

UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Policy

Introduction

The stakeholder engagement policy provides direction on how to engage stakeholders that are impacted upon by UN-Habitat policies and programmes or can influence UN-Habitat decision-making processes. It facilitates gaining stakeholders inputs and responding to their needs. It supports coherence in engagement of stakeholders in UN-Habitat legislative and non-legislative bodies, forums and programmes. The intention is to improve transparency and accountability, build trust and ownership, draw on stakeholders' expertise, and enhance delivery of results.

Background

The Stakeholder engagement policy responds to the UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution GC26/7 – Accreditation of 12 May 2017, endorsed in General Assembly Resolution A/72/8 - Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. In this resolution, Member states recognize the need to reform the accreditation system drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions, to ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, the monitoring of accreditation, and the enhancement of transparency and accountability. The resolution requests the Executive Director, in consultation with Member States, to develop a draft stakeholder engagement policy, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.

This stakeholder engagement policy is intended to provide a continuous accreditation and reporting process, and directives on stakeholders' engagement and participation in both normative and operational work of UN-Habitat. It takes into account UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 19/8 and the UN-Habitat Governing Council Rules of Procedures. It supports implementation of the new Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16, 17, 10, 5, and 11. It further supports GA Resolution A/RES/68/234- Towards Global Partnerships which emphasizes coordination, coherence, accountability and due diligence without imposing undue rigidity in partnership arrangements.

The stakeholder engagement policy supports implementation of UN-Habitat Partnership Strategy 2017-2022. The partnership strategy aims to harness partnerships that UN-Habitat needs to

successfully coordinate and implement the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and urban related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The stakeholder engagement policy builds on UN-Habitat past experience in stakeholder participation including through existing thematic networks, platforms, programme implementation, Habitat III, and preparation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Urban Development. It supports UN-Habitat mandate and its focal point role for sustainable urban development enshrined in the New Urban Agenda, and respective General Assembly Resolutions including A/RES/72/226.

The Partnerships Strategy emphasizes strategic engagement with national, sub-national and local governments, the UN System, private sector, civil society, knowledge partners, development banks and financial institutions, and implementing partners at all levels for effective implementation, scale up of programmes, and resource mobilization.

The stakeholder engagement policy promotes consistence in the way UN-Habitat engages stakeholders (accredited and non-accredited) at global, regional, national and local levels. Annex I outlines the process followed in the development of this policy.

Objectives

The objectives of the stakeholder engagement policy are to:

1. Increase stakeholders' participation in sessions and intersessions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, within the areas of their competence.
2. Enhance stakeholders' contribution to the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation of, and resource mobilisation for UN-Habitat normative and operational programmes at all levels.
3. Enable stakeholders to understand UN-Habitat policies, priority areas for action, limitations, and opportunities for engagement.
4. Enable UN-Habitat to understand and respond to stakeholders' perceptions and interests, and to manage stakeholders' expectations.

Guiding Principles

The key guiding principles for the stakeholder engagement policy are as follows:

- a) Equality, accessibility, inclusion and non-discrimination to ensure genuine and meaningful participation so "no one is left behind",
- b) Shared responsibility and ownership,
- c) Transparency and accountability
- d) A focus on results, impact and transformative change in lives and processes

- e) Sustainability to institutionalize long term commitment to stakeholder engagement with UN-Habitat and beyond

Expected Outcomes

This stakeholder engagement policy will lead to:

1. Enhanced stakeholders' voices and inputs into UN-Habitat policies and decisions, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation through:
 - Significant increase in stakeholder participation and collaboration in the identification of priority areas for action, development of UN-Habitat policies, strategic plan and programmes,
 - Improved stakeholder access to information and other resources,
 - Increased design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of inclusive policies and programmes reflecting stakeholders' realities and drawing on innovative practices and lessons learned.
2. Enhanced quality and scale of UN-Habitat's interventions through respective comparative advantages, leveraging resources, sharing innovations and promoting collaboration among stakeholders
3. Improved UN-Habitat impact and credibility through:
 - Increased demand for UN-Habitat's activities, technical support, etc.,
 - Increased delivery of transformative programmes and projects in collaboration with stakeholders at all levels,
 - Increased relevancy and effectiveness of UN-Habitat policies, decisions and programmes
 - Improved partnerships, open and transparent communication with stakeholders.

