

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**67th REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
PROGRAMME**

14 DECEMBER 2017

Agenda Item 4:

**Executive Director's Briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives
(HSP/CPR/67/4)**

1. Introduction

There have been a number of important developments since the last meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on 27 September 2017. Activities since the last CPR have predominantly focused on discussions at the General Assembly and the draft Resolution on Strengthening UN-Habitat, portfolio development and preparations for the 9th Session of the World Urban Forum. I will also provide an update on recent missions undertaken by myself and my Deputy:

- Draft General Assembly Resolution on Strengthening UN-Habitat
- Update on the status of preparations for the 9th Session of the World Urban Forum
- Update on programmatic issues, including update on the status of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda
- Recent missions undertaken by myself and the Deputy Executive Director

2. Update on the draft General Assembly Resolution on Strengthening UN-Habitat

I am pleased to share that Member States successfully concluded the negotiations on the annual UN-Habitat related resolution: "Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)". The main aim of the resolution is to take decisions on the further reform of UN-Habitat, following up on the outcome of the Secretary-General's High Level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat and the High-Level meeting of the 71st Session of the General Assembly on the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the positioning of UN-Habitat in that regard, as well as the summary by the President of the General Assembly.

During discussions, Member States debated the relationship between the re-positioning of UN-Habitat, including in the context of the broader UN Development System. Delegates felt they were not in a position to take final decisions on the inter-related matters of governance, financing of UN-Habitat and its coordination role within the UN-system. For that purpose, the resolution creates an open-ended working group, to be put in place by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to detail recommendations on governance, including UN-Habitat's institutional architecture for its operational activities, and financing. There are no immediate budgetary consequences (PBIs) to the current resolution. Member States agreed on a strategic financing dialogue to review the financing needs of UN-Habitat, which will subsequently be reflected in the next work programme and budget 2020-2021. To that end, the working group will need to conclude its work by 30 June 2018 in view of final decisions in the 73rd General Assembly.

3. Report on the status of preparations for the 9th Session of the World Urban Forum

The Director of External Relations Division will provide a more detailed update on the preparations for the 9th Session of the World Urban Forum. The WUF9 Concept Note has been revised, taking into account the comments of Member States and has been agreed upon by the Senior Management Committee. WUF9 is a critical advocacy and partner platform from which we expect a number of solutions to be brought about for sustainable urban development in the

context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as a platform that will galvanize strategic partnerships and support for UN-Habitat. I am pleased to share that we have received nearly 1,000 submissions for side, networking and training events and the exhibition area, demonstrating the important and noteworthy interest in the world's premier conference on urban issues. We are expecting approximately 20,000 participants including high level delegations and look forward to the intensified engagement of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as we move forward.

4. Key portfolio developments

Since September 2017, grants amounting to a total value of approximately US\$ 40million were opened in the system. In addition, during the reporting period, new projects in all regions were approved by the Project Advisory Group (PAG) and are contributing to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. A select few are as follows:

Asia-Pacific region:

In this region, there are three strategic pioneering green projects focusing on climate change:

- Myanmar – a two-year project “Assistance to the Yangon Regional Government – Yangon Informal Settlements – Resettlement Programme” with a value of US\$ 1million funded by the Adaptation Fund.
- Solomon Islands – “Enhancing urban resilience to climate change impacts and natural disasters: Honiara, Solomon Islands” which is a four-year initiative with a value of US\$ 4million supported by the Adaptation Fund.
- Nepal – a four-year US\$ 2.4million project entitled “Green Growth and Green Rebuilding in Kathmandu, Nepal, which is aimed at “Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in the Heritage Tourism Sector” supported by the European Commission.

Arab States region:

- Syria – a three-year initiative worth EUR 10million funded by the German Government (BMZ) and administered by KfWe seeks to provide “Support to Restoration of Minimal functionality of Infrastructure in Urban contested areas in Syria”.
- Lebanon – an initiative for a total of US\$1,851,100 over one year focuses on an integrated approach to address vulnerable refugee and host communities in Lebanese urban areas “Towards an integrated approach to address vulnerable refugee and host communities in Lebanese urban areas”.
- Yemen – a two-year initiative is underway for a value of US\$ 2.3million, entitled “Rapid City and Neighbourhood Profiling”.

Africa region:

- Ethiopia – a three-year project entitled “Support to Sustainable Development of the Hawassa City Cluster” with a value of GBP 1,503,480 supported by DFID was opened. Under this project, UN-Habitat plans to provide technical expertise to Hawassa’s City Administration with a population of 350,000 people and a growth rate of 4%, which is responsible for land use planning and management in the areas surrounding the construction of Ethiopia’s first large-scale industrial park.
- Nigeria – a two-year project with a value of US\$ 1,920,000 funded by the State of Niger, with the purpose to provide technical assistance to the government to implement the New Urban Agenda through the development of a state urban policy along with integrated and territorial plans.

