

Summary of the third meeting of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board held on Wednesday 04 March 2020 at UNON

The meeting considered the following items:

1. Presentation of the Draft Capacity Building Strategy

- a) The Secretariat provided a briefing on the draft Capacity Building Strategy. The two-fold purposes of the Strategy are as follows.

The briefing highlighted the following:

- i. The purpose of the strategy is two- fold; aims to fill the institutional and operational gap within UN- Habitat for greater coordination, coherence and monitoring of results and improving the delivery of capacity building services to Member states, local governments and other key urban stakeholders.
- ii. The key strategic actions include institutional anchoring of capacity building; development of a virtual center of excellence; full integration into UN- Habitat's normative and operational programming; and clear stakeholder's engagements and strategic partnerships.
- iii. The Strategy requires prioritized implementation plan with the available resources while exploring ways of increasing financing.

- b) The full presentation made by the Secretariat is available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/02/un-habitat_capacity_building_strategy_abridged_version_final_draft_for_sharing_revised_post_pmc_31012020_clean.pdf

In the discussions, the following issues were raised:

- i. How will the strategy help to improve the coordination of all the spheres of government structures (national and local) which play a key role in sustainable urbanization.
 - ii. Institutional location- with reference to paragraph 56 of the Capacity Building Strategy presentation why is the "Capacity Development and Training Platform" within the Program development Branch of the Global Solutions Division.
 - iii. How will the Secretariat reconcile capacity building in the context of huge bias towards earmarked funding which has its own peculiarities.
 - iv. A concern of if permanent missions are included in the capacity building considering they also need to be well equipped.
 - v. The Secretariat to define fragile environments.
- c) The Secretariat confirmed that an institutional context is considered and what is necessary to facilitate impact of capacity building training. It also confirmed that it was careful not to overload the front or executive offices with substantive functions and instead bring them as close as possible to the primary role and further confirmed that the Platform will support other units including the Office of the Executive Director as well as the Secretary of Governing Bodies for the training of permanent representatives. In addition, there is mainstreaming of a good quality capacity development strategy within the already the existing earmarked portfolio. The Secretariat further emphasized on paragraph 58 of the Presentation that mentions that the institution will be kept under periodic review to ensure

effective and efficient implementation of the strategy. The Secretariat confirmed that fragile environment has different ways of looking at it; the context of the UN system or that of UN-Habitat in terms of countries urbanizing too fast with immigration pressure and conflicts of climate change.

REQUIRED ACTION:

It was agreed that the member states will share any further recommendations to the Secretariat in writing.

2. Presentation on progress made on implementing UN Systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities, specifically, the concept note

- a) The Secretariat provided an oral briefing to the Ad-hoc working group on the progress made on the concept note of implementing UN Systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities.

The briefing highlighted the following:

- i. Objective of the review process which is to assist member states in the implementation of the UN Systemwide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements.
 - ii. Three major outcomes of the review process.
 - iii. The advantage of the UN-Habitat's safer cities approach as a strong foundation in social inclusion and integration and a city-wide participatory planning led approach to urban safety.
 - iv. Selection of champion countries based on voluntary participation and resource contributions.
 - v. Partnerships with stakeholders supporting cities such as international development partners, local government networks, academia, urban professionals, financing partners and private sector.
 - vi. Reporting mechanisms and success indicators
 - vii. Budget and Staffing requirements- estimated USD 50 million over a period of 10 years with USD 25million for the global implementation and USD 25 million for the local.
 - viii. Round-table towards UN agencies Joint programming with the Government of Austria having volunteered to host the RoundTable discussion.
- b) The full presentation made by the Secretariat is available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/02/concept_note_-_review_process_for_the_un_systemwide_guidelines_on_safer_cities_and_human_settlements_as_at_27.01.2020.pdf

In the discussions, the following issues were raised:

- i. The Secretariat was reminded to ensure there is regional balance when selecting the champion countries.
- ii. The Secretariat to clarify on the selection criteria for Vienna as the location for the Roundtable discussion.
- iii. On the outlook of finances, if the Secretariat had innovative ideas of mobilizing resources.
- iv. A concern on if the UN Agencies were consulted during the development of the concept note and their role in the peer review mechanism.

- v. The Secretariat to clarify on the Terms of References (ToRs) as a review cycle is supposed to last for one full cycle of UN Habitat Assembly and yet wants the concept note to adopted by September which is within the first year.

