

Summary of discussions and recommendations emanating for the second 2020-2021 Bureau meeting of the Executive Board

Thursday 10 September 2020 – 10:00 – 12:30 East Africa Time

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
1.	Adoption of the Agenda	
	a) Adoption of the Agenda.	Adopted
	b) Adoption of the summary of discussions and recommendations emanating for the Bureau meeting held virtually on 10 August 2020.	Adopted
2.	Guidance on modalities of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020	
a) Confirmation of the venue of the session in light of the Covid-19 situation in Kenya	a) The Executive Director briefed the Bureau on Agenda item 2, namely guidance on modalities of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020. The key points of the presentation are summarized below. The full presentation of the Executive Director can be accessed here .	Noted
	b) The Executive Director reported that after the consultations with the UNON Director General, it will not be possible to have any physical meeting within the Complex just yet. Accordingly, the Bureau may wish to reaffirm its position that the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 be held online and in Nairobi.	Agreed
	c) The second session of the Executive Board in 2020 will be held online.	Agreed
b) Recommended on-line platform for interpretation in UN 6 official languages and implications of the organization of work during the session;	a) Due to the particularity of interpretation being limited to 4 hours a day instead of 6 hours a day, the Executive Director shared with the Bureau five options for consideration in order for the Executive Board to adequately conclude its work at the second session as indicated herein.	Noted
	b) Option 1: Three-day second session of the Executive Board with interpretation, from 27 – 29 October 2020: The Bureau may wish to review this option which would allow for only 4 hours of meetings per day with a total of 12 hours for the entire session and this would therefore require a reduction of the number of Agenda items for consideration by the Board. The cost implication will be determined by agenda items removed and postponed to the next session and for which revisions may be required for the subsequent session of the Executive Board. A platform cost of USD 5170 is however applicable. This option would only be possible if some agenda items are removed from the provisional Agenda. In which case the Bureau needs to note that a number of items were already shifted from the 2020 first session to this second session and documentation is already prepared for all items.	

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 2. b) continued	<p>c) Option 2: Three-day second session of the Executive Board <u>without</u> interpretation, from 27 – 29 October 2020: The Bureau may wish to review this option which would allow for three days of meetings with 18 hours of discussion for the session comprising of six hours per day, noting that some Member States may have difficulties with the absence of interpretation services, although this was successfully done during the 2020 first session of the Executive Board.</p>	Noted
	<p>d) Option 3: A four-day second session of the Executive Board <u>with</u> interpretation, from 26 – 29 October 2020: The Bureau may also wish to review this option for four days with 16 hours of discussion for the session comprising of four hours per day and requiring additional cost of USD 14,970 to be covered by UN-Habitat. This option may require that the session starts on Monday 26 October 2020 instead of Tuesday, 27th October 2020.</p>	Noted
	<p>e) Option 4: A five-day second session of the Executive Board <u>with</u> interpretation, from 26 – 30 October 2020: The Bureau may need to consider a five - day session with 20 hours of discussion for the entire session comprising of four hours per day. The session would have a cost implication for interpretation of USD 29,400 and online platform costs will be USD 5,170. This gives a total cost of USD 34,570 to be covered by UN-Habitat. This option may also require that the session start on Monday 26 October 2020 and end on 30 October as World Cities Day will be held on 31 October.</p>	Noted
Agenda item 2) b. continued	<p>f) Option 5: A three-day second session of the Executive Board <u>with</u> a hybrid of interpretation and non-interpretation, from 27 to 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 may fall outside interpretation hours. The session would have a cost implication for the online platform only of USD 5,170.</p>	Noted
	<p>g) In deciding the appropriate option for the second session of the Executive Board, the Executive Director emphasized that the Bureau may need to take into account the need to conclude the agenda items before the Board at its second session and if Option 1 is recommended, it will require a reduction in the agenda items to enable the session to conclude within the 12 hours the time slot available for interpretation. Some of which were postponed from the first session, with or without interpretation. The</p>	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 2 b. continued	Bureau may also need to take into account the financial implication for interpretation services. If option 5 is recommended, agenda items to be covered under interpretation would be prioritised.	
	<p>h) The Bureau agreed that the priority is to cover all the Agenda items to secure the oversight function for the Executive Board, specifically in the particular context of the financial situation of the Organization. It was also emphasized that interpretation of discussions is also key for the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 in order to allow wide participation from all capitals. Besides, most Bureau members were of the view that the meeting should not go beyond the allocated 3 days.</p>	Agreed
	<p>i) The Bureau therefore recommended Option 5, namely a three-day second session of the Executive Board in 2020 with a hybrid of interpretation and non-interpretation, from 27 to 29 October 2020, with 18 hours of discussion for the entire session. 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.</p> <p>The following Agenda items should be prioritized to be discussed under interpretation :</p> <p>For Day 1 of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Agenda item 3 - financial, budgetary and administrative matters); ii. Agenda item 5 - discussion and possible approval of the draft annual work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2021 including COVID 19 response. <p>For Day 2 of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Agenda item 6 - the implementation of UN-Habitat strategic plans ii. Agenda item 8- development of the capacity-building strategy iii. the informal consultations on draft decisions to be adopted by the Executive Board with at least a reading of the draft decisions with interpretations before proceeding to the negotiations. <p>For Day 3 of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Agenda item 9 - Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat ii. Agenda item 11- implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process. iii. Agenda item 14 - the provisional agenda for the next session of the Executive Board agenda including adoption of any decisions the Board will make. 	Agreed
	j) For an efficient conduct of the meeting and in the interest of time, it would be recommended to avoid lengthy opening remarks at that session.	Agreed

