

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**62ND REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
14 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**Item 3: Executive Director's Briefing to the
Committee of Permanent Representatives**

HSP/CPR/62/3

62th Regular Meeting of the CPR

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Agenda Item 3: Executive Director's Briefing to the CPR

1. Introduction

There have been a number of important developments since the last meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). In this briefing, I would like to focus on the following issues:

- Habitat III preparations;
- Revision of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019
- Recent missions.

2. Habitat III

2.1. Introduction

The months of June, July and August were crucial for the preparations for Habitat III. During this period, a number of major events leading to Habitat III took place, culminating with the third session of the Preparatory Committee, which was held from 25 to 27 July in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Following PrepCom3 in Surabaya and at the time of writing, negotiations are ongoing among member states on the outcome document for Habitat III, particularly on issues relating to the follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda. The third PrepCom made substantial progress towards an agreement. As Secretary-General of the Conference, I will continue supporting member states in any way required.

More details on the main preparatory activities for Habitat III and other notable milestones are described below.

2.2. Informal Hearings with Stakeholders on 6 and 7 June 2016 in New York, USA

Conforming to the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution A/70/210, the Informal Hearings with Stakeholders convened on 6 and 7 June 2016. This was the first consultative process to recognize the 15 stakeholders groups of the General Assembly of Partners such as older persons or grassroots organizations, representing billions all around the world.

2.3. Informal Intergovernmental Negotiations from 8 to 10 June and 27 June to 1 July 2016, New York, USA

The Informal Intergovernmental Meetings in New York were aligned with the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution A/70/210. The main objective of the Informal Intergovernmental negotiations on the draft New Urban Agenda was to invite member states to provide comments and views on the draft outcome document, receive initial reactions and comments on other chapters of the draft outcome documents, as well as advance on negotiations of the New Urban Agenda. After each round of negotiations a new draft outcome document was circulated: on the 18 June 2016 and 18 July 2016.

2.4. UNTT Expert Group Meetings

As a part of the contribution from the UN system to the draft New Urban Agenda, the United Nations Task Team held a number of Expert Group Meetings on cross-cutting issues. All EGMs were convened in

collaboration with a UN agency or programme, with the participation of 20-25 experts. During the months of June, July and August the following EGMs were held:

- 2 June 2016: Land, Law and the New Urban Agenda (New York, US) in collaboration with UN-Habitat and GLTN;
- 4 June 2016: Gender Perspectives of the New Urban Agenda (New York, US) in collaboration with UN Women;
- 6 July 2016: Health as the “Pulse” of the New Urban Agenda (Paris, France) in collaboration with WHO;
- 6-8 July 2016: Safer Cities and the New Urban Agenda (Geneva, Switzerland) in collaboration with UN-Habitat and Safer Cities;
- 21 July 2016: Driving Smart Sustainable Cities Worldwide (Geneva, Switzerland) in collaboration with UNECE and ITU.

2.5. Urban Breakfast Series

Urban Breakfasts Series were launched in mid-December 2015 by the Habitat III Secretariat in collaboration with various esteemed partners and are every month all over the world. The main goal of the Urban Breakfasts is to create a platform for knowledge-sharing and to encourage an informal discussion on the challenges of sustainable urban development as well as key priorities to take into account in the New Urban Agenda. During the months of June, July and August the following Urban Breakfast have been held:

