

2023 Sixth Bureau Meeting of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat

Hybrid format – Friday, 1 September 2023

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

Statement by the Executive Director

(Draft of 30 August 2023 9.30 am)

SLIDE 1: Title slide

Slide 2: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda to be led by the Chair.

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Review of the conduct of the 2023 second session of the Executive Board.
3. Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board;
 - a. Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session.
 - b. Guidance on format of the session (hybrid or in person).
 - c. Proposed organization of work during the session.
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.
5. Discussion and guidance on rationalizing pre-session documents towards the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023.
6. Status of proposed changes in the regional representation of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States (GRULAC) in the Executive Board.
7. Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur (**new item proposed by chair**).
8. Any other matters.
 - a. Proposed field visit of UN-Habitat Projects.
 - b. Proposed Joint Bureaux Meeting in Mexico.

Slide 3: AGENDA ITEM 2 - Review of the conduct of the 2023 second session of the Executive Board

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Good morning and a warm welcome to you all. It is indeed good to see all of you once again.

Let me start by congratulating you all on the extension of your term as members of the Bureau of the Executive Board during the 2023 second session of the Executive Board held on 8 June 2023.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to you and to this Bureau for the very important role you all played prior to, and during the adjourned second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, including navigating the very delicate political and substantive issues related to the Governing Bodies.

I am truly grateful for the tremendous support you have given to me and to the Organization throughout the year, which has led to the very substantive and I believe successful outcomes of the second session of the Assembly.

At the 2023 second session of the Executive Board, other than the matter of elections, we took note carefully of your advice and recommendation, inter-alia, on the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation and are preparing to issue the related document well in advance of the upcoming session to be held in November to allow Member States sufficient time to consider the document and provide us with the necessary guidance.

Overall, my humble view is that the Executive Board went well with your support, and intuition of the Chair, but then again, what is important is your perception of the session as Member States and what we can improve upon.

I must, however, and through all of you, express my gratitude to all Member States for the cooperation during the session.

I thank you Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

Slide 4: AGENDA ITEM 3: Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

On agenda item 3 allow me to start with sub item (a) on Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session then I will proceed to 3b and 3c.

Slide 5: Item 3a: Confirmation of the dates for the session.

Regarding the dates for the session, we consulted extensively with the Division of Conference Services as well as with UNEP and United Nations Headquarters on the available dates within the UN global calendar for the last quarter of 2023, as requested of us during the second session of the Executive Board in June 2023. We found that only the last week of November, namely **28-30 November 2023** can accommodate up to a three-day session of the Executive Board. Given the number of items on the proposed provisional Agenda, our recommendation is a three-day session of the Executive Board **from 28-30 November 2023, which have since reserved.**

Slide 6: item 3(a). Confirmation of the Provisional Agenda for the session:

With respect to the provisional Agenda for the third session of the Executive Board, what we have proposed is an agenda that not only takes into account the decisions of the previous sessions of the Executive Board but also the outcomes of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly as they pertain to the Executive Board and as also guided by the Board during the 2023 second session. We specifically focused on those outcomes that are more time sensitive, require immediate attention and fall within the gambit of the Executive Board, as we head towards the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2025.

The proposed provisional agenda for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board is on the screen and is as follows:

1. Opening of the session.

2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the third session of 2023;
 - (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its first session of 2023;
 - (c) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its second session of 2023.
3. Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups established by the Executive Board including continuation of the work on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy
4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025; including a report on the fully costed scalability model and action by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff.

Slide 7: item 3(a). Confirmation of the Provisional Agenda for the session (continued):

5. Discussion and possible approval of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2024
6. Discussion on the Due diligence assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation.
7. Report of the Executive Director on analysis of the principal obstacles to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by Member States.
8. Roadmap towards the preparation of the next Strategic Plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the Period 2026 to 2029.
9. Draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window towards the need to achieve the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner.

