

Summary of the thirtieth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Wednesday, 05 October 2022 – 14:30 – 16:30 East Africa Time

Chair: H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat

Agenda item 1 - Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board was called to order at 14:35 EAT. The working group adopted the provisional agenda for its thirtieth meeting with an amendment to include a new Agenda item 4 on activities which implementations are affected due to lack of adequate Foundation non-earmarked funding, with a focus on the normative work, as follows :

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat
3. Briefing on UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters
4. Briefing by the Secretariat on activities which implementations are affected due to lack of adequate Foundation non-earmarked funding
5. Any other matters.

After the adoption of the agenda, the meeting considered Agenda item 2, namely normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat.

Agenda item 2 - Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat

Under this item, the Chair gave the following background:

- i. The Chair recalled that during the resumed first session of the Executive Board for the year 2019, the Board decided that the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat should be included on the provisional agenda of Executive Board sessions on a regular basis. The Chair also recalled that during the 2022 first session of the Executive Board, the Board, in its Decision 2022/3, agreed that the provisional Agenda for the second session of 2022 should include an item on the implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat.
- ii. The Chair concluded that the purpose of the discussion was to hold preliminary discussions and provide guidance to the Secretariat, if any, on the implementation of the Organization's normative and operational activities.
- iii. Following the above background information, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat. The full presentation can be accessed [here](#). The Secretariat referred the ad hoc working group to the report of the Executive Director on the progress made in the flagship programmes which can be accessed [here](#).

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

- iv. The Secretariat recalled that the five flagship programmes were launched after the adoption of the Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020-2023 (SP). The eleventh session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 11) held from 26 to 30 June 2022 in Katowice, Poland, was an opportunity assess progress made on the implementation of the five flagship programmes and to set out a way forward, based on current challenges and opportunities.
- v. The Secretariat noted that the five Flagship programmes are a tool to operationalize the SP and cut across the four domains of change of the SP:
 - a. **Flagship Programme 1: Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities (Urban Regeneration):** *Domain of change 1* (Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum), outcomes of domain of change 1.1 and 1.3.
 - b. **Flagship Programme 2: People-Centered Smart Cities:** *Domain of change 2* (Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions), outcome of domain of change 2.3.
 - c. **Flagship Programme 3: RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor:** *Domain of change 3* (Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment), outcome of domain of change 3.3 and 1.2.
 - d. **Flagship Programme 4: Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the positive impact of urban migration:** *Domain of change 4* (Effective urban crisis prevention and response), outcomes of domains of change 1, 2 and 3.
 - e. **Flagship Programme 5: SDG Cities:** All domains of change and all outcomes.
- vi. After that, the Secretariat provided a short overview of each of the Flagship Programme, highlighting the progress made, the challenges faced and available opportunities.

Flagship programme 1 - Inclusive, Vibrant Neighborhoods and Communities (Urban Regeneration)

Overview and strategy

- vii. The Secretariat noted that flagship programme 1 builds upon tools and experience of UN-Habitat on urban policy, community engagement, participatory process, local economic development, mobility, climate action, urban health, basic services, and housing. It uses urban regeneration approaches to address spatial inequality and

climate change, and to promote social value creation, environmental resilience, and shared economic prosperity.

- viii. The Secretariat noted that urban regeneration represents a powerful integrative tool for social, economic and environmental impact through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ix. The Secretariat noted that as a convening initiative, the flagship programme 1 supports multi-level governance, focuses on building capacity and providing technical assistance for the formulation of strategies. It also works closely with the private sector, as well as international and impact funds and investors to develop inclusive business models and benchmarks to promote public-private partnerships.

Progress made and planned outcomes

- x. The Secretariat noted that flagship programme 1 focuses on three main outcome areas:
 - a) Consolidated data and knowledge on spatial inclusion and climate action in cities, including data platforms, methodologies, and best practices for urban regeneration.
 - b) Strengthened global and regional networks for inclusive and climate resilient urban regeneration.
 - c) Initiatives and solutions developed and implemented by localising urban regeneration processes globally.
- xi. The flagship programme 1 is actively contributing to UN-Habitat's development of normative tools and technical guidance on urban regeneration. Examples include:
 - a) Urban Regeneration and Viruses Report: learning from past and present health crisis',
 - b) the 'Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Regeneration',
 - c) the 'Spatial Inclusion Indicators Framework', and the 'Spatial Inequality Monitoring Dashboard'
- xii. The Secretariat noted that some of the main activities have been funded by governments, including the Germany Ministry of Housing, Urban Development and Construction, the Government of the Basque Country, the Regional Catalan Government, and Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Opportunities

- xiii. The Secretariat noted that urban regeneration represents a super-tool for the localization of the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the SP , as it impacts almost all SDGs simultaneously.