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
<p>c) Proposed organizational arrangements of work during the session;</p>	<p>a) The following arrangements and daily distribution of work as suggested by the Executive Director should be implemented: First day of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening of the session (agenda item 1); • reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups (agenda item 2); • financial, budgetary and administrative matters (agenda item 3); • action by UN-Habitat to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff (agenda item 4); • and discussion and possible approval of the draft annual work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2021 (agenda item 5). <p style="text-align: center;">Day 2 of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of UN-Habitat strategic plans (agenda item 6); • the status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session (agenda item 7); • development of the capacity-building strategy (agenda item 8); and • informal consultations on draft decisions to be adopted by the Executive Board. <p style="text-align: center;">Day 3 of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities (agenda item 9); • action by UN-Habitat to strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace (agenda item 10); • implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process (agenda item 11); • the annual report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board (agenda item 12); • the annual report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board (agenda item 13); • the provisional agenda for the next session of the Executive Board (agenda item 14); • any other matters (agenda item 15); and • the adoption of decisions and the closure of the session (agenda item 16). 	<p>Agreed</p>

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
	b) Therefore the proposed organization of work can be accessed here .	Agreed
d) Confirmation of the date of the Executive Director's briefing to Member States on the status of preparations of the second session of the Executive Board.	After consultations with UNEP, the briefing by the Executive Director on preparations of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 will take place on 8 October 2020 instead of 12 October 2020 as earlier planned.	Agreed
3. Consideration of the proposal by Serbia for a special session to discuss UN-habitat's work on Covid-19 response		
	a) During the last Bureau meeting held on 10 August 2020, the representative of Serbia made a proposal regarding a possible third special session of the Executive Board to be held in December 2020, which would focus exclusively on UN-Habitat's COVID-19 response. The written proposal from the representative from Serbia on this matter was circulated to the Bureau by the Secretariat on 3 September 2020.	Noted
	b) The Bureau highlighted that the financial situation of UN-Habitat and the uncertainty on a third session of the Executive Board in 2020 should be taken into account when scheduling a special session. Besides, the decision on holding a special session of the Executive Board on UN-Habitat's response to COVID-19 would be a decision to be taken by the Executive Board rather than by the Bureau.	Agreed
	c) A proposed option was that UN-Habitat's work on Covid-19 response should be discussed during the briefing by the Executive Director on the preparations of the second session of the Executive Board which will be held on 8 October 2020.	Agreed
4. Alignment of the 2021 work plan of the Executive Board with the approval process of the 2022 draft Annual work programme and budget;		
	a) The Executive Director briefed the Bureau on the alignment of the 2021 workplan of the Executive Board with the approval process of the 2022 draft annual work programme and budget and noted that the oversight role of the Executive Board on the Work Programme and Budget is an important one and as such it is desirable for the sessions of the Board in any given year to be aligned with the preparatory	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
	<p>and approval process for the annual work programme and budget by the Executive Board, also taking into account the New York calendar.</p> <p>b) The Bureau considered and agreed to the recommendation from the Executive Director as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Given that the first deadline of submission of the draft document to New York is 15 January 2021, the Bureau recommends that the Executive Board at its 2020 second session to be held in October 2020 empowers 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; ii. The second deadline will be 15 February 2021 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 first 2021 session in early February and having its input incorporated into the draft 2022 Work Programme and Budget before submission. iii. The ACABQ being expected to give its report on the budget by June 2021 for further consideration by the Executive Board, the Board should then be in a position to consider and approve the draft Work Programme and Budget for 2022 around June 2021. 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. 	Agreed
