

2023 first Meeting of the Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly
Hybrid

Wednesday, 15 February 2023

14:30 hrs. to 16:00 hrs. East Africa Time

Statement by the Executive Director

(Draft of 13 February 2023)

SLIDE 0: Title slide

Slide 1: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda led by the President.

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. General update on the status of preparations of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.
3. Preparations for the elections of the members of the Executive Board for the term 2023-2027 and officers of the 2023-2027 Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly
4. Any other matters.

Slide 2: (Title slide): AGENDA ITEM 2 - General update on the status of preparations of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly

- i. The President will call on ED for updates on the preparations.*
- ii. ED will make a few remarks and call on Chris and Raf to briefing the Bureau on the preparations.*
- iii. ED will take the floor back and request for specific guidance on specific matters related to the preparations for the UN-Habitat Assembly, before handing back to the President.*

i)Remarks by ED

Madam President,
Excellencies,

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to all of you. I welcome you to this first meeting of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly for the year 2023 which is very important as we intensify our efforts in preparing for the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly.

Let me first convey my sincere condolences and message of support to the Republic of Turkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic for the very devastating earthquake which occurred on 6 February 2023 and which has resulted in unimaginable loss of life, injury and extensive damage. We at UN-Habitat join the international community particularly the United Nations agencies in mobilizing support for and offering our expertise in emergency response and reconstruction.

Excellencies

We are joined at this meeting by Members of the Bureau of the CPR, which, as you are aware, act as vice presidents of are Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly in line with the rules of procedure of the Assembly.

Before briefing you on Agenda item 2, I recognize that this is the first time we are gathered together this year and as such let me take this opportunity to wish you a very productive and successful 2023.

I also want to acknowledge with gratitude all the support you accorded to me and to UN-Habitat in the year 2022. Thank you, Madam President, and all members of the Bureau for your dedication throughout 2022. With your support and guidance including through the very productive joint Bureau meetings chaired by the President, we have had a very successful year.

We achieved key milestones in 2022 with the clear outcomes of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the new urban agenda held in April 2022 and the ECOSOC meeting just before that, the very successful and inclusive eleventh session of the World Urban Forum in June 2022, and the impactful contributions of UN-Habitat to the COP 27 with first ever Ministerial meeting on urbanization in November 2022.

In addition, the informal consultations by Member States led by the Chair of the CPR in December were instrumental in finalizing the theme of the upcoming second session of the UN-Habitat. We closed the year on a high note with a favorable outcome from the General Assembly at its 77th session in December 2022 which approved the conversion of 7 extra-budgetary posts to UN-Habitat under the Regular Budget. Let me assure you that we have immediately affected the conversion. Once again, I am most grateful for your support and that of Member States both in Nairobi and in New York on this matter.

Madam President,
Excellencies,

I am also very pleased to inform you that within context of our resource mobilization strategy and with your support and guidance, in the year 2022 we were able to achieve a total of USD 7.5 Million in the core contributions under the foundation non-earmarked fund. This represents USD 5.5 million in surplus, from which we have set aside USD 3 million to fund the financial reserve and USD 500,000 to be used as first progress payment against the loan. I am very grateful for this milestone which was possible because of the support by Member States. *[NOTE FOR ED - THIS IS AN ESTIMATE PENDING FINALISATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ON 31 MARCH 2023]*

Excellencies,

As I also informed the Executive Board Bureau last week, the year 2023 is another very important year for UN-Habitat. We will have the Executive Board meet three times, the CPR will hold its second open ended meeting to prepare for the United Nations Habitat Assembly and then the Assembly itself which will hold its second session in June 2023. Another key milestone event will take place right after the Assembly in July 2023 when the High-Level Political Forum in New York will focus on the implementation of the SDG 11 which is under the responsibility of UN-Habitat as the lead UN agency.

I will once again count on your full support and guidance for the success of these important activities.

With regard to preparations for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, I would like to emphasise that this session is very important to us as it comes four years since the first session took place in May 2019.

It is my expectation that the Assembly at its upcoming session will exercise its role in reviewing major trends, examining global norms and standards, towards advancing global policy directions relating to human settlements and urbanization. It is anticipated that Member States will utilize the second session to also advance the work of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly held in April 2022 by providing policy coherence and recommending specific strategies on housing, climate, localization, and crisis recovery, among other issues. These will help accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in ways that contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and other global commitments.

