

Summary of the twenty-second meeting of the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Wednesday 26 January 2022 – 14:30 – 17:00 East Africa Time

Chair: H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board was called to order at 14:35 EAT and the working group adopted the provisional agenda for its twenty-second meeting as follows:

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Discussions on the orientations for the development of the work programme 2023 and prioritization;
3. Any other matters.

After the adoption of the agenda, the meeting considered Agenda item 2, namely discussions on the orientations for the development of the work programme 2023 and prioritization.

2. Discussion on the orientations for the development of the work programme 2023 and prioritization

Under this item, the Chair first gave the following background:

- i. The Chair recalled that the Executive Board at its second session in 2021, through paragraph 11 of its Decision 2021/6, took note of the need to align the sessions of the Executive Board in 2022 with the preparatory and approval process for the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for 2023 and requested the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters to discuss a draft work programme of UN-Habitat for 2023 for timely submission to the United Nations Controller.
- ii. The Chair noted that the Executive Director, at the meeting of the Bureau held on 9 December 2021, brought to the attention of the Bureau a communication that the Secretariat received from the UN Controller on the issue of the date of issuance of the United Nations guidance on the 2023 Regular Budget. Specifically, the Executive Director informed that the communication from the UN Controller states that such guidance would only be issued mid-February 2022. The Executive Director indicated that this would have an impact on the preparation of the draft work programme and budget for the year 2023 as a pre-session document in readiness for discussions by the Executive Board at its first session to be held from 29 to 31 March 2022.
- iii. The Chair provided an update that after consideration and discussions among Bureau Members during its meeting on 9 December 2021, the Bureau recommended that the Secretariat should prepare for consideration of the Executive Board at its 2022 first session, a paper on “UN-Habitat work programme priorities for 2023 in line with the Strategic Plan 2020-2023” as a pre-session document fully translated in the six UN languages to be availed four weeks prior to the session. This document will then be complemented by a full draft of the 2023 work programme and budget document, to be availed to Member States two weeks prior to the session, as a pre-session document but in English only. The Bureau emphasized that this is an exceptional measure specifically with respect to translation of documents and timing of pre-session documents.

Following the above background information, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the orientations for the development of the draft work programme 2023 and its prioritization. The Secretariat referred Member States to the discussion paper on the orientation for the development of the work programme 2023 and its prioritization which can be accessed on the following [link](#).

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

The full presentation can be accessed [here](#).

- i. The Secretariat highlighted four key elements of orientation for the development of the draft work programme for 2023 and prioritization, namely:
 - a. The Secretary-General's Quadrennial Report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which illustrates the need to elevate the NUA and to position its transformative commitments and key drivers to enable countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and other global Agendas.
 - b. The COVID-19 pandemic which exposed systemic inequalities and created new vulnerabilities. The pandemic also showed the States' crucial role in providing public goods and services, the significance of local fiscal capacity; inclusive multi-level governance; and the importance of planning and urban design, adequate housing, and sustainable neighbourhoods.
 - c. The need for cities to provide opportunities to anchor pandemic recovery in social justice and climate action.
 - d. The need for financial resources to adequately support Member States, and the Organization to prioritize its work.
- ii. The Secretariat further noted that the strategy of UN-Habitat for delivering the work programme for the year 2023 will continue to be driven by UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan carried out by the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UN-Habitat during its high-level mid-term review recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the value of the strategic plan, which serves both as a framework for recovery and as a road map for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- iii. The Secretariat also noted that it is working towards extending the strategic plan to 2025, in line with the recommendation from the Executive Board at its second session of the year 2021, that the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session of 2023 consider approving the extension of the current strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 until 2025 in order to align the planning cycle of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. UN-Habitat.
- iv. The Secretariat outlined that UN-Habitat further identified key elements of its strategy for 2023 as:
 - a. Co-creation of new programme and projects to integrate normative and operational work and alignment of the strategy with the proposed adjustments to the Strategic Plan following the first meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat for a high-level midterm review as set out in document [HSP/EB.2021/19](#);

