



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 February 2019

Original: English

Seventy-third session

Agenda item 21

**Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations
Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and
Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

Report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/226](#)

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/226](#).



Report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/226¹

Findings and recommendations

1. The Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/226, identified the need for a body to provide the political and strategic framework under which UN-Habitat shall function, dedicated to the promotion of sustainable urban development and human settlements, under the authority of the General Assembly. It should have universal intergovernmental membership and convene in Nairobi, during a five-day period, every four years to, among other things, undertake the following:

- (a) Identify key issues and areas of focus for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat;
- (b) Review major trends relating to human settlements and urbanization;
- (c) Examine global norms and standards in human settlements and sustainable urbanization;
- (d) Adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, formal decisions, reports and other documents pertaining to strategic vision and political guidance, in accordance with its mandate;
- (e) Recommend strategies for the coherent implementation of the dimensions of urban and human settlements contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and other global agendas, including in the work of the United Nations system;
- (f) Examine and approve the UN-Habitat strategic plan, to be prepared by an executive board;
- (g) Review the quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

2. This body could be called the UN-Habitat Assembly and would replace the current Governing Council. The UN-Habitat Assembly could also deliberate on its rules and procedures at its first session. The Committee of Permanent Representatives would convene in Nairobi, in an open-ended manner, twice every four years: once prior to the UN-Habitat Assembly in preparation for that session and a second time for a high-level mid-term review.

3. The Open-ended Working Group identified the need for a dedicated executive body to increase the oversight by Member States of UN-Habitat operations and to strengthen its accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. This body would provide greater efficiency in decision-making, help to build trust and attract sufficient, sustainable and predictable funding. It would take the form of an executive board to comprise 36 members, to be elected by the UN-Habitat Assembly according to equitable geographic representation, following the formula established for the

¹ The President of the General Assembly, in a letter dated 27 June 2018, transmitted a letter from the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) conveying the findings and recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group. See www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/06/un-habitat.pdf.

Governing Council.² This board would meet two or three times annually, as appropriate, in Nairobi to, among other things, undertake the following:

- (a) Oversee the implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat;
- (b) Ensure accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness;
- (c) Approve and oversee the implementation of the annual programme of work and budget and of the resource mobilization strategy, in accordance with the strategic plans and the political guidelines provided by the UN-Habitat Assembly;
- (d) Adopt decisions, under its mandate, on, among other things, programmatic, operational and budgetary issues for the adequate and effective implementation of the resolutions and other decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly;
- (e) Guide and support efforts to finance UN-Habitat;
- (f) Oversee the compliance of UN-Habitat with evaluations and support auditing functions;
- (g) Collaborate with the executive boards of other United Nations agencies, in accordance with the Secretary-General's management reforms.

4. The proposed executive board should have delegation of authority from the UN-Habitat Assembly to submit periodic reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council on issues pertinent to the board's mandate in the years when the UN-Habitat Assembly is not in session. All Member States and members of specialized agencies may actively participate in the deliberations as observers at board meetings, through their permanent missions in Nairobi or otherwise. The board could also deliberate on its rules and procedures at its first meeting.

5. The Open-ended Working Group recognizes that UN-Habitat applies the financial rules and regulations and personnel, procurement and budgetary policies and practices of the United Nations, which are underpinned by the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and oversight. It also acknowledges that UN-Habitat shall build its global normative role and enhance its United Nations coordination role on matters relating to sustainable human settlements and urbanization and continue to engage countries operationally, in line with the guidance that it receives from the UN-Habitat Assembly and the executive board. The Open-ended Working Group trusts that the review of regulations, rules and operational arrangements incorporated into the Secretary-General's management reforms will facilitate the improved delivery of UN-Habitat programmes and the enhancement of its collaboration with other programmes and agencies. Furthermore, the Open-ended Working Group understands that the detailed consideration of rules and regulations and matters associated with the day-to-day running of UN-Habitat should be examined in detail and acted upon by the executive board of UN-Habitat.

6. The UN-Habitat Assembly should ensure the active engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in it, in its subsidiary bodies and in intersessional meetings, in accordance with the stakeholder engagement policy currently under discussion by Member States. Efforts should be made to enhance the attractiveness and usefulness of UN-Habitat for those relevant stakeholders and to generate new partnerships, innovative sources of funding and interest from a wider public audience.

² The seat distribution on the executive board would be as follows: 10 seats for African States; 8 seats for Asia-Pacific States; 4 seats for Eastern European States; 6 seats for Latin American and Caribbean States; and 8 seats for Western European and other States.