The Assembly will be a key milestone in engaging with Member States at a high level here at our headquarters in 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.

Madam President,
Excellencies,

With your support and guidance, the theme for the second session Assembly was finalized as: **“A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises.”**

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. We are hoping to have at some Heads of State in addition to the Host Country to participate in the session and many more Ministers participating at the session more than the first session which has about 50 Ministers.

It is also my hope that we shall have a First Ladies round table during the Assembly, under the auspices of the First Lady of Kenya to champion areas of her activities which dovetail with the work and mandate of UN-Habitat.

Allow me now to call on Chris Mensah, followed by Raf Tits to quickly brief the Bureau on the status of preparations for the Assembly and how we are internally organized for efficient preparations. I will then come back to request for your guidance on specific matters.

With your permission, Madam President I give Chris the floor.

(CHRIS TAKES OVER)

ii)Presentation by Chris Mensah

SLIDE 3: NOTIFICATION FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HABITAT ASSEMBLY

Madam President,
Excellencies,

In terms of the preparations for the upcoming session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, we have already sent out to you the notification of the Executive Director in the UN official languages in line with the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The notification which we sent out to all Member States contains the provisional Agenda for the session and confirms the dates of the session. It further presents the theme of the session and highlights the key issues to be discussed in line with the provisional Agenda, and a very preliminary outlook of the five days of the session from the legislative point of view.

SLIDE 4: THEME OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HABITAT ASSEMBLY

Excellencies,

As already mentioned by the Executive Director, theme of the second session was arrived at on 16 December 2022 and you can see it on the screen. The theme is: **“A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: Achieving the SDGs in times of global crises”**

This was based on the proposal of the Executive Director, with the guidance of the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Joint-Bureaux of the Governing Bodies and through the informal consultations chaired by Pakistan as Chair of the CPR.

To concretize the special theme, five key action areas have been identified as to structure the deliberations of the UN-Habitat Assembly on global urban policies: **1) universal access to adequate housing, 2) urban climate action and environmental protection, 3) urban crisis recovery, 4) localization of the SDGs and multi-level governance, 5) prosperity and finance.** These reflect the priorities expressed by Member States during the High-Level Meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The special theme is therefore expected to explore action areas for sustainable urban transformation to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs in times of global crises. It is also expected to help prepare for the ‘**Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow**’ in New York in September 2024.’

SLIDE 5: EXPECTED STRUCTURE OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HABITAT ASSEMBLY

Madam President,
Excellencies,

Allow me to now share the expected format of the Assembly, noting that the Bureau of the Assembly will continuously review this format to ensure an efficient conduct of the session.

As is tradition, it is expected that **Member States will participate fully in the five-day session** and that there will be detailed discussions under each item of the provisional Agenda of the session.

There will be a **High-Level opening**, we hope by the Head of State of the Host Country, who will be joined by other Heads of State as we did during the first session. Then there **will be a High-Level segment** on the special theme of the second session of the Assembly with expected participation of Governments, Partners, and Stakeholders.

As already mentioned by the Executive Director, we are exploring other the High-level segments which should ideally include the presence and **participation of**

Heads of State, and in addition, there is a possibility for the **First Lady's roundtable** to take place within the days assigned for high level segment but not in parallel with the plenary activities.

Member States will also have the opportunity to **deliver National Statements**. The expectation is that the national statements will most likely be delivered at the Ministerial level.

In addition, it is **expected that various partners and stakeholders**, notably subnational governments, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations, will convene their own **informal consultations, events and activities** prior to and during the session.

SLIDE 6: INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS TO PREPARE FOR THE OECPR AND FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY

Excellencies,

On 8 February 2023 under the leadership of the CPR Chair, Member States held the first round of preliminary informal consultations to prepare for the OECPR and the Assembly. That informal consultations was a very important mechanism that helped us as the secretariat to get very useful suggestions and recommendations from Member states, some of which the ED will be looking for your guidance on, particularly as related to draft resolutions. You would recall that the CPR unlike the Executive Board does not have any subcommittee or working groups at the moment even through the rules provide for that. The absence of a subcommittee can make it difficult for consultations and information sharing prior to the OECPR. Hence the proposed informal consultations. We don't see any legal impediment to having the informal consultations because this is at the will of Member States and anything coming out of the informal consultations will have to be endorsed and recommended by the OECPR to the Assembly.

