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**Executive Board of the United Nations**

**Human Settlements Programme**

**First session of 2021**

Online, 7 and 8 April 2021

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

**Implementation of the resolutions and decisions  
adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly  
of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

**Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions  
adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its  
first session**

**Report of the Executive Director**

**I. Introduction**

1. The present report provides an overview of the status of implementation of four of the five resolutions and the decision adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly) at its first session, held in Nairobi from 27 to 31 May 2019, namely:

- (a) Resolution 1/2 on the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements;
- (b) Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (c) Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements;
- (d) Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements;
- (e) Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

**II. Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements**

2. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in collaboration with the city of Madrid, held a global expert meeting on the development of the Urban Safety Monitor on 29 and 30 October 2020, at which participants reviewed existing safety indicators applied by local governments, in order to inform the development of the urban safety monitor prototype tool to support the country activities and the peer review process.

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\* HSP/EB.2021/1.

3. Mexico and South Africa are to date the two countries that have initiated engagement with UN-Habitat on the review of current municipal policies in pilot cities with a view to scaling up in-country activities. UN-Habitat will circulate an online survey among Member States to collect further information in this endeavour. UN-Habitat is making progress on a funding proposal for extrabudgetary support from the United Nations trust fund for human security to further support this process in 2021.
4. As part of the efforts to raise awareness in countries of innovative practices and case studies that contribute to the safety indicators, the first annual 40 Days Safer Cities Challenge was implemented, running from the International Day of Peace, 21 September, to 31 October 2020, bringing together over 40 partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities through several online webinar events at the country, regional and global levels. It is anticipated that this annual event will raise further awareness of the implementation of innovative practices as part of the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements.
5. The draft terms of reference for a country peer review mechanism will be shared with the Executive Board for consideration and decision-making. The terms of reference of the mechanism for the review process build on the experience of UN-Habitat with respect to the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, as well as similar review mechanisms in the United Nations system, and regional intergovernmental processes. A background paper on these mechanisms will also be shared, together with the draft terms of reference. Member States are encouraged to provide financial support for the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, for which the concept note for the period 2020–2023, for both global and in-country activities, has been submitted to the Executive Board (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.2).

### **III. Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

6. The capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.1) was approved by the Executive Board at its second session of 2020, held from 27 to 29 October 2020. A draft implementation plan was communicated to Member States for information purposes.

#### **A. Capacity-building for the implementation, monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda**

7. The *New Urban Agenda Illustrated* handbook was finalized and released in January 2021. The handbook is a global capacity-building tool prepared by the Capacity Development and Training Unit for all urban stakeholders worldwide. The handbook analyses the contents and propositions of the New Urban Agenda and their synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, and enriches them with concrete references, visual illustrations and examples from all over the world, and includes practical propositions for action.

8. To improve implementation, monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda, through the project entitled “Interregional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda”, funded through the United Nations Development Account, a series of consultations were undertaken with regional economic commissions to assess capacity-building needs at the national and regional levels.

9. In order to support the UN-Habitat Catalogue of Services, the Capacity Development and Training Unit has developed a handbook to support cities wishing to build participatory accountability systems for their policies. The handbook describes methodologies in a pedagogical way and refers to good practices developed by the cities participating in the “Accountability systems for measuring, monitoring and reporting on sustainable city policies in Latin America” project in Brazil, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The handbook will be released during the first quarter of 2021.

#### **B. Digital innovation for capacity-building**

10. The Capacity Development and Training Unit has developed an internal digital learning strategy. The document takes stock of the current approaches and products developed throughout UN-Habitat, identifies potential partners and solutions, and provides a road map to accelerate the digital transformation of UN-Habitat capacity-building and learning activities.

11. The first part of the pilot online “crash course” (the core dimensions of the New Urban Agenda), based on the *New Urban Agenda Illustrated* handbook, was released on 5 October 2020. The self-paced online crash course, developed internally, paves the way for producing new types of digital learning services on a dedicated learning management system.