The policy is complemented by the following existing policies, strategies and guidelines:

- a) UN-Habitat's Partnership Strategy 2017-2022
- b) Implementing Partners' Policy and Operating Procedures
- c) Guidelines for preparation of legal agreements with stakeholders
- d) accreditation requirements for stakeholders (see annex 3b).

Critical Focus Areas of the Policy

The stakeholder engagement policy addresses the following three critical areas namely accreditation, enhanced coherence in stakeholder engagement; and stakeholder's participation:

1. Focus Area 1 - Accreditation

The UN-Habitat Governing Council Rules of Procedure 64 – local authorities and 65-67 Other Habitat Agenda Partners, and Non-Governmental Organisations, GC resolutions 19/8 and 26/7 provide space for stakeholders to participate as observers in public meetings of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and its subsidiary organs. [Such participation has been possible based on:

- a) Non-Governmental Organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC
- b) Habitat Agenda Partners accredited to Habitat II
- c) Ad-hoc accreditation of other Habitat Agenda Partners on a no objection basis after the application of the 10 weeks rule.
- d) Stakeholders accredited to Habitat III.]

1.2 Provision for continuous accreditation

To strengthen the accreditation process and ensure that accredited partners and stakeholders remain relevant to the overall agenda of UN-Habitat, that is, human settlements and sustainable urban development, this policy provides for continuous accreditation and reporting as follows:

- a) Non-Governmental Organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC and stakeholders accredited to Habitat III shall be accredited to the sessions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council in accordance with Rule 66 of GC Rules of Procedure, operative paragraph 3 of GC resolution 19/8; and operative paragraph 1 of the GC resolution 26/7 respectively.
- b) Local authorities shall participate in the Sessions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and its subsidiary organs in accordance with rule 64 of the UN-Habitat Governing Council rules of procedure, and operative paragraphs 2 of GC resolution 19/8.
- c) Habitat Agenda Partners accredited to Habitat II in 1996 shall renew their accreditation, and submit all accreditation requirements to the Secretariat for review and approval based on accreditation criteria approved by Member States. The criteria and requirements for accreditation are attached in Annex III.
- d) Other stakeholders not in category a), b) and c) above shall apply for accreditation and submit all accreditation requirements to the Secretariat for review and approval based on criteria approved by Member States. The process shall be completed within three months from the date of application.

1.3 Reporting process

- a) All accredited stakeholders in categories a), b) c) and d) above shall submit to the Secretariat brief periodic reports every two years with regard to the support given to the work of UN-Habitat, especially on implementation of the New Urban Agenda, SDGs and relevant international agreed commitments.
- b) If any stakeholder organization cannot submit a periodic report as required, after three reminders, the Secretariat shall suspend accreditation status with approval of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 1996/31-*Arrangements for consultation with Non-Governmental Organisations*, especially Part VIII – Suspension and withdrawal of consultative status.

1.4 The role of the Secretariat

The Secretariat through the on-line Partner Information Management System shall facilitate stakeholders' application for accreditation and submission of periodic reports by relevant organisations. The Secretariat shall:

- a) Submit a list of all accredited stakeholders to the Committee of Permanent Representatives at each of their quarterly sessions.
- b) Submit an updated list of organisations accredited to UN-Habitat Governing Council Sessions shall be published in December of every year.
- c) Submit a full list of duly accredited stakeholders, invited by the Executive Director to attend the Governing Council as observers to the Committee of Permanent Representatives 10 weeks before the Governing Council session.
- d) Regularly present to the Committee of Permanent Representatives a list of organisations that submitted periodic reports. These reports will be uploaded on the CPR portal.

