



Guidelines for participants

First session of the UN-Habitat Executive Board in the year 2020 Online, 29, June 2020

Introduction

At its meeting of 6 March 2020, held to prepare for the first session of 2020, the Bureau of the Executive Board recommended, in the light of the evolving global situation with regard to the coronavirus (COVID-19), that the duration of the first session of 2020 of the Executive Board be shortened to two days, on Tuesday, 31 March 2020 and Wednesday, 1 April 2020. The Bureau met again on 19 March 2020 and decided to postpone the first session of Executive Board to a later date given the unpredictable global situation with respect to the COVID - 19.

Subsequently, the Bureau met on 11 May 2020 and decided that aware of the continued unpredictable global situation with respect to COVID 19, and given the importance of business continuity for the Organization and the importance of continuous oversight by Member States of the activities of its activities, the first session of the Executive Board for the year 2020 will take place this time virtually, in English, for one day on 29 June 2020.

1. Purpose

This document provides general guidance to participants on how the online session of the Board in 2020 will be held in a manner that is consistent with **the rules of procedure of the Executive Board** and the legal framework for the sessions of the Board.

These guidelines have been recommended by the Bureau of the Executive Board and by the UN-Habitat Secretariat.

2. Notification of the online first session of the Executive Board

- a) The **notification of the Executive Director** transmitted to Member States on Monday 18 May 2020 informed that pursuant to the recommendation of the Bureau of the Executive Board at its meeting of 11 May 2020 and given the continued unpredictable global situation with COVID-19 which has also impacted on the onsite operations at the headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi, the first session of the Executive Board will be held virtually, in English only, on Monday 29 June 2020.
- b) The provisional Agenda can be found in document **HSP/EB.2020/1/Rev.1**.

3. Registration to the session

(i) Registration modalities and deadlines

- a) All delegates are invited to pre-register online for this virtual session at <https://unhabitat.org/governance/executive-board> from Wednesday, 27 May 2020. When registering, delegates need to communicate a primary and a secondary e-mail address. On-line registration will close on Saturday, 20 June 2020 at midnight, East Africa Time (EAT).
- b) For effective planning for the session, UN Habitat also requires Permanent and Observer Missions in addition to registering online by 20 June 2020, to communicate the names and email addresses of the members of their respective delegations as early as possible, but no later than 22 June 2020. This should be done by an official letter emanating from the Government or a Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of the country to the United Nations or to UN-Habitat to the Secretary to the Governing Bodies of UN Habitat: Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies (Telephone: 254 20 7625221, email: chris.mensah@un.org and unhabitat-sgb@un.org).
- c) In addition, registration and participation of non-governmental organizations in the upcoming session of the UN Habitat Executive Board is subject to the provisions of Rule 69 of the **Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly** as well as rule 17 of the **Rules and Procedure of the Executive Board** of UN-Habitat.
- d) Consequently, non-governmental organizations should have proceeded with registration only if **accredited to the UN-Habitat Assembly** or **in consultative status with ECOSOC**, with the understanding that participation is limited to a maximum of one (1) representatives per organization.
- e) All queries regarding accreditation of civil society organization should be directed to Ms. Lucia Kiwala (Tel. +254 20 762 23025, email: lucia.kiwala@un.org)
- f) In case of any questions on registration, please write to unhabitat-registration@un.org for assistance.

(ii) Communication of participants' complete contact details

It is important that the Secretariat receives complete contact information, including a primary and a secondary e-mail address for each participant, to transmit connection details for the session.

4. Duration and nature of the session

- a) Following consultations within the Bureau and considering that the session will be held virtually. In addition, it is recommended that the one day session of the Executive Board be undertaken in two online meetings lasting three hours each, one in the morning from 09:00 am to 12:00 and another in the afternoon from 13:00 to 16:00 of 29 June 2020.
- b) It is proposed that the first meeting in the morning of the first session of 2020 be devoted to the opening of the session (item 1), organizational as well as financial, budgetary and administrative matters (items 2 and 3, respectively), the status of and discussions on the draft annual work programme of UN-Habitat and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2021 (item 4), and the briefing on the status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session (item 5); and that the second meeting in the afternoon be devoted to election of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board (item 6), and the provisional agenda for the second session of 2020 of the Executive Board (item 7).
- c) The proposed organization of work and timetable was shared in the Notification of the Executive Director on 18 May 2020 and can be found in Annex 3 of document HSP/EB.2020/1/Rev.1/Add.1.

5. Informal consultations

- a) To facilitate the work of the Executive Board, arrangements will be made upon request for online informal consultations to be held between the regional groups on various matters, including any draft decisions for consideration and possible adoption by the Executive Board at its first session of 2020.
- b) Such requests may be forwarded to the Secretariat through the emails: chris.mensah@un.org and unhabitat-sgb@un.org.

