



**UN HABITAT** Executive Board  
of the United Nations  
Human Settlements  
Programme

Distr.: General  
28 January 2022

Original: English

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Executive Board of the United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme  
First session of 2022  
Nairobi, 29–31 March 2022  
Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*

Status of and discussion on the draft annual work  
programme of the United Nations Human Settlements  
Programme and draft budget of the United Nations  
Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2023

**Paper on the priorities for the work programme of the  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme for 2023  
in line with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023\*\***

**Summary**

1. This note briefly sets out the main orientations for work programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2021 and further prioritization. The full detail is included in the draft of the work programme of UN-Habitat for 2023.

**I. Introduction**

2. The second Quadrennial Report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda points to the need to elevate the New Urban Agenda, positioning its transformative commitments and key drivers as ready-made tools to enable countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commitments to the Paris Agreement, and other global agendas.

3. As set out in the Secretary-General Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World, and further elaborated upon in UN-Habitat's Cities and Pandemics Report, the pandemic exposed systemic inequalities and created new vulnerabilities. It is clear now that cities provide opportunities in anchoring pandemic recovery in social justice and climate action. The pandemic showed the crucial role of the State in providing public goods and adequate basic services, highlighted the significance of local fiscal capacity and inclusive, multi-level governance, and underlined the importance of planning and urban design, the centrality of adequate housing, and the need to build more ecologically sustainable neighbourhoods. The Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda highlights adequate housing as a key element of social protection and calls for more systematic engagement with subnational authorities. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat confirmed the robustness of the plan and called upon UN-Habitat to further adjust and strengthen its support to Member States, adapting to the evolving conditions.

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\* HSP/EB.2022/1.

\*\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

4. The programme of work for 2023 continues to do just that. Financial resources commensurate with the ambition and deliverables proposed by this programme are needed to adequately support member states, while, as guided by its Executive Board, UN-Habitat will continue to prioritize its work in line with the available resources.

## II. Strategy

5. The strategy of UN-Habitat for delivering the programme plan in 2023 continues to be driven by the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan by UN-Habitat's Committee of Permanent Representatives found that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the value of the strategic plan, which serves both as a framework for recovery and as a road map for achieving the SDGs. The strategies for each subprogramme have been further updated and are included in the draft Work Programme 2023.

6. Key elements of the strategy for 2023 are:

(a) Ensure co-creation of new programme and project development to both integrate normative and operational work and to ensure alignment with the adjustments proposed to the Strategic Plan (HSP/EB.2021/19) in response to COVID-19 and increased need to focus on climate change;

(b) Continue to use the UN-Habitat flagship programmes as vehicles to fast-track integration between the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat and scaling the impact of the organization. Scaling will depend on the mobilization of soft- or hard earmarked resources and potential allocations of the third-party endowment, the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation;

(c) Strengthen capacity-building initiatives, digitization of tools and virtual e-learning programmes, in line with the UN-Habitat capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, adopted by its Executive Board in 2020;

(d) In its catalytic role as a knowledge hub and partner convenor, and recognizing the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement as the basis to achieve the SDGs, carry out advocacy, communication and outreach activities across the four subprogramme themes and mobilize public and political support, making maximum use of advocacy and knowledge platforms, including its own website, the Urban Agenda Platform and key global meetings such as the World Cities Day and World Habitat Day, regional ministerial conferences and the 2023 UN-Habitat Assembly;

(e) Ensure follow-up of key meetings that will take place in 2022, notably the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly, the 11th session of the World Urban Forum, and COP27 which will require significant efforts of the organization in 2023;

(f) As a focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, continue to monitor and report on global conditions and trends and provide evidence for policymaking, in line with available funding. The global urban monitoring framework (UMF) will serve the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the urban dimensions of the SDGs, as well as support the SDGs cities flagship programme to assist in the preparation of voluntary local reviews and realization of SDGs in cities; and

(g) Further strengthen its strategic partnerships with different entities of the UN-system, and other international organization and actors such as OECD, the World Bank and regional development bank to leverage UN-Habitat expertise and capacity.

7. These elements have been translated into adjusted strategies at the subprogramme level, building on the updates already included in the work programme for 2021, taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic:

(a) Subprogramme 1: further increase the focus on access to adequate housing to overcome inequalities and facilitate social inclusion;

(b) Subprogramme 2: strengthen the focus on municipal finance and socio-economic recovery;

(c) Subprogramme 3: increase the synergies between programming focusing on climate change and urban environment;

(d) Subprogramme 4: focus on urban recovery as a key instrument for effective action in the humanitarian, development and peace and security nexus.

8. For 2023, the UN-Habitat planned deliverables will support Member States' ongoing management of and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such planned deliverables and activities include: (a) assisting Governments in supporting increased access to water and sanitation and adequate housing, (b) advocating for the prevention of evictions, (c) measuring and reducing spatial vulnerability, and (d) preparing urban planning strategies and local resilience programmes. The UN-Habitat programme of work for 2023 will focus all efforts of the different subprogrammes and deploy advisory services, innovative solutions, and knowledge packages to support Member States towards sustainable socio-economic recovery, while also addressing climate change. In principle, strategies and deliverables have global relevance and will be applied to regional conditions, except for region-specific deliverables, which will be marked accordingly.

9. Reflecting the importance of continuous improvement and responding to the needs of Member States, UN-Habitat has mainstreamed lessons learned and best practices related to the adjustments to and adaptation of its programme owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the continuation of virtual and hybrid meeting modalities where possible for technical support and for expert group meetings, which allows for broader participation, complementing the existing tools of UN-Habitat with online digital learning companions to expand its outreach and a stronger focus on sustainable economic recovery across the subprogrammes.

### **III. External factors for 2023**

10. With regard to external factors, the overall plan for 2023 is based on the following planning assumptions:

(a) Adequate unearmarked extrabudgetary resources are available to implement the planned work and produce the deliverables;

(b) Countries remain committed to the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(c) Ongoing requests are received from national and local governments for policy advice and technical assistance from UN-Habitat in the development and implementation of their urban policies, plans and strategies;

(d) Urban indicators, data and information are used to formulate policies, with adequate mechanisms available for impact monitoring and performance assessments;

(e) Social, political and macroeconomic conditions will not prevent UN-Habitat and partners from implementing programmes and projects.

11. The financial situation will be kept under review to allow prioritization building on the experience of 2022. A budget committee will be in place in 2022 to monitor and prioritize expenditure on a quarterly basis.