	<p>c) It should be noted that the decision to empower 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 belongs to the Executive Board itself.</p>	Agreed
5.	Update on consultations on the continuation of the work of the ad-hoc working group on stakeholder engagement policy	
	<p>a) A Note Verbale was sent on 4 September 2020 by the Secretariat to other regional groups, inviting them to declare their interest to Chair the ad-hoc working group on stakeholder engagement policy following the end of tour of duty of its former Chair, the immediate former Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UN-Habitat.</p>	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
	<p>b) Subsequently, the Secretariat received formal expressions of interest from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan and from the Permanent Representative of Malawi to chair the Ad-Hoc working group.</p>	Noted
	<p>c) In the absence of no other expression of interest, the Bureau recommended that the Permanent Representative from Pakistan and the Permanent Representative of Malawi be appointed respectively as Chair and Co-Chair of the Ad-hoc working group. The two will have to be formally endorsed by the membership at the beginning of the next meeting of the said Working Group.</p>	Agreed
	<p>d) The Secretariat will notify the Chair and the Co-Chair of the Bureau’s recommendation.</p>	
	<p>e) It is to be noted that some countries raised the absence of any urgency on the matter, and expressed discomfort with the continuation of work in a virtual format. As a trade-off, the Bureau recommended that the Chair and the Co-Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group organize an organizational meeting of the Ad-Hoc working group to inform the Ad-hoc working group of the recommendation from the Bureau, collect formal endorsement to their nomination, and discuss the opportunity and modalities of the continuation of the work of the Ad-hoc working group.</p>	Agreed
6	Update on Urban October preparations	
Agenda item 6 continued	<p>a) The Executive Director updated the Bureau on the status of preparations of Urban October. The full presentation can be accessed here.</p> <p>b) The Executive Director noted that Urban October is a huge opportunity for UN-Habitat, Member States and all stakeholders to ensure sustainable urbanization is recognized as one of the key issues of the 21st century and COVID-19 gives this an added sense of urgency. She further emphasized that Urban October will present an opportunity for a renewed focus on the role of cities and towns in the response to and recovery from COVID-19 as some 95 per cent of COVID cases have been found in urban areas and the speed and effectiveness of the response has been impressive.</p> <p>c) Urban October is bookended by World Habitat Day at the start of the month (5 October 2020) and World Cities Day at the end (31 October 2020).</p> <p>d) World Habitat Day: This year on Monday 5 October for the World Habitat Day, hosted by Surabaya, Indonesia, the theme is Housing for All: A better urban future. During COVID, housing became a matter of life and death as people were told to stay at home to protect themselves. Local authorities reacted quickly to temporarily address the housing crisis. Everyone is encouraged to</p>	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
	<p>h) The representative of Egypt underlined that the selection process to host the World Cities Day was not clear enough and the Secretariat should communicate more clearly about it.</p>	Noted
7.	Guidance from the Bureau on communications and fundraising matters	
	<p>a) The Executive Director recalled that at its last meeting held on 10 August 2020, the Bureau agreed to consider discussions on different thematic issues in which the Bureau could give guidance to the Organization. In this regard, the Bureau agreed that for this meeting, topics on communications and fundraising would be considered. The full presentation by the Secretariat on communication and fundraising matters can be accessed here.</p>	Agreed