During that informal consultation held on 8 February 2023, Member States suggested that this Bureau should recommend very clear timelines for submitting resolutions to be considered first by the CPR at its upcoming open-ended meeting to prepare for the Assembly, and subsequently by the Assembly at its second session. There were also suggestions for the informal consultations to be held for full days instead of half days for efficiency.

In the roadmap towards the Assembly, we have scheduled additional informal consultative meetings under the leadership of the Chair of the CPR, and it would be good to have the Bureau pronounce itself on the need to carry on with these consultations so that there would be clarity among Member States as we prepare for the Assembly

As you can see on the screen, we are scheduling a meeting every month as follows:

- 8 February 2023
- 6 March 2023
- 25 April 2023 (morning & afternoon)
- 17 May 2023
- 24 May 2023 (morning & afternoon)

SLIDE 7: BUREAU MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR THE OECPR AND FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY

The next meetings of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the CPR Bureau are scheduled to take place as you can see on the screen, as follows:

- i. 12 April 2023: CPR Bureau, **to be chaired by the Chair of the CPR.**
- ii. 24 April 2023: Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly which includes CPR Bureau members as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly, **to be chaired by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.**
- iii. 2 May 2023: Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly which includes CPR Bureau members as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly **to be chaired by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.**
- iv. 10 May 2023: Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly which includes CPR Bureau members as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- v. 26 May 2023: Joint-Bureaux meeting of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat.

SLIDE 8: EXPECTED PARTICIPATION TO THE SESSION

Excellencies,

Given that the UN-Habitat Assembly is expected to discuss key issues related to human settlements and urbanization it is anticipated that States will attach great significance to the need for high-level representation at the Ministerial level for the 193 State Members of the United Nations, and for substantive representation at the session.

UN-Habitat also expects participation at highest level of Government as has been in the past.

The first session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly held in May 2019 was attended by 4000 participants, 50 Ministers and 4 Heads of States.

We have already transmitted letters from the Executive Director informing the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the session. We are now transmitting letters inviting line Ministries.

We are counting on your support to ensure the participation of your own ministers and Ministers from your regions at this second session which as you know only comes once every 4 years and is very important for not only guiding the work of the Organization but setting global policies and guidelines for sustainable urbanization and human settlements development.

We are also engaging with our regional representatives to support the mobilization efforts as well as the Government of Kenya for any courtesies that may be provided to high-level participants.

SLIDE 9: UPCOMING KEY TIMELINES IN THE ROADMAP TO THE UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY

Madam President,

Simultaneously, we are preparing for the **first session of the Executive Board** to be held on 28-29 March 2023 which we expect may have possible recommendations

for the UN-Habitat Assembly including on the draft stakeholder engagement policy, among others.

We are also working to ensure that we have the **pre-session documents** for both the OECPR and the Assembly in a timely manner for transmission by 24 April 2023 to all Member States in all languages.

We plan to open the call for submissions of side event **proposals and exhibitions** by end of February 2023.

We are hopeful for a very seamless transition from the OECPR to the UN-Habitat Assembly, hopefully with key major resolutions that the Assembly is expected to consider nearly concluded at the CPR level, notwithstanding the prerogative of any Member State to introduce a resolution at the Assembly.

SLIDE10: SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS

Madam President,
Excellencies,

The issue of draft resolutions to be considered by the Assembly has come out as one of great interest to Member States. and as such we have issued preliminary guidance to Member States which clearly state the following:

1. Submission of draft resolutions for consideration by the UN-Habitat Assembly is the prerogative of Member States.
2. A Member State or group of Member States may submit draft resolutions for consideration.
3. Draft resolutions may be submitted for consideration by the UN-Habitat Assembly any time before or during the session. Guidance will be given by the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly for consideration by the delegations at the first meeting of the session, on the deadline for submission of resolutions during the session.
4. Member States may wish start consultations on draft resolutions, guided by the provisional Agenda of the session.
5. Member States may also submit draft resolutions from mid-April 2023 after the pre-session documents, including reports of the Executive Director, have become

available. Nothing, however, precludes the submission of resolutions prior to that date.

