

2022 first Bureau Meeting of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat

Hybrid format - Wednesday 2 February 2022

10:00 am to 12:00 noon East Africa Time (EAT)

Statement by the Executive Director

(Draft 27 January 2022)

SLIDE 0: Title slide

Slide 1: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda led by the Chair

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda;
2. Preparations for the 2022 first session of the Executive Board:
 - a. Guidance on the format and venue of the session in light of the Covid-19 global situation;
 - b. Consideration of the request by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN system to brief to the Executive Board on the findings of the management and administration review of UN-Habitat.
 - c. Proposed organization of work during the session.
 - d. Informal consultations on possible outcomes of the 2022 first session of the Executive Board
 - e. Nominations towards the election of the 2022/2023 Bureau of the Executive Board.
3. Any other matters

Slide 2 (Title slide) : AGENDA ITEM 2 - PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2022 FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

- a. Guidance on the format and venue of the session in light of the Covid-19 global situation;**
- b. Consideration of the request by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN system to brief to the Executive Board on the findings of the management and administration review of UN-Habitat.**
- c. Proposed organization of work during the session.**
- d. Informal consultations on possible outcomes of the 2022 first session of the Executive Board**
- e. Nominations towards the election of the 2022/2023 Bureau of the Executive Board.**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Good morning and welcome to this first meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2022.

Before briefing you on Agenda item 2, let me take this opportunity to first wish you a very productive and successful 2022 this being the first time we are meeting this year. I also want to acknowledge with gratitude all the support you accorded to me and UN-Habitat in the year 2021. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and all members of the Bureau for your dedication throughout 2021 which was another extraordinary and challenging year. Under the Bureau's guidance and the Executive Board's leadership, UN-Habitat continued to carry out its duties and to implement its mandate in the field, demonstrating transformative change for the most vulnerable communities.

The year 2022 is an important year for UN-Habitat with key activities including the High-Level meeting on the implementation of the New urban Agenda and the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. We are looking forward once again for support and guidance towards a successful outcome from these events and for all of us in terms of strengthening our Organization.

I also wish to thank you and all Member States for your active participation in the just concluded induction seminar for new and relatively new Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. It was a great opportunity to familiarize all Member

States with their oversight functions and guidance role in the work of UN-Habitat including on the budgetary and resource mobilisation.

Excellencies,

Following our meeting held on 9 December 2021 in which the Bureau provided preliminary guidance on the preparations for the upcoming session of the Executive Board , allow me to give you an update on the preparations at this point and to brief you on sub-items a) to d) of Agenda item 2.

Slide 3: AGENDA ITEM 2a. Guidance on the format and venue of the session in light of the Covid-19 global situation

Excellencies,

I will start with **sub item 2a** on the guidance on the format and venue of the session in light of the Covid-19 global situation.

As you are all aware the Director General of UNON following consultation with the Government of Kenya has declared phase 3 of the back to office plan on 26 January 2022 which means that the UNON compound is open for business at least partially up to a maximum of 60 % capacity and the agencies based at UNON including UN-Habitat are actively engaging in back to office arrangements.

We can now hold in-person meetings in the Conference facilities at UNON with up to one third capacity of each meeting room.

As such, we would like to propose that for the upcoming session of the Executive Board that the Bureau should consider a hybrid session and that we utilise Conference room 2 which has the largest capacity at UNON.

This is because under the Covid guidelines in place, Conference room 2 can take up to a maximum of 168 delegates with a distance of one meter between each delegate. In this regard, we would like to suggest if agreeable to the Bureau, that only Member States based in Nairobi should participate in the session in-person and all other Member States, UN agencies and partners should participate online.

The Bureau may therefore recommend that all the 36 Member Countries of the Executive Board as well as delegations from State Members of the United Nations and United Nations Specialized Agencies that have Permanent and Observer Missions to UN-Habitat based in Nairobi may be represented physically by two delegates, namely the 1+1 format.

As earlier stated this means that that all other members of such delegations of the Nairobi based Missions may participate in the session online and that all other delegations from State Members of the United Nations, any other member of a United Nations specialized agency, and intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or accredited to the UN-Habitat Assembly and not based in Nairobi should follow and contribute to the session on-line.

