

## **Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism for UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes: Secretariat perspective**

### **1.0 What is a Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM)?**

A Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM) describes the [procedure by which](#) stakeholders can plan, consult, coordinate and contribute expertise on substantive issues involving the mandate of UN-Habitat. It also provides clear guidance for stakeholder engagement when UN-Habitat's governing bodies are in-session and facilitates stakeholder participation during inter-sessional periods.

### **2.0 Current Practice**

Current practice at UN-Habitat involving stakeholder engagement is informed by the UN-Habitat Assembly's Rules of Procedure and is guided by the UN Charter. With over 100 different stakeholder groups associated with the New Urban Agenda; and with some xx accredited to the ECOSOC as well as Habitat II and Habitat II as well as the first UN-Habitat Assembly, the current mechanism's main purpose is to help stakeholders participate effectively.

The Secretariat provides the following:

- (a) The calendar of meetings UN-Habitat's governing bodies; also included are the dates of various ad-hoc working group meetings during inter-sessional periods.
- (b) Relevant documents for all the intergovernmental meetings associated with UN-Habitat's governing bodies.
- (c) Relevant opinion with regards to the Rules of Procedure and other protocol-related best practice to facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement during sessions and inter-sessional periods.
- (d) At the request of Member States, facilitate the participation of stakeholders in their capacity as subject experts in informal meetings or "informal informals" during sessions or at the inter-sessional periods.

### **3.0 Engagement Opportunities**

Additionally, in the background document on "*Stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes: Current Practice*" which was shared with member states on 28 October 2022, UN-Habitat outlined how stakeholders are engaged in the work of [UN-Habitat's](#) intergovernmental bodies:

- (a) Through accreditation to respective governing bodies
- (b) Through the organisation of side events
- (c) Through the participation in sessions as panelists or guest speakers

- (d) Through the submission of written [statements and/or guidance when](#) making oral statements at various [inter-governmental](#) meetings.

#### **4.0 Examples of Engagement**

Below is a summary of stakeholder engagement in [UN-Habitat's](#) intergovernmental processes since the First Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019:

##### **2019**

- a. First session of the UN-Habitat Assembly:

A total of 197 organisations were accredited to UNHA and the Executive Board.

213 participants attended the two-day Global Stakeholder Forum organized on 25-26 May 2019 ahead of the assembly. This meeting was organized by UN-Habitat, and a Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) was launched, inter alia to [advise](#) the Executive Director on stakeholder engagement in policy and programmatic matters.

SAGE led the discussions including [the](#) development of a stakeholder declaration which was adopted by the Forum and submitted to the First Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. SAGE also established a working group on UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement mechanism in response to recommendations made by the Forum. This was the origin of the work undertaken by Habitat International Coalition (HIC) which resulted in the development of a proposed stakeholder engagement mechanism which has been presented to you by HIC.

Additionally, a private sector forum and a Youth Assembly were also organized in conjunction with the first UN Habitat Assembly.

- b. Second session of the 2019 Executive Board  
12 organizations represented: and 0 statements

##### **2020**

- c. First session of 2020 Executive Board  
31 organizations represented: and 4 statements
- d. Second session of the 2020 Executive Board  
32 organizations represented: and 3 statements

## 2021

- e. First session of the 2021 Executive board  
55 organizations represented: and 6 statements
  
- f. Second session of the Executive Board  
35 organizations represented: 7 statements
  
- g. Committee of Permanent representatives meeting  
45 organizations represented: 6 statements

## 2022

- h. First session of the 2022 Executive board  
36 organizations represented: 6 statements
  
- i. Second session of the 2022 Executive Board  
31 organizations represented: 7 statements

Accredited NGOs are invited to attend the UN-Habitat Assembly (UNHA), Executive Board and related Ad hoc working groups, especially the working group on stakeholder engagement; and the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The NGOs attend as observers and may be allowed to submit [written statements](#) or [make oral statements](#).

### 5.0 Ways to Enhance the Current SEM

Given UN-Habitat current practice, experience from other UN agencies including UNEP, and proposals emerging from submissions made by stakeholders to this working group, we see possible scenarios going forward:

1. **Out-sourced Option:** An external body takes the lead to mobilise and engage diverse groups without Secretariat involvement like the Habitat III arrangement. This will require stakeholders to find their own resources, consolidate around the principles of inclusivity and be able to convene all the stakeholders of UN-Habitat and the New Urban Agenda on their own. The Secretariat will not be involved in any way other than to facilitate registration, enable the confirmed representatives to speak or submit written statements when called upon by Member States; and to provide relevant documents in a timely manner.
2. **Secretariat-Lite Option:** Based on the **principle of self-organisation**, stakeholders can organise, coordinate and develop their interventions with the Secretariat providing a neutral platform, convening stakeholder meetings when required and, when requested

by Member States, the Secretariat will facilitate the involvement of stakeholders in specific activities associated with the inter-governmental processes. In addition to baseline support, the Secretariat will help facilitate with UNON and other relevant partners to ensure stakeholders are able to secure rooms for side-events or other self-organised activities in accordance with the UN Charter and the Rules of Procedure.

3. **Enhanced Secretariat Option:** Building on UN-Habitat's current practice, enhance the SAGE to allow it to consult with relevant networks using multi stakeholder platforms on key issues under discussion as necessary. The Secretariat will continue to service SAGE to mobilise new stakeholders, organise regular stakeholder briefings and conduct online consultations as necessary. The Secretariat will also facilitate the engagement of the various stakeholder advisory groups to ensure their expertise are incorporated into the 'decision-shaping' process. The Secretariat can also co-organize side events with stakeholders and Member States by co-developing concept notes, through joint fundraising and securing endorsement from Member States. This third option will require a top up of resources from Member States and donors.

*\* Decision-shaping here refers to the process whereby Member States may call upon stakeholders in their capacity as subject experts in housing and sustainable urbanisation or a relevant subject matter to contribute ideas, concepts, experiences for the consideration of Member States when making decisions on a particular agenda item in the inter-governmental processes.*

**Pictorial view of the engagement of stakeholders in the meetings of UN-Habitat Governing Bodies**

