

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

Hybrid format – Monday, 12 September 2022
10:00 am to 12:00 noon East Africa Time (EAT)

Statement by the Executive Director

(Draft 8 September 2022 at 5.30pm)

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 second session of the Executive Board.
3. Outcomes of eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 11).
4. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
5. Discussion on the next steps for the open-ended informal contact group on Resource Mobilisation matters.
6. Any other matters.

Slide 2 (Title slide): AGENDA ITEM 2 - Preparations for the 2022 second session of the Executive Board

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

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

I want to first of all take this opportunity to thank you for your support towards the successful implementation of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. As you would recall, we also had a very successful meeting of the joint Bureaux of the

Governing Bodies held on the sidelines of WUF 11 which was chaired by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly. I am very grateful for the active participation of many Member States in WUF 11 including Members of this Bureau. I will later brief you on the outcome of the WUF 11 under item 3 of our discussions today.

Mr. Chairman.

Coming back to agenda item 2 , I wish to confirm to you that we are making good progress in terms of the preparation of the key pre-session documents towards the second session of the Executive Board, for the year 2022, which will be held from 21 to 23 November 2022 as previously recommended by the Bureau. The documents will be shared with all Member States by 24 October 2022, which will be four weeks prior to the session in line with the rules of procedure.

The formal Notification and provisional Agenda for the session is now with the UNON Division of Conference Services for finalization, and will be shared with Member states by 10 October 2022, which will be within the required 42 days prior to the session and stipulated in the rules of procedure.

We expect registration for the session to open on Tuesday, 18 October 2022 and close on Thursday, 17 November 2022.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies

What I truly want to share with you today and to get your guidance on, with regards to our preparations for the upcoming second session are: **i. the format of the session and ii. organization of work during the session.**

Slide 3: Format of the 2022 second session of the Executive Board

Excellencies

With regard to **the format of the session**, you may be aware of the recent communication from the Director General of UNON lifting most of the COVID-19 related restrictions that were previously in place at the UNON complex, effective 1 September 2022. The implication of this is that participants can now more flexibly access the UNON compound, and the conference rooms can now function at full capacity.

I wish to suggest, therefore, that unlike the past two years, Member States be encouraged to participate in-person during the upcoming session but the Secretariat will provide the option for online participation for those delegates who may not be able to participate in-person. In short, Excellencies, we should have a hybrid session but with the expectation of a large in-person participation. The decision of whether to participate in person or online naturally is left to delegates. I wish to note further that we do not expect any restrictions on the number of delegates that can participate in-person.

Slide 4: Organization of work during the 2022 second session of the Executive Board

Secondly, with regard to **the organization of work during the session**, we would like to share with you the details of the consideration of the Agenda items as well as informal consultations over the three days of the session, keeping in mind your guidance that more time should be allocated for substantive discussions on thematic work of UN-Habitat and that some of our partners be given an opportunity to talk about UN-Habitat's work on the ground in their cities as a way of contributing to the discussion.

As you can see on the screen, the proposed organization of work is therefore as follows:

On day one, Monday, 21 November 2022

In the morning we propose to cover the following agenda items:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the second session of 2022;
 - (b) Adoption of the report of the first session of 2022.
3. Reports 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 one we propose to cover the following agenda items

5. Draft work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2023.
6. Annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023

On day two, Tuesday, 22 November 2022

In the morning we propose to cover the **one agenda item on normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat** related to urban crisis and the five flagship programmes in order to allow for in-depth and substantive discussion on the work of UN-Habitat including affording one or two of our partners the opportunity to engage the Board on the effect of UN-Habitat’s activities in their cities as recommended by the Bureau. This will come under agenda item 7 on:

7. Normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2021 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the engagement of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster.

In the afternoon of day two we propose to cover the following agenda items:

8. Outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
9. Outcome of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum.
10. Preparations for the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

On day three, Wednesday, 23 November 2022

In the morning we propose to cover the following **agenda items**:

11. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board.
12. Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board.
13. Working methods of the Executive Board, including a review of the results of the survey conducted by the secretariat following the first Executive Board session of 2022.
14. Briefing by the Joint Inspection Unit on the findings of its management and administration review of UN-Habitat.