- 15 June 2016: Water and Climate Change - Adaptation Strategies in Megacities, Paris, France, in collaboration with UNESCO;
- 20 June 2016: A briefing on Habitat III: What is this once-every-20-year United Nations conference on cities all about? The Urban Breakfast was held in Washington, D.C., US, in collaboration with World Bank and Citiscope;
- 23 June 2016: Articulaci3n multinivel para la implementaci3n efectiva de la Nueva Agenda Urbana in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with UNDP;
- 30 June 2016: Oportunidades para la igualdad de g3nero y el empoderamiento de las mujeres in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with UN-Women and UNFPA;
- 7 July 2016: La participaci3n de la juventud como herramienta para el desarrollo urbano inclusive in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with UNFPA and UNV;
- 14 July 2016: Urban Resilience, the challenge of the cities in the future in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with Programa Mundial de Alimentos;
- 18 July 2016: The road towards Habitat III - Urban Challenges and Sustainable Development in Lisbon, Portugal, in collaboration with The Ministry of the Environment of Portugal, Directorate-General for Territorial Development and The Metropolitan Area of Lisbon;
- 19 July 2016: The road towards Habitat III - Urban Challenges and Sustainable Development in Porto, Portugal, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment of Portugal, Directorate-General for Territorial Development and The Metropolitan Area of Porto;

- 28 July 2016: Sector privado e innovación urbana in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo;
- 4 August 2016: El Derecho a la Ciudad in Quito, Ecuador, in collaboration with Sistema Naciones Unidas Ecuador;
- 11 August 2016: El Derecho a Las Ciudades y a Una Gestión Urbana Eficaz in Cuenca, Ecuador, in collaboration with UN Women;
- 19 August 2016: Implementación multisectorial de la Nueva Agenda Urbana in Guayaquil, Ecuador, in collaboration with UN Women;
- 29 August 2016: O papel do setor privado na nova agenda urbana e no desenvolvimento sustentável, in Curitiba, Brazil, in collaboration with United Nations Institute of Training and Research e Fiep - Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Paraná;
- 30 August 2016: Best Practices and Challenges ahead for cities in Flanders in Antwerp, Belgium in collaboration with CIFAL Flanders and UNITAR.
- 1 September to be organized in Nairobi, Kenya

2.6. Urban Thursday Breakfast on West Asia on 16 June 2016, New York

The Urban Breakfasts Series in New York (Urban Thursday Breakfast) are organized in collaboration with the Ford Foundation and held every third Thursday of the month. On 16 June, the Habitat III Secretariat in collaboration with Ford Foundation held the last breakfast session in New York. The topic for discussion was urban development in Western Asia.

2.7. Urban Dialogue

The Urban Dialogues is an e-discussion series launched by the Habitat III Secretariat, which aims to integrate the voices, bringing together new thinking and engage people passionate about urban development from all over the world in the elaboration of the New Urban Agenda. An Urban Dialogue was launched from 20-28 July 2016 in parallel with PrepCom3 to discuss the Draft New Urban Agenda.

2.8. General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III Meeting, 24 July in Surabaya, Indonesia

GAP aims to support stakeholders' engagement and contributions to the conference. Originally consisting of 14 Partner Constituent Groups (PCG) with members from the United Nations' major groups and other relevant stakeholders, GAP has expanded during the past year adding an Older persons PCG. The last PCG Persons with disabilities was added during the GAP meeting in Surabaya.

2.9. Urban Journalism Academy

The Urban Journalism Academy is a pioneering and innovative initiative which aims to train journalists and media professionals who are already interested or involved in urban development with reference to social and economic issues facing cities in the 21st Century. A number of Urban Journalism Academies have been organized by the Habitat III Secretariat in collaboration with various partners all over the world. A number of UJAs were convened in the past 3 months, including UJA in Belgrade, Serbia on 16 May 2016; UJA in Quito, Ecuador on 17 and 18 June 2016; UJA in Bucharest on 15 July 2016, and the latest one was held in Surabaya, Indonesia during the third session of the Preparatory Committee on 26 July 2016.

