



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

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**Executive Board of the United Nations  
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**Implementation of UN-Habitat strategic plans:  
implementation of the strategic plan for the period  
2020-2023: partnership strategy, including UN-Habitat  
engagement with the private sector and with  
non-governmental partners**

**Progress in the implementation of the strategic plan for the  
period 2020-2023: the draft partnership strategy**

**Report of the Executive Director**

**I. Purpose**

1. The purpose of the partnership strategy is to advance the partnerships that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) needs to establish and maintain to successfully coordinate and implement its strategic plan for the period 2020-2023.
2. The strategy is intended to serve as a vehicle for strategic political engagement with Member States and the United Nations system; mobilize stakeholders at various levels; ensure the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda; and the UN-Habitat flagship programmes; and substantially strengthen the depth and breadth of resource mobilization activities.
3. The strategy provides a road map for undertaking the following:
  - (a) Guide and leverage existing partnerships to deepen strategic collaboration opportunities;
  - (b) Provide a platform for partnership development and resource mobilization to advance the work of UN-Habitat in the outcome areas set out in the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023;
  - (c) Identify and prioritize those partners who can help UN-Habitat to transform lives in cities and communities in line with the domains of change and outcomes set out in the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023;
  - (d) Capitalize on the unique position of UN-Habitat within the United Nations system as the recognized focal point and interlocutor for local government and local authority associations;
  - (e) Enhance and influence United Nations system-wide coordination and cooperation on sustainable urban development at the local, national, regional and global levels;
  - (f) Continue to enhance the involvement of local authorities, organized civil society and other constituencies in the governance of UN-Habitat, based on the principles adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly, with clear stakeholder engagement mechanisms;

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\* HSP/EB.2020/19.

(g) Recognize that “a new generation of city networking involves framing global challenges as urban questions and suggests that cities have the leaders to tackle them”<sup>1</sup> and, in so doing, strengthen relations with non-traditional policy partners with a strong interest in sustainable urban development to enable cooperative collaboration on matters related to the work of UN-Habitat.

## II. Expected results

4. The main expected results of the partnership strategy are as follows:

(a) **Fostering UN-Habitat as a global centre of excellence and innovation for sustainable urbanization.** Leveraging and engaging new and existing partnerships is at the core of establishing UN-Habitat as the global centre of excellence and innovation for sustainable urbanization. By fostering expertise and the sharing of experience, UN-Habitat can better lead the exchange of frontier research and solutions in sustainable urbanization, thus enhancing its impact.

(b) **Strengthening and supporting the UN-Habitat mandate.** By ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals and the outcome areas specified in the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023 are interpreted well in local contexts through partnerships that recognize the role of UN-Habitat in implementing the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Programme’s mandate will be strengthened and supported.

(c) **Demonstrating UN-Habitat ability to drive effective coordination across the United Nations system.** Strategic partnerships will enable UN-Habitat to achieve stronger synergies at the city, country and regional levels; efficiently channel technical assistance, expertise, capacity development and finance to local, subnational and national governments; foster integrated approaches and avoid duplication of efforts; and ensure systematic monitoring, follow-up and review of progress at the local, country, regional and global levels.

(d) **Consolidating expertise.** The implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023 and the achievement of the New Urban Agenda require joint efforts by UN-Habitat and its partners who recognize the UN-Habitat strategic goals and adopt the principles outlined in the New Urban Agenda. That will include consolidating the technical, social mobilization and operational capacities of the United Nations system with the expertise and capital resources of development banks, civil society, academia and the corporate sector to support local and national governments to achieve scalable, transformative development.

(e) **Catalysing investment in implementing the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023.** Joint programming with United Nations partners accounts for a notable share of the UN-Habitat budget. The successful implementation of its flagship programmes requires strengthened and robust partnership engagement that supports both in-kind and financial resource mobilization.

## III. Scope and key target partners

5. The partnership strategy concentrates on engagement with the following eight key partner categories to leverage resources, expertise, knowledge and innovation during the implementation of the strategic plan:

(a) Governments, including Member States, parliamentarians, ministers and intergovernmental entities;

(b) Subnational governments and local authorities;

(c) United Nations entities;

(d) Financial institutions, including development banks;

(e) Corporate sector;

(f) Stakeholders, including civil society, women, children and youth, grassroots and informal sector organizations, people with disabilities, indigenous people, older persons and the media;

(g) Foundations and philanthropists;

(h) Knowledge and innovation partners.