In the afternoon of day three we propose to cover the following agenda items:

15. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the first session of 2023 of the Executive Board.
16. Other matters.
17. Closure of the session

Slide 5: Informal consultations on draft decisions toward the 2022 second session of the Executive Board

Excellencies,

You would recall also that during the last Bureau meeting held on 8 June 2022, the Bureau recommended the roadmap towards the second session of the Board which included **informal consultations on draft decisions** prior to the session. These are scheduled to be held on 10 October 2022, 19 October 2022, 2 November 2022 and 9 November 2022 under the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

During the actual session from 21 to 23 November 2022, we propose that informal consultations be held at the end of business on day 1 and day 2 and if required, a final informal consultation on the draft decisions will take place during the lunch time on day 3, that is on 23 November 2022.

We anticipate that during the upcoming meetings of this Bureau, and closer to the dates of the session, we will firm up this proposed organization of work to include exact timings of informal consultations on draft decisions during the session as well as Bureau meetings which usually take place outside the formal windows of interpretation. For now, it is very important for me to give an overall picture on how the core business of the Board will be covered during the three-day session.

I thank you Excellencies and I look forward to any feedback on this item.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Back to you.

Slide 6: AGENDA ITEM 3 (TITLE SLIDE). Outcomes of eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 11).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as earlier mentioned, it is my pleasure to now brief you on the outcomes of WUF 11. Allow me to again reiterate my sincere gratitude to all Member States for their support and to the Host country Poland as well as the city of Katowice for the tremendous input and hard work towards a very successful WUF 11.

Slide 7: WUF11 Recap - Key Themes of the eleventh Session of The World Urban Forum

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The **World Urban Forum (WUF)** was established by United Nations resolution 18/5 paragraph 10 of February 2001 and has progressively strengthened its authority as **a key coordination, advocacy, partnership, and knowledge platform on sustainable urbanization**

The forum, *Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future*, sought to strengthen relationships and create linkages to promote accelerated implementation of global

urban commitments, grounded in the achievement of SDG11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

The WUF11 theme was aligned with the World Cities Report 2022 *Envisaging the Future of Cities*.

Linked closely to the achievement of the New Urban Agenda, WUF11's main Dialogue sessions as well as other policy debates and interactive activities emphasized six themes.

WUF11's theme of transformation of cities for a better urban future is supported by **six dialogue spaces**, each of which explores a different dimension of transformation. Dialogue spaces were curated by UN-Habitat and facilitated by thought leaders and high-profile experts.

In response to urban crisis recovery and reconstruction and strengthening of UN-Habitat's **Domain of Change 4: Effective urban crisis prevention and response**, an "extraordinary dialogue" was established together with a series of urban crisis track events.

Slide 8: WUF11 Recap - WUF11 Recap - Overall Attendance at WUF11 in Katowice

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Let me assert that, in terms of the participants' statistics, the WUF11 exceeded expectations especially as the secretariat had almost 3 months to prepare to welcome participants dating from the confirmation that the Forum was proceeding at the last Executive Board Meeting (29 to 31 March 2022) and the Advance Mission taken place in April (20-22 April 2022).

The event attracted a **total of 17,003 attendees**, with **10,799** participants from **158 countries** attending in person. Approximately three-quarters of the **gender-balanced** participants came from Europe, while participants for **Africa** and **Asia** accounted for **7.5%** and **8.7%** respectively.

Just to note that there **was not much variance** in terms of our projected attendance and mode of participation, and the actual attendance at WUF, with **64%** attending in-person.

I am happy to say we had comparatively more female representation at WUF11 than previous WUF10 at a margin of 10% (male representation **dropped from 64% in WUF10 to 54% in WUF11**).

The WUF11 successfully presented its opportunity to reflect the feeling of many participants that fast action is needed for cities to recover from multiple crises and embark on a rapid transition towards sustainable urban development.

Slide 9: Overall Attendance at WUF11 in Katowice

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The top countries who attended the WUF11 in-person were **Poland** as the host, **Germany, Malaysia, France, USA, Ukraine, Kenya, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Spain.**

This gives a fine print of the regional representation from the previous slide, and equally poses a strategic question of where we should yearn to engage if we were to balance the numbers in these regions.

