



UN HABITAT Executive Board
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Agenda items 3 of the provisional Agenda*

**Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups /
Progress made by UN-Habitat in the implementation
of the United Nations development system reform**

Analytical Brief on the Alignment of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the UN-Habitat Strategic Planning Processes

I – Introduction

1. The purpose of this analytical brief is to provide Members of the Executive Board an understanding the opportunities to align the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and the UN-Habitat Strategic Planning Processes.

2. In 2021 most of the governing bodies of other UN entities have or are in the process of adopting strategic plans for the period 2022-2025 that are aligned with the QCPR for the period 2021-2024, adopted by the 75th Session of the General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/75/223 of December 2020. While the Habitat Assembly was unable to align its strategic planning process with the QCPR 2021-2024, it will be able to do so for the next round, after the 79th Session of the General Assembly adopts the QCPR for the period 2025-2028, in December 2024.

3. It was with this in mind that the Executive Board in paragraph 15 of its decision 2020/3, adopted during the 2020 second session, requested the Ad Hoc Working Group on Programmatic, Budgetary and Administrative Matters to discuss the scenarios 2 and 3 as set out in document HSP/EB.2020/16/Add.1. These were:

- a) Scenario Two: Retain the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for the full term, develop an Interim two-year Strategic plan for the period 2024-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029.
- b) Scenario Three: Extend the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 by another two years for the period 2020-2025 and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029.

II- Analytical brief

4. What follows is an eight-point analysis of the trade-offs identified by the members of the Ad Hoc Working Group in its consideration of these two options. These include the implications for the timing, frequency, duration, and agenda of future sessions of the Habitat Assembly, as well as cost considerations, and possible modifications to the two scenarios.

* HSP/EB.2021/1

5. *Interim vs. extended:* the distinction between the two scenarios is that in Scenario 2, the governing bodies of UN-Habitat would retain the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for the full term, develop an Interim two-year Strategic plan for the period 2024-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029. This is as opposed to Scenario 3 where the current SP 2020-2023 is extended to 2025 and a new strategic plan is adopted for 2026-2029.
6. *Number of sessions of the Habitat Assembly:* In both these scenarios, it should be expected, in line with the rules of procedure of the Habitat Assembly, that the Habitat Assembly meets 3 times 2023, 2025 and 2029 to take this decision on the alignment of planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the QCPR. Without any efforts towards the alignment (e.g. the status quo), the Habitat Assembly would meet in 2023, 2027 and 2031, with 3 meetings of the Habitat Assembly expected over the next decade.
7. *Modifying the Third Session of the Habitat Assembly in 2025:* based upon valid suggestions from Member States on the need to save costs and the need to abide by the rules of procedure of the Habitat Assembly, Member States could possibly empower the Executive Board to approve the SP on an exceptional basis, or possibly hold a scaled back UN-Habitat Assembly in 2025. This last consideration would be based upon the experience from UNEP on its alignment during its UNEA 3 and the scale down of UNEA5 due to COVID. There was a further possibility to hold a scaled-down or full session Habitat Assembly virtually.
8. *Agenda of a Scaled Back Third Session of the Habitat Assembly:* should Member States agree to hold a shorter, scaled back session of the Habitat Assembly in 2025, they would need to agree that the agenda of that session would be confined solely to the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029.
9. *Mandate of the Habitat Assembly:* The Habitat Assembly is the subsidiary body of the General Assembly, established to advance global urban policy as well as adopt the UN-Habitat Strategic Plans. Member States would therefore need to consider the implications of holding a scaled back session of the Habitat Assembly, noting that the Forth Session of the Habitat Assembly will not take place until 2029. A scaled back session of the Third Session of the Habitat Assembly 2025 would place a significant burden on the Second Session of the Habitat Assembly to carry forward the work of global urban policy for a six-year period until the Fourth Session of the Habitat Assembly in 2029. It should be noted also that the same six-year gap would emerge if the Habitat Assembly in 2025 delegated on an exceptional basis the responsibility of strategic planning to the Executive Board.
10. *Cost Implications of Modified Habitat Assembly:* according to estimates prepared by UNON Conference Services, the cost of holding a modified session of the Habitat Assembly is significantly lower if the session is held virtually and is only somewhat lower if the session is held in person but for a shorter duration (see annex 1 below). To hold an in-person Third Session of the Habitat Assembly in 2025, it would be necessary to capitalize the Trust Fund to finance the participation of delegations of some member States that would not otherwise be able to participate.
11. *Defraying of Costs:* should Member States decide to hold the Third Session of the Habitat Assembly in 2025, the next session will take place in four years, in 2029, such that the cost of holding the a session of the Habitat Assembly in 2025 will be defrayed by the cost savings of not holding a session of the Habitat Assembly in 2027.
12. *Authority of the Governing Bodies:* the Habitat Assembly will be the appropriate body to consider whether it wishes to delegate to the Executive Board the role of adopting the SP as this is currently the role of the UN-Habitat Assembly under its rules of procedure. It should be noted that the provision of Rule 25 provides that: “The Executive Board shall have delegation of authority from the Habitat Assembly to submit periodic reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council on issues pertinent to the mandate of the Executive Board in the years when the UN-Habitat Assembly is not in session.”

Annex I - Summary on cost estimates for the UN-Habitat Assembly

TABLE 1: COST ESTIMATES FOR THE NEXT SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY						
	UNHA (2 days) Virtual	UNHA (2 days) On-site	UNHA (3 days) Virtual	UNHA (3 days) On-site	UNHA (5 days) Virtual	UNHA (5 days) On-site
1.REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES (RB)	301,048	272,350	466,508	463,206	647,901	620,847
2.EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES (XB)	1,022	14,099	1,504	21,138	2,506	29,509
Grand Total (RB+XB) in USD	302,070	286,449	468,012	484,343	650,408	650,356

NOTE ON TABLE 1 :

The above scenarios do not include extra budgetary resources usually associated with security, temporary structures, medical coverage, side events, exhibition, branding and other **non-mandated activities** which are highly variable.

TABLE 2: ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY		
held for five days from 27 to 31 May 2019		
	Amount	Note on source of funds
1.REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES (RB)	696,993.18	Conference Services Regular Budget
2.EXTRA BUDGETARY RESOURCES (XB)	993,882.63	UN-Habitat XB resources: i. USD 145,189.67 from Programme Support Costs ii. USD 848692.96 from UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund
Total Expenditure in USD	1,690,875.81	