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<sup>1</sup> CEB/2019/1/Add.5.

6. Member States provide policy, political leadership and oversight; support resource mobilization and advocacy; and spearhead national ownership. Through the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly) and its subsidiary organs, and regional ministerial meetings, Member States will play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023. National Governments and related institutions will also play a critical role as implementing partners and executing agencies.
7. Local authorities and cities are critical actors in the planning, governance and management of cities and human settlements, including the provision of basic services, the enforcement of rules and regulations, the promotion of local economic development, the promotion of inclusive societies and the collection and expenditure of revenue. They constitute a direct link between the people and other levels of government. The partnership strategy that emerges from this way of working is not confined to the public sector and is, in fact, used to assist local governments in introducing planning processes with diverse actors at the subnational level.<sup>2</sup> Cities and local authorities are not only implementers of and advocates for sustainable urban development, they are also instrumental in mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda and other internationally agreed commitments at the local level. Local and regional governments should also be consulted in the design, conception and formulation of the implementation plans of the five flagship programmes, which together constitute the main implementation modality of the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023.
8. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, both individually (based on their specific mandates) and collectively, will be instrumental in supporting cities, local authorities, Member States and other stakeholders in implementing the New Urban Agenda, relevant Sustainable Development Goals and consequently the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023.
9. Financial institutions and development banks, in particular the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank and European investment banks must become key strategic partners of UN-Habitat, including in implementing the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023. Important efforts are under way to rethink the engagement with regional and international development banks in order to mobilize the resources needed to carry out the work of the organization and leverage investment in sustainable urbanization. In that regard, as a prelude to the development of an action plan, UN-Habitat has produced a concept note, entitled “UN-Habitat strategy with development banks”, which explores potential avenues to strengthen collaboration with development banks with a view to supporting cities as they implement the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.
10. UN-Habitat has strengthened its engagement with the corporate sector, notably in the area of innovation and frontier technologies. Such partnerships (with large multinational companies, including Microsoft and Airbus) explore the role of urban intelligence (the use of artificial intelligence in cities to help make informed decisions and deliver services such as water, transport, security, waste management and clean energy to improve quality of life for all) in helping municipal leaders to make better-informed decisions and engage communities.
11. Stakeholders, including civil society, professional bodies, academia, development institutes, women, children and youth, grassroots and informal sector organizations, people with disabilities, indigenous people, older persons and the media, are able to contribute to UN-Habitat areas of work, including advocacy, programme delivery (as implementing partners), knowledge generation and the sharing of good practice. As members of thematic and cross-sectoral networks, umbrella groups and advisory boards, people in those groups contribute to the shaping of policy, research and data analysis. UN-Habitat will therefore continue to engage stakeholders through its well-established internal and external mechanisms and networks, including the Stakeholder Advisory Group internal steering committee, thematic advisory boards and clusters. The stakeholder collaborative implementation framework and other tools will support stakeholder engagement at all levels.
12. Foundations and philanthropists play an important role in supporting Governments and other stakeholders at all levels to implement sustainable urban development-related policies and programmes. Efforts are also under way to establish strategic partnerships in support of the implementation the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023.
13. Knowledge and innovation partners are essential to increase the production, dissemination and use of evidence-based data and information at all levels to ensure that real-time information is

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

produced to support sustainable urban development policies and programmes so that workable solutions can be designed to meet the challenges posed by rapid urbanization. In that regard, emphasis will be placed on academia, researchers, practitioners, think tanks, civil society, grassroots organizations and other stakeholders who produce information and document high-impact programmes and best practice, with probable influence on policy change and transformation in peoples' lives. The table below sets out specific strategies organized by target partner type.