### **C. Support to regional centres of excellence**

12. The project entitled “Centre of Excellence on Housing for the Western Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) countries” was approved and started in the second half of 2020. The Centre supports the eight countries of WAEMU, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. Through the project, UN-Habitat supports the universities of Ouagadougou and Dakar, which are mandated by WAEMU, with funding from the World Bank, to develop a robust and aligned system of data collection and indicators, prepare national reports on housing and deliver training sessions for urban professionals. The current project will be implemented over three years.

13. Continuous support is provided to the International Urban Training Center (Hongchen-gun, Gangwon Province, Republic of Korea). During the reporting period, the Center and UN-Habitat implemented a capacity-building workshop on the theme of “Public health and public response to the COVID-19 pandemic” for public health authorities of Mongolia, and delivered an international online course on integrated urban water management, including the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). They were attended by academics and senior urban professionals from nine countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. The post-training evaluation by participants indicated a level of satisfaction and perceived relevance of 90 per cent.

### **D. Enhanced and coordinated capacity-building programmes**

14. To strengthen the UN-Habitat corporate approach to capacity-building, the Programme Development Branch is currently developing a capacity-building component for the flagship programmes.

15. In the spirit of achieving impact at scale in the current Decade of Action, UN-Habitat recently launched its Sustainable Development Goals Cities (SDG Cities) flagship initiative. SDG Cities has three components: data and evidence-based planning; strengthened local systems and capacity to deliver sustainable urban development; and sustainable financing for impact. For each domain covered by the initiative, the capacity-building offering will contain online diagnostic tools, online training tools and learning communities. Efforts to mobilize resources for the initiative are under way.

### **E. Enhanced partnerships**

16. In response to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat adapted the format of the tenth edition of the “Shelter Academy”, supported by Arcadis, making it a virtual one-week training session, held from 19 to 22 October 2020. Senior representatives of 11 cities in nine countries participated in the programme.

17. A partnership with the United Nations System Staff College is being set up to deliver a course to UN-Habitat staff on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the common country analysis mechanism. The course will be delivered to more than 100 staff members during the second or third quarter of 2021.

## **IV. Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements**

18. In keeping with the requirement under resolution 1/4 to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment and set up policies and programmes to support efforts to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment, continuous project reviews were undertaken by project review committees to ensure that gender and other social inclusion considerations were addressed in all UN-Habitat projects and programmes using relevant markers. Between August 2020 and January 2021, 20 project documents and 10 concept notes were reviewed, leading to notable improvements on social inclusion issues.

19. On 7 December 2020, UN-Habitat organized a virtual event as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. In attendance were UN-Habitat partners, including local authority leaders and representatives of grassroots women's organizations and civil society. The outcome of that meeting included the drafting of guidelines on inclusive, safer cities for women and girls. Members of the UN-Habitat Advisory Group on Gender Issues also participated in the event and reviewed the progress of gender mainstreaming within the Programme.

20. UN-Habitat revamped its gender focal point system in November 2020. The new system includes the four leads of the domains of change of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023. These focal points will be in charge of monitoring and reporting progress in gender mainstreaming within the programmes and activities of UN-Habitat.

21. The review and update of the UN-Habitat Policy and Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Urban Development and Human Settlements 2014–2019, together with the Gender Equality Action Plan 2014–2019, is in the final stages. The revised Policy and Plan will guide UN-Habitat engagement on gender issues in line with the new strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 and will ensure that all the activities of the strategic plan reflect and advance the global consensus on inclusion, non-discrimination and equality. The evaluation of work in UN-Habitat on gender equality and the empowerment of women during the period 2014–2019 was commissioned in July 2020 and is also in the final stages.