- xiv. Governments and experts need consolidated benchmarks, data and methodologies to monitor inequality and social value creation.
- xv. The programme has the potential to mobilise additional resources from non-traditional donors.

Challenges

- xvi. The Secretariat noted that urban regeneration is context-specific, and regions adopt different approaches to it. There is need for a global initiative with adapted regional and national frameworks, tools and methodologies.
- xvii. In certain contexts, urban regeneration is identified with a specific political agenda, making it susceptible to change and representing a challenge for sustained collaboration with governments.

Proposed actions to scale up, including resource mobilisation

- xviii. The Secretariat underscored the importance of urban regeneration for the localization of the SDGs needs to be more strongly communicated, showcasing the linkages between the housing, climate change and SDG priorities, and representing regeneration as a powerful tool for integrated SDG localization.
- xix. The Secretariat also noted that the programme achieved results in knowledge development, with concrete urban regeneration initiatives, partnership consolidation and resource mobilization. Its impact and output delivery will substantially increase if soft-earmarked resources are allocated to the Flagship Programme 1.
- xx. For the programme to turn the increased resources effectively into results more funding is required for the flagship programme coordination to provide partners with core knowledge sharing, advocacy, project development and implementation support roles.

Flagship programme 2 - People-Centered Smart Cities

Overview and strategy

- xxi. The Secretariat noted that flagship programme 2 places inclusion and sustainability at the center of smart cities – a field that has been rather technology-focused and industry-driven.
- xxii. The flagship programme promotes an approach to smart cities that starts with the people and their identified real challenges and priorities as described by cities, communities, and urban residents, thus placing the needs of people at the center of smart city planning.
- xxiii. The flagship programme addresses three outcomes: (a) policy transformation centering people on smart cities; (b) financing of smart cities to achieve SDG 11; (c) capacity

building and technical assistance to local and national authorities, the private sector and the global development community. The flagship programme advises on the adoption of 'people-centered smart cities' approaches by providing guidance on inclusive, rights-based digital technologies for cities and communities. It implements projects to guide cities in smart city planning, apply people-centered solutions, builds the capacity of local governments to adopt people-centered smart city strategies, and, through the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) initiative, delivers innovative digital technology and data solutions.

Progress made and planned outcomes

- xxiv. The Secretariat indicated that despite limited resources, normative frameworks for adopting the people-centred smart cities approach, strategic partnerships, and the cross-functional team have been put in place. A body of normative tools is also being established:
- a) A 'digital rights governance framework' for cities was produced and a 'toolkit for local governments on digital transformation for people-centered cities' was developed in collaboration with ITU and other UN agencies.
 - b) A series of 'playbooks' on people-centred smart cities for local and regional governments was launched at WUF11.
 - c) Global research was undertaken on AI, smart city governance, and blockchain for urban development.

Initiatives and portfolio

- xxv. The Secretariat indicated that the operational portfolio includes, for example :
- a) UNITAC's projects on mapping, data, and digital governance are being implemented in Brazil, South Africa, Jordan, Tanzania and Mexico.
 - b) A 'Smart City Strategy Toolbox' to support the development of national and local smart city policies and strategies (with implementation focus on African countries).
 - c) 'Digital Helpdesk for Cities' initiative is being piloted with four cities in Europe.

Status of resource mobilization

- xxvi. The Secretariat indicated that during its first two years, the Governments of Germany and Sweden as well as the Open Society Foundations have contributed to the Programme.
- xxvii. It has also received in-kind support from the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Edinburgh Napier University, and Mila.

Opportunities

- xxviii. The Secretariat commented that digital transformation has risen to the top of the agenda in international development.
- xxix. The demand for support on smart cities and related digital transformation issues continues to grow.
- xxx. Member States have expressed the need for international guidelines on national smart city plans, policies, and strategies.

Challenges

- xxxi. The Secretariat noted that 'Smart cities' are still considered to be a top-down, technology-first, industry-led approach that doesn't consider people's needs.
- xxxii. The digital divide is inhibiting smart city developments.
- xxxiii. The Secretariat further commented that there is limited resources to deliver the technical support on people-centered smart cities that is needed, particularly in Least Developed Countries.

Proposed actions to scale up, including resource mobilisation include :

- f. Develop international guidelines on people-friendly smart cities to scale up the programme and disseminate the normative frameworks and the practices and lessons from country operations.
- g. Leverage existing external partnerships and identify new ones, especially from the private sector.
- h. Increase capacity through identifying sustainable, long-term funding sources.

