

Summary of discussions and recommendations emanating from the third 2020-2021 Bureau meeting of the Executive Board

Wednesday 7 October 2020 – 10:30 – 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 September 2020.	Adopted
2.	Briefing by the Executive Director on the preparations of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020:	
a. Status of official pre-session documents	a) The Executive Director briefed the Bureau on Agenda item 2, namely status of official pre-session documents, logistical information, including pre-session trainings for the use of Interactio interpretation in the 6 official languages of the United Nations, the Executive Director’s briefing to Member States on 8 October 2020. The full presentation of the Executive Director can be accessed here .	Noted
	b) The Executive Director noted that some of the Documents previously prepared for the session that was to be held on 31 March 2020 will be the same ones that would be used for the upcoming session. She further emphasized that a briefing on the UN-Habitat Covid-19 Response as well as a briefing on the outcome of the tenth session of the World Urban Forum will be included as part of Executive Director’s reports to the Board with distinct documents for information. She noted that all documents including the list of documents are available at https://unhabitat.org/2020-second-session-of-the-executive-board	Noted
	c) The Executive Director noted that the draft work programme and budget for 2021 have been prepared in line with guidance given by the Executive Board at its session on 29 July 2020 and taking into account the USD 10 million budget as recommended by the Ad Hoc working group. The edited English version has been made available online and the Division of Conference Services is doing everything possible to avail the translated versions as soon as possible. She further noted that at this stage the Secretariat was still waiting for the report of the ACABQ from that Committee in New York and that the Secretariat should receive it time enough for the Executive Board session. It is planned that the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters will have a chance to review the ACABQ report prior to the session.	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 2 continued		Noted
b) Logistical information, including pre-session trainings for the use of Interactio with interpretation in UN 6 official languages	a) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With respect to interpretation, the Executive Director recalled that at the last Bureau meeting the Secretariat stated that it was planning to use the <i>Interactio</i> platform for remote simultaneous interpretation during the upcoming session. 2. The <i>Interactio</i> platform is recommended by the Division of Conference Services and some testing has been done including through the UNEP 151st session of the CPR meeting held in September. On Tuesday 6 October 2020, there was an internal testing by staff of UNON and UN-Habitat, and just that morning with the Bureau and regional Chairs, which was shortened though due to one member struggling to connect. 3. Prior to the testing, the Secretariat had received some quick feedback on the platform <i>Interactio</i> from some Member States and from UNEP in order to try to overcome the identified challenges ahead of the second session of the Executive Board. 4. The testing was necessary to increase user familiarity following its original use by UNEP for the 151st session of the CPR. In addition, UNON interpreters' initial feedback on <i>Interactio</i> is that it offers the best environment for them for interpretation in comparison with the other two platforms which are available for UN use (Kudos and Inteprefy). 5. All duly accredited delegates and participants registered for the session will receive training towards accessing the online session through the <i>Interactio</i> platform on or after 22 October 2020. 	Noted
	b) The Division of Conference Services of UNON further reiterated that on-line meetings with interpretation are much more difficult to moderate and service than on-line meeting without interpretation and emphasized that <i>Interactio</i> offers the best quality sound for interpreters. Conference Services further added that UNEP is currently testing the Inteprefy platform and that similar challenges are being experienced in the use of the platform. The Division of Conference Services noted that should the Bureau recommend to switch to another platform, the possibility will be explored in coordination with the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat.	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item continued 2.b)	c) The Bureau recommended that adequate time be provided for people to log in and there should be appropriate allocation of time for training of delegations ahead of 27 October 2020. The Bureau recalled that as there will be limited amount of time dedicated to interpretation during the session of the Board, the Secretariat should ensure that all delegates are familiar with the system prior to the session.	Agreed
	d) The Bureau reiterated its collective attachment to interpretation in 6 UN official languages and encouraged the Secretariat to persevere in its efforts.	Agreed
	e) The Bureau recommended that despite the technical challenges encountered, the Secretariat still goes on with preparations of the session using Interactio and ensures that adequate training of delegate is provided.	Agreed
	f) The Bureau recommended that, should the challenges currently being encountered with Interactio persist despite the trainings and efforts from the Secretariat, the Secretariat should be prepared to implement an alternate solution of holding the meeting on a different platform, perhaps in English only without interpretation. Such recommendation would belong to the Bureau which could convene in an extraordinary manner prior to the session of the Board.	Agreed
	3. Alignment of the 2021 workplan of the Executive Board with the approval process of 2022 draft Annual Work Plan and Budget:	
a) Options for consideration by the Executive Board at its second session in October 2020	a) The Executive Director briefed the Bureau on Agenda item 3, namely Alignment of the 2021 workplan of the Executive Board with the approval process of 2022 draft Annual Work Plan and Budget: a) options for considerations by the Executive Board at its second session in October 2022; b) date and possible agenda of the next session of the Executive Board. The full presentation of the Executive Director can be accessed here .	Noted
	b) The Executive Director suggested that at its 2020 second session to be held from 27 to 29 October 2020, the Executive Board may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Decide on the budget priorities of UN-Habitat for the year 2022. b. Empower the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Discuss the Draft Work Programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2022 in readiness for submission to UNHQ in New York by 15 January 2021 without the need for further discussion by the Executive Board at an early session in 2021. This will allow the Secretariat to prepare the initial draft budget for 2022 with an initial working figure for the resource envelope of the Foundation 	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 3.a) continued	<p>non-earmarked fund of the 2022 draft work programme and budget. Subsequently to the Bureau meeting, the Secretariat circulated an Explanatory Note which suggested that the Ad-Hoc working group could meet during the week of 11-15 January 2021 to meet the deadline of 15 January 2020 for submission of the draft work programme to New York.</p> <p>ii. Discuss the draft budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2022 in readiness for submission to UNHQ in New York by 15 February 2021, without the need for further discussion by the Executive Board at an early session in 2021. Subsequently to the Bureau meeting, the Secretariat circulated an Explanatory Note which suggested that the Ad-Hoc working group could meet during the week of 8-12 February 2021 to meet the deadline of 15 February 2021 for submission of the Budget to the Controller in New York.</p>	Noted
b) Date and possible agenda of the next session of the Executive Board.	<p>a) The Secretariat further explained that the possibility of a first session for 2021 being held in February 2021 had been re-examined and considered not practical for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The preparation of the draft work programme and budget usually benefits from the guidance received from New York in early January each year regarding the parameters for the regular budget. Only then does Budget preparation begin for 2021. 2. The preparation of the draft work programme and budget document requires a significant time, and given point (a) above, the implication is that the document would not be available in a timely manner and in the UN official languages in line with the Rules of procedure for a February 2021 first session of the Executive Board if it were to be held in early February 2021. 3. It is recommended that first session of the Executive Board in 2021 which will also consider the status of the draft work programme and budget 2022 takes place when the report of the Secretary General on the same has been availed, usually at the end of March each year. This way, the Board would have additional information based on the Report of the Secretary General. 4. In addition, it is to be noted that all pre-session documents are usually prepared within a minimum of two months prior to each session. In this regard and to enable more substantive reporting and engagement with the Board at its first session if held in April 2021, the period between November 2020 and February 2021 offers a wider window for substantive reporting and pre-session documentation. A first session in early February 2020 would imply that, pre-session documents would cover progress reports for November 2020 only to enable timely editing and translation prior to the session. 5. It is therefore recommended that the Executive Board may hold its first session for 2021 in late March or April 2021 with the view to have the documents fully translated into language versions 	Noted