- b. Continued use of UN-Habitat's flagship programmes as vehicles to fast-track integration between the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat and scaling the impact of the Organization. The scaling of the Organization will depend on the mobilization of soft or hard earmarked resources and potential allocations from the third-party endowment, the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation;
 - c. Strengthened capacity-building initiatives, digitization of tools and virtual e-learning programmes in line with UN-Habitat's capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, adopted by the Executive Board at its second session of the year 2020;
 - d. Recognition of UN-Habitat's catalytic role as a knowledge hub and partner convenor, and of the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement as the basis to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as undertaking advocacy, communication and outreach activities across the four subprogrammes and mobilize public and political support, making maximum use of advocacy and knowledge platforms;
 - e. Undertaking significant follow-up for key meetings, notably the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the 11th session of the World Urban Forum, and COP27 which will require significant efforts from the organization in 2023;
 - f. Monitoring and reporting on global conditions and trends and provide evidence for policymaking as UN-Habitat being the focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. In this regard, the Global Urban Monitoring Framework will serve in the implementation of the SDGs cities' flagship programme to assist in the preparation of voluntary local reviews and realization of SDGs in cities;
 - g. Strengthening UN-Habitat's strategic partnerships with different entities of the UN-system, and other international organization and actors such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and regional development banks to leverage the Organization's expertise and capacity.
- v. Furthermore, the Secretariat reiterated that the above-mentioned key elements have been translated into adjusted strategies at the subprogramme level, as follows:
- a. Subprogramme 1: further increase the focus on access to adequate housing to overcome inequalities and facilitate social inclusion
 - b. Subprogramme 2: strengthen the focus on municipal finance and socio-economic recovery
 - c. Subprogramme 3: increase the synergies between programming focusing on climate change and urban environment
 - d. Subprogramme 4: focus on urban recovery as a key instrument for effective action in the humanitarian, development and peace and security nexus
- vi. The Secretariat highlighted that for the year 2023, UN-Habitat's planned deliverables will support Member States' ongoing management of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such planned deliverables and activities will include: (a) assisting Governments in supporting increased access to water and sanitation and adequate housing, (b) advocating for the prevention of evictions, (c) measuring and reducing spatial vulnerability, and (d) preparing urban planning strategies and local resilience programmes. The draft programme of work for 2023 will focus all efforts of the different subprogrammes and deploy advisory services,

innovative solutions, and knowledge packages to support Member States towards sustainable socio-economic recovery, while also addressing climate change.

- vii. The Secretariat recalled the importance of continuous improvement in responding to the needs of Member States, and noted that UN-Habitat has mainstreamed lessons learned and best practices related to the adjustments to and adaptation of its strategic plan owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the continuation of virtual and hybrid meeting modalities where possible for technical support and for expert group meetings, complementing online digital learning existing tools.
- viii. The Secretariat indicated that the orientations for the development of the draft work programme for 2023 and prioritization are based on the following assumptions:
 - a. Adequate unearmarked extrabudgetary resources will be available to implement the work and produce the deliverables;
 - b. Countries will remain committed to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - c. Requests will be received from national and local governments for policy advice and technical assistance from UN-Habitat in the development and implementation of their urban policies, plans and strategies;
 - d. Urban indicators, data and information will be used to formulate policies, with adequate mechanisms available for impact monitoring and performance assessments;
 - e. Social, political and macroeconomic conditions will not prevent UN-Habitat and partners from implementing programmes and projects.
- ix. The Secretariat concluded that the financial situation of the Organization will be monitored to allow prioritization if required. The Secretariat also updated that a UN-Habitat budget committee will be set up in 2022 to review corporate budget allocations, review budget implementation and performance against authorized allocations and endorse the Programme Performance Report on a quarterly basis.

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

- i. One Member State commended the Secretariat in its efforts to refer of the NUA in the Secretary-General's Quadrennial Report as a guiding instrument for sustainable development. The Member States noted that in its view, however, greater advocacy work is needed to mainstream the NUA.
- ii. One Member State sought clarification on the launch of the UN system-wide Global Urban Monitoring Framework and the set of indicators which will be used in relation to the implementation of the NUA and SDG 11.
- iii. Another Member State inquired how the envisioned 2023 programme of work would be implemented across the different UN-Habitat's regional offices while taking into consideration regional conditions and specific circumstances.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

- i. The Secretary-General's Quadrennial Report will assert the importance of the NUA and provide seven concrete recommendations on how to increase traction and accelerate the role of the NUA towards the achievement of the SDGs.

- ii. The Secretariat highlighted that the Executive Director has prioritized the Global Urban Monitoring Framework as a topic in her report on the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, which will be presented in detail at the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2022. The Secretariat further updated that by March 2022, a paper describing the purpose of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework will be circulated. This paper which will benefit from inputs from other UN Agencies will provide links to the key indicators being used and will also demonstrate and how these indicators connect to the NUA and SDG 11.
- iii. UN-Habitat further indicated that while the narrative of the work programme for the year 2023 adopts a global strategic narrative, its specific deliverables are based on regional needs and requests by Member States.

3. Any other matters

Under this item, the ad hoc working group recommended its schedule of upcoming meetings as follows:

- a. Monday 14 February 2022 - normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat
- b. On Friday 11 March 2022 - to review and discuss the proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2023 based on the inputs received at this meeting.

It was further noted that on Friday 4 March 2022, UN-Habitat will transmit the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2023 to Member States.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 15:30 East Africa Time.
