



First informal consultations of the CPR to discuss the preparations for the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

Wednesday, 8 February 2023 from 10:00 to 12:00 East Africa Time (EAT) - CR4

Agenda item 2 - Expectations on high-level participation
Responsible officer : Mr. Erfan Ali

[Once the Raf gives the floor back to you after the general update on Agenda item 1]

Thank you Raf.

Madam Chair,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to brief you on the expectations on high-level participation at the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

As mentioned by Raf, the Executive Director established on 30 November 2022 an internal Task Force for the coordination of the Assembly preparations. Three sub-groups were also established to distribute the work, with accountability to the Task Force for specific topics, including Mobilization of High-Level Participants and Special guests.

I wish to emphasize that the United Nations Habitat Assembly will be a key milestone in engaging with Member States at a high level here at our headquarters Nairobi, and in getting policy guidance for our work for the next few years. We also believe that the Assembly presents one-of-a-kind chances to showcase the added value of UN-Habitat to Member States as we all aim to accelerate implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban agenda with a sense of urgency. We believe that the theme of the Assembly is broad and appealing enough to attract high level policy makers to attend the UN-Habitat Assembly.

It is therefore crucial to ensure adequate mobilization of high-level participation and representation of Member States particularly at the Ministerial level, in line with the universal nature of the Assembly.

Mobilization strategies for high-level participation

UN-Habitat intends to increase mobilization efforts through strategies such as:

- a) organizing regional meetings,
- b) utilizing of regional forums organized by regional commissions, for instance the sustainable development forum and/or
- c) the use of direct linkages and fostered relationships between UN-Habitat and Line Ministries.
- d) building up an attractive programme during the Assembly and a good press and media coverage for the high-level participants
- e)

Heads of States

During the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019, there were four Heads of State namely: Kenya, South Sudan, Yemen, and Fiji and about 50 Ministers in attendance. UN-Habitat is aiming at mobilizing more High-Level representation at the upcoming second session of the Assembly, particularly at the Ministerial level.

With regard to the Heads of State participation, a preliminary list has already been shared informally with the Government of Kenya for consideration. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Kenya as our Host Country for the support in the preparations towards the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Some ideas on how to engage Heads of States include the following:

- a. the discussion of a broad topic of relevance to all Member States for instance climate change and its effect on urbanization,
Alternatively,
- b. for each day, a relevant topic on sustainable urbanization is selected for discussion that is led by a Head of State which will provide variety on the areas of discussions.

First Ladies RoundTable

The Executive Director is also considering a First Ladies round table during the Assembly, under the auspices of the First Lady of Kenya to champion the work and mandate of UN-Habitat. In inviting the Heads of State, UN-Habitat will explore innovative ways of engaging with the Heads of States beyond the opening ceremony of the first day.

Invitations to Ministers

In terms of sequence for the letters to Ministers, the letters to the Ministers Foreign Affairs would be transmitted first, and it will be this week, followed by the letters to the Line Ministries. UN-Habitat appreciates that it is crucial to communicate with the relevant line ministries as soon possible to ensure: (i) adequate time for the substantive preparations by the ministries for substantive discussion at the Assembly and (ii) adequate time for ministries to prepare and get approval for logistical travel arrangements from their respective governments.

The Secretariat is also mapping out the participation of Ministers who have participated in previous UN-Habitat meetings such as the high-level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda held on 28 April 2022, the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum and the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of Parties to UNFCCC to enable the Organization to build upon their active participation in promoting sustainable urbanization and on the outcomes of these meetings.

The Secretariat had sent out invitation letters towards the second session of the Assembly to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council. Invitations has also been sent to the President of Kenya, as the Host Country

Thank you, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

UN-Habitat very much welcome your guidance and initial contributions today towards adequate mobilization of high-level participation and representation of Member States to the second session of the Assembly.

I now pass the floor to my colleagues Ms. Shipra Narang Suri and Ms. Edlam Yemeru who will provide an overview on the approach for substantive reports and resolutions.