Flagship programme 3 - RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor

Overview and strategy

- xxxiv. The Secretariat noted that flagship Programme 3 addresses one of the greatest challenges for climate adaptation – how to build resilience for the three billion people living in vulnerable climate hotspots and the one billion living in informal settlements.
- xxxv. The Secretariat commented that despite the efforts so far, urban vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by climate change. The objective of the programme is to mobilize large-scale investments in resilience to provide national and local governments and communities with the resources, knowledge, capacity, and policy environment required to accelerate climate-resilient actions. RISE UP implements innovative, feasibility-proven, and bankable resilience solutions for the urban poor and for the natural and built environments. It advocates for the integration of pro-poor urban climate action in national and city climate policies, plans and commitments, global climate action, and finance architecture.

Progress made and planned outcomes

- xxxvi. The Secretariat indicated that the flagship programme addresses 3 planned outcomes:
- a) Achieving a breakthrough in adaptation and resilience for the over three billion people highly vulnerable to climate change globally.
 - b) Redirecting climate finance to local-level and large-scale investments in resilience for the most vulnerable urban poor.
 - c) Creating the enabling policy environment, knowledge transfer, and capacities to build local resilience through multi-level governance and cooperative partnerships.
- xxxvii. The Secretariat noted that since 2020, RISE UP has integrated its objectives across the agency's normative and operational work. It has brought the urgency of the most vulnerable to several events, such as the Race to Zero campaign during the Urban October 2021, and the Race to Resilience Campaign.
- xxxviii. During COP26, together with the 'Local Government and Municipal Authority' which is a Constituency to the UNFCCC, UN-Habitat supported the integration of "Multi-level Governance and Cooperative Action" into the Glasgow Pact.

Initiatives and portfolio

- xxxix. The Secretariat noted that the RISE-UP's portfolio has grown to USD 89.8 million including climate action efforts in 20 cities in 17 countries financed by Adaptation Fund, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Asian Development Bank, International Climate Initiative, Germany, and Stiftelsen Stockholm International Water Institute.

Resource mobilization

- xl. The Secretariat commented that the flagship programme is designing two new global normative projects:
- i. An initiative with support from SIDA builds an integrated approach to strengthening climate action, improving the urban environment and resilient settlements for the urban poor in Madagascar, Malawi, and the Solomon Islands.
 - j. A project financed by the UN Development Account focuses on building capacities of African, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS for green, resilient, and pro-poor pandemic recovery.
- xli. The Secretariat further noted that the flagship projects aligned with the Executive Director's priorities - adequate housing, cities and climate change, and localizing the SDGs – and financed by Adaptation Fund, will mobilize USD54,000,000 in Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Iran, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka.

- xlii.* At WUF11 , a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation which will second an Urban Heat Officer to UN-Habitat.

Opportunities

- xliii.* The Secretariat noted the following opportunities with respect to the implementation of flagship programme 3 :
- k.* Mature Adaptation Fund portfolio.
 - l.* Existing experience, tools, and methodologies.
 - m.* Scale up the strategic partnerships reanimated at WUF11 during COP27 through the COP27 presidential initiative, and
 - n.* define partnerships by analyzing existing expertise, experience, best practices, and lessons learned.
 - o.* Increase human resources and expert pool of the programme.

Challenges

- xliv.* The Secretariat noted the following challenges with respect to the implementation of flagship programme 3 :
- p.* Reduction in financial resources.
 - q.* Limited knowledge and capacities of local governments on how to access climate finance for local levels and realize resilience for the urban poor.

Flagship programme 4 - Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the positive impact of urban migration

Overview and strategy

- xlv.* The Secretariat noted that the flagship Programme 4 aims to harness the positive impact of migration and displacement in urban areas. To achieve the ambition of making the urban environment more inclusive for migrants, internally displaced (IDPs) and host communities, UN-Habitat launched a 4-year Global Programme on Migration at WUF 11.
- xlvi.* The Secretariat indicated that the flagship programme 4 was developed to operationalise the flagship programme, by promoting evidence-based approaches as basis for normative and operational work of UN-Habitat on urban migration. The programme encompasses two outcomes: (a) improved knowledge (based on data and normative frameworks and tools) informing integrated and inclusive solutions for urban migrants, displaced people, and their host communities; and (b) innovative, integrated and people-centred solutions are scaled to respond to migration and displacement challenges and opportunities in urban areas through area-based approaches.

- xlvi. UN-Habitat expects to strengthen capacities of UN-Habitat Headquarters and Regional Offices to support the implementation of the global programme in ten pilot countries in the next two years.