2. Focus Area 2 - Stakeholders Participation in Decision Making and the Work of UN-Habitat

The Secretariat shall support stakeholders' engagement and participation in UN-Habitat policy and decision-making processes, programme design, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. The Secretariat will also facilitate stakeholders access to information provided to the Governing Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its Subcommittees including through on-line services.

2.1 Stakeholder Participation in UN-Habitat Governance and Decision-Making Processes:

- a) All duly accredited stakeholders in category 1.2 a), b), c) and d) above shall participate in the Sessions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its Subcommittees as observers in accordance with Rules 64-66 of the Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Governing Council.
- b) An inclusive multi-stakeholder forum shall be held before the Governing Council Session to determine collective inputs and messaging to the Session based on their shared innovations, good practices, strategies and identified policy implications related to implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDGs and UN-Habitat's work. Attention shall be paid to the need to balance representation of organisations operating at local, national, regional and global level.
- c) Furthermore, structured dialogues between stakeholders and the Governing Council shall be arranged during the Governing Council Sessions.
- d) Stakeholders upon invitation by the President of the Governing Council, or respective Chairs of the Committee of Permanent Representatives or the Chair of the Sub-Committee shall make oral and/or written statements as inputs to the discussions on relevant agenda items in their areas of work and special competence including the Drafting Committee, Committee of the Whole, and discussions on UN-Habitat Governance, etc.
- e) Stakeholders shall continue to participate in the GC Session dialogue as provided in the Governing Council Rules of Procedure.
- f) Member states shall be encouraged to include other stakeholders in their delegations to the Governing Council, and as members of National Habitat Committees.

2.2 Stakeholder Participation in UN-Habitat's Work

Due attention shall be paid to strengthening stakeholder participation and voice at global, regional, national, local and community level, working with a range of inclusive multi stakeholder platforms, networks, alliances, grassroots and community based organisations, as well as the people's process.

- a) Stakeholders shall continue to serve as members of existing UN-Habitat thematic and cross-sectoral advisory boards and their governance structures, inclusive of multi-

stakeholder platforms, networks, alliances, grassroots, and community development councils.

- b) Stakeholders through various networks, platforms and alliances as well as the Stakeholder Advisory Group below shall be consulted during the design of the Medium Strategic Plan and related Work Programmes, regional and country specific programmes to ensure these plans respond to stakeholder needs and priorities. A Stakeholder participation plan shall be an integral part of the roadmap for preparation of Medium Strategic Plan and related Work Programmes.
- c) Multi-stakeholder groups shall be consulted in the design of Habitat Country Programmes.
- d) Stakeholders shall act as implementing partners for UN-Habitat programmes through open and transparent processes in accordance with the UN-Habitat Implementing Partners Policy and Operating Procedures.

3. Focus area 3 - Enhanced coherence in stakeholder¹ engagement in UN-Habitat work

To-date, UN-Habitat works with several multi stakeholder networks, alliances, platforms, grassroots, community based organisations through dialogues, joint programmes, partnerships and the peoples process. These comprise both issue-based and cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder networks and platforms. The stakeholder engagement policy provides for an institutional framework and tools to ensure coherence and coordination in stakeholder engagement and participation as follows:

- a) A stakeholder advisory group to *inter alia*:
 - i. advice the Executive Director on stakeholder engagement and collaboration with UN-Habitat
 - ii. Consolidate stakeholder inputs and provide feedback to stakeholders on decisions and issues emerging from the Governing Council sessions
 - iii. Dialogue with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Bureau of the Governing Council on stakeholder perspectives on key policy issues, decisions and programmes under discussion.

¹ Stakeholders are either individuals, organisations, or companies that benefit from, support or influence UN-Habitat policies and programmes at all levels.

