



Seventh meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2023

Friday, 13 October 2023

10:00hrs -12:00 hrs, East Africa Time (EAT)

Hybrid meeting- UN-Habitat OED Boardroom

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the provisional Agenda.

1. H.E. Mr. Silvio Albuquerque, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil opened the meeting at 10:10 hrs EAT.

The following Executive Board Bureau members were present:

In-person

H.E. Mr. Silvio Albuquerque, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

H.E. Ms. Jean Kimani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya

H.E. Mr. Ibrar Hussain Khan, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Mr. Ronney Almeida e Silva Filho, Alternate Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil

On-line

Dr. Martin Row, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of the Republic of France

Ms. Joanna Szymanska, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland

The following UN Habitat Secretariat members were also present:

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Michal Mlynar, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Raf Tuts, Director, Global Solutions Division.

Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies.

Mr. Erfan Ali, Chief of Staff

Mr. Stephen Slawsky, Director, Management Advisory and Compliance

Mr. Neil Khor, Special Adviser to the Executive Director & Director (a.i), External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation (ERSKI)

Ms. Katerina Bezgachina, Chief of Communications
Edlam Abera Yemeru, Chief of Knowledge and Innovation

2. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all participants to the meeting.
3. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director announced her impending departure from UN-Habitat at the end of her tenure on 19 January 2024 and thanked the Bureau and Member States for their support during her tenure.
4. After the Executive Director's announcement, the Chair of the Bureau expressed regret that Ms. Sharif was not extended to complete her full four-year term. The Chair noted that the Secretary-General has the authority on appointments and extension but wished Ms. Sharif could have been extended given her exceptional leadership, which was praised by many Member States. The Chair also highlighted the possible impact on the upcoming session of the Executive Board in November.
5. The Chair noted that the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), African Group, Asia Pacific Group, and Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) supported the extension of the Executive Director's term for two more years to enable her to complete the full four-year term.
6. One Member of the Bureau recognized the excellent work of the Executive Director in leading the Organization and noted that the African Group, through its Dean, had sent a letter to New York in support of extending the Executive Director's term. The letter took into account the timelines of the Strategic Plan and the resumed second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) to be held in 2025 and emphasized the importance of continuity in UN-Habitat activities.
7. Another Bureau Member expressed gratitude towards the Executive Director for her hard work and dedication in consolidating the Organization and its functions. It was also acknowledged that the Organization was in a much better state than it was before she took over. The Bureau Member recalled that several Member States had supported the extension of the Executive Director's term during the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly. It was further suggested that the Bureau should reflect on the future and what the impending departure of the Executive Director would mean, given the upcoming three months and beyond.
8. The Bureau discussed the possibility of sending a letter to the Secretary-General, recommending the establishment of a dialogue between the Bureau of the Executive Board and New York. The focus of this dialogue would be on the importance of the Organization's leadership in the upcoming months, during which important decisions would be taken on budgetary and strategic matters.
9. The Executive Director expressed her gratitude for the kind words of support from the Bureau but also noted the authority of the Secretary-General and the fact that she served at his pleasure.
10. Following the above remarks in response to the announcement by the Executive Director of her impending departure, the Chair called for the adoption of the provisional Agenda. The Agenda was adopted without any changes and can be accessed [here](#).

Agenda item 2: Status of Preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board

11. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the status of preparations for the third session of the Executive Board for the year 2023. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).

a. Documentation for the session

12. The Bureau praised the efforts made by the Executive Director to ensure that pre-session documents for the upcoming Executive Board session are translated into the six official languages of the UN, including with the support of extrabudgetary resources.
13. The Chair indicated that the Bureau could review the draft letter to the Director General of UNON regarding the rationalization of the pre-session documents, as recommended during the Bureau's meeting on 1 September 2023, if still warranted, especially considering the rationalization measures taken by the Executive Director on the translation of legislative documents.
14. The Bureau noted that one document would not be availed within the period established by rule 6.8 of the [rules of procedure of the Executive Board](#) due to time constraints. That document pertains to Agenda item 9 of the upcoming session of the Executive Board which is on "*Draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window to support the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner*". In response, the Bureau recommended that the draft document be discussed by the ad hoc working on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters on 1 November 2023 and to avail it in English only as a conference room paper in accordance with rule 6.9 of the rules of procedure.

b. Technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the session

15. The Chair thanked the Permanent Representative of Kenya, H.E Ms. Jean Kimani for taking on the leadership of the ad hoc working on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters temporarily. The Bureau awaits the appointment of the new leader of that working group.
16. Upon invitation by the Chair, H.E Ms. Kimani in her capacity as acting Chair of the ad hoc working on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters reflected on the 42nd meeting of the ad hoc working group, which took place on 11 October 2023 and covered, among other topics, the first informal consultations on the draft outcomes of the third session of the Executive Board. Ambassador Kimani noted that the technical inputs by the Secretariat were well received by the ad hoc working group, however, Member States were only able to provide general comments on the draft decisions and did not review the draft outcomes paragraph by paragraph. In that regard, Ambassador Kimani expressed concern with the limited time available for such discussions prior to the session in November.
17. The Bureau recommended that the ad hoc working on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters hold its next meetings on 30 October and 1 November in the afternoon, respectively, noting the busy schedule of Member States as well as the limited availability of meeting rooms caused by several planned global intergovernmental meetings taking place at the UNON complex in Nairobi, just before the Executive Board session.
18. The Bureau accepted the technical inputs provided towards the draft outcomes for the upcoming session and the progress already made during the informal consultations in the ad hoc working groups on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters and generally in the preparations so far towards the session.

Agenda item 3: Review of the roadmap towards the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.

19. In introducing the agenda item, the Chair recalled that, during the discussions in the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters held on 11 October 2023, a Member State had requested that all the substantive matters to be considered by the

Executive Board at its third session of 2023 be discussed and addressed at the working group before the discussions on the draft decisions of the Executive Board.

20. The Bureau suggested continuing informal consultations and potentially adjusting meeting schedules to allow for further discussions on draft outcomes.
21. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the roadmap towards the third session of the Executive Board. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
22. The Bureau endorsed the revised roadmap presented by the Secretariat, particularly on the modifications made between 31 October and 3 November 2023, in which meetings previously planned to take place between 16 October and 27 November were rescheduled to 30 October and 2 November. The proposed revised roadmap for 2023 meetings of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat can be accessed [here](#).
23. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised roadmap to Member States.

Agenda item 4: Leadership of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board

24. The Chair recalled that when the Bureau met on 1 September 2023, it requested the Secretariat to send out a call for expression of interest through the Chairs of the regional groups for the Chair and co-Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters. The Bureau at that meeting on 1 September also agreed to re-visit the issue of the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of Stakeholder Engagement Policy.
25. The Chair noted that following the recommendation of the Bureau in its meeting held on 1 September 2023, the Bureau approached Switzerland to continue on the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy, but Switzerland informed that it would not be able to continue chairing that working group at this time.
26. The Chair suggested sending a Note Verbale to Member States enquiring if there are any interested countries to chair the ad hoc working group of stakeholder engagement and mentioned the possibility of deferring the next meeting on stakeholder engagement until the election of a new Chair took place.
27. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director provided feedback regarding the nominations to the Chair and co-Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters emphasizing that no nominations had been received. The presentation by the Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and her detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
28. Responding to an enquiry by the Chair on whether the leadership of the ad hoc working groups was limited to members of the Executive Board, the legal advisor informed that the appointment of Chairs of the ad hoc working groups was not limited to the members of the Executive Board and is open to the universal membership.
 - a. **Recommendation on the Status of nominations to chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.**
29. The Bureau recommended that a Note Verbale be recirculated calling for expression of interest for the leadership of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

30. The Bureau further recommended the next meetings of the ad hoc working group should take place on Monday, 30 October, and Wednesday, 1 November, from 14:30 to 16:30 EAT.
- b. Consideration of the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy.**
31. One Bureau Member recalled that Portugal had offered to step in as a replacement for Switzerland on behalf of WEOG but there was an objection to that offer by one Member State and noted that a new call for interest would provide an option for Portugal to come forward again, alongside other interested candidates.
32. The Bureau recommended that a Note Verbale be circulated calling for expression of interest for the leadership of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy.
33. The Chair informed that he would reach out to Portugal on the possibility of volunteering to Chair the ad hoc working group, should the interest still remain.
34. The legal advisor noted that if the Secretariat circulated the call for expression of interest and Portugal volunteered again to chair the ad hoc working group, if needed, a written legal opinion would be provided to guide the decision of the Chair in requesting Portugal to assist to Chair the meeting of that working group.
35. The Bureau recommended the next meeting of the ad hoc working group on the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Policy to take place on Thursday, 2 November 2023, from 14:30 to 16:30 EAT.