Slide 10: - Participation - High-Level Delegates

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

As you all witnessed, WUF11 managed to draw high-level representation, including **Polish Prime Minister, Prime Minister from Guinea-Bissau, President of ECOSOC, and President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.**

It is indeed good to note the in-person attendance of **35 Ministers** from **28 countries** and **13 Vice Ministers from 10 countries**, and more than **156 Mayors** from 15 countries, and Governors. **Overall Total** of National Government representatives: **1,013.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, for participating and encouraging participation and engagement in your respective countries. Your pulled efforts and zeal to see success in UN-Habitat made WUF11 and resounding success.

Slide 11: Speakers – Main Sessions

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

With more than **52%** (on average) of female speakers in the main sessions, the WUF11 was successful in **achieving panel-parity**.

(Data to Note)

535 confirmed speakers for all sessions

*Female: 275 (**51%**)

Male 260 (**49%**)

All Sessions excluding Ministerial Roundtable:

504 Confirmed Speakers

(Improvement) * **Female: 265 (53%) compared to 51% in WUF10**

Male: 239 (47%)

Slide 12: Programme Sessions & Events

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

We had a total of **451 events** in the main sessions and partner-led events and representing an increment from previous WUF10 and this implies that we focused on efficiency and impact in WUF11.

An important track incorporated into the WUF11 programme is the **Urban Crisis track**. In response to the **recent urban crises** such as COVID-19 pandemic, climate disasters, and emerging conflicts, WUF11 presented an opportunity to strengthen the UN-Habitat's Domain of Change 4 - Effective urban crisis prevention and response with **an extraordinary dialogue on urban crisis response and recovery**. High attendance at WUF11 has demonstrated its convening power and contributed to growing global focus on sustainable and resilient cities by using smart technologies and other tools to prepare cities for future crises.

Slide 13: Accessibility and Inclusivity

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

WUF11 established a new benchmark for accessibility, with full interpretation in all **6 UN languages as well as in Polish and Ukrainian (6 events)**.

Both the **International and Polish sign languages** were also provided. **CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation)** and numerous improvements for the visually and physically impaired demonstrated that transformative action to ensure accessibility for all through universal design is possible in our built environment.

Overall, **gender parity was achieved** in terms of the participants **with 47% women and 53% men**.

Since **panel parity** was achieved at WUF10, the **Executive Director and the Government of Poland have ensured that 52% of speakers in the main sessions of WUF11 comprised of women** among more than 630 session speakers.

With this milestone, we shall be partnering with key stakeholders; **World Blind Union amongst others, in developing a practical guide on accessibility**, incorporating lessons learned from WUF11, and patching a vision for the future on accessibility and inclusivity as a building block towards sustainable urban future.

Slide 14: The Outcome - The Katowice Declared Actions

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I am happy to present to you that, **The Declared Actions** of the Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) were introduced at the event's **closing ceremony** on 30 June, the culmination of five days of debate and discussion in Katowice, Poland. Announced by **H.E Madame Martha Delgado**, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The Declared Actions will carry the sustainable development agenda forward to the **next World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt in 2024**, and beyond.

Approximately **100 of commitments** have already been received from city planners, mayors, governments, civil society, and community groups as of **31 July 2022** on the Urban Agenda Platform www.urbanagendaplatform.org on the WUF11 theme of 'Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future'

We are still encouraging all stakeholders to join the Urban Agenda Platform with committed actions, and update and monitor in the lead up to the WUF12.