### Partner engagement strategies by partner type

<i>Target partner type</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
1. Governmental partners (Member States, parliamentarians and intergovernmental entities)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political support and leadership for the New Urban Agenda and the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020-2023 at all levels</li> <li>2. Policy and legislative change in support of sustainable urban development</li> <li>3. Increased investment in sustainable urban development and in support of the strategic plan</li> <li>4. National ownership of programmes and initiatives</li> <li>5. Integration of sustainable urban development into national and regional development priorities and frameworks</li> <li>6. Implementation, monitoring and reporting on the strategic plan, the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and establish strategic partnerships with key Member States and bilateral development partners as advocates, "friends" of cities, resource mobilizers and defenders of UN-Habitat.</li> <li>2. Work with the bureaux of regional ministerial meetings and the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies to ensure the financing and incorporation of sustainable urban development into regional development priorities.</li> <li>3. Seek technical advice and high-level policy dialogues, cooperation and collaboration with intergovernmental bodies, key government representatives and parliamentarians.</li> <li>4. Engage key Heads of State and Government to support urbanization as a tool for development and to reach out to other leaders to take similar action.</li> <li>5. Ensure involvement in the development of flagship programmes.</li> <li>6. Enhance advocacy, communication and the dissemination of high-impact stories on the outcomes of the strategic plan.</li> <li>7. Extend capacity development, including monitoring achievements in the frameworks of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, with particular focus on the preparation of voluntary national review country reports.</li> <li>8. Co-create programmes and provide technical support for policy and legislation agenda, including the incorporation of sustainable urbanization into United Nations sustainable development programmes at the country level.</li> </ol>
2. Subnational governments and local authorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning, governance and management of cities</li> <li>2. Management of local government</li> <li>3. Enhancing the voice of local authorities in the United Nations system</li> <li>4. Promoting capacity-building and technical assistance in key areas of the strategic plan</li> <li>5. Engaging other stakeholders in planning and implementation processes</li> <li>6. Improving the investment environment for sustainable urban development, the strategic plan and the flagship programmes</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support local authorities and their associations in the localization of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and tailor technical support to the needs of local authorities.</li> <li>2. Facilitate the participation of local authorities in local and international processes through collaboration with national government, local government and national and local government associations.</li> <li>3. Strengthen the engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in the sessions of the Executive Board and the Assembly.</li> <li>4. Enhance the engagement of local authorities with the United Nations system and other stakeholders at the national level.</li> <li>5. Reinforce the World Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities as the mechanism for structural collaboration and the submission</li> </ol>

<i>Target partner type</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
	7. Localizing the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals	<p>of inputs from the local and regional authorities constituency to the institutional framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.</p> <p>6. Enhance capacity-building, advocacy, outreach and communication with targeted messages to local authorities.</p> <p>7. Ensure the appropriate involvement of local authorities in the design, formulation and conception of relevant international or national programmes or initiatives.</p> <p>8. Ensure the involvement of relevant actors, including local authorities, in the development of flagship programmes.</p> <p>9. Co-create and ensure innovation in and technical support for programmes and projects for implementation at the local level through inclusive participatory engagement practices, which should also support localization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.</p> <p>10. Facilitate the monitoring and sharing of knowledge, data, good practice and impact stories from cities, regions and national bodies.</p>
3. United Nations entities	<p>1. Providing technical and financial support to all stakeholders for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>2. Supporting the achievement of the four drivers of change: developing urban policies; strengthening urban governance; urban and territorial planning and design; and supporting an effective financing mechanism and localization.</p>	<p>1. Ensure involvement in the development of flagship programmes.</p> <p>2. Enhance the role of UN-Habitat in the United Nations system by creating strategic alliances to influence and participate effectively in both policy and operational programmes by closely following global developments and following up on international commitments, especially recently agreed commitments, ensuring that the voice of the Programme is present and heard in meetings of, among others, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the Second Committee, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework at the regional and global levels, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the resident coordinator system.</p> <p>3. Build strategic partnerships and cooperation with national, subnational and local authorities, other stakeholders and United Nations country teams during the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Frameworks, including the common country assessments.</p> <p>4. Promote joint programmes, resource mobilization, advocacy and programming at the national level and incorporate sustainable urban development activities into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.</p> <p>5. Prioritize resource mobilization, advocacy and the dissemination of good practice and innovative solutions.</p>