Agenda item 5: Composition of the Bureau of the Executive Board

36. The Chair recalled that during the Bureau meeting held on 1 September, Bureau Members were requested to seek views from their various regional groups regarding the expected composition of the Bureau of the Executive Board, particularly with regard to the rotation of the offices of Chair and Rapporteur as stipulated in Rule 9.3 that *“The offices of Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year to a different regional group. Each regional group shall occupy the office of Chair and Rapporteur once during a period of five years”*.
37. The Chair requested the Secretariat to share the expected composition of the Bureau and the previous rotation of the Chair and Rapporteurs for the past four years. The Secretariat shared the table below:

Year	Chair	Rapporteur
2019-2020	WEOG (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	AFRICAN STATES (MALAWI)
2020-2021	ASIA PACIFIC STATES (IRAN)	EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES (SERBIA)
2021-2022	EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES (POLAND)	GRULAC (CHILE)

2022-2023	GRULAC (BRAZIL)	WEOG (FRANCE)
2023-2024?	GRULAC (BRAZIL)	WEOG (FRANCE)
2023-2025?	AFRICAN STATES (?)	ASIA PACIFIC STATES(?)
2024-2025?		

38. The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the expected composition of the Bureau and the previous rotation of the Chair and Rapporteurs for the past four years. The Secretariat also indicated that the African Group and Asia Pacific Group should present their candidates for the positions of the Chair and Rapporteur, respectively, as soon as possible.
39. The Bureau Member representing the African Group noted that the Dean of the Group had circulated the notification within the Group and would report back to the Bureau after consultations within the Group.
40. The Bureau noted that upon nomination of the new Chair of the Executive Board by the Africa group and subsequent election based on the requirement for yearly rotation of the Chair and Rapporteur, the current Chair would hand over to the successor to chair the Executive Board as stipulated in rule 9.1 of the [rules of procedures of the Executive Board](#) that “*The Executive Board shall, at its first regular session each year, elect from among its members, taking into consideration the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, a Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected*”. The Chair noted the need for an informal agreement among the regional groups on when the next Chair would take over the session to avoid any problems arising during the upcoming session of the Executive Board.

Agenda item 6: Any other Matters

41. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Executive Director noted that following the letter from the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly to all Member States on 24 August 2023, with respect to the designation of Barbados to fill the vacancy in the Executive Board left by Chile, there was no objection received and as such Barbados is now a designated Member of the Executive Board.
42. The Executive Director noted the Secretariat received a similar request from Argentina, as Chair of GRULAC, informing UN-Habitat that Costa Rica had stepped down and that Colombia had been designated by GRULAC to replace Costa Rica in the Executive Board. The Secretariat noted it was preparing relevant communication to the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly to take appropriate action.
43. The Bureau took note of the update on GRULAC representation to the Executive Board.
44. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the activities of UN-Habitat during Urban October 2023. The Secretariat noted that Urban October begins with World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October and ends with World Cities Day on 31 October. This year’s World Habitat Day was held in Baku, Azerbaijan and World Cities Day will be held in the Municipality of Üsküdar, in Istanbul, Türkiye. More information on Urban October can be accessed [here](#).
45. The Executive Director updated the Bureau that the COP28 Presidency requested her to co-Chair the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change. In addition, there would

be two events related to the mandate of UN-Habitat: a) Local Action Climate Summit on 2 December and b) Ministerial High-level Meeting on Urbanization on 6 December. The Executive Director noted that the expected outcome of the Ministerial High-Level Meeting on Urbanization was a ministerial declaration, resolution, or decision to be brought at the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and World Urban Forum (WUF 12) in November 2024.

The seventh meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2023 was adjourned at 12:10 hrs. East African Time (EAT).