. After accreditation, stakeholders must still abide by registration requirements in order to participate in the meetings and sessions of the Governing Bodies.

## **Chapter 9 – Funding**

xxvii. The Secretariat noted that it was useful for the stakeholder engagement policy to also focus on funding.

xxviii. The Secretariat further emphasized the UN Secretariat requirement to prepare a policy budget implication document to support any policy adopted.

xxix. The Secretariat noted that the Partnership Section comprised of two staff members who undertook corporate partnership responsibilities in addition to supporting stakeholder

engagement in meetings and sessions of the Governing Bodies. A strengthened stakeholder engagement mechanism would require consideration of funding.

**After the briefing by the Secretariat:**

- xxx. One Member State agreed that draft Chapter 9 was important and requested the Secretariat to provide more background on the cost implications of the Zero Draft, such as potential staffing implications, the number of events that may be required to be held and their location.
- xxxi. One Member State enquired how UN-Habitat envisaged the mobilization and allocation of resources for the participation of stakeholders under the Zero Draft and what would be the priority areas of the implementation process should the lack of adequate funding persist.
- xxxii. Another Member State sought clarification on any required extra budgetary resources needed to support the participation of stakeholders in the meetings and sessions of the Governing Bodies.
- xxxiii. One Member State noted that the Zero Draft involved budgetary implications, specifically draft Chapter 7, which currently expands the role of UN-Habitat and creates additional work for UN-Habitat. The Member State encouraged the Secretariat to look into the experience of other UN-Agencies in funding stakeholders.

**In Response:**

- xxxiv. The Secretariat clarified that stakeholders fund their own participation in the meetings and sessions and that UN-Habitat only funded the participation of invited experts. That, however, did not preclude Member States from sponsoring selected stakeholders should they wish to do so. The Secretariat noted that UN-Habitat sponsored Member States representatives from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) participation in the meetings and sessions of the Governing Bodies depending on the availability of funds.

**Agenda item 3 - Any other matters**

- xxxv. The Chair requested Member States to share their additional comments on the Zero Draft in writing with the Secretariat as the latter continued with the revisions.
- xxxvi. The Chair further requested the Secretariat to provide a revised Zero Draft by 28 October 2022 and recalled that the next meeting of the working group will be held on 7 November 2022.
- xxxvii. One Member State requested that draft Chapter 5 should be discussed so that the entire document can be agreed on at once.

**There were no other matters considered and the Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:15 hrs East Africa Time.**