

Third Bureau meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2020

14:30 – 15:30 Conference Room 4

Summary of discussions and recommendations emanating from the third Bureau meeting of the Executive Board

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
1.	Adoption of the Agenda	
	<i>Adoption of the provisional Agenda as shared with Bureau members on 17 March 2020.</i>	Adoption of the Agenda
		Adopted
2.	Impact of the Covid-19 situation in Kenya on the upcoming first session of 2020 of the Executive Board	
	Situation in Kenya and possible options for the upcoming 2020 first session of the Executive Board	The Chair provided an update on the Covid-19 situation in Kenya since the last Bureau meeting which was held 06 March 2020 and recalled the measures taken by the Government of Kenya, in order to safeguard public health safety, measures taken by UNON, UN-Habitat and UNHQ (New York, Geneva and Vienna) in light of the evolving situation of Covid-19
		The Bureau did not have specific comment on this update.
	In light of the current situation, the Chair briefed the Bureau on the possible options for the upcoming first session of the Executive Board for the year 2020:	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical session; 2. Virtual session, using a United Nations Video Conferencing or Microsoft Teams; 3. Postponing the upcoming session to a later date. 	The Bureau took note of the different options.
	Option 1 - Physical session: requirements for participation and for decision-making process	Scenario 1: minimal physical presence required
		The physical presence of at least one third of the Executive Board members would be required for the debate to begin.
		The rules on decision-making and participation would need to be announced by the Chair at the beginning of the session and should be reflected in the session's record.
		The Bureau took note the briefing on option 1.

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	<p>Scenario 2: limitation of the meeting to the 36 members of the Executive Board only</p> <p>This would involve limiting the session of the Executive Board to the thirty six members only, who should be physically present. The thirty-six Member States should be seated at an appropriate distance from one another.</p> <p>Member States that are observers as well as IGOs and civil society could watch a live broadcast of the session remotely.</p> <p>Possible challenges of Scenarios 1 and 2</p> <p>In any of the above scenarios of option 1 decision-making would require all Members of the Executive Board to be physically present, otherwise this could be challenged. It being understood that the decision on participation and decision-making is the prerogative of Member States.</p>	
Option 2 - Virtual session: connection options	<p><u>Scenarios</u></p> <p>a) Using United Nations Video Conferencing or Microsoft Teams whereby. Participants can join through the web</p> <p>b) Practical implementation of scenario a) above :</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">i. Scenario a above is a best effort options and would depend a lot on the participants'connection speed and equipment readiness.</p>	<p>The Bureau took note the briefing on option 2.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Given the number of participants expected to attend a possible virtual first session of the Executive Board in 2020, if one or few users have a bad connection, it can ruin the overall experience and will elicit complaints. iii. With respect to user identity and participation, anyone who has the link can open it and it may not possible to know and check the identity of the person connected. iv. There would only be basic session moderation available for scenario a) above. Participants to the session can be muted and the chat can be used to back up the Questions & Answers session. There may, however, not be any option for asking for the floor, no ‘raising hand’ option and no speak on demand option. c) Dial in alternative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Participants can join through a web browser or dial in as backup option. ii. if users have to dial in as a possible alternative, it could be costly to the users as it will be charged as international call. d) On-line meeting platforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Other alternatives to consider could be online meeting platforms such as Cisco, Webex, Zoom, or Bluejeans. ii. These options allow better meeting management and moderation options. These are more user friendly and connectivity alternatives. iii. This service however would be at a cost and would need to be procured. 	

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Legal implications of a virtual session	<p>The Legal Adviser further emphasized that in the event of a virtual session of the Executive Board, the following procedural arrangements should be announced by the Chair at the beginning of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair should at the beginning of the session proceed to a roll call and call every Executive Board member to make sure that there is quorum and that every member is present for the virtual session; - If Conference Services is unable to provide effective interpretation in all languages for the session, this should be announced by the Chair at the beginning of the session and the Chair should obtain the permission of Executive Board members to proceed in English. - With respect to decision making, on a specific decision item, the Chair should make sure consensus has been reached. In case Executive Board members do not reach a consensus where decision making is required, then a vote should be organised by way of roll call in alphabetical order. <p>The report of the session should properly record that the session took place virtually. The Legal Adviser further advised that observers could participate in the virtual session. If, however, the number of participants connected to the session becomes too large, the session should be broadcasted so that Observers can follow the session on a separate channel.</p>	The Bureau took note of the legal implications and procedural arrangements of a virtual meeting.
Option 3 – Postponement of the session	<p>Postponing the session later to June 2020 or even to September which would depend upon how the Covid-19 situation evolves in Kenya and upon an assessment by UNON and the Host Country.</p> <p>Conference Services informed that the current schedule of UN meetings would allow to postpone the session to June 2020 if Bureau members decide to do so.</p> <p>The Executive Director further emphasized that the UN Secretary General requested that UN calendar meetings between March and May 2020 should be postponed.</p>	<p>There were some Bureau Members who felt the session should be postponed.</p> <p>The Bureau took note of this information</p> <p>The Bureau took note of this information</p>
Recommendation from the Bureau on a physical meeting	<p>In light of the evolving global situation with respect to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and measures put in place by both the Government of Kenya and the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) which includes social distancing, a physical meeting of the Executive Board is unattainable at this time.</p>	Agreed

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Recommendations from the Bureau on the upcoming first session of the Executive Board for the year 2020	The Chair emphasized that considering UN-Habitat’s current financial situation and status of voluntary contribution it was crucial to hold the upcoming first session of the year 2020, so that Member States engage with the Organization in the funding situation and remain involved in UN-Habitat’s activities and in the discussions on the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2021.	Agreed
	Postponing the session could impact on the continuity of the work of UN-Habitat and could hamper the interest of Member States in the work of the Organization.	Agreed
	The global response to the current coronavirus outbreak requires an understanding of urban dynamics and of the practices of urban solidarity as the key to overcoming the Covid-19 outbreak.	Agreed
	Member States should take the opportunity of this upcoming first session of the Executive Board for the year 2020 to support UN-Habitat’s natural leadership and catalytic role in the urban dynamics of the Covid-19 outbreak.	Agreed
	To enable the efficient conduct of a virtual meeting, the Agenda items for consideration should be prioritized as follows: 1. Opening of the session. 2. Organizational matters: (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the first session of 2020; (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its resumed first session; (c) Reports of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board: i) Ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative Matters and, ii) Ad hoc working group on Working Methods 3. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters. 4. Status of and discussions on the draft annual work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2021. 5. Election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board. 6. Provisional agenda for the second session of the Executive Board in 2020. 7. Other matters	Agreed
	The Secretariat should work with the UNON Division of Conference Services to ensure the adequate technical capacity is available for the virtual session.	Agreed

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Agenda item		Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
		The Bureau would meet again on Thursday 19 March 2020 from 14:30 to 15:30 to assess the technical capacity available for holding a virtual session.	Agreed
		The Bureau will review this position taking into account both the evolving situation of COVID-19, the technical capacity currently available at UNON for the planned virtual session and any new measures being taken by the relevant authorities. Based on any new development that might occur, the Bureau will remain open to the possibility for postponing the first session of the year 2020 of the Executive Board to a later date.	Agreed