6. Working Language for the Online First Session of the Executive Board

- a) Given the limited availability of technology and capacity for interpretation for online meetings currently prevailing at the United Nations including the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and based on the recommendation of the Bureau of the Executive Board at its meeting held on 11 May 2020, the first session of the Executive Board will be conducted in English only.
- b) Pre-session documents are however available in all the six official languages of the United Nations.

7. Documentation

(i) Pre-session documentation

- a) Pursuant to rule 6 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board in document HSP/HA.1/HLS.3, the substantive documents for the session were issued by 4 March 2020, which was four weeks prior to the then expected opening of the session which was to commence on 31 March 2020.
- b) The pre-session documentation can be accessed here : <https://unhabitat.org/2020-first-session-of-the-Executive-Board-meeting>
- c) Secretariat presentations will be as succinct as possible. Executive Board members have had the supporting documentation for four weeks and should be prepared to pose specific questions to the secretariat on each Agenda item.

(ii) Questions to the Secretariat based on pre-session documentation

- d) Participants are strongly encouraged to communicate their questions to the Secretariat based on the pre-session documentation in advance and in writing through the Secretary to the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat: Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies (Telephone: 254 732 689199, email: chris.mensah@un.org and unhabitat-sgb@un.org) as early as possible but no later than **15 June 2020**.

8. Technical pre-requisites and connection instructions

- a) The online first session of the Executive Board will be held virtually.
- b) The main pre-requisites for connection to the session and connection details will be sent to participants on 25 June 2020. For any additional information on the connection pre-requisites for the online session, please contact: Mr. Leon Osong Email:leon.osong@un.org Telephone Number: +254 737 131851.
- c) For the best experience, participants will need a high-speed internet preferably cable network or 4G data when using a mobile application.

9. Connection test on 25 June 2020

Before the online session of the Board, participants will be required to join a test call on Thursday 25 June 2020 to confirm the adequacy of the connection and to familiarize themselves with the link that will be used for the session. Connection details for the test will be communicated directly by e-mail to each participant.

10. Connection to the online session on Monday 29 June 2020

(i) Connection time

- a) The “online meeting room” will be opened one hour before the start of the session to ensure that connection problems can be resolved in good time.
- b) Delegates are therefore strongly encouraged to connect as from 08:00 hrs East Africa Time on Monday 29 June 2020.

(ii) Technical difficulty during the session

- a) In case of any technical difficulty during the online session, please contact: Mr. Leon Osong Email:leon.osong@un.org Telephone Number: +254 737 131851or Mr. Daniel Ndeti through WhatsApp + 254 729 442 476 or Email : Daniel.ndeti@un.org
- b) If the connection fails for certain participants, the session may, depending on the decision of the Chair, be suspended until all participants are connected or the quorum requirement is met.
- c) The Secretariat will use the contact details provided by participants during registration to communicate with participants outside the online platform, by phone or email, to resolve connection failures or interruptions.

11. Protocol for the session

(i) Instructions for log-in identification

- a) Participants will be invited to log in by identifying their Delegation including their names starting with
 - a. name of Country / Organization (as applicable)
 - b. Title,
 - c. First name and
 - d. Last name.
- b) Participants who omit to provide the above details at the initial log in would be encouraged to log out of the session and immediately reconnect using the above format to enable identification.

(ii) Use of microphone and video

- a) Participants would be encouraged to only use the microphone (audio only) option and keep their video option off for the time being unless they have the floor.
- b) All participants would be requested to mute their microphones during the meeting. They will however unmute their microphone when given the floor for contribution, at which time they can choose to turn on their video.

(iii) Requests for the floor

To request for the floor, delegates should request through the Chat Box by sending a direct message, clearly indicating the name of the delegation. The Chat Box is available to everyone by clicking on the message icon. The message field will then appear on the right side of the screen.

(iv) Speaking order

As far as the order of speaking is concerned, under each agenda item, the following speaking order will be followed:

1. Members of the Executive Board.
2. Member States that are not members of the Executive Board as well as Members of United Nations Specialized Agencies.
3. Representatives of intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations' constituencies will be accorded 20 minutes to contribute towards the discussions at the end of the morning and afternoon. The Chair will call them to speak and make statement on behalf of their constituency.

(v) Length of interventions

- a) Delegations will be encouraged not to make opening national statements but rather provide substantive contribution to the Agenda items under discussion during the session.
- b) Interventions on any item will be limited to **3 minutes** per delegation.

(vi) Communication of formal interventions

Participants are strongly encouraged to communicate all formal interventions in advance and in writing to the Secretariat through the Secretary to the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat: Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies (Telephone: +254 732 689199, email: chris.mensah@un.org and unhabitat-sgb@un.org).