Progress made and planned outcomes

- xlvi. The Secretariat indicated that partnerships are at the core of the programme approach to build and share knowledge. UN-Habitat has already engaged with key actors such as UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the World Bank.
- xlix. One of the strengths of UN-Habitat is its membership in several regional and global networks and platforms for global advocacy, outreach and knowledge sharing activities on urban migration: the GP2.0, the UN Network on Migration, the Global Refugee Forum, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the World Bank Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and the Global Alliance on Urban Crises.
- i. To better coordinate and align the approaches, the Flagship is strengthening the corporate capacities on durable solutions to internal displacement and on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus through design of online courses with global GP2.0 and OECD-DAC networks.
 - ii. The Secretariat further noted that the programme focus has been on operations design in migration and displacement contexts in cooperation with key partners:
 - a) In East and Horn of Africa region, UN-Habitat has collaborated with UNHCR in a review of Housing-Land-Property issues.
 - b) In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat has developed a joint programme with UNHCR and IOM to reduce the vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants and increase the resilience of host communities in six countries.
 - c) In 2022, UN-Habitat contributed to interventions in countries facing large scale and often protracted displacement, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kenya, and Mozambique.
 - iii. The Secretariat noted that the contribution of UN-Habitat to the work of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement was reflected in the report to the Secretary General in September 2021 and in the Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. The key role of local governments in identifying and implementing durable solutions to internal displacement was affirmed in both documents as well as the increasingly urban character of displacement.
 - iiii. The Flagship has actively supported response to climate change induced displacement, both through operational and policy work, such as leading the Urban Track of the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative.

Opportunities

- liv. The Secretariat noted the following opportunities with respect to the implementation of flagship programme 4 :
 - a) Extensive field level portfolio in all regions.
 - b) Existing experience, tools, and methodologies feasible for new support needs emerging in Eastern Europe and Ukraine in particular
 - c) Identify priority geographical areas where there is the greatest need and opportunity for UN-Habitat to add value to wider United Nations' efforts in addressing urban migration and displacement challenges across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

Challenges

- lv. The Secretariat noted the following challenges with respect to implementation of flagship programme 4 :
 - a) Dramatic and steady increase in the number of displaced people/migrants globally
 - b) Limited knowledge and capacities of local governments on how to address challenges caused by displacement/migration

Proposed actions to scale up

- lvi. The secretariat noted that flagship programme 4 is strengthening the corporate capacities on durable solutions to internal displacement and on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus through design of online courses in collaboration with global GP2.0 and OECD-DAC networks.

Flagship programme 5 - SDG Cities: All domains of change and all outcomes

Overview and strategy

- lvii. The Secretariat indicated that Flagship Programme 5 responds to the need for accelerated action on the local implementation of SDGs during the Decade of Action.
- lviii. It centres on the ambitious goal of supporting over 1000 cities to accelerate their achievement of the SDGs and the impact this would have on a billion lives. The programme adheres to a four-tracked sequence: (a) data collection and analysis, (b) strategic planning, (c) the strengthening of local institutions, and (d) the financing high impact projects. Ultimately, the programme bolsters local economic opportunities while improving environmental sustainability and reducing social inequality.
- lix. The Secretariat noted that the Flagship initiative is undertaken in partnership with Global CEO Alliance, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Global SDG Index Institute (UNGSII) Foundation, Institute for Housing and Urban Development

Studies (IHS), World Economic Forum, Erasmus University, national and municipal governments, city networks and as investors.

Progress made and planned outcomes

- lx. The Secretariat noted the progress made in the implementation of the flagship programme 5 :

Tools development

- a) SDG Cities has developed a bank of digitized tools, including institutional diagnostic and capacity development tools and spatial data tools.
- b) It has established a City Investment Facility, which prepares and matchmakes SDG Impact Projects with diverse sources of finance.

Global hubs and implementation windows

- c) As SDG Cities prepares to go to scale it will establish four global hubs: City Monitoring, City Performance, Investment, and Certification.
- d) The global hubs will serve as centres of excellence, providing training, technical backstopping, networking, and technical resources to participating cities and partners.
- e) In addition, to reach global scale, the SDG Cities mobilises national multi-city partnerships including with UN Country Teams, and six global implementation windows, organized by constituency thematic groups: National Groupings, Local Government Networks, Cities in Least Developed Countries, Youth Networks, Women-led Businesses, and Faith Communities

Programme Portfolio

- f) Highlights of the programme's portfolio include SDG Cities Pilot cities (Mafra, Portugal; Kasarine Ennour, Tunisia; Shanghai, China; Penang, Malaysia; La Paz, Bolivia and Kyebi, Ghana), Global SDG Cities Conference series
- g) During 2022, the programme has been initiating SDG Cities national programmes in Bolivia (4 cities), Ecuador (14 cities), Colombia (5 cities), Ghana (10 cities), Tunisia (10 cities), Morocco (6 cities), Malaysia (10 cities in partnership with Urbanice),

Resource mobilization

- lxi. The Secretariat noted that some of the national programmes initiated during 2022-2023 are expected to be funded by national authorities (Ecuador, Malaysia) or by regional governments (Colombia) with the support of development banks. Others will be supported by donors (such as Ghana and Tunisia).