6. The objective of a resolution may be to offer guidance or recommendations to the Executive Director or to Member States or as a decision on a particular matter based upon the provisional Agenda or matters under discussions.

7. The Secretariat may offer technical and substantive support to Member States in preparing draft resolutions, if requested or as appropriate.

SLIDE 11: SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS (continued)

8. It is highly encouraged that resolutions be submitted early to allow sufficient time for negotiations and consensus-building including through informal consultations organized by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and through formal consultations during the open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in preparation for the Assembly.

9. In this regard, the Bureau of the Assembly working with the Bureau of the CPR may issue guidance on the recommended deadline for submissions of resolutions, which may be first considered first by the CPR, under informal consultations and during the second open ended meeting of the CPR, for onward transmission to the Assembly.

10. Draft resolutions that are formally submitted will be considered by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session.

11. Draft resolutions may be addressed to the Chair of the CPR but submitted through the Secretary of the Governing Bodies .

The next step is to update these guidelines to include any recommendations this Bureau may have, particularly in relation to timelines for submission of resolutions.

Madam President, Excellencies, I thank you for your attention.

ED, if it is ok allow me now to hand over to Raf to share how we are internally organized in our preparations for the session.

(RAF TAKES OVER)

iii)Presentation by Raf Tuts

SLIDE 12: UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE: Terms of reference:

Madam President,
Excellencies,

The Executive Director has established an organization-wide task force on the preparations for the second session of the UN-Habitat to perform the following tasks.

1. Identifying expected outcomes and proposing innovative approaches to obtain them.
2. In-house and external resource mobilization for the organization of the Assembly.
3. Recommending high-level political representation at the Assembly.
4. Advising on the format of the components of the Assembly, such as the plenary, including dialogue on the theme, the sessional committee, and the opening and closing ceremonies.
5. Identifying which substantive documents are required.
6. Considering how UN-Habitat can best support the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Executive Board as they prepare for the Assembly.
7. Advising on external and internal communications; and
8. Any other tasks as assigned by the Executive Director and Acting Deputy Executive Director

SLIDE 13: UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE: Subgroups of the UN-Habitat assembly task force

Subgroup 1: high-level participation and protocol.

Key Tasks include:

1. High-level attendance.
2. regional mobilization for high-level participation.

Subgroup 2: Substantive coordination, including support on dialogue and provision of technical language for draft resolutions. Key Tasks:

1. Reviewing the format and shaping the dialogue on the theme.
2. Support preparation of draft technical inputs for draft resolutions and decisions to be considered by the UN-Habitat Assembly, in relation to the theme.
3. Preparation of ED's statements.
4. Clearance of reports.
5. Quality control.
6. Editing the daily journal.

SLIDE 14: UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE: Subgroups of the UN-Habitat Assembly Task Force (continued)

Subgroup 3: Communications, resource mobilization and budget, side-events, exhibitions, and logistics of participation, including registration.

Key Tasks include:

1. Strategic communications towards attracting high-level attendance.
2. Approving the nature of the side-events in relation to the theme.
3. roundtables or fireplace discussions.
4. Dissemination of information on the session.
5. Assembly and mobilization of participation at the high-level form the regions.
6. Budgets and Finance.
7. Pledging session.
8. Resource mobilization.
9. Registration.
10. Liaison with the Host Government.
11. Exhibition.
12. Side Events.
13. Webpage.
14. Information desk.
15. Press and Media.
16. Airport reception.
17. Advertisement/Design.
18. General Support.
19. Security.

SLIDE 15: UN-HABITAT ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE: Coordination of the Subgroups of the UN-Habitat Assembly Task Force.

Subgroup 1: high-level participation and protocol	Subgroup 2: Substantive coordination, including support on dialogue and provision of technical language for draft resolutions	Subgroup 3: Communications, resource mobilization and budget, side-events, exhibitions and logistics of participation, including registration
Coordinator: Erfan Ali Co-coordinators: Neil Khor, Chris Mensah	Coordinator: Shipra Narang - Suri Co-coordinator: Edlam Yemeru	Coordinator: Neil Khor Co-coordinator: Stephen Slawsky

SLIDE 16: EXPECTATIONS AND IDEAS ON RESOLUTIONS

Madam President before I hand back to the Executive Director, allow me to share with the Bureau some you expected resolutions and ideas for resolutions we have so far received from Member States.

