

Regional Group Meetings March 2022

Regional Group for Western Europe & Others

Talking Points

General

1.0 **Thank Member States** for the continued support for the UN-Habitat mandate and acknowledge the multiple challenges that MS are facing owing rampant political conflicts, the climate change, severe weather patterns and the socio-economic fallout from Covid-19 pandemic. One thing has remain constant that is that urbanisation continues unabated and cities & communities remain on the frontline of conflict, health and economic crises.

Excellencies,

Second Term & Vision Statement

2.0 Let me thank all regional group members for the concern and support for my continued leadership at UN-Habitat. Your support for me personally in my re-election as Executive Director a second term is most appreciated. I have recently sent out my vision statement whereby I remain committed to supporting Member States particularly in the areas of work identified by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in its mid-term review of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023. You will see that the work programme for 2023 and beyond is a reflection of the priorities identified by MS including focusing on localising the Sustainable Development Goals, climate adaptation & promoting affordable housing through integrated planning.

High Level Meeting & Briefing to NY-based PRs

3.0 I have also had the opportunity to meet with New York-based Permanent Representatives and your colleagues in the regional groups. As I had updated you, I briefed them about the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), which will take place on 28 April 2022.

4.0 As you know, UN-Habitat has received only 26 National Reports on New Urban Agenda and we need to better support Member States through capacity building, investments in data collection & analysis as well as the development of urban policies to ensure urbanisation is better managed especially in the developing world

5.0 [The President of the General Assembly shared the Non-Paper with the Chair of the WEOG group and other regional groups in NY for discussion purposes. The Non-Paper suggests the framing issues and the objectives that Member States may want to consider for the HLM. It is based upon the recommendations of the Quadrennial Report](#)

of the Secretary General in the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda issued last week and available on UN-Habitat website. Drawing upon feedback from Members States on the Non-Paper, the PGA will issue the Draft HLM Concept Note and Notional Agenda. The HLM will be 6 hours in duration pursuant to resolution GA/75/226.

6.0 The HLM is a meeting of the General Assembly. Member States are encouraged to request their interest in addressing the HLM and to indicate the head of delegation. Based on this, the PGA will generate a Delegates List to develop a final agenda of the HLM.

7.0 Members of the NY WEOG group noted the objective areas of the Non-Paper that include: New Urban Agenda positioning vis a vis global goals, lessons learned from COVID, integrated housing, climate action, peace and security, local governments, and financing. They indicated when developing the HLM Concept Note, the PGA may wish also to include economic transformation, innovation and smart cities.

8.0 Outcome and Format of the HLM: there is an emerging consensus among Member States that the Outcome of the HLM should be action-oriented. Delegations are encouraged to incorporate in their respective statements to the HLM three actions they have taken to implement the New Urban Agenda and two commitments for the future. Based on PGA's thinking on meetings of the General Assembly, the HLM would be an in-person meeting with the option for video presentations/remarks.

9.0 Associated events: The PGA has recognised the importance of the building blocks for the HLM that include the SG's Quadrennial Report that will serve as the pre-session document, the regional forums for sustainable development, the ECOSOC special meeting to review the SG's Quadrennial Report on 21 April, and several side events in NY on 26 and 27 April. For the moment all side events are virtual. A decision is to be taken by the SG in the first week of April on whether side events can be in person. If a decision is not taken, then side events may take place outside the UN venue or take place virtually. The members of the PGA's Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanisation are committed to take forward the action-oriented outcome after the HLM in other meetings of the General Assembly, the World Urban Forum, COP26, the second session of the Habitat Assembly in June 2023, and July 2023 HLPF that will feature SDG11. This is in line with decisions of the CPR in July 2021 and Executive Board in Nov 2021 calling for strategic alignment of the HLM.

The World Urban Forum

10.0 Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Poland for their commitment to host the 11th session of the World Urban Forum. WUF 11 was intended to experiment with a hybrid format using the latest technology to enable wide engagement around the world. Consultations are ongoing with the Government of Poland on options for WUF 11 given the challenges posed by influx of refugees from Ukraine. A

decision by Poland is expected within a week. In this regard, deadlines to apply for events at WUF 11 are “soft” at the moment.

11.0 Although we are faced with a global health pandemic, the socio-economic fall-out from Covid-19 and political instability, let us not forget that we have a bigger crisis - this is the climate crisis. I would like to repeat that the New Urban Agenda is a tool that will help member states develop policies towards integrated planning. We need to get from policy into practice and please let me know how we can help Member States meet your commitments to implementing the New Urban Agenda.

UN-Habitat’s 2021 Performance

12.0 In terms of **our performance at the global level**, 2021 was a better year than 2020 in terms of project acquisition with earmarked funds exceeding USD 230 million or a 10% increase. Core contributions remain low at USD 3.1 million although soft-earmarked funding increased from USD 5 million to USD 8 million. Overall PSC generated was at USD 10 million, which is due to the slower rate of implementation owing to Covid-19.

13.0 European Union has advanced its programming for international partnerships in 2021-2027. Under the Global Europe instrument, EU Multi-annual Investment Programmes in various regions have been published. We have been analysing in which countries UN-Habitat can contribute to Team Europe Initiatives which join forces of the Member States and EU Institutions in promoting sustainable development. EU also announced EU Global Gateway Strategy for coordinating investment in development of the partner countries. Together with the whole UN family, UN-Habitat has been engaging with the European Commission in mutually aligning UN and EU priority frameworks to determine opportunities for cooperation in implementation of this pivotal Strategy.

14.0 Our renewed presence in Geneva, with support of The Government of Switzerland to re-establish our Geneva office has enabled deeper engagement with Geneva-based organisations and actors. We now have improved operational agreements with WHO, UNHCR and UNECE, including further joint projects funded by the Development Account.

15.0 My colleagues Mr Graham Alabaster and Mr Paulius Kulikauskas stand ready to provide any additional updates that you might require as we progress towards the Executive Board meeting next week. Also present is Mr Chris Williams, our New York Office director and the main coordinator for the High Level Meeting, who can answer any questions you might have about the HLM. Mr Neil Khor, who is my Special Advisor, will take any questions about the World Urban Forum..

Excellency Chair,

16.0 As Member States requested for more time during these regional group meetings to ask questions and have open frank discussions, I stand ready to answer any questions you might have and I have the support of my team, who are present here today.