

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

65th REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
PROGRAMME

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Agenda Item 3:

**Executive Director's Briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives
(HSP/CPR/65/3)**

1. Introduction

Activities during the period since the last CPR were predominantly related to the Twenty-Sixth session of the Governing Council. I will also provide an update on recent missions undertaken by my Deputy and me:

- Twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council
- Updates on programmatic issues
- Recent missions undertaken by myself and the Deputy Executive Director.

1. Twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council

The Twenty-Sixth Governing Council took place from 8 to 12 May 2017. The participation, discussions and conclusions of the Council reflected the continued interest of member States in guiding UN-Habitat in its work in sustainable urban development. Over 800 participants took part in the proceedings of the Governing Council, including more than 500 government representatives from 98 Member and Observer States and other stakeholder participants. Many of the statements made over the five days recognized the central role of UN-Habitat in sustainable urbanization and human settlements, and called for the strengthening of UN-Habitat as a focal point for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. In that respect, I am grateful for the support of member States for the development of the Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, expressed in the resolution on the theme of the Governing Council. I was also encouraged by the strong support of member States and the manifest intent of the delegates to work together in the Drafting Committee, as they considered the language and decisions of the nine resolutions adopted. This good will allowed for agreement on constructive and practical decisions on the way forward for UN-Habitat. Let me take this opportunity to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the delegates.

Looking ahead, I count on the same spirit of constructive and practical discussions and debates, to make progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The coming months bring an opportunity for the reform and strengthening of UN-Habitat, in the upcoming session of the General Assembly, particularly following the report of the Secretary-General's Panel and the outcomes of the High-Level meeting scheduled for the end of August. In the meantime, with the Work Programme and Budget, and the Revised Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 both having been approved by the Governing Council, we continue our efforts to fulfill our mandate in both through the implementation of ongoing projects, and the development of new initiatives.

2. Key portfolio developments

I am pleased to provide an update on key new projects that were approved by the UN-Habitat Project Advisory Group during the reporting period and for which grants have been acquired or are about to be signed:

Asia-Pacific region:

- A new programme on ‘Sustainable Human settlements in Urban Areas to support Reintegration in Afghanistan (SHURA). The total budget now stands at US\$ 141 million for three phases of SHURA. As requested by the President’s office, the programme is composed of three phases (Design, Inception and Roll-out), with the purpose to provide a ‘foundation’ for integration of returnees and protracted Internally Displaced People through offering them access to land and housing by way of planned city extensions and other sustainable urban development measures.

Arab States region:

- Egypt - A new project valued at US\$7.6 million will assist the Government of Egypt to reform its legal and institutional framework, enabling sustainable urban development in city extensions and inner city areas. Reform proposals will tackle issues of urban development from a multidimensional perspective, aimed at integrating spatial planning and land management on the one hand and public finance and investment planning on the other hand.

Africa region:

- Sao Tome and Principe - A new project valued at US\$ 4.7 million in São Tomé and Príncipe aims to improve the living conditions of the Roça Sundry community through sustainable resettlement. The design of the future resettlement will incorporate eco-friendly materials with a minimal CO₂ footprint and will be in line with the standard of the Right to Adequate Housing. This will guarantee the access of the Roça Sundry community to adequate, resilient and sustainable housing with tenure security, infrastructure, basic services and public facilities.

Latin American and the Caribbean region:

- Mexico - A project titled ‘Promoting Sustainable Urban Development in Sinaloa: from subnational planning to local action’ with a budget of US\$ 990,000 developed in partnership with the Secretary of Sustainable Development of the State of Sinaloa-SEDESU, will provide technical and institutional support in urban development and planning, and the management of natural resources and energy. The Government of Mexico in April 2017 established the National Council of the 2030 Agenda.

Global:

- Initiation of the City Prosperity Initiative (CPI) in China. The City of Wuhan signed a Cooperation Agreement with UN-Habitat for US\$350,000 to implement the CPI as part of the city efforts to create evidence based information for planning activities. An expansion of CPI activities in China is expected.
- Selected important events that took place during the reporting period:

- A Ministerial Dialogue on Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Africa and Briefing on Key Issues at the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Governing Council brought together Ministers, high-level officials and UN-Habitat partners from the Region to discuss the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
- The Government of Kuwait hosted a Workshop for states of the Gulf Cooperation Council on "City Prosperity Initiative for Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals and Urban Targets - SDG 11 in focus" from 22 - 25 May 2017. There are ongoing discussions with Kuwait on UN-Habitat support to the Fourth Kuwait Master Plan and for the development of a National Urban Policy for Kuwait.
- UN-Habitat and the International Federation of Real Estate Developers (FIABCI) signed an agreement to implement the City Prosperity Initiative to monitor SDGs in cities where FIABCI is implementing large housing operations.
- The Municipality of Dubai and UN-Habitat agreed to align the prestigious Dubai Award to the New Urban Agenda and UN-Habitat's Action Framework for Implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The call for submissions is currently open, until August 2017.

3. Recent missions by the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director

Missions by the Executive Director:

On 13 and 14 March, I visited Mexico City at the occasion of the MEXTROPOLI Festival Internacional de Arquitectura y Ciudad, where I addressed the conference at its opening ceremony. I took advantage of the visit to meet with our partners in Mexico, particularly the Ministry of Rural, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU) where I met with H.E. Ms. Rosario Robles to discuss our support to sustainable urban development in Mexico. During my mission, I also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Workers' Housing Fund Institute (INFONAVIT) to collaborate in the areas of monitoring, through the City Prosperity Initiative, and housing.