Latin American and the Caribbean region:

- Brazil – an integrated two-year initiative with a value of US\$ 1,159,368 on sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity was initiated in the State of Alagoas in Brazil. The project aims to enhance engagement toward sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity, through a better understanding of the urban setting, and the establishment or improvement of its public policies, plans, and actions. The overall objective is the improvement of urban sustainability and living conditions of municipalities of Alagoas.

Global:

- A two-year initiative with a value of EUR 2million funded by BMZ seeks to Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR) with an overall goal of improving land and natural resources tenure security for rural poor smallholder farmers, including women, youth and vulnerable groups, in Uganda, the Philippines and Laos.

5. Report on the status of Implementation of the New Urban Agenda

The Director of Programme Division will provide a more detailed update on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our intent is to give periodic updates on the implementation of the NUA and today: (1) progress made on Urban Data and Reporting and, (2) progress made by our Regional Offices will be highlighted.

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

Missions by the Executive Director:

On 12-13 October, during my visit to Havana, Cuba I contributed to an international dialogue of experts on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) in Cuba. The dialogue was jointly organized by UN-Habitat and the Cuban Institute of Physical Planning (the equivalent to a Ministry of Planning) with international experts to discuss and exchange

technical views and knowledge on the Cuban reforms towards the implementation of the NUA. Since the adoption of the NUA, Cuba has taken significant steps in correlating its urbanization model to the recommendations enshrined in the Quito document, leading the process in the region. UN-Habitat has accompanied the government of Cuba in this process, forging and achieving the adaption of their urbanization model to the fundamentals of the NUA and its local implementation in Cuba.

On 28 October to 1 November, during my visit to China, my participation in a number of key events related to World Cities Day in Shanghai and Guangzhou, contributed to the efforts in raising the international community's interest in global urbanization and in pushing forward cooperation among partners and countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.

On 2-3 November, I paid an official visit to Lima, Peru, invited by the President of the Latin-American Development Bank (CAF), to deliver a keynote speech. Building on the spirit of Habitat III and the strategic relevance of urbanization to sustainable development, this is the first time that a regional bank, hosts a meeting on cities and the NUA, with a relevant presence of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development and high level officials from the region. During the event I met with the Vice President of Argentina, the ministers of Chile and Paraguay, different mayors from the region among others. This meeting was an example of the cooperation of a private sector initiative with the UN system (UN-Habitat) in achieving the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

On 8-9 November, the Chief Executive Board, hosted by the Secretary-General in New York, provided an opportunity to participate in important discussions regarding the on-going reform of the UN, including contributing with points on UN-Habitat's strategic role in the broader UN Development System.

On 10-12 November, I participated in a number of key side events of COP23 in Bonn, Germany, including the highly visible Human Settlements Action Day. Together with partners, I also launched a new UN-Habitat cooperative initiative called "Planners for Climate Action", whereby I contributed to raising awareness with key stakeholders, on the importance of scaling up climate action in urban and regional planning around the world.

On 14 November, I participated in the Smart City Expo World Congress 2017 "Empowered cities, empower people", which aimed to collectivize urban power, to increase the strength of cities, to identify business opportunities, to establish partnerships and contribute to enacting common policies. The event also aimed at leveraging the implementation and follow-up of global agendas, including the NUA, at local and national level. My intervention directly contributed to demonstrating and contextualizing the NUA, reiterating its value as a tool for development and role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On 16-17 November, I participated in the Global Conference on Cities & Migration in Mechelen, Belgium, which was initiated by the Director General of IOM and myself at Habitat III in Quito. It was co-organized with UCLG, the Belgian Government and the City of Mechelen in view of following up on the implementation of the relevant elements of the NUA and to

galvanize the voice of local and regional governments as an input into the Global Compact on Migration. The successful outcome of the Conference is the Mechelen Declaration; whereby local and regional governments advocate addressing certain policy gaps in the upcoming Global Compact on Migration, including an annex of potential commitments for joint work with national governments and other relevant stakeholders building on the NUA.

On 27-28 November, during my trip to Rotterdam, The Netherlands, I attended the regional European Union Urban Forum / Cities Forum, where I engaged with ministers, mayors and European Union officials assessing the challenges and opportunities faced in the implementation of the NUA in the region. These encounters allowed for further strengthening of UN-Habitat's relationship with the European Union and its Member States.