The Secretariat responses on issues raised:

- i. On the criteria of selecting champion countries, the Secretariat confirmed that it would consider regional balance putting in consideration the variety of experiences in the peer review; history of safer cities programmes countries that have been engaged very much with it on the question of safety in the past and those countries with safety and safer cities particularly mentioned in their countries' assessments and sustainable development frameworks.
- ii. It confirmed the choice of Vienna for the Roundtables was because it is the headquarters for United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which is good platform for the Secretariat to expand the global partnerships with governments and private sector as UNODC impacts different industries such as data and economy among others. In addition, UNODC has a closer relationship with Vienna and there will be some fund support from government of Austria for the Roundtable discussions.
- iii. The Secretariat confirmed that ToRs can only be implemented after the selection of champion countries and time is taken from intervention to impact hence it would not be able to show meaningful impact within one cycle of such a process. However, it will seek advice from member states on where there is need for adjustments.
- iv. It further confirmed that heads of UN agencies were consulted and put on board in developing the UN guidelines, after adoption in two informal working groups sessions; one during the High Level Political Forum reported to Member States and the second one during UN General Assembly where UN agencies reflected on the linkage between the Guidelines and UN strategy for sustainable urbanization and it was agreed that the inter-agency framework was to align with the strategy for sustainable urbanization and it is in the process of development currently.
- v. The Secretariat confirmed that it was looking into a broader scope of partners and it would come back to seek the advice of Member States on creative innovative activities.

REQUIRED ACTION:

It was agreed that the Member States will share any further recommendations to the Secretariat in writing.

3. Discussions on prioritization process of normative and operational activities within the Strategic Plan of 2020 -2023

- a) The Secretariat provided a briefing to the Ad- Hoc working group on the prioritization process of normative and operational activities within the Strategic Plan of 2020-2023.

The briefing highlighted the following:

- i. A 4- year implementation plan with each subprogramme or domain of change include deliverables, year of delivery, priority level, locations, staff responsible, internal and external collaboration and partnership and the resources available or needed.
- ii. The 4- year implementation plan will be updated annually and will be linked to a

- iii. monitoring and reporting system.
 - iii. Criteria for the implementation plan.
- b) The full presentation made by the Secretariat is available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/sp_implementation_plan_presentation.pdf

There were no issues raised from the discussions on prioritization process of normative and operational activities within the Strategic Plan for 2020- 2023.

REQUIRED ACTION:

It was agreed that the Member States will share any further recommendations to the Secretariat in writing.

4. Update on the restructuring process

- a) The Secretariat provided an update to the Ad- Hoc working group on the restructuring process.

The briefing highlighted the following:

- i. There are more vacant seats to be filled and this presents a better opportunity for geographical and gender balance.
 - ii. Mapping exercise to identify the offices that need to be strengthened, combined and creation of more regional offices. In addition, creation of new offices will involve the Office of the Secretary General.
- b) Update on the on-going restructuring of UN- Habitat is available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/sp_implementation_plan_presentation.pdf

In the discussions, the following issues were raised:

- i. The Secretariat to share information on regional and gender balance in UN- Habitat restructuring process and Multi- Country Offices and to highlight how the issue is being addressed.
 - ii. It was highlighted that restructuring process should be a discussion and not just an update, Member States should be consulted by the Secretariat.
 - iii. The Secretariat to clarify how UN Development Reform is being considered in the UN- Habitat restructuring process.
 - iv. The Secretariat to clarify on the guidelines and criteria of hiring new staff.
 - v. If there is a new Organigram of the new UN- Habitat structure.
- c) The Secretariat confirmed the restructuring process is in line with the strategic plan and it is at its first phase of collecting information on staff composition and being on the ground for verification. In addition, the information would be shared with Member States once it is available. It further confirmed that gender and geographical balance is an important affair to Delegates, United Nations, Secretary General and therefore is an important agenda. It further confirmed the issue on geographical and gender imbalance would only be solved by hiring new staff which requires more resources. The Secretariat confirmed that Member States are now receiving Note Verbales for new positions and the exact date for the new organigram will be communicated but not so far from the

future.

REQUIRED ACTION:

The Chair of the Ad- Hoc working group requested the Secretariat to share with Member States:

- i. Draft of the staff composition per country and gender
- ii. Methodology of recruitment
- iii. List of draft vacant positions
- iv. A draft of the Organogram

5. Schedule of meetings of the Ad- hoc working group

- a) The following tentative schedule of meetings was agreed upon:
 - i. **11 March 2020:** Discussions on the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2021 and on the alternative scenarios on the draft budget prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat was tasked to transmit the alternative scenarios to the Member States before the meeting.
- b) The Chair finally encouraged Member States to provide in writing through the Secretariat any comments they may have on Resource mobilization discussion before the Executive Board.