

2023 Seventh Bureau Meeting of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat
Hybrid format – Friday, 13 October 2023
10:00-12:00 hrs. East Africa Time (EAT)
Statement by the Executive Director
(Draft of 12 October 2023)

SLIDE 1: Title slide

Slide 2: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda to be led by the Chair.

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Status of Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board including:
 - i. Documentation for the session.
 - ii. Technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the session.
3. Review of the roadmap towards the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.
4. Leadership of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board:
 - i. Status of nominations to chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.
 - ii. Consideration of the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy.
5. Composition of the Bureau of the Executive Board.
6. Any other matters.

Slide 3 AGENDA ITEM 2: (TITLE SLIDE) Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board

- i. Documentation for the session.**
- ii. Technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the session.**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Good morning and a warm welcome to you all.

Happy Urban October.

We have just come back from a very successful celebration of World Habitat Day in Baku, Azerbaijan and are now preparing for the World Cites Day to be held on 31 October in Istanbul, Turkiye. I am grateful to the Governments of Azerbaijan and Turkiye for their support in this regard and to all Member States for the various activities being held to mark the Urban October 2023. If time allows, we will give you a bit more detail on Urban October under the agenda item on AOB.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies

I wish to take this opportunity to inform you of my impending departure from UN-Habitat which some of you are perhaps already aware of.

Towards the end of last week I received a phone call from the Deputy Secretary General of the United nations Ms Amina Mohammed, informing me of the decision of the UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres that my appointment as UN-Habitat Executive Director and UN Under-Secretary-General will come to end on 19 January 2024 when my current contract is expected to expire.

The Deputy Secretary General also informed that they appreciated my work and that the decision was more political in nature.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the United Nations and to contribute to the work of UN-Habitat and to support Member States.

Most of all I am grateful to the Members States for the support I have received from them..

Yesterday I met with the UN-Habitat Executive Committee and informed them of this news as I wished for them to hear it from me as the senior managers who have diligently supported me over the last six years, with great passion and commitment.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, I consider this Bureau quite instrumental to the work of UN-Habitat. I truly appreciate the excellent support I have received from each of you consistently for the last two years now, which has enabled UN-Habitat to be in a better position, more stable and visible. I therefore wanted to share with you this information at the very earliest opportunity and in person.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Thank you Excellencies.

Slide 4: Item 2 (i): Documentation for the session.

My intention is not to take the time of the Bureau but to inform you of this myself and so, with your permission, let me now get back to my briefing on agenda item 2 of today's Bureau meeting which is on the status of preparations for the upcoming 2023 third session of the Executive Board to be held from 28 to 30 November.

Excellencies,

You would recall that at our last meeting held on 1 September 2023 you gave us important guidance that has enabled us to proceed with the preparations quiet smoothly. These were related to the dates, number of days, format of the session, provisional agenda, documentation and, organizational arrangements for the session.

I am happy to confirm, therefore, that we have continued to prepare for the session in line with your guidance.

The "Convocation Note" for the session to allow Member States to "save the date" was sent out soon after the September Bureau meeting, on 4 September 2023.

The preparation of the formal "Notification by the Executive Director" for the session has been done and an edited English Advance version has been placed on the website pending the ongoing translation into the six UN official languages by the UNON Division of Conference Services. We expect to share the Notification as well

as the Provisional Agenda with all Member States on 17 October 2023, which will be 42 days prior to the session in line with Rule 3 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board

Excellencies

With regard to the rest of the pre-session documents for the session, you would recall the extensive discussions we had in that regard during the Bureau meeting on 1 September 2023. At that meeting we informed you of the communication from the Division of Conference Services that they were only able to process not more than 90 pages of documents through editing and translation into the six UN official languages due to both capacity and cost issues. As a result, we had prioritized selected documents for translation based on what we considered as their significance in contributing to key decisions likely to be taken by the Executive Board at the upcoming session.

The Bureau expressed concern on the limitation of translated documents and encouraged that the universality of participation of Member States in the session should be preserved.

Your specific guidance was that the Secretariat should consider the following actions:

1. A revision of the list of prioritized key documents for translation presented by the Secretariat during the Bureau meeting,
2. Reduction of number of documents and number pages of the pre-session documents, and
3. Postponement of the agenda items to the next Executive Board session in 2024, for those documents that could not be translated.

Mr. Chairman,

I am happy to update the Bureau on the actions we have so far taken as follows:

1. We have significantly reduced the total number of pages for pre-session documents from approximately **180 pages to less than 150 pages**. This excludes the 2024 draft work programme and budget document.

