



**Executive Board
of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme**

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**Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme**

First meeting (resumed)

Nairobi, 19 and 20 November 2019

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Briefing on the status of implementation of resolutions
and decisions adopted during the first session of the
UN-Habitat Assembly**

**Progress report of the Executive Director on the
implementation of resolutions and decisions adopted during the
first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly**

Summary

The present report provides the status of implementation of resolutions and of a decision adopted by the first session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly), namely resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements; resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements; resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements; and decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

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* HSP/EB.1/1/Rev.1.

Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human settlements

1. As at August 2019, the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements had been uploaded to the UN-Habitat website. They will be published by UN-Habitat ahead of the resumed first meeting of the Executive Board.
2. In addition, UN-Habitat convened its first informal working group of United Nations agencies in the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held on 16 July 2019 in New York. The informal working group will report on the adoption of the Guidelines and initiate steps towards the development of a concept note, including financial costing, on the implementation of a review process for the Guidelines in a manner that enables member States to share their experiences and best practices. At an informal working group meeting held at the headquarters of the United Nations Children's Fund, the working group agreed to include both a programmatic framework and an indicator matrix based on the Guidelines in the concept note for presentation to the Executive Board at its session in 2020. In addition, the group agreed to take into consideration three interlinked processes as part of the review process for the Guidelines: (1) the strengthening of the Safer Cities Programme at UN-Habitat; (2) the identification of champion countries to spearhead the implementation of the Guidelines in their national urban policy frameworks and in their city development and growth strategies; and (3) the adoption of an intensive focus on evaluation and impact assessment.
3. In the lead-up to the next session of the World Urban Forum, an online survey will be disseminated to Member States to assess the specific contexts and current approach to safety in cities and human settlements, with a view to encouraging further dialogue and collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders, including from civil society, for the promotion and further refinement of their approaches to safer cities and human settlements in line with the Guidelines. The feedback will also inform the further development of the concept note for the review process.
4. In line with the United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development, a second informal working group of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds working in the field of urban crime prevention and safety will be convened in New York in October 2019 to follow up on the programmatic framework and indicator matrix and to share their ongoing programming and experiences in making cities and human settlements safer. The second informal working group will consider the steps required to develop an inter-agency framework to support UN-Habitat as a focal point in the United Nations system for sustainable urbanization in the implementation of the Guidelines. UN-Habitat is preparing a publication on the value and delivery of the safer cities approach, based on its practical experiences and lessons, to share with other United Nations agencies.
5. In line with the 2020–2023 UN-Habitat strategic plan, which identifies safety as a cross-cutting theme, UN-Habitat is exploring practical ways of following up on the use and application of the Guidelines for the effective implementation of the Safer Cities Programme and seeking to enhance partnerships with other United Nations bodies, local authorities and associations, relevant international professional associations, non-governmental organizations and other major groups. A first draft of urban safety indicators is being compiled to guide this work.

Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

6. In resolution 1/3, the UN-Habitat Assembly requested the Executive Director to develop a draft strategy to strengthen the coordination of capacity-building as a cross-cutting function based on an integrated capacity-building approach, with inclusive consultations that take into account the needs of Member States and within the scope of available resources, which can support Member States in their efforts to mobilize human and financial resources to develop and implement capacity-building programmes. The Assembly also invited Member States to voluntarily contribute to that strategy.
7. Capacity-building can be defined as a change process comprised of a set of learning activities whereby individuals and institutions develop and acquire knowledge, skills, know-how, methods and tools that strengthen their ability to effectively intervene in, transform and improve the environment in which they operate.
8. The Research and Capacity-Building Branch of UN-Habitat organized a brown bag meeting on 27 June 2019, after the conclusion of the UN-Habitat Assembly. This interactive session focused on capacity-building as a crucial means of implementing the mandate of UN-Habitat, reviewing and showcasing ongoing work to realize the capacity-building functions for which the Branch is responsible. The presentation and discussions that followed revealed that capacity-building is carried

out across the organization in various ways. In 2018, there were 50 days per month of seminars, workshops, expert group meetings and training sessions organized by UN-Habitat, as referred to in the 2020 work programme report. The enormous amount of work being done is, however, failing to realize its potential because of inadequate harmonization and the need for better integration and coordination.

9. During the session, an interactive mobile phone quiz was employed to gather feedback from participants on their views and experiences with capacity-building. The brown bag session confirmed that, while UN-Habitat has many achievements in that regard, more can be done to have a greater long-term impact on knowledge, skills and learning at the country and city levels.