a) Thematic resolutions

1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) cities,
2. Housing,
3. Localizing SDGs,
4. Climate adaptation and climate change,
5. BioDiverCities (proposed by Colombia and Costa Rica)
6. Development of international guidelines on people friendly smart cities. (proposed by France),

7. UN-Habitat's Early Warning, Rapid Response and Post Conflict and disaster Reconstruction Framework: (Africa Group):
The whole idea being to develop or identify and deploy a reliable mechanism that enables member states to receive early warning information related to possible disaster's threats and to provide early support with regard to conflict consequences on human settlements, in terms of remediation actions in a rapid and sustainable manner.
8. Urban planning and Sustainable Urban Infrastructure (Africa Group):
The whole idea being to provide concrete and actionable integral expertise for designing or remodeling of urban areas to be compliant with SDG specifications and the New Urban Agenda.
9. [Global Action Plan: Accelerating for Transforming Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030](#)' (proposed by South Africa)

SLIDE 17: EXPECTATIONS AND IDEAS ON RESOLUTIONS: (continued)

b) Process /Management resolutions

10. Decision on the extension of the current Strategic Plan until 2025.
11. Decision on the next session of the UN-Habitat Assembly aligned with the QCPR and the next Strategic Plan.
12. Decision on the stakeholder engagement policy depending on the advancement of the discussion by the ad hoc working group of the Executive Board on the matter.
13. Resolutions related to the report of the JIU on administrative and management review of UN-Habitat, especially as related to governance.
14. Election of 36 new Members of the Executive Board.
15. Election of a new President and Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly

16. Resolution's financing and monitoring mechanism (Africa Group):
The main idea being to promote equity in the Financing of all Habitat
Assembly resolutions and to develop a portal for the tracking of their
implementation.

(After that)
(Raf hands back to the ED)

(ED TAKES OVER)

Thank you Raf and Chris.

iii)Remarks by ED on specific guidance requested from the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly for discussion by the Bureau.

SLIDE 18: KEY ISSUES FOR GUIDANCE BY THE BUREAU

Madam President
Excellencies

As I mentioned earlier, I would be most grateful for your consideration and guidance on the following key issues as we prepare for the second session of the Assembly.

1. **Format of the session:** The Bureau may consider either,
 - i. Hybrid or
 - ii. fully in-person participation.

2. **Timelines for submitting draft resolutions:** It is proposed that:
 - i. Resolutions be submitted to the secretariat as soon as possible from now onwards until 30 April 2023 for consideration by the OECPR.
 - ii. Final submissions of draft resolutions for consideration by the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly should be by the end of Day two of the session on 6 June 2023.

3. Consideration for a CPR subcommittee during the second open OECPR

iii. The CPR may consider formally creating a subcommittee as provided for in rule 23 of the rules of procedure to assist with its preparatory work in the future just like the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board.

SLIDE 19: KEY ISSUES FOR GUIDANCE BY THE BUREAU

4. Preliminary Organization of work prior to the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly:

- i. Informal consultations on preparations for the Assembly and the OECPR should take place at least once a month as proposed, and where possible for a full day, under the leadership of the Chair of the CPR.
- ii. The Bureau of the Assembly (which includes the CPR Bureau) will convene regularly as proposed earlier to prepare for the Assembly.

5. Preliminary Organization of work during the session:

- i. The High-level opening should take place on Day 1, 5 June 2023. In addition, the High-level segment of the Assembly with possible participation of some Heads of State should be designated as Day 1: 5 June 2023 and Day 2: 6 June 2023 of the second session of the Assembly.
- ii. Most work of the Assembly will be held in the Plenary and as appropriate, through the Committee of the whole.
- iii. A drafting Committee will work to conclude any negotiations on the draft resolutions prior to consideration by the Plenary.
- iv. Non-legislative activities including special events, side events, regional groups meetings will be held outside the official timings of the session each day.

I thank you Madam President.
Back to you.

SLIDE 20: Agenda item 3:(TITLE SLIDE) Preparations for the elections of the members of the Executive Board for the term 2023-2027 and officers of the 2023-2027 Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly

To be led by the Chair

SLIDE 21 – Agenda item 4(TITLE SLIDE) 4. Any other matters.