Agenda item 7 continued	<p>On Communication</p> <p>a) The Secretariat recalled that following the approval of 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, the Executive Board will consider the Impact Communication Strategy at its Session in October in 2020. The Impact Communication Strategy supports the implementation of UN-Habitat’s vision of a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world. The Communications Strategy is grounded in advancing partnerships with Member States, local government, private sector, NGOs, educational institutions, community organizations and the public.</p> <p>b) An Informal Contact Group on Communications comprising France, China, Mexico, Poland and Kenya was held on 9 July 2020. Member States provided a wealth of good advice including calling for UN-Habitat to demonstrate its impact, the outcomes and concrete results in a more visible way. They suggested a particular focus on COVID-19 and the Flagship Programmes to show how UN-Habitat is changing lives. The Secretariat is implementing some of the short term recommendations particularly in terms of implementing changes to the Governance Section of the website, ensuring the information on meetings and outcomes is timely, accurate and easily accessible. The website reporting is being sharpened to focus on impact. Member States are updated with various material including sending the Urban Impact newsletter quarterly.</p> <p>c) The COVID-19 Response Plan and Campaign featured widely on the corporate website. Many opinion pieces and media interviews on COVID-19 are published on several platforms and interviews along with press releases. The Urban Thinkers Campuses provided good visibility and partnership opportunities. The Secretary-General’s Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World was a key document and the Secretariat helped organize a virtual briefing at UNHQ with UNDP and produced accompanying material.</p>	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 7 continued	d) Urban October and WUF are other important advocacy events for UN-Habitat. The Secretariat continues to publicize the Catalogue of Services widely including on social media making use of UN days to highlight particular areas.	Noted
	e) On the resource mobilization strategy The Secretariat presented its 2020-23 strategy to Member States in January and June 2020. It has incorporated comments from Member States – this included reflection of partnerships with academia and incorporating the performance indicators of the strategy into the overall results framework of the strategic plan 2020-2023. Following the reviews, the strategy will be presented to the Executive Board in October 2020. In addition to the main strategy a Covid-19 resource mobilization strategy was developed to raise funds for UN-Habitat’s response plan which sought to raise USD 72 million. The strategy has helped raise USD 14.6 million in new funding. In addition, over USD 4.8 million of existing programmes were repurposed while internal funds of USD 1.4 million were allocated initially for emergency response.	Noted
	f) On the resource mobilization action plan A resource mobilization action plan was drawn up by March 2020 and has been updated throughout the year. The plan focuses on the main categories outlined here, with detailed activities under each category. The activities are fully aligned to the resource mobilization strategy and UN-Habitat’s strategic plan 2020-2023. Current actions under way include greater engagement with Member States to increase the level of core funding which underpins UN-Habitat’s work. The Secretariat proposed to hold a pledging session as part of the Executive Board’s October session, during a lunch break..	Noted
	g) The Secretariat also committed to provide regular (possibly monthly) updates on contributions received, both earmarked and non-earmarked, taking examples from sister agencies such as UNEP.	Agreed
8. Any other matters		
	a) The Secretariat mentioned that the timeline by when the ACABQ report on the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2021 will be available was not yet known. The Secretariat will update Member States accordingly.	Noted, the Secretariat is expected to update Member States

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
	<p>b) The Secretariat clarified that the platform that will be used for interpretation during the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 will be INTERACTIO. The Secretariat further emphasized that UNEP will use such platform for its 151st CPR meeting on 14 September 2020¹.</p>	<p>Noted</p>

¹ Bureau members later on flagged to the Secretariat technical difficulties encountered on the INTERACTIO platform during the UNEP meeting on 14 September, in order to help UN-Habitat anticipate challenges.