Slide 15: The Outcome - The Katowice Declared Actions (continued)

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

In brief, in the “**Katowice Declared Actions: Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future**,” WUF11 participants declared their voluntary actions and commitments for the next two years and beyond, including:

1. *Move from incrementalism towards fundamental shifts in urban environments, systems of governance and forms of habitation, in line with human rights treaties;*

2. *Focus on imminent urban crises such as climate and biodiversity emergencies, pandemics, violence and conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters, that all converge in cities and surrounding territories;*
3. *Reconfirm culture as a core component of local identity;*
4. *Reconfirm that accessibility and universal design are an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanization; and*
5. *Encourage all development actors to mobilize their capacities in the UN Decade of Action, and appeal to governments to better fund UN-Habitat.*

Slide 16: The WUF12 Host Country Agreement

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

I am delighted to announce that, after the official closing ceremony of WUF11, H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister for Local Development, Egypt, and UN-Habitat Executive Director, **signed the WUF12 Host Country Agreement.**

Details of logistical arrangements on the Agreement of Logistical Arrangements will be discussed and finalized with the Government of Egypt in coming next months.

Slide 17: An ongoing commitment - The WUF Alumni Network

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The **World Urban Forum Alumni Network** also convened for a working meeting on **28 June 2022 during the Forum** to agree on activities and forward planning of the network's activities.

The alumni members agreed on **activities within five broad workstreams** with members agreeing to be the focal points for each of the work streams.

These broad work streams presented at the open session included participation of **UN-Habitat's Executive Director** and ministers from the host (**Poland**), **Egypt** (host of WUF12), **Kenya** (first host of WUF) and a high-level representative from **United Arab Emirates** (host of WUF10).

The agreed broad workstreams are:

1. global think tank;
2. technical advisory;
3. knowledge management;
4. voluntary local reviews;
5. and global projects.

The outcomes resulting from the activities will be geared towards the evaluation of the WUF and development of the next WUF programme cycle.

Slide 18: An ongoing commitment - The WUF13 Expression of Interest

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

As witnessed in the WUF11, the success of the forum generated a lot of traction of interest from partners who expressed interest in hosting the WUF13.

The WUF13 Expression of Interest for hosting of the Thirteenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) in 2026, opened from **Friday, 1 July 2022** and shall run till **Tuesday, 15 November 2022**.

The evaluations shall start then, and we shall Provide potential hosts with **bidding package and guidelines**, from the **15 December 2022**.

Slide 19: Thank you on a successful WUF 11

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the outcomes of WUF 11.

I would also like to note that there shall be a more detailed update during the upcoming second session of the Executive Board for the year 2022, to be held from 21 to 23 November 2022.

I stand ready to answer any questions that may arise.

Once again, I am very grateful to you Member States and to the Government of Poland for all your efforts that made WUF 11 a highly successful, progressive and memorable session.

Thank you and back to you Mr. Chairman.

Slide 20: AGENDA ITEM 4(TITLE SLIDE). Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Excellencies,

As already indicated by the Chair, the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has recently concluded its report on the **“Review of management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)”**.

The report will inform discussions under the Agenda item 14 of the upcoming second session of the Executive Board This is in line with paragraph 6 of decision 2022/3 of the Board.

I can confirm that at the request of the JIU, on 22 August 2022 we shared the English version of the report with Nairobi based Member States. We have also submitted the report to UNON Division of Conference Services for the translation into all six UN official languages so that these can be available prior to the 2022 second session of the Board.

Slide 21: JIU Recommendations requiring action by Member States

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to add that the JIU made 8 recommendations, of which the first three are for the consideration of Member States and one was addressed to the Secretary-General. The four remaining recommendations are being implemented and I am happy to provide a brief update.

Recommendation 1

The UN-Habitat Assembly should consider amending its rules of procedure, in accordance with rule 71 thereof, to further clarify the distinct roles and responsibilities of each of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat. Such an amendment should be adopted by the end of 2024.

Action: This recommendation is for the consideration of Member States, particularly the Joint Bureaux. To date, we have had two Joint Bureaux meetings at the sidelines of WUF10 and WUF11. The Secretariat, responding to the request by the Executive Board, have carried out a survey with regards to the effectiveness of the Executive Board sessions. We will continue to support the request by Member States on how to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 2

The Executive Board of UN-Habitat should approve a realistic budget for the Foundation non-earmarked fund, to which Member States should consider making sufficient contributions so that UN-Habitat can carry out its critical normative work in accordance with its mandate and in a consistent and sustainable manner.