For Executive Board members, there will be pre-assigned seats for two persons per delegation.

For all other Members who are not Members of the Executive Board, the two person of the delegations will be seated “a la carte” meaning that Conference Services will avail to them a code which they will key in onto their delegate consoles and their specific name plates will be activated.

The experiences from the upcoming UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50 which will be held in a hybrid format in early March 2022 will be important in helping us to better organise for the upcoming 2022 first session of the Board at the end of March.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

We look to this Bureau for guidance with regard to the proposed hybrid format for the 2022 first session of the Executive Board. Any recommendation will then be promptly communicated to all delegations along with the guidelines on Covid compliance as already established by UNON.

I will continue with **sub item 2b**, consideration of the request by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN system to brief to the Executive Board on the findings of the management and administration review of UN-Habitat.

Slide 4 - AGENDA ITEM 2b. Consideration of the request by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN system to brief to the Executive Board on the findings of the management and administration review of UN-Habitat.

Excellencies,

You may already be aware that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system is undertaking a management and administration review of UN-Habitat.

I am aware that the Joint Inspection Unit has engaged with some of you in this context and I am grateful for the time you dedicated to the JIU team in this respect.

We will also share with the JIU, at their request, the outcome of the survey on the effectiveness of the second session of the year 2021 as mandated by Decision 2021/8.

I have been informed by the Inspectors that they wish to share the key findings of the JIU review of UN-Habitat with Member States during the upcoming session of the Executive Board.

As you are aware, the Executive Board at its 2021 second session did approve the provisional Agenda for its first session of 2022, and as is practice, the Agenda was already further reviewed and recommended by you during our meeting on 9 December 2021. On this basis that we already advanced in preparing the pre-session documents for the first session. Both the Executive Director's notification and the provisional Agenda have been formally issued in the 6 official languages of the United Nations.

Therefore, in considering the request by the JIU to brief the Executive Board at its upcoming session, the Bureau may wish to recommend an amendment to the proposed organization of work and consider including the briefing by the JIU after under Agenda item 14, namely "progress made in the implementation of the working methods of the Executive Board pursuant to its decision 2020/6 and and on the basis of a survey conducted by the secretariat following the request by the Executive Board at its second session of 2021 to evaluate the effectiveness of that session so as to improve the process and outcome of future sessions, including discussions on the schedule of future sessions of the Board".

We see the results of the UN-Habitat review by the JIU as contributing to the effectiveness of UN-Habitat, including its governance processes which fits quite

seamlessly under the intended outcome of agenda item 14. The amendment could be made from the floor and be scripted in the chair's statement, just as we did for the change in the order of consideration of Agenda item 5 and 6 at the last session. This will also help to avoid a revision of the Agenda and the notification which may impact the timely issuance of pre-session documents to Member States and also have cost implications.

Excellencies,

We look forward to the Bureau 's guidance in this respect. I will now take on **sub-item 2 c)**, proposed organization of work during the session.

Slide 5: AGENDA ITEM 2c - Proposed organization of work during the session

Mr. Chairman.

Excellencies,

I shall now give a quick overview of the proposed organization of work during the upcoming session.

On day one from 9 am in the morning we hope we can cover the following agenda items:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters.
3. Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups established by the Executive Board.
4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 and action by UN-Habitat to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff.

In the afternoon of day 1, we should cover agenda items:

5. Reports of the ACABQ relevant to the work of UN-Habitat issued since the previous session of the Executive Board.

6. Status of and discussion on the draft annual work programme and draft budget of UN-Habitat for 2023.

The same afternoon going into the evening, the Board may **decide to hold the first informal consultations in any draft decisions.**

Excellencies,

Let me now proceed to the work plan for day 2.

On day two from 9am in the morning, the Board may cover the following agenda items:

7. Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2021 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities.

8. Preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

9. Preparations for the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. As part of Agenda item 9, perhaps the Chair could update the Bureau on the expected participation of Poland at the session.

