

Modalities for the 2020 second session of the Executive Board, Alignment of the 2021 sessions with the 2022 Annual Work Plan and Budget Approval

Options for Consideration by the Bureau of the Executive Board at the second session in October 2020

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A. BACKGROUND:

1. The first session of the Executive Board in 2020 took place online and in English only on 26 June and 29 July due to the continued global COVID-19 disease pandemic. The Bureau recommended that the first session be held online and with a reduced agenda. That was done after careful consideration of the situation and related limitations in consultation with the Executive Director, the Director General of UNON, the Division of Conference Services, the UNON Chief Medical Adviser and the WHO Kenya representatives.

2. Owing to the evolving nature of the pandemic, the Bureau at its meeting of 10 August 2020, recommended that the Executive Director make preparations for the 2020 second session of the Executive Board to be held online from 27-29 October.

3. Meanwhile, the Executive Director and the Bureau, in consultation with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the Government of Kenya, would be monitoring the situation in order to determine the best possible format for the session, if any, taking into account the status of the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. ISSUES RAISED BY THE DIVISION OF CONFERENCE SERVICES IN PLANNING THE FOR 2020 SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

4. Additional consultations with the Division of Conference Services have brought the following factors to light:

- i. Online sessions of the Executive Board will be possible with interpretation into the six UN official languages but with a limitation of 2 hours per meeting of two meetings per day, for a total of 4 hours per day instead of the usual 6 hours per day for in-person sessions with interpretation.
- ii. The cost of online interpretation is much higher as more interpreters are required in comparison to in-person sessions.
- iii. Given the reduced availability of regular budget resources, additional resources related to servicing the meetings of the Executive Board with respect to interpretation would not be available. In this regard:
 - a. consideration would have to be given for additional days of meetings beyond the 3 days and this would mean additional costs related to interpretation services and this would have to be borne by UN-Habitat
 - b. The above “a” is in addition to the already existing cost implication for the online platform for interpretation, and which is to be borne by UN-Habitat

- iv. On documentation, it is noted that the pre-session documents for the sessions of the Executive Board thus far has exceeded the available resources available to UN-Habitat. This is because the General Assembly did not allocate additional resources for the new governance structure of UN-Habitat. It is important to note that while the editing and translation of documents for the old Governing Council took place once in two years, in the case of the Executive Board, it at a minimum two sessions every year to enable the fulfillment of the decisions of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board. In this regard the following is the status quo:
- a. The costs for editing and translation of documents for the first session in 2020 was fully covered by resources available to the Division of Conference Services.
 - b. The cost for editing and translation of documents for second session for a 3day session in 2020 has been secured and preparations are ongoing.
 - c. In the event of a third session for 2020, the resources for documentation will not be available, other than for report writing. Moreover, the practicality of adequate preparation as required by the rules of procedure will be wanting. In addition to the cost, there is simply not be enough time to adequately prepare for a third session.

C. OPTIONS FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

5. In order for the Executive Board to have a session with interpretation services during the second in 2020, the implications and option outlined below would have to apply.

Option 1: Three-day second session of the Executive Board with interpretation, from 27 – 29 October 2020:

6. A three-day online session of the Executive Board will benefit from 12 hours of interpretation, consisting of 4 hours each day instead of six hours per day as is usually the case for in-person sessions. That time **will not** be adequate to cover the 16 Agenda items to be discussed by the Board at its second session. The Bureau would need to keep in mind, however, that the first session already deferred a number of items to the second session and that the related documents for these items have been prepared accordingly towards the second session. Deleting or postponing items on the provisional Agenda for the second session would imply additional costs with respect to pre-session documentation for the subsequent session.

Consideration: The Bureau may wish to review this option which would require a reduction of the number of Agenda items for consideration by the Board. The cost implication will be determined by agenda items removed for which revisions may be required for the subsequent session of the Executive Board. A platform cost of USD 5170 is however applicable. The time of 12 hours for the entire session comprising 4 hour per day will not be enough for all the agenda items.

Option 2: Three-day second session of the Executive Board without interpretation, from 27 – 29 October 2020:

7. A three-day session of the Executive Board without any interpretation, 3 hours per meeting in the morning and afternoon with a total of 6 hours for each day, would benefit from 18 hours of discussions

for the entire session in English only. This should be adequate to cover the 16 Agenda items to be discussed by the Board at its second session.