On 4 December, I participated in the UNWTO's Global Summit on Urban Tourism in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, whereby my role in the event was aimed at highlighting how the NUA can play a key role in the field of sustainable urban tourism development, thereby, a key tool for sustainable development.

Missions by the Deputy Executive Director:

The focus of the Deputy Executive Director's (DED) missions was on strategically strengthening UN-Habitat's role as focal point for urbanization in the UN-system in the context of the overall UN Development System reform. She sought support to strengthen UN-Habitat and further its cooperation with Member States, sister agencies, as well as other stakeholders.

The DED travelled to Japan (2-4 October) to contribute to a Forum on the "Future City Initiative". She highlighted the importance of sound policy coherence across all levels of government and the role of local governments in implementing the SDGs, using the New Urban Agenda (NUA) tools. During her visit, she met with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussing the cooperation with the Government of Japan, particularly on the humanitarian-development nexus. She also took part in a meeting of UN Offices in Japan to discuss the SG's reform agenda with the DSG, Ms. Amina Mohammed.

The DED travelled to New York (16-20 October) to support negotiations of the 2nd Committee Resolution. She also held several bilateral meetings with Member States and co-hosted a movie screening with the PR of Slovakia, followed by a panel discussion on urban marginalization. She further met with the UNDP Administrator and with UNDESA to discuss renewed and strengthened partnerships and joint programmes.

In Brussels (23-25 October), the DED gave several speeches on urbanization and technology at the Global Science Technology and Innovation Conference (G-STIC), showcasing our partnerships enhancing inclusive, affordable and sustainable basic services in mobility, energy, and sanitation, fostering the implementation of SDGs in cities. She met with the ED of UNITAR, discussing joint training and capacity building programmes to Member States, discussed a potential joint WUF 9 event with the DG of UNIDO and had a bilateral with the

Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where increased exchange on the urban related portfolio was agreed.

In Norway (25-27 October) the DED attended the “Localizing SDGs” event in Asker to support cities in using NUA tools in the localization of SDGs and to appreciate this being piloted in a developed economy. She also held bilateral meetings with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appreciating the continuously strong partnership, and met with the NGO Habitat Norway, using the platform for mobilizing and campaigning for policy reviews and implementation of the NUA in the context of urban October. She also spoke at an event by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the role of the private sector in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The DED visited Iraq (4-7 November), inaugurating returnees’ low-cost housing settlements and handing over newly rehabilitated houses, both in the liberated area of Ramadi. These projects are examples of how UN-Habitat can engage in humanitarian post-crisis backgrounds to implement the SDGs. She highlighted the role of the successful cooperation with the Iraqi government and especially Japan, but also the US, as key donors and held a joint press conference with the Japanese Ambassador in Baghdad. She met with relevant Iraqi Ministries, the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, as well as other bodies. She signed a Letter of Intent to launch the Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience Data Platform with the Ministry of Planning and launched the Iraq National Housing Policy with the Minister of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works. She also met with USAid to discuss potential collaboration, held an online meeting with the DSRSG, addressed a Country Team meeting and hosted a dinner for all sister agencies and other strategic partners.

The DED visited COP23 in Bonn (8-13 November). She provided a keynote address to the Focal Point Forum on Human Settlements and Adaptation of the Nairobi Work Programme, highlighting the importance of coherent policy designs across all levels of government. She further spoke at a number of events, including on “Advancing science to accelerate effective climate action in human settlements”, moderated a panel session of Women leaders on “Making human settlements inclusive, sustainable and resilient, and chaired a session on “Joining Forces for Transboundary Climate Action”, featuring leaders from cities, regions and global partnerships. She also held bilateral meetings with Member States and UN-system partners to seek synergies for cooperation.

The DED visited Brussels (14-15 November) to attend the Africa Caribbean Pacific Group of States (ACP) Sub-Committee on the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) to mobilize political and strategic support in facilitating the strategic transition into a bigger partnership program with private sector engagement. She also held bilateral meetings with the ASG of ACP and the Deputy Director General of the EU Commission’s Department of the Department for International Cooperation and Development to further promote the PSUP programme in line with the European Consensus development strategy, to address poverty and exclusion, foster urban public policy alignment with private investment and promote empowerment of especially women and youth.

The DED represented the Secretary-General at the “Security, Democracy & Cities” Conference in Barcelona (15-17 November) hosted by the European Forum for Urban Security

(EFUS). She highlighted the successful cooperation with EFUS since the establishment of the Safer Cities Programme in 1996 and expressed UN-Habitat's support for the Outcome Document (Manifesto) that captures the way forward to co-produce security in city-planning.