22. Under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN-Habitat is to release a report on progress in gender mainstreaming for 2020 in February 2021. The report will highlight the progress achieved in the work of UN-Habitat on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

## V. Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

23. As part of the implementation of the United Nations Development Account project, UN-Habitat has successfully conducted four workshops, thereby enhancing the knowledge of over 150 experts: a course in Cameroon on 28 August 2020; a virtual course for the State of Niger of Nigeria and for Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, on 3 October 2020; a virtual course for Cameroon and Guinea on 16 December 2020; and a course in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, on 29 December 2020. The workshops were able to support participating countries implementing the Urban-Rural Linkages project by integrating relevant COVID-19 measures. The project in Mozambique on implementing the New Urban Agenda through integrated territorial development was successfully delivered and finalized on 31 October 2020.

24. In collaboration with partners, UN-Habitat co-organized two events: the Urban-Rural Assembly, with the Technical University of Berlin, on 25 and 26 September 2020; Sustainable and Resilient Urban-Rural Partnerships 2020 (URP2020), organized with the Germany Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Stadt-Land Plus and partners, held on 26 and 27 November 2020; and participated in the launch of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Green Cities Initiative programme on 18 September 2020 during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

25. On partnerships and advocacy, FAO has also initiated collaboration with UN-Habitat for the implementation of the Green Cities Action Programme. UN-Habitat has been engaged in discussions to stimulate the exchange of experience and knowledge-sharing and to amplify the voices of city governments in international forums such as the Food System Summit.

26. Technical materials that were released and disseminated include the second issue of the *Urban-Rural Linkages Newsletter*, the urban-rural linkages events at the tenth session of the World Urban Forum and reports for the First International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages. Forthcoming publications include the second compendium on urban-rural linkages, a working paper on strengthening urban-rural linkages based on SMART approaches, the third issue of the *Urban-Rural Linkages Newsletter*, the thematic guide on sustainable food systems and nutrition in the urban-rural continuum, a synthesis report from the webinar series and a second issue brief on urban-rural linkages guiding principles and COVID-19. The thematic guide *Mainstreaming Urban-Rural Linkages in National Urban Policies* is now available in Arabic and French. With respect to capacity development, online platforms for the e-learning course on urban-rural linkages and the toolkit repository will be released soon.

## **VI. Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

27. At its second session of 2020, held from 27 to 29 October 2020, the Executive Board, in its decision 2020/6, recommended that the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy resume its work once in-person meetings were again possible. Following that recommendation, the Bureau of the Executive Board, at its meeting of 11 January 2021, supported the organization of an online meeting by the co-chairs of the ad hoc working group to discuss organizational matters on 21 February 2021.

28. In preparation for discussions with Member States, UN-Habitat carried out a staff survey on stakeholder engagement in September and October 2020 to gather information on the status of UN-Habitat engagement with partners and to identify areas for improvement. The results of the survey underscored the close collaboration that UN-Habitat has with other United Nations entities, in line with the United Nations reforms, including the approach of “delivering as one”, and highlighted its strong partnerships with local, national and regional governments to deliver the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In identifying new partners, survey respondents underscored the importance of desirable partner attributes, namely mandate alignment, good governance, expertise and influence in the urban development arena. Partners, on the other hand, engage with UN-Habitat mainly because it is a United Nations organization and because of its urban knowledge and expertise and its wide network of partners. The main recommendations on improving stakeholder engagement included improved systems processes for more efficient partnership engagement and joint resource mobilization with partners. The findings of the survey will be discussed at internal and external workshops on stakeholder engagement and will inform the stakeholder handbook to be finalized in 2021. The recommendations will also help to improve the standard operating procedures contained in the UN-Habitat Operations Manual, among other tools and systems that support effective partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

29. Also in 2020, the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) contributed to expert group consultations on the publication on cities and future pandemics and to Executive Board discussions in its capacity as observer. Through the World Urban Campaign, UN-Habitat continued to mobilize stakeholders to organize Urban Thinkers Campuses on pertinent sustainable urban development issues, especially the impact of COVID-19 on cities and communities.

30. Initiatives in progress include the development of an online portal showing UN-Habitat engagement with partners in different regions and thematic areas for transparency and recognition of partner contributions to achievement of the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda.