



UN HABITAT United Nations
Habitat Assembly
of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme

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**United Nations Habitat Assembly of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

First session

Nairobi, 27–31 May 2019

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

**Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme, including coordination matters**

**Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on its
work during the intersessional period**

Addendum

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat hereby transmits to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on its 72nd regular meeting as part of its work for the period 2017–2019.

I. Introduction

1. The Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat held its 72nd regular meeting on 10 April 2019.

II. 72nd regular meeting, 10 April 2019

2. At the 72nd meeting, the Executive Director briefed the Committee of Permanent Representatives on developments regarding the governance structure and internal reform of UN-Habitat, the preparations for the first session of the new governing body of UN-Habitat, the UN-Habitat Assembly, and the financial situation of the Programme.

3. With regard to the governance reform of UN-Habitat, she highlighted as a major milestone the adoption by the General Assembly, on 20 December 2018, of resolution 73/239, in which it had approved a new governance structure for UN-Habitat. Given that Member States had been reviewing the governance structure of UN-Habitat for 14 years, the adoption of the resolution constituted a remarkable achievement by Member States and signalled a bright future for the organization, whose agility, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, transparency and relevance would continue to improve under its new governance structure.

4. In line with resolution 73/239, the secretariat had continued with its efforts to restructure and reform UN-Habitat in order to ensure that it was fit-for-purpose and ready to implement the new strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, which the Committee had approved. The reform process was guided by a document entitled “Guiding framework for the UN-Habitat change process: changing to increase impact”, and would be completed by 31 December 2019.

* HSP/HA/1/1.

5. A financial and management audit of UN-Habitat had been conducted, and a first draft of the audit report had been completed on 31 March 2019. On the basis of the report, and with delegated authority from the Secretary General, the Executive Director would consider how to improve management, processes, finance and fundraising.

6. With regard to the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Executive Director had engaged with regional groups in March 2019 in preparation for the session and conveyed to them that the key objectives of the first session should be to garner strong political and financial support for the Assembly and build strategic alliances in order to strengthen the position of UN-Habitat as a centre of excellence and global leader in the field of urbanization and human settlements. Funding the session remained a key challenge, however, because the funds that had been allocated to the twenty-seventh session of the 58-member Governing Council would not be sufficient to convene the first session of a new governing body that had universal membership. The Executive Director provided an overview of the budget for the first session of the Assembly, which had been revised by the secretariat following consultations with the expanded Bureau and stood at \$2.2 million, including a shortfall of \$1.3 million. The budget included travel costs of nearly \$500,000 to support the participation of least developed countries in the session, as well as costs associated with the personnel, equipment and contractual and other services required for the session. She highlighted the programme for the session, noting that the secretariat had reviewed the programme on the basis of feedback received from members of the expanded Bureau and would welcome additional feedback on the proposed programme. The theme of the session was “Innovation for a better quality of life in cities and communities: accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals”.

7. The Chair of the Committee recalled that, in its resolution 73/239 of 20 December 2018, the General Assembly had endorsed the findings and recommendations on changing the governance structure of UN-Habitat of the open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/226, and had decided to dissolve the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and replace it with the UN-Habitat Assembly. He stated that, in preparation for the first session of the Assembly, the Bureau had met four times in 2019 in an expanded format that had included Bureau members and the chairs and representatives of regional and political groups, to discuss issues related to the session. Some of the Bureau recommendations had been discussed by the subcommittee at a meeting held on 25 January 2019, including the provisional agenda of the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its rules of procedure. At its meeting on 9 April, the expanded Bureau had discussed the draft programme, format and budget estimates for the session and made recommendations thereon to the secretariat. He said that the expanded Bureau would meet again to consider the budgetary situation with respect to the first session of the Assembly, with a view to ensuring the success of the session.

8. The Chair further drew attention to a non-exhaustive list of expected actions by the UN-Habitat Assembly and the executive board at their first sessions, including action on draft decisions and draft resolutions, the adoption of a ministerial declaration, the adoption of rules of procedure and the election of the members of the executive board, among others. In that regard, the Chair clarified that the draft resolution on the work programme and budget for 2020 would be considered for possible adoption by the executive board.

9. The Committee agreed to entrust the subcommittee with the finalization of the draft rules of procedure of both the Assembly and the executive board in the lead-up to the first session, and to set 30 April 2019 as a “soft deadline” for the submission, by member States, of any additional draft resolutions or decisions to be considered by the Assembly and the executive board at the first session, in order to facilitate discussion by the subcommittee on all the draft resolutions and draft decisions in the lead-up thereto.

10. The Committee also decided that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly would guide the work of the UN-Habitat governing bodies pending the adoption of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly and of the executive board.

11. The Committee mandated the Chair to facilitate the consultations on a draft ministerial declaration in the context of the subcommittee.

12. The Chair urged regional groups to select their nominees to the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the executive board so that the lists were ready a week prior to the opening of the first session. He stressed that member States had not yet decided whether the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly should comprise 5 or 10 members, and recalled that its office bearers would be appointed following the pattern for geographical rotation that was being applied for the Governing Council. Accordingly, the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly would be selected from among the Latin American and Caribbean States and the Rapporteur would be selected from among the Asia-Pacific States.

13. With regard to the financial situation of UN-Habitat, the Executive Director reported that, during 2018, out of an approved budget of \$13 million, the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation general purpose fund had received only \$6 million and had incurred expenditures of \$6.2 million. UN-Habitat had received and expended the \$13 million received from the regular budget of the United Nations. The programme support cost account had received \$10.4 million out of the budgeted \$13.2 million and had incurred expenditures of \$11.9 million. The Foundation special purpose account had received \$48.2 million out of the budgeted \$65.7 million and had incurred expenditures of \$40.8 million. Lastly, out of the approved \$148.2 million, \$116.8 million had been received by the technical cooperation fund, which had incurred expenditures of \$113.3 million.
 14. The Executive Director said that, thanks in part to contributions of non-earmarked funding by member States, the deficit had been reduced from \$5.5 million in 2017 to \$1.7 million in 2018. However, additional non-earmarked contributions to the Programme were urgently needed, as there continued to be insufficient support for the normative work of UN-Habitat, which was funded through non-earmarked contributions. Achieving a balance between earmarked and non-earmarked funds remained critical.
 15. The Committee was briefed on the 2018 annual progress report on the implementation of the strategic plan for 2014–2019 and on the work programme for the period 2018–2019. Salient aspects of the annual progress report included the institutional and programmatic achievements made in 2018 by all the UN-Habitat organizational units as well as the progress and results achieved at the subnational, national and global levels against indicator targets for the period 2018–2019.
 16. The Committee was briefed on the preparations for the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, which would be held in Abu Dhabi from 8 to 13 February 2020, under the Committee-approved theme “Cities of opportunities – connecting culture and innovation”.
 17. The Committee was briefed on the collaboration between UN-Habitat and the European Union spanning over a decade, with emphasis on the shift from a donor-contractor to a strategic knowledge partnership.
 18. The Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Choi Yeonghan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to UN-Habitat, as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the period 2018–2019.
 19. The Committee took note of the report on the work of its subcommittees.
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