10. Roadmap towards the preparation of the development of international guidelines on people-centred smart cities as a non-binding framework for developing national and local smart city regulations, plans and strategies.

Slide 8: item 3(a). Confirmation of the Provisional Agenda for the session (continued):

11. Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities and the engagement of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster.
12. Preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum.
13. Discussion on the implementation of the UN Development System reform in UN-Habitat- Review of the Checklist for UNSDG entities' Governing Bodies
14. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board.
15. Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board.
16. Progress on implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the findings of its review of the management and administration of UN-Habitat.
17. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the first session of 2024.
18. Other matters.
19. Closure of the session.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies

Both the dates and the proposed provisional agenda for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board were shared with the Bureau on 3 July 2023 for comments. No comments or objections has been received, and this has enabled the secretariat to take the liberty to advance the preparations for the session, putting the drafting of relevant pre-session documents currently at an advanced stage. Moreover, and as

you can see, the agenda is very extensive and will require 3 days to consider all the items, according to our estimation.

Slide 9: item 3(b): Guidance on format of the session (hybrid or in person).

On subitem (b) of agenda item 3, we would be most grateful for your guidance on the format of the upcoming session. In other words, whether we should hold it fully in-person or in a hybrid format. As you may recall Mr. Chairman, some delegations were of the opinion that the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly held in June 2023 should have been fully held in-person given that COVID-19 was no longer a global pandemic and that restrictions at the UNON Complex had been lifted. We would appreciate the guidance of the Bureau on this matter as it will enable us to finalize the Notification of the Executive Director for the session accordingly.

Slide 10: item 3(c): Proposed organization of work during the session.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

I now move to subitem (c) of agenda item 3.

As I said earlier, and based upon our estimation, it is quite clear to us that we need a three-day session.

Accordingly, below is our proposal for the organization of work for each day during the session which is also on the screen.

(NOTE the for Executive Director: ED, here you may opt to simply mention the agenda items by number instead of reading them out fully. They will be on the screen)

On Day 1 of the session, we propose that the following items be considered by the Executive Board:

1. Opening of the session (agenda item 1);
2. Organizational matters (agenda item 2);

3. Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups established by the Executive Board including continuation of the work on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy (agenda item 3);
4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025; including a report on the fully costed scalability model and action by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff (agenda item 4);
5. discussion and possible approval of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025 (agenda item 5), and
6. Discussion on the due diligence assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation (agenda item 6).

On Day 2 of the session, we propose that the Board considers the following items:

7. Report of the Executive Director on analysis of the principal obstacles to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by Member States (agenda item 7);
8. Roadmap towards the preparation of the next Strategic Plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the Period 2026 to 2029 (agenda item 8);
9. Draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window towards the need to achieve the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner (agenda item 9);
10. Roadmap towards the preparation of the development of international guidelines on people-centred smart cities as a non-binding framework for developing national and local smart city regulations, plans and strategies (agenda item 10);
11. Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat (agenda item 11);
and
12. Preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (agenda item 12).

On Day 3 of the session, we propose that the following items be considered:

13. The report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board (Discussion on the implementation of the UN Development System reform in UN-Habitat- Review of the Checklist for UNSDG entities' Governing Bodies (agenda item 13);
14. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board (agenda item 14);
15. Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board (agenda item 15);
16. Progress on implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the findings of its review of the management and administration of UN-Habitat (agenda item 16);
17. the consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the first session of 2024 (agenda item 17);
18. other matters (agenda item 18); and
19. closure of the session (agenda item 19).

As we continue with the preparations for the session, we will prepare a draft programme accordingly for each day of the session.

As an established practice, in addition to consideration by **ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters** prior to the session, consultations on draft outcomes during the session will be held every lunchtime break and in the evening of each day, except for the final day when we hope to have concluded all consultations during the lunch break period.

The above therefore, is the preliminary organization of work which may be further revisited at upcoming Bureau meetings.