Agenda item	Discussion	Recommendation from the Bureau
Agenda item 3 continued	<p>for consideration, including the status of the draft work programme and budget 2022. This will also allow for substantive reporting on other agenda items.</p> <p>6. In addition, the Board at its first session if held in April 2021 may offer guidance to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the draft work programme and budget for 2021 which is in tandem with the Secretary General’s report through a conference room paper.</p>	
	<p>b) The Bureau further recommended that a detailed explanatory note including a timeline should be shared as soon as possible by the Secretariat with members of the Bureau to give them the opportunity to consult with their capitals and their respective regional groups. The members of the Bureau are invited to provide feedback to the Secretariat no later than 15 October 2020. One member indicated that a later date in 2021, although justifiable, should not prevent the possibility of holding a third session of the Board before the end of the year, if the Bard so decides.</p>	Agreed
4.	Guidance from the Bureau on possible outcomes of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 including informal consultations on any draft outcomes.	
	<p>a) Executive Director presented the list of possible outcomes of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020 including informal consultations on any draft outcomes. The document can be accessed here.</p>	Noted
	<p>b) The Bureau recommended the following possible outcomes for the second session of the year 2020 of the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible action on Ad-Hoc Working Groups based on the reports of the Chairs 2. Possible action on Working Methods of the Executive Board. 3. Possible recommendation on Finance and administrative matters. 4. Possible approval on the draft work programme and budget 2021 5. Possible recommendations and approval of documents related to the Strategic plan 2020-2023 namely; draft accountability framework, the concept note on the draft financial plan, the draft results-based management policy, the draft results framework, the draft partnership strategy, the draft impact communication strategy and the draft resource mobilization strategy 6. Possible recommendations and adoption of the draft capacity building strategy. 7. Possible recommendations on the alignment of the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process and session of the UN-Habitat Assembly 8. Recommendations on the report of the Board of Auditors 9. Decision on date and Agenda for the next session of the Executive Board and the workplan of the Executive Board in 2021 	Agreed

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	c) Based on the list above, the Secretariat should circulate draft technical inputs into the potential outcomes of the second session of the Executive Board in 2020.	Agreed
	d) One Representative requested for clarification on the use of the word ‘possible’ when referring to the draft outcomes to be adopted by the Executive Board, further suggesting that using ‘action points’ would be more appropriate. The Secretariat clarified that the word ‘possible’ was used in this context so that the Secretariat is not perceived as pre-empting the views of the Member States and of the Executive Board.	Noted
5	Schedule of work of the Ad-hoc working groups and of the Bureau of the Executive Board towards the second session of the Board.	
	a) It was proposed that the Ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters tentatively meets on Wednesday 21 October 2020 , in consultation with the Chair and the Co-Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group, pending the receipt by the Secretariat from the ACABQ of the report from that Committee on the draft work programme and budget for the year 2021. This will also give an opportunity for the Secretariat to brief Member States on the interim financial stats of UN-Habitat.	Agreed
	b) As the Bureau already recommended at its last meeting that the Ad-Hoc working group on working methods be responsible for prior informal consultations on the draft outcomes to be considered by the Executive Board at its second session of the year 2020 under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya, it was proposed that the Ad-Hoc working group on working methods meets twice prior to the second session of the Executive Board, on Monday 19 October 2020 and Thursday 22 October 2020 .	Agreed
	c) The Chair and the Co-Chair of the Stakeholder Engagement Policy Ad-Hoc working group will confirm to the Secretariat the date of the organizational meeting of the working group. It was agreed that the respective nominations of Pakistan as Chair and Malawi as co-chairs would be formally proposed for endorsement to the membership prior to any further discussion.	Agreed
	d) The fourth Bureau Meeting of Executive Board will be held on Monday 26 October 2020 with the understanding that the Chair may convene a Bureau meeting earlier, should there be the need for the Bureau to further advise on the arrangements related to interpretation for the session.	Agreed
6. Any other matters		
	No issues were raised under any other matters.	Noted