EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT
First session of the year 2022
29-31 March 2022

AGENDA ITEM 14
Agenda item 14
Progress made in the implementation of the working methods of the Executive Board pursuant to its decision 2020/6 and on the basis of a survey conducted by the secretariat following the request by the Executive Board at its second session of 2021 to evaluate the effectiveness of that session so as to further improve the process and outcome of future sessions, including discussions on the schedule of future sessions of the Board
Background document: HSP/EB.2022/INF/2

Introduction to the survey and procedure

Outcomes

- Alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board with the provisional agenda of the sessions of the Board
- Pre-session Documents
- Pre-session briefing by the Executive Director
- Number of sessions per year of the Executive Board
- Preparations and implementation of the second session of 2021 of the Executive Board
- Other questions
The Executive Board of UN-Habitat requested the Secretariat to conduct a survey following its second session of 2021 through its Decision 2021/8, paragraph 9.

The aim of the survey was to evaluate the effectiveness of that session and explore ways to further improve both the process and outcome of future sessions.

The report was to be submitted for the consideration by the Executive Board at its first session for the year 2022.
In consultation with the Chair and the Bureau of the Executive Board for the period 2021–2022, the Secretariat prepared a survey of the effectiveness of the 2021 second session. Survey link circulated to all Member States on 20 January 2022. Deadline for responses extended to 7 February 2022.

- 24 responses received by 7 February 2022 (N = 24)
- Survey with open-ended and closed (rating) questions
- 31 questions in total
The survey was structured in 6 sections:

1. The alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board with the provisional Agenda of the sessions of the Board;
2. Pre-session documents;
3. Briefing by the Executive Director;
4. The number of sessions per year of the Executive Board;
5. Preparations and implementation of the 2021 second session of the Executive Board;
6. Other items.
An overview of feedback from Member States on the alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board

- The EB should review decision 2019/4 on predetermine agenda items
- EB’s board and functions are clearly understood and adhered to
- Agenda for each session of the EB is well aligned with the function and competence
- The provisional agenda is clearly communicated to the EB members for input
- The EB Bureau is flexible and responsible in the planning of the provisional agenda

Number of Respondents

- No Response
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
Alignment of the functions and competence of the Executive Board with the provisional agenda of the sessions of the Board

• Respondents made several suggestions:
  • Hold induction seminars for delegations;
  • Capacity-building and regular briefings;
  • Clearer and more summarised briefs;
  • Reflection of all languages on UN-Habitat website.

• Comments related to the agenda drafting process:
  • Enhance involvement of regional groups;
  • Agenda should be focussed and fit-for-purpose;
  • Flexibility of the agenda to be adjusted according to developments.
An overview of feedback from Member States on the provision of pre-session documents

Sharing ED/Secretariat presentations prior to the EB sessions would bring about effective and active participation during discussions of Agenda Items

The documents presented at the 2021 second session of the EB were generally informative and focused in content

Guidance on the length limit of 8,500 words is sufficient, with the exception of specific documents (e.g. work programme and budget, and the strategic plan)

Pre-session documents of 2021 second session were easily accessible in a timely manner

Timely submission and distribution of pre-session documents of 4 weeks is adequate.
Pre-session documents

• Suggestions to strengthen pre-session documents (11 respondents):

(a) all pre-session documents should be focused and kept up to date to the extent possible;
(b) lengthy pre-session documents should be accompanied by abstracts or summaries;
(c) a streamlined provisional agenda and pre-session documents were needed to guide the Executive Board towards its decisions and support those decisions;
(d) The role of the Executive Board was not as a general briefing forum for Member States, nor should it be a place for UN-Habitat to demonstrate all its work;
(e) The second session of 2021 of the Executive Board had had too many pre-session documents and that those documents were too long, taking into account the two-day duration of the session;
(f) draft decisions should be more clearly connected with the relevant items of the provisional agenda and supporting pre-session documents.
With respect to the pre-session briefing by the Executive Director, respondents noted the following:

(a) Of the 24 respondents, 8 provided a comment with regard to this question.
(b) Of the remaining 16, 12 respondents said that they found the pre-session briefing useful and sufficient;
(c) Two respondents said that their delegations would benefit from receiving a short-annotated agenda of the briefing prior to the briefing;
(d) The pre-session briefing should be conducted in such a manner as to encourage more discussion and a fuller exchange of ideas between delegates, the Executive Director and the secretariat.
Views of respondents on how many sessions of the Executive Board are needed per year (multiple responses possible)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two sessions of two days</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four sessions (quarterly)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the quality of the sessions, not the frequency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three sessions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two sessions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>
Overview of feedback from Member States on the preparation and implementation of the second session of 2021 of the Executive Board

- Hybrid format resulted in the 2021 second session of the Executive Board being successful
- Hybrid format put remote participant at a disadvantage
- Hybrid format was less conducive format for complex discussions
- Hybrid format was successful but missed body language and facial reactions

Number of Respondents

- No response
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
Preparations and implementation of the second session of 2021 of the Executive Board (ii)

• Modality of upcoming sessions:
  • Very low response rate, likely due to uncertainty around COVID-19;
  • Preference for in-person sessions but recognition that this is unlikely;
  • Consensus the hybrid sessions are most likely
  • Noted advantages of hybrid modality:
    • Easier planning
    • Lower costs
    • Lower Carbon footprint
    • Fewer barriers could lead to higher participation rates.
Overview of feedback from Member States on the adequacy of the preparation for the second session of 2021 of the Executive Board

- Draft decisions and technical inputs prepared were manageable, in line with the mandate of the EB
- The delegates discussed openly, stimulating inclusive debate and dialogue that resulted in outcome decisions
- Time allocated to informal consultations on draft outcomes during the session itself was adequate
- Number of informal consultations on draft outcomes and decisions was adequate
Overview of feedback from Member States on the allocation of time for statements

- **No response**: 1
- **Strongly Disagree**: 1
- **Disagree**: 6
- **Somewhat Agree**: 7
- **Strongly Disagree**: 2
- **Agree**: 6
- **Strongly Agree**: 10

**Legend**:
- Blue: Time was a limitation for discussions and debate on important issues
- Red: Time available to speakers during the session was adequate
Findings: Preparations and implementation of the second session of 2021 of the Executive Board (v) Time management

Time management could be improved by:

Allocating more time to the plenary for discussion;
Suggestion to complete the informal consultation ahead of the sessions;
Organising additional pre-session meeting to streamline the actual meeting.

Suggestions for the ED and Secretariat:

Create a better awareness of the most important issues for discussion;
Secretariat to liaise with COs to ensure concise contributions;
Provide more clarity on substantive contents during preparatory process;
Shorter the annotated provision agenda
Draft decision should be clearly linked to agenda items.
Overview of suggestions from respondents on ways in which the Executive Director and the secretariat could better support Member States

- Enhance the quality of documents and make them more succinct
- Understand which issues will require most discussion during the meeting
- Encourage Member States and regional bodies to provide feedback prior to sessions
- Communicate more with Member States and regional bodies
- Increase the length of sessions
- Organize team-building activities, including sports and cultural activities
- Increase members' understanding of the objectives of the Executive Board
- No response
Cycle of preparation of the annual draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat
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Slide to be inserted (MACS)
THANK YOU

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