2. We have reviewed the list of documents and reconsidered the prioritization of the documents that need to be translated. As such, all **agenda items will have the supporting core pre-session documents being translated**, except one item which is subject to discussions at the ad hoc working group first and which will be considered at future sessions of the Executive Board as well. This is the item on the “Draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window to support the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner”.
3. Due to the need to limit the number of words, **some items are further supported with additional “information documents” which will remain in English**. We have however ensured that core information to support decisions of the Executive Board are being translated.
4. We further **negotiated with Conference services to accept additional pages beyond the 90 pages limit for editing and translation with the undertaking that UN-Habitat will pay for costs** that fall outside the available resources that the Organization is entitled to for the year 2023.
5. To further reduce costs as well as the capacity challenge communicated by the Division of Conference Services, we have **mutually agreed with Conference services on certain documents that would only be translated without editing**, and this is a normal practice.
6. **82 % of the core pre-session documents are now covered under the available Regular Budget allocation** and only three documents will be paid for by UN-Habitat using extra budgetary resources.

Excellencies

As you can see from the document that has been shared with you, most documents will now be translated as shown in green.

The documents have been submitted to the Division on Conference services in line with the stipulated timelines and are currently being processed. In fact, several documents have already been placed on the dedicated website for the session, in English Advance versions. The expectation is that by 30 October 2023, which will be four

weeks prior to the session, the pre-session documents will be made available to Member States.

Mr. Chairman, we have not forgotten your request for a letter from you to the DG of UNON and to the UNSG of DGACM. They are ready and we can share them as we speak. We however, wanted to share with you the initiatives we have taken to rationalize the documents so that we can see if we need to change the content.

Slide 5: Item 2(ii) Technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the session

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies.

With regards to the second part of item 2, we have provided the technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the upcoming third session of the Executive Board, as is practice.

The technical inputs cover four draft decisions for consideration of the Executive Board as follows;

- Draft Decision 2023/A: Financial, budgetary and administrative matters of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit based on the findings of its review of the management and administration of UN-Habitat; and draft work programme and budget for 2024.
- Draft Decision 2023/B: Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat; reporting on the programmatic activities of the Programme in 2022; implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities.
- Draft Decision 2023/C: Implementation of the outcomes of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly including preparation of the Strategic Plan for the period 2026 to 2029; and
- Draft Decision 2023/D: Methods of work of the Executive Board in 2022 and the workplan of the Executive Board for 2023.

As you are aware, Member States through the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters held the first consultations on the draft outcomes on Wednesday, 11 September 2023 under the leadership of Kenya. Ambassador Kimani has kindly been steering the activities of that working group in the absence of a substantive Chair and we are very grateful.

Additional consultations on the draft outcomes are for now planned for 1st November and 27 November 2023.

Slide 6: Item 2 (ii). Some expectations on the outcomes of the session

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

I wish to add that at the upcoming session Executive Board, among other decisions that the Board may take, we are looking forward to;

- i. the consideration and approval of our work programme and budget for the year 2024,
- ii. a way forward on the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation
- iii. a consideration and possible approval of the scalability model
- iv. guidance of the SDG Cities initiative, and
- v. An agreement on the roadmaps for the development of the strategic plan 2026 to 2029, as well as the Smart Cities guidelines, both of which need to be approved by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second regular resumed session in 2025.

Slide 7: Item 2 (ii). Other pertinent information of preparations for the session

Excellencies

I would like to conclude the briefing on agenda item 2 by mentioning that;

- i. As has become the practice, one or two partners may join us to share their testimonials on our work particularly as related to normative and operational activities, We are still working to confirm this.

- ii. We are also expecting the UN Under- Secretary General for Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to participate in person and briefing the Executive Board on agenda item 14 on report of the OIOS to the Executive Board. We have received confirmation from her.
- iii. We are organizing the travel of the five LDCs who are Members of the Executive Board.
- iv. The registration for the session will open on Tuesday, 17 October and will close on Friday, 24 November 2023.
- v. An “information for participants” document will be shared shortly and also placed on the dedicated website for the session, where we are also placing the pre-session documents as they become available.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Back to you.

Slide 8: (TITLE SLIDE) AGENDA ITEM 3 - Review of the roadmap towards the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Excellencies,

At the last meeting of the Bureau, the roadmap was reviewed and approved with the understanding that it is a living document and that any changes would be made while ensuring that there is no clash with UNEP meetings.

Mr. Chairman

We have since received further information from the Division of Conference Services regarding challenges with meeting facilities at UNON due to numerous UNEP related Member States meetings taking place in Nairobi in October and November. In this regard we have reviewed and updated the roadmap, working with UNEP and UNON Conference Services in order to ensure not just the availability of meeting rooms but also of Member States who are likely to be engaged with those UNEP related meetings.

This has resulted in the meetings previously scheduled for between 16 October and 27 November being moved to between 30 October and 2 November.

Slide 9: Item 3(a). Reviewed dates for the period 30 October to 2 November 2023

As you can see on the screen, we are planning for the following meetings to take place from 30 October to 2 November 2023.

- i. **Monday 30 October 2023:** ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters from **14:30 -16:30 EAT** - on the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation (SURGe) initiative and the draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window towards the need to achieve the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner.
- ii. **Wednesday 1 November 2023:** ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters from **09:30 -12:00 EAT** – on Informal consultations on the draft outcomes to be considered by the Executive Board at its 2023 third session- to be confirmed
- iii. **Thursday 2 November 2023:** Technical briefing to Member States on implementation of UN-Habitat Assembly resolutions led by the Deputy Executive Director from **10:00-12:30 noon EAT**.
- iv. **Thursday 2 November 2023:** ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy from **14:30-16:00 EAT** – on general discussion on the draft stakeholder engagement policy including leadership of the ad-hoc working group.

Slide 10: item 3(b). Dates that remain unchanged in the Roadmap

In addition, the following meetings remain as previously scheduled in the roadmap:

- i. Monday 6 November 2023:** Briefing by the Executive Director on the status of preparations of the 2023 third session of the Executive Board from **3:00 – 4:30 EAT.**
- ii. Monday 6 November 2023– in the morning and Tuesday 7 November the whole day** will be the consultation by the Executive Director with the Regional Groups.
- iii. Monday 27 November 2023, from 10:00-12:00 noon** Bureau meeting in preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.
- iv. Monday 27 November 2023:** ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters from **14:30 -16:30 EAT on third** Informal consultations on the draft outcomes to be considered by the Executive Board at its 2023 third session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Back to you.

Slide 11: AGENDA ITEM 4 - Leadership of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board:

- i. Status of nominations to chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.**
- ii. Consideration of the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy.**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

As guided during the Bureau meeting on 1 September, we sent out the call for Expression of interest for Chair and co-Chair of the **ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters** through the Chairs of regional groups. This was done on 20 September 2023. Up to now, we are yet to receive any response to this call.

In the meantime, and as earlier mentioned, Kenya has been chairing the working group. We seek the Bureau's guidance on this matter including any updates from the regional groups that Bureau Members may have.

With regard to the ad hoc working group on **ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy**, indeed this is a matter that the Bureau was to take up again at this meeting. The next meeting of that ad hoc working group is scheduled for 2 November 2023.

In the meantime, the Deputy Executive Director has checked with the Permanent Mission of Switzerland and may give us an update. With the permission of the Chair, DED you have the floor.

(DED to add any update here)

(after that)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to the guidance of the Bureau in this matter including if we should send out a reminder to Chairs of regional groups on the leadership of the **ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters** and possibly issue a call for expression of interest for the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy.

Back to you Mr. Chairman.

Slide 12: TITLE SLIDE AGENDA ITEM 5: Composition of the Bureau of the Executive Biard.

*To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required. The focus will mainly be on the **Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur.***

Slide 13: Rule 9.3 of the rules of Procedure of the Executive Board on Rotation of the Chair and Rapporteur

*To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required. The focus will mainly be on the **Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur.***

Rule 9.3: “The offices of Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year to a different regional group. Each regional group shall occupy the office of Chair and Rapporteur once during a period of five years”.

Slide 14: Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Executive Board since 2019

*To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required. The focus will mainly be on the **Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur.***

Year	Chair	Rapporteur
2019-2020	WEOG (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	AFRICAN STATES (MALAWI)
2020-2021	ASIA PACIFIC STATES (IRAN)	EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES (SERBIA)
2021-2022	EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES (POLAND)	GRULAC (CHILE)
2022-2023	GRULAC (BRAZIL)	WEOG (FRANCE)

2023-2024? 2023-2025? 2024-2025?	GRULAC (BRAZIL) AFRICAN STATES (?)	WEOG (FRANCE) ASIA PACIFIC STATES(?)
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Slide 15: Excepted composition of the next Bureau of the Executive Board

*To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required. The focus will mainly be on the **Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur.***

Chair: African States

Vice-chairs:

1. Eastern European Group
2. Latin American and Caribbean Group
3. Western European and Others Group

Rapporteur:

Asia-Pacific Group

Slide 16: AGENDA ITEM 6- Any other matters.

(to be led by the Chair)

(Proposed for ED to update on the following two AOBs and any others)

a. Status of proposed changes in the regional representation of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) in the Executive Board.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Following the letter from the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly to all Member States on 24 August 2023 with respect to the designation of Barbados to fill the vacancy in the Executive Board left by Chile, there was no objection received. As such Barbados is now a designated Member of the Executive Board

We have also recently received a similar request from Argentina as Chair of GRULAC informing UN-Habitat that Costa Rica has stepped down and that Colombia has been designated by GRULAC to replace Costa Rica in the Executive Board. We are preparing the relevant communication to the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly for his action.

b. a brief on Urban October 2023

(ED to call on Neil to brief the Bureau on Urban October activities, if time allows)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to you.