Opportunities

- lxii. The Secretariat indicated that the SDG Cities is strongly demand-based flagship programme:
- a) Demand for a SDG Cities Certification model, to be recognized across the UN system in line with the United Nations Global Urban Monitoring Framework.
 - b) Demand for technical assistance
 - c) Demand for finance for high impact projects
 - d) Interest of financiers to engage with the flagship and invest in SDGs in cities worldwide

Challenges

- lxiii. The Secretariat noted that there is the need for dedicated secretarial resources to support mobilising implementation windows and overall coordination

Way forward

- lxiv. The Secretariat will work closely with the Local 2030, the UN system wide initiative to support localising the SDGs. SDG Cities national programmes and implementation windows will benefit from the Local 2030 hubs that will provide thematic expertise.
- lxv. The Secretariat further outlined the geographical distribution of the flagship programmes for the year 2022 -2023 which can be accessed on slide 17 of the presentation [here](#).
- lxvi. The Secretariat presented to the ad hoc working group proposed draft language to be considered by the Executive Board at its 2022 second session with respect to the implementation of the flagships programme:
- a. Highlight the importance of urban regeneration for the localisation of the SDGs, showcasing the linkages between the housing, climate change and SDG priorities;
 - b. Explore, in a consultative manner, the development of international guidelines on people-friendly smart cities to scale up good practice;
 - c. Develop strategic partnerships for 'Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor' by analyzing existing expertise, experience, best practices, and lessons learned, and expand resource mobilization by disseminating success stories to relevant stakeholders;
 - d. Identify priority geographical areas where there is the greatest need and opportunity for UN-Habitat to add value to wider United Nations' efforts in addressing urban migration and displacement challenges across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus;
 - e. Develop a model of SDG Cities Certification to be recognized across the UN system in line with the United Nations Global Urban Monitoring Framework.

- lxvii. In conclusion, the Secretariat informed Member States that the progress on the flagship programmes has been unbalanced due to financial constraints. The Secretariat noted, however, the focus on strengthening partnerships and on resource mobilization has enabled the programmes to gain more traction, generating positive projections for the achievement of each one of the programmes goals and targets.
- lxviii. Additionally, the Secretariat foresees the need to mobilize for additional capacities and expertise as well as joint Secretarial support for the flagship programmes as key instruments for the integration of the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat, towards enhancing strategic partnerships across the flagship programmes and integrated work in priority locations, including at the sub-regional level.
- lxix. Moreover, the Secretariat commented that it seeks further convergence between UN-Habitat's global programmes and the flagship programmes to deliver more integrated and tailored solutions between climate change, migration, smart cities, and urban regeneration and resilience. As key instruments for the integration of the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat, the flagship programmes have demonstrated their potential of achieving impact at scale through assistance from Member States and development partners. In order to increase impact, the flagship programmes need to expand on their strategic partnership successes and gain increased soft- or hard earmarked funding support from Member States.

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

- lxx. One Member State welcomed the implementation by UN-Habitat of the Nairobi River Regeneration Project (2022-206) . The Member State further enquired on the additional capacity and additional resources required by UN-Habitat for an adequate implementation of the flagship programmes.
- lxxi. The Member State also enquired which of the flagship programmes could benefit of funding from partners and if there is a risk of discontinuation of implementation of some of the programmes, should the lack of adequate resource persist.
- lxxii. One Member State inquired whether there are synergies between the operational and the normative work of UN-Habitat that could be drawn upon to support the implementation of normative activities.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

- lxxiii. The Secretariat informed Member States that there is a capacity gap in each of the flagship programmes. The Secretariat noted that each flagship programme has developed its own fundraising strategy with a systematic budget and core secretariat consisting of normative tools and means for catalyzing the development of operational programs related to each flagship.
- lxxiv. The Secretariat indicated, however, that this development did not take place to the extent the Secretariat would have hoped. The Secretariat further provided the example

of flagship programme 3 - RISE UP Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor which depends on the resources of the Adaptation Fund. The Secretariat is match-making the requests it receives from the countries with the resource available in the Adaptation Fund.