2.10. Third Session of the Preparatory Committee from 25 to 27 July 2016 in Surabaya,

Indonesia

In accordance with the General Assembly resolution 67/216 and the General Resolution 70/210, PrepCom3 was held from 25 to 27 July 2016 in Indonesia. Over the 3 days, a total of 4,248 participants from 142 different countries attended 27 parallel events and 39 side events, exhibitions and plenary meetings. This PrepCom3 also had the highest number of participants representing LDCs –the Habitat III Trust Fund provided support to 42 representatives from LDCs to attend PrepCom3. Although member states did not reach an agreement on the outcome document of the Conference, the Preparatory Committee made a strong progress towards the adoption of the New Urban Agenda. It was decided that the negotiations will continue in New York in September.

3. Revision of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019

UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 was adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in April 2013. Since then, a number of important global strategic agendas have also been adopted. Chief among them is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its Sustainable Development Goals.

Member States are also pointing to the outcomes of major conferences to call for an adjustment of country-based interventions by relevant UN agencies. This is the case with the outcome of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 21, held in Paris.

Moreover, paragraph 95 of UN-Habitat's current Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 states that “the strategic plan will be adjusted on the basis of this midterm evaluation, the outcome of Habitat III (i.e., the new urban agenda), and any changes in the governance structure of UN-Habitat”.

The time has come to start organizing, in terms of procedure only, the adjustment of the Plan in order to respond to the outcome of Habitat III, the results of the midterm evaluation of the Plan, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris COP-21 agreement on climate change.

4. Recent Missions

From 17-18 June, I visited Ecuador where I had the opportunity to witness first-hand the devastating effects of the earthquake that affected the coastal areas in April. I toured the areas with H. E. President Correa, whose government continues to make tremendous efforts to recover fully from the earthquake. As UN-Habitat, we are supporting these efforts through dedicated early recovery and reconstruction programmes. Our deepest sympathies go to the Government and peoples of Ecuador in their recovery from this disaster.

During my visit, I also reviewed the ongoing preparations for the Habitat III Conference in Quito with the relevant Government counterparts, under the leadership of the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, H.E. María de los Ángeles Duarte. The construction works and overall preparations are continuing on track, as we continue to benefit from the strong commitment of the Government at the highest level.

From 10-11 July, I visited Singapore at the invitation of H. E. Mr. Lawrence Wong, Minister for National Development, at the occasion of the World Cities Summit where I delivered a speech. During my visit, I also met bilaterally with the Minister to discuss the preparations for Habitat III as well as our various areas of cooperation. I was very grateful for the opportunity to visit Singapore and to observe the tremendous achievements made by the government to achieve a sustainable and productive urban environment. Many of the Singapore's lessons with regards to urban legislation and financing should be widely disseminated amongst countries in order to achieve more sustainable and livable cities.

From 20-22 July, I again visited China where I had very productive engagements both in Shanghai and Beijing. In Shanghai, I signed a tri-partite with Tongji University and the Municipality of Shanghai to establish a partnership on capacity development. During my stay in Shanghai, I also had the opportunity to review the final draft of the Shanghai Manual which we hope to launch in Quito during Habitat III.

During my stay in Beijing, I met with H.E. Mr. Chen Zenggao in order to further the discussions on the next five-year framework agreement between UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development. I also discussed preparations for Habitat III, where China continues to play a vital supporting role. In Beijing, I signed an agreement on behalf of UN-Habitat with the China Centre for Urban Development which establishes a formal relationship to advance in the high-level exchanges with the Chinese government on urbanization issues. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Vice-Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design as well as to start initial discussions on collaboration with the new Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

I would like to take this occasion to extend my appreciation to the Chinese government for pledging a contribution of US\$500,000 to the Habitat III Trust Fund. This signals a strong commitment to ensuring the success of the New Urban Agenda.

Following my attendance in PrepCom3 in Surabaya, Indonesia, I visited Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in order to review preparations for the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum that will be held in 2018. During my visit, I met with H.E. Mr. Noh Omar, Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, where we advanced in the discussion on the formal arrangements of the WUF which we hope to conclude soon. I am grateful to the Government of Malaysia for their commitment, through their hosting of the WUF9, to the advocacy efforts for sustainable urban development.