Action: This recommendation is also for the consideration of Member States. At the last Executive Board Meeting, the Ad-hoc Working Group on Work Programme and Budget recommended a budget for the non-earmarked core contribution at USD 3 million per-annum to match the average core funding received over the last four years. As of June 2022, the core contribution received matches this budgeted amount. The Secretariat is not recommending a higher budget as we still have a debt of USD 4 million incurred from past years and a reserve target of USD 1 million to maintain.

Recommendation 3

The Executive Board of UN-Habitat should establish a voluntary indicative scale of contributions for the Foundation non-earmarked fund by the end of 2023.

Action: This recommendation is also for the consideration of the Executive Board. The Secretariat is proposing to adopt the same voluntary indicative scale as that of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Slide 22: JIU Recommendations requiring action by the Executive Director and the Secretary General

Recommendation 4

The Executive Director should implement activities supported by the Foundation non-earmarked fund within existing resources and should not consider new activities until adequate contributions for that fund are received.

Action: The Executive Director, in agreement with this recommendation, have not proposed any new activity under the non-earmarked budget. At USD 3 million per annum, UN-Habitat has had to enter into bilateral arrangements with donors to fund some of its normative work. This includes the generous support from SIDA (Sweden), SDI (Switzerland), BMZ (Germany) as well as foundations.

Recommendation 5

By no later than the end of 2023, the Executive Director should develop a corporate risk register, including risk owners and action plans for each risk, and ensure that critical risks faced by UN-Habitat are regularly monitored and the necessary actions are taken.

Action: Whilst a risk register has been developed, its implementation requires additional resources from Member States to carry out monitoring work and take remedial action.

Recommendation 6

Given the current financial constraints and staffing situation of the UN-Habitat secretariat, the Executive Director should implement the main outstanding audit recommendations as a matter of urgency.

Action: The Secretariat is working systematically to address the issues identified by the Board of Auditors. A more comprehensive update will be provided at the Executive Board. Suffice to say at this point that all recommended actions by the BoA is being implemented and in varying stages of completion.

Recommendation 7

The Executive Director should urgently discuss the current financial and human resources issues with the Secretary-General and request substantive support and special arrangements, at no cost to UN-Habitat, until the financial stability of the Foundation non-earmarked fund is secured.

Action: The Executive Director has done so and in February-May 2022, the Secretary-General assigned Mr. Arnab Roy to Nairobi to assist with the refinement of the UN-Habitat austerity measures. To date, DMSPC is assisting with the implementation of the Austerity Measures with good results.

Recommendation 8

The Secretary-General should, as a matter of priority, address the financial and human resources issues of UN-Habitat, re-evaluate its capability to fulfil its mandate, and explore ways to make it a more viable and sustainable entity.

Action: The Secretary-General has prioritised UN-Habitat for additional Regular Budget resources and the ACABQ have reviewed the request. At this point in time, all indications from the ACABQ has been positive. The request will now have to be considered by the 5th Committee and eventually the GA. Let me appeal to Member States to please support the request by the Secretary-General. The posts have all to do with inter-governmental and normative functions as reviewed by the Department of Management Strategy Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) in New York.

Slide 23: Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

Excellencies

You will notice that the first recommendation of JIU is requesting the UN-Habitat Assembly to consider amending its rules of procedure, in accordance with rule 71. As you can see on the slide, this is what Rule 71 says:

Rule 71: “The UN-Habitat Assembly may, by a decision adopted by a majority of States Members of the United Nations present and voting, amend any of the present rules, but only after it has received a report on the proposed amendment from a committee or working group established by the Assembly for that purpose.”

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

The Secretariat stands ready to support the Executive Board in consideration of JIU recommendations especially on item 1 and 2 as described earlier. More details of the actions taken and an update on their implementation will be provided at the Executive Board meeting by Mr. Stephen Slawsky, our Director of Management, Administration, Compliance and Services.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Back to you.

Slide 24 - AGENDA ITEM 5. Discussion on the next steps for the open-ended informal contact group on Resource Mobilisation matters.

*To be led by the Chair
ED may react as appropriate*

Slide 25: AGENDA ITEM 6- (TITLE SLIDE). Any other matters

(To be led by the Chair).