Thank you, Excellencies, for your patience and kind attention.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, back to you.

Slide 11: 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.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

We have shared with all Member States the tentative roadmap for the third quarter of 2023 which also includes this particular Bureau meeting.

The roadmap has taken into account the various meetings necessary for the preparation of the third session of the Executive Board and it includes:

- i. Bureau meetings,
- ii. meetings of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board,
- iii. consultations on draft outcomes of the 2023 third session of the Executive Board
- iv. consultations between Executive Director and regional groups, just prior to the third session and
- v. briefing on the preparations for the session.

The roadmap has also been prepared in a manner that meeting dates do not coincide with the planned meetings of UNEP and in that respect, I can assure you that both our teams will continue to consult in case of any changes.

Slide 12: item 4: Some key dates in the roadmap to the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.

With the understanding that the roadmap is a living document, allow me to highlight the dates of the monthly **Bureau meetings** which are planned as follows:

- 1 September 2023
- 13 October 2023
- 27 November 2023

Informal consultations are scheduled to be held on 11 October 2023 in the afternoon and on 25 October 2023 during the whole day and again on 27 November 2023

in the afternoon depending on the schedule of the Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

In addition, and in line with rule 6.10 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, we have scheduled the **Executive Director's briefing** to Members States on the preparations for the session and in particular, matters to be covered under each agenda item, on 6 November 2023.

With respect to the meetings of **the ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters**, we have provided for a number of meetings to allow for preliminary discussions by Member States on the various items before the third session including the draft work programme and budget for the year 2024, which we hope will be approved. In one of those meetings during which the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation will be discussed, we intend, with your permission to invite key partners to listen to the discussions and contribute only in terms of clarifications, if necessary, but with the invitation of the Chair.

Finally, we have also scheduled **one meeting of the ad-hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy** in response to the mandate by the UN-Habitat Assembly in its decision 2/4, that the Executive Board “on an exceptional basis, to continue its work to develop a stakeholder engagement policy and to submit the draft policy for consideration and possible approval by the Assembly at its resumed regular second session”. We hope that at that meeting, there would be discussions on the status of the draft stakeholder engagement policy as well as the way forward for the working group in terms of its leadership, possibly leading to a decision by the Executive Board at its 2023 third session that would guide a possible recommendation by the Executive Board to the UN-Habitat Assembly.

As I conclude on this particular item Mr. Chairman, I wish to bring to your attention that we have been informed that consultants working on the MOPAN assessment could be present during the upcoming third session of the Executive Board and would like to make some remarks during the session, to guide the Organization. In our view, these remarks could come under agenda either agenda items 14, 15 or 16 of the provisional Agenda.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

Slide 13: AGENDA ITEM 5 - Discussion and guidance on rationalizing of pre-session documents towards the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

As you are aware, this year, unlike any other year since the new Governance structure came into force in 2019, we have 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-Assembly.

The UNON Division of Conference Services has informed us 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.

Slide 14: Item 5. Communication from the UNON Division of Conference Services.

Accordingly, for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board the Division of Conference Services has communicated to us the following:

- i. DCS will service the three-day session comprising of 6 meetings, with interpretation and report writing.
- ii. 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.
- iii. That the limit of 90 pages will not include the 2024 draft work programme and budget which DCS will process as well.
- iv. 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, they simply would not be able to manage the requirements.

- v. If we outsource this function beyond the 90 pages, it will cost about 183 USD per page.

Slide 15: item 5. Proposals for consideration by the Bureau

Excellencies,

Given this information, we would like to suggest the following rationalizing of the documents being prepared for the third session for your consideration:

- i. Prioritizing key pre-session documents that require approval by the Executive Board as well as all post session documents for editing and translation. By prioritization, I mean editing and translation in the six official languages of the UN.
- ii. Issuing all other pre-session documents in English only.
- iii. Issuing the in-session documents also referred to as conference room papers in English only as provided for in rule 6.9 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board.