10. The Research and Capacity-Building Branch revisited the bulk of the capacity-building work done over the past three years, including a study on centres of excellence within the United Nations system and an analysis of the ways in which capacity-building functions are implemented in different organizations. The Branch also prepared concept notes focusing on a global programme and a capacity-building strategy, which were presented to the project advisory group, generating positive feedback from meeting participants.

11. As part of an in-house inventory of capacity-building practices and experiences across the units of UN-Habitat, an online survey was launched and sent to all staff on 3 August 2019. The survey should enable UN-Habitat to map the breadth of capacity-building practices within the Programme, which will lay the foundation to create a well-informed, integrated and coordinated capacity-building strategy. That survey is still under way.

12. Currently, an initial draft of the strategy is being prepared, taking into account ongoing restructuring and organizational change. As part of this process, UN-Habitat is reaching out to various capacity-building partners, including universities, national and international training institutions and research centres, and key United Nations partners. The latter include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), as well as the UN-Habitat Partners University Initiative, the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative and the One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership.

13. An interactive session with representatives of Member States in Nairobi will also be organized to exchange views and ideas in order to enrich the content and approach of the capacity-building strategy.

Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

14. The key priorities set out in resolution 1/4 include the execution of a two-fold gender strategy for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat and the establishment of policies and programmes to support efforts to foster gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender mainstreaming within the work of the Programme is also prioritized.

15. To guarantee the impactful mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment, the gender and human rights team has taken an active role in various reform processes, including in the finalization of documents related to the strategic plan, such as the results framework, and in the overall organizational restructuring and reform of programming systems. The gender equality and human rights unit is currently developing a number of updated systems and processes to propose to the Executive Director to ensure that gender and human rights, as well as other social inclusion issues, are more effectively incorporated at all stages of project development cycles, from initial analysis, design and formulation to implementation, monitoring and final evaluation.

16. The revision of existing cross-cutting markers and the development of new social inclusion markers is also under way. These initiatives are aimed at enabling UN-Habitat colleagues to have a clear and straightforward understanding of how to consider social inclusion issues in their work, including those relevant to gender, youth, human rights, older persons, children and people with disabilities. To familiarize colleagues with these initiatives and tools, the team is devising an internal campaign and raising awareness on social inclusion issues.

17. As implementation begins for the UN-Habitat 2020–2023 strategic plan, the gender and human rights team is planning to increase its gender-specific programming by planning projects with gender-specific outcomes. Priorities identified in this context include specific projects and work embedded in existing UN-Habitat priorities on urban planning, public space, housing, safety and

mobility, people on the move (for example, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants), humanitarian assistance in conflict situations and sustainable energy solutions. Proposals will be developed following more in-depth consultations with UN-Habitat colleagues and partners and will initially target projects in the larger programmes, including those in Somalia and Afghanistan.

18. The adoption of resolution 1/4 further highlighted the need for UN-Habitat to engage meaningfully with partners in order to improve efficiency and have a greater impact. Since its adoption, UN-Habitat has been focusing on increasing engagement with partners in the context of women's empowerment and gender equality. This includes engagement within the United Nations system, where UN-Habitat is supporting the establishment of an international gender champion hub in Nairobi together with other United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNEP. Heads of international organizations, regional heads and Member States represented by their ambassadors or heads of missions based in Nairobi are also involved. In that regard, UN-Habitat has been following up on the possibility of joint programming with UNEP on women's economic empowerment through the development of sustainable markets and waste management. Initial assessments have already taken place.

19. The priority of UN-Habitat until the end of 2019 in this context is to strengthen existing partnerships with United Nations entities, civil society and other stakeholders and to engage with new partners. Furthermore, the effective engagement of partners, including women leaders, with local authorities and civil society will be promoted as the preparations for the tenth session of the World Urban Forum continue. The priority of UN-Habitat in that regard is to ensure the effective, inclusive and diverse participation of women and other groups in the tenth Forum and thereby guarantee meaningful outcomes with respect to gender issues. UN-Habitat intends to continue its partnership with Member States to ensure the prioritization of gender equality and women's empowerment.

20. In resolution 1/4, the Assembly urged the Executive Director to support and make optimal use of the Advisory Group on Gender Issues. The Advisory Group is responsible for advising the Executive Director on all issues related to gender equality, both within the agency and externally, identifying emerging global issues and trends. UN-Habitat has maintained close collaboration with the Advisory Group, most recently in the context of developing the UN-Habitat 2020–2023 strategic plan and its accompanying documents, including the results framework. UN-Habitat values the expert input of the Advisory Group, which has strengthened the gender focus of the accompanying documents. Moving forward, the Advisory Group will continue to play a key role, including in the organization of the next session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in March 2020. It is expected that Advisory Group will continue to support UN-Habitat in ensuring the inclusive and diverse participation and engagement of stakeholders that are active in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion.