- iv. Co-lead with the Secretariat inclusive multi stakeholder meetings to be held before the UN-Habitat Governing Council Sessions
- b) An internal stakeholder engagement committee to *inter alia*:
- i. ensure internal coherence and coordination of stakeholder engagement and participation
 - ii. facilitate synergies and collaboration among various stakeholder networks and platforms across UN-Habitat programmes
 - iii. review and advise on establishment and work of UN-Habitat networks, platforms, and other stakeholder alliances
 - iv. review internal stakeholder engagement procedures, guidelines and communication
 - v. act as resource persons on stakeholder engagement within UN-Habitat, including training and capacity building

4. Support to Implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy

UN-Habitat shall facilitate implementation of the stakeholder engagement policy through the following approaches:

- a) *Access to information* through sharing of with stakeholders session papers of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its Sub-Committees, publications - reports, brochures, newsletters; press releases, statements and speeches, social media campaigns, websites, online mailing lists, email messaging, etc.
- b) *Response to stakeholders' voices, perspectives, etc.* through face-to-face and virtual meetings, online surveys and stakeholder interviews, email feedback forms, stakeholders help desk, media articles, voluntary reporting, project/programme evaluations, oral and written submissions.
- c) *Stakeholder inclusion and participation* in UN-Habitat Platforms, Networks, Advisory Boards, Expert Group Meetings, Workshops, and as implementing partners, etc.
- d) *Collaboration and coordination* through joint projects and programmes, joint programming, joint advocacy, joint knowledge generation, data sharing, and innovation, joint position papers, partnerships, peer to peer exchanges, city to city cooperation, and south to south cooperation.

- e) Capacity building to enhance effectiveness of stakeholders' engagement and participation.
- f) Resource mobilization, leverage, coordination and collaboration with major urban sector donors as per their respective focus areas.

The operationalization of a stakeholder engagement policy will be supported by:

- a) stakeholders' collaborative framework
- b) a handbook on how to engage with UN-Habitat for stakeholders,
- c) a guidance Note for staff on stakeholder engagement, and
- d) a Partner Information Management System

5. Review of impact of the Stakeholder Engagement policy

The progress on implementation and impact of the stakeholder engagement policy should be reviewed every four years.

A stakeholder mapping exercise will be undertaken every two years in conjunction with the Governing Council Sessions to establish new strategic partners and platforms that support implementation of urban related SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, and UN-Habitat normative and operational programmes.

Conclusion

This stakeholder engagement policy, when implemented effectively will enhance trust and a sense of ownership of UN-Habitat's work and agenda by stakeholders at various levels. It promotes transparency, accountability, and equality of stakeholders in their engagement and participation towards common goals. This policy will therefore contribute towards enduring partnerships, upscaling and sustainability of UN-Habitat's, Member States' and stakeholders' interventions through mutual leveraging of knowledge, expertise and resources.

Annex I

The Process of developing a stakeholder engagement policy

Preparation of the stakeholder engagement policy has been informed by the following actions:

- Review of various stakeholder engagement policies in the UN system, and other multi-lateral organisations
- UN-Habitat stakeholder analysis
- Review of MOPAN Report on enhancing partnerships in programme design, monitoring and evaluation
- Dialogues with a voluntary stakeholder reference group representative of various multi stakeholder platforms, and experts
- Preparation of the Stakeholder collaborative framework, including consultation with stakeholders at WUF9
- Outcome of various sessions on multi stakeholder partnerships held at the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

Annex II (Discussion note - Not to be annexed in final policy)

Current accreditation procedures and challenges

The UN-Habitat Governing Council Rules of Procedure in rules 65, 66 and 67 provides for participation of duly accredited other Habitat Agenda Partners and Non-Governmental Organisations in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to attend as observers the UN-Habitat Governing Council Sessions, and to make oral and written statements on issues before the Governing Council and within their area of competence.

The UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolutions 19/8 – arrangements regarding accreditation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda Partners of 9th May 2003, and resolution 26/7 – Accreditation of 12 May 2017 provide further guidance on accreditation. In resolution 19/8 Member States decided:

- “1. to reconfirm, on request, the accreditation to the Governing Council of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners that were accredited to the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and to the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda;*
- 2. that accreditation of other local authorities referred to in rule 64 of the rules of procedure shall be approved by the Governing Council on the recommendation of the Executive Director in consultation with the Bureau of the Governing Council;*
- 3. that accreditation shall be automatically granted, on request, to non-governmental organizations, including other Habitat Agenda partners, which are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council;*
- 4. that other Habitat Agenda partners referred to in rule 65 of the rules of procedure that were not accredited according to operative paragraphs 1 and 3 above may be invited by the Executive Director and accredited on an ad hoc basis to a session of the Governing Council:”*

In GC resolution 26/7 Member States also decided as follows:

“to reconfirm, upon request, the accreditation to the Governing Council of the stakeholders that were accredited to Habitat III;”

Accreditation allows local authorities, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to attend as observers the GC sessions, provided their work is relevant to the issues before the GC and within their competence. Based on the GC Rules of Procedure 65-67, and the GC resolutions 19/8 of 9th May 2003, and 26/7 of 12th May 2017, accreditation to GC sessions is done on an adhoc basis, except for non- governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, the 1945 Habitat Agenda Partners accredited to Habitat II, and now the 117 organisations accredited to the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Urban Development (Habitat III).

However, the current accreditation arrangement poses two main challenges. First, organisations that seek accreditation to UN-Habitat at the time when the Governing Council is not in session, usually wait for almost two years prior to accreditation approval, as there is no mechanism for accreditation between Governing Council Sessions. Second, there is no way to ascertain areas of work and competence for organisations accredited to ECOSOC, Habitat II and III. Moreover, many organisations in this category have not engaged with UN-Habitat since their accreditation and for some, this might be decades ago. Consequently, there is lack of accountability for sustainable urban development actions on the part of these organisations.

Experience from the UN system

Other sister agencies like UNEP and the Department for Economic and Social Affairs do require all organisations including organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC to apply for accreditation to the UN Environmental Assembly, and other UN meetings held in New York respectively. This is done almost every two years to ensure that stakeholders accredited to respective meetings are working in relevant areas, for example environment.

According to ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC are required to submit quadrennial reports as evidence of continued engagement and relevance to the UN agenda. Non compliance, after several reminders would lead to suspension of the consultative status. But it is also possible that some organisations change areas of focus over time for different reasons.

Annex III

a) Proposed Accreditation Criteria for consideration by Member States

- i. The stakeholder organization shall be a legal entity duly registered, with a governance structure, Secretariat, and in existence for two years.
- ii. The vision and mission of the stakeholder organization shall be in line with UN-Habitat's mandate, sustainable urban development, especially in relation to the new urban agenda and SDGs
- iii. The stakeholder organization should be credible with duly audited accounts, and with a track record in the field of sustainable urban development.
- iv. All relevant stakeholders operating at global, regional, national or local level shall be accredited, provided they meet the accreditation requirements below.
- v. Multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances shall demonstrate due diligence in their own membership management

b) Accreditation requirements

Organizations seeking accreditation to the Sessions of UN-Habitat Governing Council are required to submit the following details to confirm that the organization is a legal entity with established governance structure, and operational areas relevant to sustainable urbanization and human settlements development.

General Information Required:

- Date
- Name of Organization
- Address
- Telephone
- Email
- Website
- Contact (Name of Head of Organisation and title)
- Scope (National/Regional/International)
- Purpose, objectives and summary of activities

Attachments Required

- The purpose of the organization.
- Documented confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international level, especially in areas relevant to housing, urban development and human settlements with detailed information in the country (s) in which they are carried out.
- Copies of the annual or other reports of the organization with financial statements, and a list of financial sources and contributions, including contributions from Governments.
- A list of members of the governing body of the organization and their nationalities.
- A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution.
- A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization and a copy of the registration / incorporation of the entity as applicable.