- lxxv. The Secretariat further indicated that in this manner, normative work is linked with operational work by connecting projects that meet the objectives of a flagship programme with the available fund to either a city, a community or a donor. The challenge to this is that the Executive Director cannot make proactive and catalytic investments into the flagship programmes. The proposed way forward is a gradual move into a common centralized structure of support that will require less resources.
- lxxvi. The Secretariat also noted that the flagship programmes are anchored within the UN-Habitat 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, therefore their implementation of work covers both normative and operational development. The outcomes areas of the flagships contribute directly to the annual reports and official reporting tools on the implementation of the Strategic Plan and also constitute a central part of the annual work programme of UN-Habitat. The Secretariat further noted that the flagship programmes inherently create the synergies between the normative and operational work.

Agenda item 3 - Briefing on UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters

Under this item, the Chair gave the following background:

- i. The Chair recalled that during the 2022 first session, the Board in its Decision 2022/2 requested the Executive Director to support the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in countries affected by conflict and disaster, including those leading to the displacement of people, through a comprehensive whole-of-system response and to use all relevant tools at her disposal to engage with countries newly affected by conflict and disaster, and continue to provide assistance to countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, as reflected in the annex to Decision 2022/2.
- ii. Following the above background information, the Secretariat provided a briefing on UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters. The full presentation can be accessed [here](#). The Secretariat referred the ad hoc working group to the report on UN-Habitat's contribution, experiences and added value in urban crisis situation which can be accessed [here](#).

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

- iii. The Secretariat recalled that UN-Habitat has been developing strong experience and expertise in prevention and response to urban crises in line with resolution 26/2 of the Governing Council, enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response, the

UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023¹ (HSP/HA.1/Res.1) and decision 2022/2 (paras. 6–9) adopted by the Executive Board at its 2022 first session.

- iv. The Secretariat noted that support to cities in crisis contexts is very much addressed in the New Urban Agenda, covering all the dimensions of it: conflicts, post-conflict, natural disasters, migration, displacement, etc– particularly in paragraphs 19, 29 and 30.. The Secretariat noted that the NUA recognizes the role of the different government levels with a strong focus on including local authorities in decision-making processes.
- v. The Secretariat indicated that UN-Habitat focuses on four guiding principles in its urban crisis work, namely:
 - a. **Multi-governance** - coordination between different government levels with a strong focus on including local authorities in decision-making processes;
 - b. **Cross-sectoral coordination** – applying an area-based approach and spatializing data fosters a cross-sector approach which enables multiple sector analysis and visualizing gaps in response;
 - c. **Inclusion of all relevant stakeholders/participatory processes** – to ensure ownership and inclusion of perspectives of all levels and parts of society, including local and national authorities, civil society organisations (including representatives of people in vulnerable situations e.g., in displacement contexts, but also religious and faith leaders, women’s and youth associations), local academia and private sector actors;
 - d. **Increased coordination between humanitarian-development-peace actors** – to foster integrated and coordinated approach – from data collection and analysis to joint prioritization and recommendations for actions and investments and implementation.
- iv. The Secretariat further noted that UN-Habitat initiated an analysis of its work in countries and territories affected by conflicts and disasters, including those leading to the displacement of people. The analysis was conducted on the country programming of the 26 countries and territories listed in the Annex of Decision 2022/2 adopted by the Executive Board at its first session of 2022.
- v. Country programmes have identified the nature of the crisis, if the crisis leads to the displacement of persons, the type of interventions of UN-Habitat, their linkages with the Strategic Plan outcomes, and the tools applied from UN-Habitat catalogue of services. The briefs on UN-Habitat’s interventions in specific countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, which is an Annex to the report of the Executive Director on UN-Habitat’s contribution, experiences and added value in urban crisis situation, can be accessed [here](#).
- vi. The Secretariat underlined that among the 26 countries and territories analysed, 16 (62%) have been affected by conflicts, 20 countries (77%) have been affected by natural disasters. 11 countries (42%) have been affected by both conflicts and natural disasters,

¹ HSP/HA.1/Res.1.

resulting in complex and multi-dimensional crisis situations. In 17 (65%) countries, people have been forced to leave their home, either due to a conflict or a disaster, or both.