<i>Target partner type</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
4. Development banks and financial entities	Contributing to addressing sustainable urban development challenges, especially through innovative financial solutions, advocacy and technical support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda and relevant outcomes of the strategic plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen links with development banks and Bretton Wood institutions, notably to support the implementation of flagship programmes at the country level.</li> <li>2. Collaborate and cooperate on joint programmes and research, data analysis, monitoring of the achievement of selected Sustainable Development Goals, development and testing of tools and innovative instruments that facilitate sustainable urban development at all levels.</li> <li>3. Strengthen the links between development banks and financial institutions and cities and local authorities.</li> </ol>
5. Private sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing financing and investment in sustainable urban development at all levels</li> <li>2. Promoting people, public and private partnerships</li> <li>3. Promoting due attention to social inclusion, human rights, resilience and environmental sustainability by all partners</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide tools, guidelines, targeted materials and high-impact stories to enhance corporate sector engagement in key result areas of the strategic plan.</li> <li>2. Facilitate strategic dialogues with the corporate sector and business associations at all levels to develop synergies to support the implementation of the strategic plan.</li> <li>3. Co-create tools and guidelines and provide opportunities for increased investment in cities and other human settlements.</li> <li>4. Connect corporate sector investors with cities and local authorities using a variety of approaches, and monitor compliance with human rights standards.</li> <li>5. Foster global norms and standards in areas of interest to the public.</li> </ol>
6. Stakeholders, including civil society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Representing partners in policy dialogues, programme design and implementation</li> <li>2. Supporting implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>3. Enhancing knowledge, innovation and the sharing of information, good practice and data on sustainable urban development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to express their interest in and align their knowledge, expertise and resources with the 12 domains of change outcomes and projects.</li> <li>2. Enhance the effective participation of key civil society stakeholders in the institutional governance of UN-Habitat, through the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise or through a stakeholder advisory board.</li> <li>3. Encourage regular multi-stakeholder dialogues, self-assessment and peer-to-peer learning.</li> <li>4. Expand “the people’s process” to other areas of operation, allowing communities to determine their development priorities and contribute resources at all levels.</li> <li>5. Mobilize new partners and build the knowledge and capacity of civil society and other actors.</li> </ol>
7. Knowledge partners (academia, researchers, professionals and other stakeholders with knowledge-based expertise)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhancing knowledge innovation and the sharing of information and data on sustainable urban development</li> <li>2. Increasing knowledge, the evidence base and good practice in sustainable urban development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involve knowledge-based institutions in generating the evidence base, good practice and advocating on sustainable urban development activities at all levels.</li> <li>2. Collaborate with think tanks, professional associations, umbrella bodies and networks, frontier technologies and innovation platforms in finding solutions to sustainable urban development challenges.</li> <li>3. Facilitate collaboration between knowledge partners and other partner groups and enhance the dissemination of data and</li> </ol>

<i>Target partner type</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
		information and the sharing of good practice. 4. Co-create programmes and contribute to policy, strategy development and capacity-building at all levels.
8. Foundations and philanthropists	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying and establishing connections with foundations and philanthropists who may be interested in the outcomes of the strategic plan</li> <li>2. Strengthening support for sustainable urban development by foundations and philanthropists</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish coordination mechanisms and build capacity to catalyse the interest of foundations and philanthropists in sustainable urbanization, notably in the implementation of flagship programmes.</li> <li>2. Document and disseminate high-impact stories from the field and increase communication with foundations and philanthropists.</li> <li>3. Connect foundations and philanthropists with appropriate partners, especially civil society, grassroots, women, youth and other stakeholders who fit specific areas of support.</li> </ol>

#### **IV. Monitoring and evaluation**

14. The monitoring and evaluation of the partnership strategy will be carried out in accordance with the results framework of the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023 and the associated performance measurement plan.

#### **V. Next steps**

15. UN-Habitat will develop a plan for the implementation of the present strategy. Implementation of the partnership strategy at the national level will also be dependent upon local, national and regional contexts, including country-specific laws, rules and regulations.

16. UN-Habitat will coordinate with Member States, the Stakeholder Advisory Group, networks and advisory boards, associations of local authorities and the United Nations system in the implementation of the partnership strategy.

17. UN-Habitat will develop and implement its partnerships in accordance with agreed and established policies and principles.