Consideration: The Bureau may wish to review this option of 3 days with 18 hours of discussion for the session noting that some Member States may not welcome the absence of interpretation services, though this was successfully done during the first session of the Executive Board in 2020

Option 3: A four-day second session of the Executive Board with interpretation, from 26 – 29 October 2020:

8. This option would allow the benefit of 4 hours per day for four days, for a total of 16 hours for the session. Under this scenario, the session should start on Monday, 26 October 2020 to enable enough time and there will be an additional cost for the extra day as indicated below

Consideration: The Bureau may wish to review this option for four days with 16 hours of discussion for the session requiring additional interpretation cost of USD 9,800 and Platform cost of USD 5170, to be covered by UN-Habitat. The session should start on Monday 26 October 2020 instead of Tuesday, 27th October 2020.

Option 4: A five-day second session of the Executive Board with interpretation, from 26 – 30 October 2020:

9. This option will allow the benefit of a five-day session of the Executive Board with interpretation services of 4 hours a day for a total of 20 hours and may be ideal to guarantee the full coverage of all agenda items of the 2020 second session of the Executive Board with interpretation but will have cost implications. This option will also require that the session starts on Monday, 26 October 2020 to avoid a clash with World Habitat Day celebration which falls on 31 October 2020

Consideration: The Bureau may wish to review this option for a five day session with 20 hours of discussion for the session requiring additional interpretation cost of USD 29,400 and Platform cost of USD 5170, The session should start on Monday, 26 October 2020.

Option 5: A three-day second session of the Executive Board with a hybrid of interpretation and non-interpretation, from 27 – 29 October 2020: The Bureau may need to consider a three-day session with 18 hours of discussion for the entire session with a hybrid of interpretation and non-interpretation. This will imply that the session will benefit from 4 hours per day of interpretation services without additional cost, and 2 hours per day without interpretation. Therefore, for each day the Executive Board can have discussions for six hours and this may in fact be adequate to cover the full Agenda of the second session. In this scenario, the Secretariat would work with the Chair and the Bureau to determine those agenda items that should benefit from discussions with interpretation and those that may be discussed in English only. As example, Agenda items that would highly likely require an action from the Board would be prioritised for discussion under interpretation daily, while those that are only an update from myself may fall outside interpretation hours. The session would have a cost implication for the online platform only of USD 5,170.

Consideration: The Bureau may need to consider a three-day session with 18 hours of discussion for the entire session with a hybrid of interpretation and non-interpretation. This will imply that the session will benefit from 4 hours per day of interpretation services and 2 hours per day without interpretation. Agenda items requiring discussion with interpretation will need to be prioritised. A cost implication will only be for the online platform of USD 5,170.

See table 1 below for advantages and limitations of the four options described above.

Table 1: Overview of the Options on Modalities for the Second session of the Executive Board in 2020

OPTION 1: THREE-DAY ONLINE SESSION WITH INTERPRETATION				
Implications for Interpretation		Implication for documentation		Cost Implication to UN-Habitat
<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	
Full interpretation services without additional costs	Only four hours per day and a total of 12 hours of interpretation during the whole session			Online platform costs to UN-Habitat of USD: 5170
	Agenda may not be covered fully in a maximum of 12 hours interpretation over three days	All documents available	If agenda is limited/reduced, some documents already prepared including some which were prepared for 2020 first session would become redundant and would need to be revised for the next session.	Costs already incurred on documentation by Conference may go to waste if agenda items are reduced New costs related to new and revised documents for agenda items postponed may be incurred again
OPTION 2: THREE-DAY SESSION WITHOUT INTERPRETATION				
Implications for Interpretation		Implication for documentation		Cost Implication to UN-Habitat
<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	
Possible full coverage of the agenda items within the three days	No interpretation services. The lack of interpretation may limit active participation by some Member states	All documents available	None	None
OPTION 3: FOUR-DAY SESSION WITH INTERPRETATION				
Implications for Interpretation		Implication for documentation		Cost Implication to UN-Habitat
<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	
Interpretation services for 4 days, with a total 16 hours for the session.	Additional Interpretation services for two hours needed at cost.	All documents available in six languages	None	Online platform costs and interpretation cost equaling USD: USD 14,970

More Agenda items may be covered with a maximum of 16 hours interpretation over four days				
OPTION 4: FIVE-DAY SESSION WITH INTERPRETATION				
Implications for Interpretation		Implication for documentation		Cost Implication to UN-Habitat
<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	
Interpretation services for 5 days (20 Hours)	Additional Interpretation services for six hours needed	All documents available	None	Online platform costs, interpretation cost for five days, totaling USD: 34,570.
All Agenda items may be covered with a maximum of 20 hours interpretation over five days				
OPTION 5: THREE-DAY SESSION WITH A HYBRID OF INTERPRETATION AND NON-INTERPRETATION				
Implications for Interpretation		Implication for documentation		Cost Implication to UN-Habitat
<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Limitation</i>	
Some interpretation services without additional costs	Interpretation will be limited to four hours per day for a total of 12 hours of interpretation during the whole session.			Online platform costs to UN-Habitat of USD: 5170
18 hours for the entire session which may be adequate to cover all agenda items	Two hours per day or six hours for the entire session will not be under interpretation. And therefore, some Agenda items would not be covered with interpretation over	All documents available in languages	none	

D. OPTIONS FOR A POSSIBLE THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN 2020

10. In the event that the Bureau recommends a third session of the following implications may need to be taken into account:

- i. The resources available from Conference Services for documentation and interpretations would be already have been exhausted by the first and second and sessions of 2020 and as such, these costs would need to be fully sourced by UN-Habitat.

- ii. The timelines for preparations towards a third session of the Executive Board in 2020 would not be realistic given the requirement of ten weeks for documentation timeline , these being six weeks for submission of such documents to conference services and four weeks for documents to be availed to member states prior to the session in line with rule 6 of the Rules of procedure. The 10 weeks rule does not include the time required by the Secretariat to prepare the documents, usually estimated between two to four weeks and this implies a total minimum preparatory lead time of two months to any session.
- iii. Additionally, a third session in 2020 would not have any substantive issue to discuss that would require a specific action by the Executive Board.

E. ALIGNMENT OF THE 2021 SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD WITH THE APPROVAL PROCESS OF THE DRAFT 2022 WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

12.It is noted that in line with the functions of the Executive Board as prescribed in Rule 5 of the Rules of procedure, the oversight role of the Executive Board on the Work Programme and Budget is key. It is to this extent that it is desirable for the sessions of the Board in any given year to be aligned with the preparatory and approval process for the annual work programme and budget.

13.For the preparations of the 2022 draft Work Programme and Budget, the following are the suggestions the Bureau may consider;

- i. Given the first deadline of submission of the draft document to New York is 15 January 2021, the Executive Board at its 2020 second session to be held in October 2020 may wish to consider empowering the Ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters to review and discuss the proposed 2022 Work Programme prior to its submission to New York to the Controller, by 15 January 2021.
- ii. The second deadline will be 15 February 2020 during which the budget associated with draft Work Programme is to be submitted to New York to form the Secretary General's report to the ACABQ. For this reason, the Executive Board may wish to consider holding its 2020 first session in early February and have its input into the draft 2022 Work Programme and Budget before submission on 15 February.
- iii. The Executive Board should therefore be in a position to consider and approve the draft Work Programme and Budget for 2022 by June 2021 by which time the ACABQ should have given its report on the budget for further consideration by Board.
- iv. The Bureau in considering a June 2021 date for the second session of the Executive Board, may also take into consideration that the High-level CPR midterm review will take place in June 2021 as well. For this reason, the Bureau may consider a proposal for the 2021 second session of the Executive Board to be held in October 2021.

See *table 2* below for the proposed timelines for the 2021 sessions of the Executive Board aligned to the approval process of the draft 2022 work programme and budget.

Table 2: the proposed timelines for the 2021 sessions of the Executive Board aligned to the approval process of the draft 2022 work programme and budget

KEY DATE	PROPOSED SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD	WORK PROGRAMME APPROVAL PROCESS
27-29 OCTOBER	2020 SECOND SESSION -Consideration of the date and agenda for the next session of the Executive Board and Work plan for 2021 -Possibly empower the Ad-hoc working group to discuss the draft Work Programme for 2022	Consideration and approval of the draft Work Programme and Budget for 2021 by the Executive Board
By 15 January 2021	Meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative issues – Discussion on the draft Work Programme for 2022	Submission of the Draft Work Programme 2022 to New York (Controller)
By 15 February 2021	2021 FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD Discussion on the Draft Budget 2022 based on draft work Programme for 2022	Submission of the Draft Budget 2022 based on draft Work Programme 2022 to New York (Controller and ACBAQ)
JUNE/ OCTOBER 2021	2021 SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD	Consideration and approval of the draft Work Programme and Budget for 2022 by the Executive Board
(June 2021)	<i>(CPR HIGH LEVEL MID TERM REVIEW MEETING)</i>	