21. This resolution seeks to ensure that gender equality perspectives are mainstreamed and continue to be reflected in all UN-Habitat policies, programmes and projects. Finally, in the same resolution, the Assembly requested UN-Habitat to develop and implement an updated version of the revised policy and plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in urban development and human settlements. In regard to gender equality, the most recent evaluation of the gender policy and plan took place in 2011, and the work plan for 2020 provides for another evaluation to be conducted.

Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

22. In resolution 1/5, the Assembly requested the Executive Director, in consultation with relevant international and regional institutions, to develop mechanisms, within the scope of available resources, for enhancing urban-rural linkages, and called upon the Executive Board of UN-Habitat to consider possible implementation options. In response, UN-Habitat has been gathering the resources to implement a project based on the guidance set out in the document "Urban-rural linkages: guiding principles and framework for action to advance integrated territorial development", which is currently being applied in nine countries in Africa. The project aims to develop recommendations for mainstreaming urban-rural linkages in national urban policies. Most of the countries are in the design phase at either the national or subnational levels.

23. In resolution 1/5, the Assembly strongly encouraged Member States to take into account urban-rural linkages in their respective national and subnational development planning policies and processes in order to strengthen the economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, including their surrounding territories. The nine countries that are receiving support approached UN-Habitat for assistance in designing national urban policies and highlighted the urban-rural divide as one of the key policy issues to be addressed. The United Nations Development

Account is the source of funding for project implementation in Cameroon, Guinea, Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania. In Mozambique, support is funded by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation of Spain. Funding for Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Senegal is provided by the Spanish Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo.

24. In the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Executive Director, within the scope of available resources, to raise awareness among Member States and local authorities regarding the impact of urban-rural linkages on sustainable urbanization, territorial cohesion and national development. In response, UN-Habitat is developing tools, guides and materials to enhance awareness on the importance of those linkages and to provide related support to countries in developing their policies, plans and strategies. The resources include training manuals, fliers, an urban-rural linkages website, thematic guides, newsletters, translations of the urban-rural linkages guiding principles publication into seven languages, advocacy and participation in conferences. All materials and information on all events related to that publication can be found on the urban-rural linkages website.¹ The first international forum on urban-rural linkages will be held in November 2019 in collaboration with the local government of Songyang County, China, to raise the awareness of Member States on the topic.

25. In resolution 1/5, the Assembly also requested the Executive Director, in cooperation with appropriate partners, to disseminate and share good practices and policies relating to the impact of urban-rural linkages that could be replicated in other countries. In response, a first edition of a compendium of best practices in urban-rural linkages, comprised of seven projects shared by partners, has been developed and is being reviewed by the authors prior to finalization and dissemination. A call for case studies has been sent out to relevant stakeholders and partners to assist in designing the second edition of the compendium. UN-Habitat is also developing a platform for sharing best practices from the nine project countries.

26. Finally, in the same resolution, the Assembly further requested the Executive Director, in consultation with appropriate partners and within the scope of available resources, to assist Member States, upon request, in developing policies and programmes to address migration from rural to urban areas. In response, UN-Habitat and its partners have initiated the development of a thematic guide on mainstreaming urban-rural linkages, a framework that can be used by Member States when designing and reviewing their policies. Another guide on mainstreaming migration and humanitarian assistance in national urban policies is also under development.

Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of UN-Habitat

27. Pursuant to decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of UN-Habitat, the Executive Board will, on an exceptional basis, receive the 2019 report on the entire cycle of the 2014–2019 strategic plan. The issue of when the Executive Board should receive the 2019 report has been included on the provisional agenda of the resumed meeting of the Board to be held on 19 and 20 November 2019. The Bureau of the Executive Board has recommended that an item addressing the 2019 annual report for the 2014–2019 strategic plan be included on the provisional agenda at the annual meeting of the Board in March 2020.

28. With regard to the UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement policy, as requested by the Governing Council in its resolution 26/7, the Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board consider establishing an ad hoc working group to continue discussions on the development of that policy, in line with rule 11 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, which provides that the Executive Board may establish ad hoc working groups as and when it deems necessary. The Executive Director proposes that the stakeholder engagement policy working group provide a report on its progress at the next meeting of the Executive Board in 2020 with a view to building consensus on and implementing the policy on an exceptional basis by 2021.

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¹ <https://urbanrurallinkages.wordpress.com/>