



**Sixth meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2023**

Friday, 1 September 2023

09:00hrs -11:00 hrs, East Africa Time (EAT)

Hybrid meeting- UN-Habitat OED Boardroom

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Agenda item 1: Adoption of the provisional Agenda.**

1. H.E. Mr. Silvio Albuquerque, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil opened the meeting at 09:10 hrs EAT.

**The following Executive Board Bureau members were present:**

**In-person**

H.E. Mr. Silvio Albuquerque, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

H.E. Ms. Jean Kimani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya

Mr. Clement Payeur, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of France

Ms. Lucianara Andrade Fonseca, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil

**On-line**

H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E. Ms. Joanna Szymanska, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland

**The following UN Habitat Secretariat members were also present :**

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Michal Mlynar, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Raf Tuts, Director, Global Solutions Division.

Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies.

Mr. Erfan Ali, Chief of Staff

Ms. Katerina Bezgachina, Chief of Communications

Mr. Stephen Slawsky, Director, Management Advisory and Compliance

Edlam Abera Yemeru, Chief of Knowledge and Innovation

2. The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting. The provisional Agenda was adopted without any changes and can be accessed [here](#).

## **Agenda item 2: Review of the conduct of the 2023 second session of the Executive Board**

3. The Chair recalled that the second session of the Executive Board for the year 2023, took place on 8 June 2023 on the margins of the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) and that at that session, the key agenda items were the election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board and the due diligence assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation. In that respect, the Chair thanked the Bureau for their cooperation and flexibility, which ensured a brief but highly focused session in which the Executive Board extended the term of office of the current members of its Bureau until the closure of the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2025. That session also recommended that the due diligence assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation be considered at the next session of the Board.
4. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director provided her reflections on the recently concluded second session of the Executive Board for the year 2023. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
5. One Bureau Member thanked the Chair and the Secretariat for the successful second session of the Executive Board for the year 2023 and noted that a lot of work needs to be done in the assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation and the Secretariat should provide a clear understanding on the matter to Member States during the third session of the Executive Board.
6. Another Member of the Bureau congratulated the Executive Director for the success of the adjourned second regular session of the UN-Habitat Assembly and emphasized the importance of preparing for the elections of the three Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat in 2025 during the resumed second regular session.

## **Agenda item 3: Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.**

7. The Chair recalled that during the second session of the Executive Board in 2023, the Board agreed to entrust the Bureau of the Executive Board with the preparation of the provisional Agenda for the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023, taking into consideration the outcomes of the adjourned second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Executive Board also agreed to entrust the Bureau with determining the appropriate dates and duration within the fourth quarter of 2023 for the third session of 2023 of the Executive Board.
8. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director provided an update on the status of preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
9. The ED further informed that consultants from the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), have requested for permission to make a few remarks during the session. She noted that MOPAN does assess UN-Habitat's performance and that their remarks could come under agenda items 14, 15, or 16 of the provisional agenda, should the permission be granted.
  - a. **Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session**
10. In response to the presentation by the Executive Director, the Bureau recommended that the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023 be held for a duration of three days from 28 to 30 November 2023. The Bureau also recommended the proposed provisional Agenda for the third session of the Executive Board which can be accessed [here](#). This is subject to the final outcome of the discussions on the rationalization of pre-session documents towards the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023.

11. Although no one on the Bureau objected to the presence of MOPAN and the remarks during the session, one Bureau member suggested the presentation by MOPAN be placed under the agenda item on ‘Any Other Matters’ (AOB) of the provisional Agenda. The Secretariat clarified that the reason for suggesting that the MOPAN presentation come under items 14, 15 or 16 was because those items will be dealing with audits and evaluation reports and thus the MOPAN report would fit within those items without the need for creating a new agenda item.

**b. Guidance on format of the session (hybrid or in person)**

12. The Bureau recommended that the session be held fully in-person at the UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, in light of the lifting of the COVID restrictions at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) Complex, Gigiri.

**c. Proposed organization of work during the session**

13. The Bureau recommended the proposed organization of work and timetable for the session which can be accessed [here](#).

**Agenda item 4: Roadmap towards the 2023 third session of the Executive Board including informal consultations on possible outcomes and required briefing by the Executive Director to Member States on status of preparations for the Executive Board.**

14. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the roadmap towards the 2023 third session of the Executive Board including Bureau meetings, meetings of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board, informal consultations on possible outcomes of the 2023 third session of the Executive Board and required briefing by the Executive Director to Member States on the status of preparations for the session. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#). The proposed draft roadmap for 2023 meetings of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat can be accessed [here](#).

**Chairing of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board.**

15. Related to this agenda item, the Chair called on the members of the Bureau of the Executive Board to avail themselves to chair the next meeting of the ad-hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy following the vacancy in the leadership of that ad hoc working group, created by the departure of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Switzerland after the end of his tour of duty. The Chair recommended that this matter be further discussed at the next meeting of the Bureau scheduled for 13 October 2023.
16. One Bureau Member suggested that Switzerland could continue chairing the ad-hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy in light of the arrival of the new Deputy Permanent Representative.
17. The Bureau recommended that the matter of the leadership of the ad-hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy be discussed further at the next meeting of the working group scheduled for 18 October 2023.
18. In addition, and also related to this agenda item, the Bureau took note of the expected vacancy in the leadership of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, Budgetary and administrative matters given the expected end of tour of duty of its current Chair, Pakistan and thus her eminent departure from Nairobi.
19. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a letter from the Chair of the Bureau of the Executive Board calling on Member States to express interest to chair the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

**Agenda item 5: Discussion and guidance on rationalizing pre-session documents towards the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023.**

20. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the need to rationalize documents towards the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023.
21. Specifically, the Executive Director explained that unlike any other year since the new Governance structure came into force in 2019, this year, UN-Habitat held more meetings of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat than ever. These include the 2023 first session of the Executive Board, the 2023 second session of the Executive Board, the second open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. In this regard the UNON Division of Conference Services informed that given the number of meetings of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat in 2023, the Organization has largely exhausted its entitlements in terms of the number of documents and translation thereof. Accordingly, for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board, the Division of Conference Services communicated the following:
  - a. DCS will service the three-day session comprising of 6 meetings, with interpretation and report writing.
  - b. DCS will process not more than 90 pages of documents through editing and translation into the six UN official languages. This includes pre-session, in-session, and post session documents.
  - c. That the limit of 90 pages will not include the 2024 draft work programme and budget which DCS will process as well.
  - d. DCS does not have the staff capacity to process any other document beyond the limits they have provided. Meaning, even if UN-Habitat were to find the extra budgetary resources for the additional documents, DCS would not be able to manage the requirements.
22. Given this information, a preliminary rationalization of documents was done in order to prioritise key pre-session documents that require approval by the Executive Board for editing and translation in the six official languages of the UN.
23. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
24. Bureau Members acknowledged that the new Governance Structure of UN-Habitat was being implemented within “existing resources”, without additional funding in line with GA resolution 73/239 and that the year 2023 had seen more meetings of the Governing Bodies, including the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, impacting the limited resources available from the General Assembly.
25. The Bureau however expressed severe concern regarding the proposed limits on the number of pre-session documents to be edited and translated into the six official languages of the UN. The Bureau, expressing grave concern, saw limitation as contrary to the universality of the participation of Member States in discussions.
26. It was agreed that the Chair will write to the Director General of UNON and to the Under-Secretary-General (USG) of Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) regarding the need for adequate support to the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat in terms of regular budget resources and staff capacity at the UNON Division of Conference Services to support the work of the Governing Bodies.

27. The Bureau strongly recommended that no limits be placed on the translation of key pre-session documents and further emphasized the importance of translating all pre-session documents into the six official languages of the UN.
28. The Bureau recommended either or all of the following actions:
  - (a) A revision of the list of prioritized key documents for translation presented by the Secretariat during the Bureau meeting,
  - (b) Reduction of number of documents and pages of the pre-session documents,
  - (c) Postponement of the agenda items under documents that could not be translated fell to the next Executive Board session in 2024.
29. In light of the above, the Bureau recommended that the Secretariat should share a new list of prioritized documents during the next Bureau meeting of the Executive Board to be held on 13 October 2023.

**Agenda item 6: Status of proposed changes in the regional representation of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) in the Executive Board.**

30. The Executive Director informed the Bureau on the proposed changes in the regional representation of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) on the Executive Board as communicated by the Chair of the Group and subsequently by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly to Member States. Specifically, the Executive Director informed that on 24 August 2023 a communication on behalf of Honourable Román Meyer Falcón, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly was sent with the following:
  - a. A note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica in its capacity as Chair of GRULAC communicating that the delegation of Chile has decided to step down as a member of the Executive Board and that Barbados has been designated on behalf of GRULAC to the Executive Board of UN-Habitat for the period 2023-2025.
  - b. A second note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Chile communicating that Chile will be stepping down from its current position as member of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat.
  - c. A Legal note on casual vacancy for the position of Membership of the Executive Board, and
  - d. A letter from the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly with respect to the designation of Barbados to fill the vacancy in the Executive Board.
31. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
32. The Bureau took note of the update on GRULAC representation to the Executive Board.

**Agenda item 7: Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur.**

33. The Chair recalled that during the last session of the Executive Board in June 2023, the Executive Board decided to extend the term of office of the current Members of the Bureau until the closure of the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2025.
34. The Chair further recalled that the [rules of procedures of the Executive Board](#) requires the rotation of the position of Chair and Rapporteur between regional groups. Specifically, rule 9

stipulates that “*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.*”

35. The Secretariat shared the composition of the next Bureau of the Executive Board as follows:

**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

36. The Bureau recommended the rotation of the offices of the Chair and Rapporteur as required by the [rules of procedures of the Executive Board](#) and requested Bureau Members to inform their respective Regional Groups on the composition of the next Bureau of the Executive Board.

**Agenda item 8: Any other matters**

37. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Deputy Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the proposed field visit by Member States to UN-Habitat Projects in Lebanon and the proposed joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Governing Bodies scheduled to be held in February 2024 in Mexico. Specifically, the Deputy Executive Director informed that there is a proposal for a field visit by Members of the Governing Bodies sometime in October 2023. The proposal for the field visit in Lebanon is to showcase an integrated normative and operational example of UN-Habitat’s work in the field, that is concretely linked to UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan, and is strongly aligned to the UN’s Cooperation Framework, the Lebanon’s humanitarian frameworks and national priorities.
38. In addition, the Deputy Executive Director recalled that the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, during one of the Bureau meetings at the second adjourned session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, invited Bureau Members to an in-person meeting of the joint Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Governing Bodies in Mexico. That meeting will be complimented by field visits to UN-Habitat projects in Mexico and Mexico’s national projects on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The proposed dates are 9 to 13 February 2024 in Mexico City, United Mexican States. The detailed statement by the Deputy Executive Director can be accessed [here](#).
39. The Bureau welcomed the proposed field visit to UN-Habitat Projects in Lebanon and the proposed joint meeting of Bureaux of the Governing Bodies in Mexico.

**The sixth meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2023 was adjourned at 11:10 hrs. East African Time (EAT).**