- vii. The Secretariat emphasized that crises are developing into new operational contexts due to COVID-19, climate change, conflict, instability, social inequality, migration, displacement, biodiversity crisis and converging issues which expand the area of operation for urban crisis response activities.
- viii. The Secretariat further highlighted that UN-Habitat contributes to the responses to urban crisis often as part of the first response team. UN-Habitat offers developmental solutions and offering expertise in areas such as (i) housing, (ii) urban basic services, (iii) disaster risk reduction and (iv) urban planning. UN-Habitat's normative work is one of the biggest added values in the area of urban profiling and urban recovery frameworks. Such tools provide a pathway for immediate response to recovery and beyond. In addition, climate actions are systematically undertaken in response to disasters while working towards managing urban displacements through mobilizing finances and capacity building efforts for sustainability purposes.
- ix. The Secretariat provided Syria as a good case of innovative work in urban profiling and recovery frameworks. The profiling work for the implementation of the project was detailed, specific and also participatory. It resulted in 85 recovery plans which trickle down to all local levels. The recovery plans guide where humanitarian action is critical preventing further displacements. Additionally, UN-Habitat in Syria was able to identify policy gaps on infrastructure and services, governance, housing and/or land property issues in informal settlements. It also resulted in the establishment of a Joint UN programme on urban-rural resilience. Syria is an example of normative work at the country level that has been scaled up to the global level through various publications.
- x. The Secretariat noted that the role of UN-Habitat headquarters is to scale up initiatives and export the best practices and solutions to other countries. Moreover, UN-Habitat also offers technical peer support, integrated approaches, capacity building, and targeted programme development. Equally, UN-Habitat engages in key global partnerships and networks such as the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, the UN Network on Migration et al which insert ideas of sustainable urbanization into global discussions.
- xi. The Secretariat outlined three priority areas going forward in urban crisis context: (a) managing displacements; (b) urban profiling/ urban recovery frameworks; and (c) climate change and crisis resilience building. The areas outlined are aligned with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and offers the ability to work with wide range of partners and integrates aspects of climate work in crisis prevention.
- xii. The Secretariat informed that WUF 11 had for the first time introduced an Urban Crisis track, curating over 40 events that allowed a broad sharing of knowledge and best

practices among national, regional and local governments, international organizations, urban practitioners, NGOs and academic institutions. It highlighted the need of an increased focus on urban crisis prevention and response hand in hand with resilience and disaster preparedness.

- xiii. The Secretariat noted that the climate and biodiversity emergencies, pandemics, violence and conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters, all converge in cities and surrounding territories. There is an urgent need to build capacities and tools for more effective urban crisis prevention, response, and recovery which support both national and local authorities. WUF 11 also presented a unique opportunity in urban crisis response for radical shifts in policy and practice, as evidenced by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- xiv. In an effort to contribute to stability and peace, the Secretariat reiterated and concluded on the need to:
 - a. Strengthen the analysis of its operational and normative work in support of urban crisis prevention and response to identify regional trends and solutions; to identify gaps in normative work and tools
 - b. Develop options to further strengthen its urban crisis response capacities, including the emergency director function, surge capacities and the engagement in the crisis related mechanisms in Geneva and New York (ex. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) , humanitarian cluster system, etc.)
 - c. Help ensure that the science and the data on the wide range of crises converging in urban areas is accessible and ‘at the fingertips’ of local governments and local actors
 - d. Elaborate the narrative on urban crisis prevention and response, and link to climate action, durable solutions for the displaced, sustaining peace and acceleration towards the SDGs and Member States to consider a discussion at the UN-Habitat Assembly as initiated in the extra-ordinary dialogue at the 11th World Urban Forum in preparation also for UN-Habitat's next Strategic Plan.
 - e. Fast track soft earmarking for flagship 4 to take up its role of supporting UN Country Teams in managing acute urban displacement and finding durable solutions, in response to the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda for IDPs and the work of the Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement.
 - f. Continue to expand the strategic partnerships with UNHCR, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) , and potentially IOM and networks (ex. Global alliance for urban crises, the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), land and conflict).

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

- xv. One Member State recognized and appreciated UN-Habitat’s interventions through its Special Human Settlements Program for the people of the State of Palestine from the period of 2018 to 2022. The activities include support provided in spatial planning, land registration processes in West Bank and East Jerusalem, building back better in

Gaza Strip and support for the preparation of a National Urban Plan. The Member State informed that the Special Human Settlements Program and its associated activities contribute towards improving human settlements conditions and other needs. The Member State urged UN-Habitat and partners to continue supporting the Special Human Settlement Programme in support of the people of the State of Palestine to enable the achievement of its objectives, including the preparation of a housing policy in the State of Palestine.

- xvi. One Member State indicated it would have expected to hear more information regarding UN-Habitat's interventions in countries newly affected by conflict and disaster, such as Ukraine in line with paragraph 9 of Decision 2022/2 adopted by the Executive Board. The Member State encouraged the Secretariat to provide more information in this respect in the future. The Member State underscored the added value of UN-Habitat the field of urban recovery.
- xvii. One Member State appreciated UN-Habitat's interventions in support for land reform initiatives taking into consideration land policy, land law, shelter designing and planning and designing for internationally displaced communities. With respect to the Annex to the report of the Executive Director on UN-Habitat's contribution, experiences and added value in urban crisis situation , the Member State encouraged the Secretariat to :
 - a. Contribute to accurate data on Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - b. Consider reframing the language contained in paragraph 26 on the Democratic Republic of the Congo an insert the wording "*foreign armed forces*" rather than "*inter-community fights*". The Member State further welcomed any bilateral discussions with the Secretariat to expand the understanding of the conflict on the ground.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