(vii) Additional information on the protocol for the session

For any additional information on the protocol for the session, please contact: Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies, at Email: chris.mensah@un.org and telephone Number: +254 732 689 199

12. Outcome of the first session of the Executive Board

- a) The Bureau, during its meeting on 11 May 2020 recommended that the outcomes of the first session of the Executive Board, due to the fact that it is being held virtually and for one day only, be limited in scope and that decisions be limited to those that are procedural in nature.
- b) This is to take account of the fact that for this first online session of the Executive Board, the ability to negotiate substantive outcomes will be highly limited.

(i) Consideration of decisions on the election of the new Bureau of the Executive Board and on the adoption of the provisional Agenda for the second session of the Board in 2020

- a) Procedural decisions that will be adopted will be those on the election of the Bureau and the adoption of the provisional Agenda for the second session of the Board in 2020.
- b) A draft decision on election of the new Bureau, that contains the names of the candidates nominated by the regional groups, will be circulated to Member States prior to the first session.
- c) A draft decision that contains the provisional Agenda for the second session of the Board will also be circulated to Member States.
- d) These 2 decisions will be adopted by acclamation during the first session on 29 June 2020.

(ii) Consideration of a draft decision enabling the Executive Board to adopt decisions via a silent procedure when it is not in session

- a) The Board will also be invited to consider and adopt during the first session of the year 2020 of the Executive Board a Decision that would enable the Board to adopt decisions by way of a silence procedure when the Board is either not physically in session or not holding its session online.
- b) Should the Board decide to adopt its own procedure for decision making by silence procedure, such decision will be adopted by acclamation during the first session.

13. Quorum and decision-making during the session

The online session will follow the format of an in-person meeting. The **Rules of Procedure** and usual practice of the Executive Board apply with respect to the quorum and decision-making. Quorum will be checked and confirmed before opening the session and at the time of any decision-making.

14. Election of officers to the new Bureau of the Executive Board (2020-2021)

- a) Under Agenda item 6 of the revised provisional Agenda for the session and in accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, the Executive Board is expected to elect from among its members a new Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, to hold office starting at the end of the first session of the year 2020. In line with rule 9, the current offices of Chair and Rapporteur are to rotate to a different regional group. It being understood that this session is an online session and so elections would be conducted virtually.
- b) The Rules of Procedure of the Board on elections provide in Rule 9 as follows: (1) "The Executive Board shall, at its first regular session each year, elect from among its members, taking into consideration the need to ensure equitable geographical representation, a Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected. (2) They shall, subject to the provisions herein, be eligible for re-election. (3) The offices of Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year to a different regional group. Each regional group shall occupy the office of Chair and Rapporteur once during a period of five years."
- c) The Bureau will be elected from the five regional groups; i.e. the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group, the Eastern European Group, Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) and the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).
- d) The normal practice is that the regional groups agree by consensus who the candidates are from their group for a seat on the Bureau.
- e) Once agreement is reached amongst the regional groups, the following procedure should be followed in the case of both an in-person and online session: The presiding officer of the meeting of the Executive Board, i.e. the current Chair/Acting Chair or a representative of the Secretariat would propose the five names of the Member States for the Bureau, with their functions (i.e. Chair, Vice Chair and Rapporteur) and present them as an "agreed slate" whereupon the five Member States would be elected by acclamation, that would constitute a Decision of the Executive Board.
- f) In the event that there is no agreement, the Executive Board will postpone the election of a particular candidate until agreement is reached.
- g) In the event of a postponement, the specific seat on the Bureau for which election could not be held, will remain vacant until there is agreement on the candidate and there is an election, including by acclamation or by ballot.

- h) However, it would be possible for a new Bureau to meet, even though there are vacancies, provided that quorum is met. As the rules of procedure of the Executive Board do not contain a rule on quorum, the rule contained in the rules of procedure of the UN Habitat Assembly would apply *mutatis mutandis*. Specifically, Rule 39 that provides that: "The President may declare a meeting of the UN-Habitat Assembly open and permit the debate to proceed when representatives of at least one third of the members of the Assembly are present. The presence of representatives of a majority of the members of the Assembly shall, however, be required for any decision to be taken." Consequently, in terms of the practice of the United Nations the presence of a majority of members of a Bureau are required at Bureau meetings for that Bureau to be able to conduct its work.
- i) The new Bureau may wish to invite the Chair of the regional group who is unable to agree on its candidate to attend Bureau meetings as an Observer until its member of the Bureau is elected.

15. Report writing

- a) The report of the session will indicate that the session was held virtually, provide a record of the on-line discussions and clearly indicate which procedural decisions have been adopted.
- b) To improve the accuracy of the official records of the online session, , delegates are strongly encouraged to communicate all formal interventions in writing to the Secretariat through the Secretary to the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat: Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies (Telephone: 254 732 689199, email: chris.mensah@un.org and unhabitat-sgb@un.org).

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**EXECUTIVE
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