On 30 and 31 March, I travelled to Vienna, Austria at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Mr. Lamberto Zannier, to speak at OSCE Security Days, alongside mayors and other senior leaders, on the topic of 'safe and inclusive' cities. During the visit, I also met with the Austrian Development Agency where we agreed to explore new areas of collaboration in target countries, particularly in Afghanistan and Iraq.

From 3-5 May, I visited Australia where I opened the New Urban Agenda Conference, organized by Compass Housing, a leading non-governmental social housing provider in Australia. I also held discussions with the Government of Australia, including Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation, H.E. Mr. Angus Taylor, with a view to further deepen the partnership with the government.

On 14 and 15 May, I travelled to Beijing to attend the Government of China-hosted Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, alongside a large number of world leaders. On

the side-lines of the Forum, I signed an agreement with the National Development and Reform Commission which provides a framework for an expanded cooperation for the Belt and Road Initiative. During my visit, I also met with the Minister for Housing and Urban-Rural Development, H.E. Mr. Chen Zhenggao, in order to confirm our renewal of the framework agreement for the next five years (2017-2022), which provides an anchor for our collaboration in China for the period ahead.

On 15 and 16 May, UN-Habitat and OECD co-hosted the second International Conference on National Urban Policy in Paris, which was attended both by the Deputy Executive Director and me. In her opening remarks, the DED highlighted UN-Habitat's work on National Urban Policies as a key tool to support the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, emphasizing the collaborative process and the need to leave no one and no space behind. I provided a special keynote address on the second day of the conference and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with OECD to further strengthen our collaboration on National Urban Policies. Both the DED and I held several key bilateral with the many Ministers and high-level officials present.

On 21 and 22 May, I visited Cairo, Egypt, on the occasion of the Second Union for Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Urban Development, co-hosted by the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, H.E. Ms. Corina Cretu, and the Minister for Municipal Affairs of Jordan, H.E. Mr. Walid Masri. The meeting demonstrated the strong commitment of countries in the region to adopt new measures to improve their urbanization process. I also met with several senior officials of the Government of Egypt, as well as our development partners in the country. I am grateful to the Government for their support to UN-Habitat, not least in hosting our Regional Office for Arab States.

Following my recent announcement of the successful bid by the United Arab Emirates and the city of Abu Dhabi as the host of the Tenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), I visited Abu Dhabi on 23 May to meet with senior officials of the Government of UAE in order to initiate discussions on the preparations for the Forum. During my visit, I outlined the overall vision for WUF10 and its role in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and we discussed various aspects relating to the organization of the Forum. I am deeply grateful for the commitment and support by United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi in hosting WUF10, which will be a key platform to review progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the New Urban Agenda.

I travelled to St. Petersburg, Russia, on 1 and 2 June, to open and attend the two-day International Conference "Promoting the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Urban Development in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States Region" organized by the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation, UN-Habitat, the Government of Saint Petersburg, and the ITMO University. The conference, held at the margins of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, represented a revitalized commitment to collaboration between UN-Habitat, Russia and the CIS region and provided insights on urbanization trends, and highlighted the importance of public space for wellbeing in cities. During my visit, I held extensive discussions with the Government of Russia and other partners to discuss how to enhance our support to the urbanization processes in Russia and the region.

Missions by the Deputy Executive Director:

The DED represented UN-Habitat at the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in NY from 13 to 17 March 2017. The mission served to further position UN-Habitat on gender issues and to showcase our normative and operational work on this important topic. A side-event was held to highlight the activities of the PSUP. Another key event hosted by UN-Habitat at Ford Foundation served to present the 'Cities for All' approach, combining work on monitoring progress towards the SDGs, youth, gender, safer cities, climate change, and urban planning. During her mission, the DED held a number of bilateral meetings with UN agencies, Member States, and Civil Society.

The DED traveled to Addis Ababa on 21 March 2017 with a group of delegates from Sweden and Norway in the context of the annual donor consultations in order to showcase the normative and operational work of the agency.

On the 18 April, the DED gave remarks at an Urban Breakfast event at the Ford Foundation in New York, on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. She also participated in the SDG Financing Lab hosted by the President of the General Assembly, during which she spoke about the potential of urbanization for generating value through land-value capture and approaches towards sustainable municipal finance. She held a number of bilateral meetings with Member States and gave a briefing to the G77 on MOPAN.

The DED participated in the Perry World House Conference on Urbanization and Migration at University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia from 20 - 21 April 2017. She delivered opening remarks to the conference, met with faculty and students and participated in a number of sessions as a speaker on issues of urban governance, marginalization and migration. She highlighted the role of proactively planned and well-managed urbanization in creating durable solutions to the migration and refugee crisis.

The DED traveled to Singapore to open the "International Leaders in Urban Governance Programme" on 5 and 6 June 2017, a training for urban leaders from Africa hosted by the Center for Livable Cities in the context of the "Planning and Leading Change in Cities Programme". In her opening remarks she focused on fostering practical results-based sustainable urban development at local level. She also met with senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Development, the Center for Livable Cities, the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities and other institutions.

The DED delivered remarks at a conference on Smart and Safe Cities hosted by the city of The Hague on 7 June and represented UN-Habitat in the European Development Days in Brussels on 8 June. There, she hosted a Policy Lab on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and spoke in a dialogue session on "Harnessing opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation in cities. She further held a number of bilateral meetings with Member States and other partners.