Among the documents we would like to prioritize for editing and translation and also based on the guidance from DCS are for example:

- i. the Executive Director's Notification for the session,
- ii. the provisional Agenda,
- iii. the annotated provisional Agenda,
- iv. the 2024 draft work programme and budget,
- v. the due diligence assessment of the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation,
- vi. the report of the session, and
- vii. the outcomes of the session.

Based on your guidance and following the finalisation of the pre-session documents currently under advance preparation, we would then include other documents to this list for editing and translation provided we do not exceed the 90 pages limit. Our

projection at the moment is that we are at 180 pages of documents, and we need to prioritise half of this for editing and translation.

Excellencies,

On our part, I want to assure you all that we continue to limit the number of words in each document as we have been doing in the last few sessions of the Executive Board, making them more succinct, despite the General Assembly rule which provides for 8500 words per document, which is about 26 pages per document. But with the limited capacity of the DCS and the lack of adequate funding, we have no choice but to limit the number of pages and prioritise those for editing and translation.

I thank you Mr Chairman, back to you.

Summary chat for the ED/DED reference only

Documents type	Projected No of pages	comment	No of pages that will benefit from editing and translation by DCS	no of pages that will not benefit from editing and translation by DCS	Recommendations
Pre-session Documents	(229 – 76) 153	153 is the total pages without the draft work programme and budget for 2024 being included	90 pages	(153 +27-90) = 90 pages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize key pre-session documents that require approval by the Executive Board as well as all post session documents for translation. 2. Issue all other pre-session documents in English only 3. Issue in-session documents in English only as provided for by the rules of procedure
In-session Documents	24	<p>In-session documents will be in English only as provided for by the rules of procedure for in-session documents</p> <p>In addition, formal editing of these documents can be excluded</p>			
Post-session Documents	27	These are Decisions and the report which Must be translated			

Slide 16: 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;

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

You would recall that on 24 August 2023 we sent out a communication on behalf of Honourable Román Meyer Falcón, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly with the following:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. A Legal note on casual vacancy for the position of Membership of the Executive Board, and
- iv. 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.

We do hope that there will be no objection from any Member State with respect to the change within GRULAC with respect to the Groups representation on the Executive Board.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

Slide 17 : AGENDA ITEM 7: Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur (NEW ITEM PROPOSED BY CHAIR).

To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required

Slide 18 : AGENDA ITEM 7 : Rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur. – Composition of the next Bureau of the Executive Board (For reference only if required)

To be led by the Chair supported by and Legal Adviser and Chris as may be required.

Slide 19: AGENDA ITEM 8 - Any other matters.

(to be led by the Chair)

(Proposed for DED to take up these two AOBs and any others)

a. Proposed field visit of UN-Habitat Projects in Lebanon.

There is a proposal for a field visit by Members of the Governing Bodies sometime in October 2023. Our proposal is Lebanon to show case:

- i. 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.
- ii. the diverse aspects of UN-Habitat's programme activities in the Country where humanitarian, urban recovery and development interventions have been implemented. Here I can refer to the programmatic work related to the Syrian refugees crises, the immediate and long term response following the Beirut Port explosion and the most recent socio-economic and political crises crippling the country.
- iii. the economic and logistics aspects (the availability of several travel and accommodation options) to travel to Lebanon and visit multiple and diverse projects across the country in a few days.
- iv. the significant UN operations in the Country and the large number of joint UN-Habitat interventions with other UN agencies. This includes the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia where UN-Habitat Programme is hosted and implementing several interventions with UNESCWA.

This is a revival of a practice that had been in place for some time, where we take the Member States to visit some of our impactful projects. If I remember, we have visited projects in Kisumu, Rwanda and Mozambique. We will provide more information later.

b. Proposed Joint Bureaux Meeting in Mexico.

You would also recall 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 you 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.

This is for your information as we prepare for the formal arrangements with the office of the President.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.