In the afternoon of day 2, the following agenda items are to be covered:

10. Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of UN-Habitat at its first session.

11. Implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations.

Informal consultations on draft decisions may continue in the afternoon going in the evening to build consensus on any issues that may be outstanding. This will be important especially if a consensus is to be reached in time for adoption of the outcomes on the following day.

Excellencies,

Let me now proceed to the work plan for day 3.

In the morning of day 3, the following agenda items are to be covered:

12. Action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment in the workplace.

13. Annual report on action by the Executive Director to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of UN-Habitat.

14. Progress made in the implementation of the working methods of the Executive Board pursuant to its decision 2020/6, including discussions on the schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board.

As earlier suggested, we suggest that the briefing by the JIU of the **key findings of the UN-Habitat management and administration review** be presented to the Executive Board under Agenda item 14.

This will be followed by **Informal consultations on draft decisions** if needed from 11:45 to 13:30 EAT.

In the afternoon of day 3, which will be the final plenary session, we can cover the following items:

15. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the second session of 2022.

16. Election of officers of the Bureau.

17. Other matters.

18. Closure of the session.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies.

This is our proposal in terms of the organization of work during the upcoming 2022 first session of the Board. At the end of the day, the work plan will look like this as shown on the screen.

Mr. Chairman allow me to proceed further **specifically on informal consultations** during the session before any reactions from the distinguished members of the Bureau.

Slide 6: AGENDA ITEM 2d. Informal consultations on possible outcomes of the 2022 first session of the Executive Board

Excellencies,

Based on practice, informal consultations on draft outcomes prior to the sessions of the Executive Board has been a productive mechanism towards building consensus and has it made the work of the Board much more efficient during each session.

Following this established practice, the Bureau may wish to recommend that the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters be instrumental in the prior consideration of any draft decisions before they are formally discussed and adopted by the Board at the upcoming session.

I would like to suggest that such informal consultation be held on 21 and 28 March 2022 as indicated in the approved roadmap, depending on the schedule of the Chair of the working group, in readiness for further consideration by the Executive Board at its first session of 2022.

With respect to the up-coming session, we have allocated time for the informal consultations to continue in the afternoon of **29 March and 30 March 2022** and during lunch break on **31 March 2022, if required.**

I wish to take this opportunity to confirm to the Bureau that following the request from the Executive Board in paragraph 7 of its Decision 2021/8, the Secretariat has provided technical inputs to the draft decisions as an annex to the annotated provisional agenda for the session . The annotated agenda will be issued in the six official languages of the United Nations on 1 March 2022, in line with the rules of procedure.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now give the floor back to you for you.

Slide 7: AGENDA ITEM 2e. Nominations towards the election of the 2022/2023 Bureau of the Executive Board.

(To be led by the Chair)

Slide 8: AGENDA ITEM 3- (TITLE SLIDE). Any other matters

(To be led by the Chair – ED, you can take the floor after the Chair opens the floor under AOB).

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I wish to make a brief comment regarding the upcoming session of the Executive Board.

Excellencies,

We take note of the recommendation from the Bureau that the Executive Board holds a hybrid session in March 2022 and the Secretariat will continue its preparations to that effect.

So in light of the hybrid format and based on the fact that LDCs and capital-based representatives will participate in UNEA 5 at the beginning of the month of March, I want to introduce an idea for consideration by the Bureau to accord a similar opportunity to LDCs for the upcoming session of the Executive Board, should Covid-19 conditions allow at the end of March.

What I am asking for is that the Bureau consider and recommend that the Secretariat supports the participation of representatives from LDCs to the first session of the Executive Board in March, of course taking into account the prevailing Covid-19 situation.

If you agree to my proposal, the financial implications is already sorted out. The UN-Habitat Assembly trust fund established pursuant to Resolutions

73/539 and 73/239 dated 26 November 2018 and 20 December 2018 respectively would be used for this specific purpose.

To be clear, this suggestion would apply to only LDCs who are members of the Executive Board, with the understanding that the decision to nominate a capital-based representative of the LDC Member would be left to each Member of the Executive Board.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.