- xviii. With regard to UN-Habitat's response in Ukraine, the Secretariat provided limited information in the Annex as UN-Habitat was conducting its first mission to develop accurate findings during the first week of October 2022. After this mission, the Secretariat will be in a position to review its proposed programmatic framework on how to best respond to the crisis.
- xix. The Secretariat took note of the language recommendation regarding paragraph 26 of the Annex, the country briefs point to the need for better context analysis of all conflict situation.
- xx. With regards to provision of data on Internally Displaced People (IDPs), the Secretariat informed that UN-Habitat looks into the links between data, analysis and proactive programming. In a recently concluded study looking at displacement across the Sahel region, UN-Habitat prepared a projection of how urban growth will take place in the region. This is an opportunity for UN-Habitat to mitigate some level of crises.

- xxi. The Secretariat also indicated that under Agenda item 7 of the upcoming the second session of the Executive Board for the year 2022 to be held in November, some of the actors and beneficiaries of the implementation the flagship programmes will testify and share their experience.

Agenda item 4 – Briefing by the Secretariat on activities which implementations are affected due to lack of adequate Foundation non-earmarked funding

Under this item, the Chair gave the following background:

- xxii. The Chair recalled that during its meeting held on 21 September 2022 on the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2023, the working group requested the Secretariat to share more information on what UN-Habitat is not able to deliver due to lack of resources and a prioritisation of what more the Organization could achieve with the provision of more resources. Specifically, the ad hoc working group requested that the Secretariat details a short note on the following: What normative products or work are dependent on soft earmarked funds? Should UN-Habitat attain a surplus of funding, what would be the priority areas of expanded work? From programme management perspective, what are the principles of prioritisation of posts and activities as the organisation scales up when funds become available?
- xxiii. The Chair recalled that in response to this request, on 29 September 2022, the Secretariat circulated a short paper on the functions that cannot be delivered without adequate Foundation non-earmarked funding, with a focus on the normative work. The short paper can be accessed [here](#).

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

- xxiv. The Secretariat referred to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the review of management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme ([JIU/REP/2022/1](#)) which requested the UN-Habitat Executive Director to provide concise information to Member States to enable them to better understand the impact of shortfalls in the Foundation non-earmarked funding. This includes listing normative work activities and functions and deliverables that cannot be implemented with the current level of core funding. The Secretariat noted that the JIU report references the analysis done in preparation for the Executive Board in November 2021, on the “Recalibration of the strategic plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the period 2020-2023” ([HSP/EB.2021/19](#)).
- xxv. The Secretariat noted that it had identified five challenges to the delivery of the organization mandate namely: (a) challenges in executing fiduciary responsibility to monitor and report against the strategic plan; (b) challenges in fulfilling UN-Habitat’s mandated role as focal point on sustainable urbanization for United Nations system-wide coordination; (c) challenges related to limited implementation of UN-Habitat Assembly resolutions; (d) challenges related to limited capacity to ensure the development of UN-Habitat’s global normative work; and (d) challenges related to

regional architecture and presence in the field, affecting engagement with UN Country Teams within the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF). These five areas are expanded in more details in the short note which can be accessed [here](#).

- xxvi. With regards to the funding gap of mandated functions and normative work that UN-Habitat is not able to fulfill without additional Foundation non earmarked funding, the Secretariat indicated that the Cost Reduction Plan of the Executive Director for 2022 involved budget cuts by moving more staff members funded by the Foundation non-earmarked budget to project funds or discontinuing staff on fixed term contracts.
- xxvii. In addition, the Secretariat indicated that the roles of several core functions are performed by colleagues assuming duties of two posts. As of September 2022, such functions include the Deputy Executive Director, while the Division Director posts of both the External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division (ERSKID) and the Regional Programmes Division (RPD) are vacant, as are three branch Chiefs post of ERSKID. These are being covered by staff who also perform other duties full-time. The position of Chief, Programme Development Branch (PDB), is being performed by an Officer-in-Charge and each of the five PDB Subprogramme Coordinator roles are held on part-time basis despite their important organizational results management and monitoring roles.
- xxviii. The Secretariat indicated that the impact of the shortfalls in Foundation non-earmarked funding were clearly evidenced in the preparation of the proposed programme and budget for 2022. The ambition and scope of the 2022 work programme was significantly reduced compared to previous years. All UN-Habitat's four Subprogrammes cut their expected outputs/deliverables across both normative operational activities. By example, regarding 'field and technical cooperation projects', which in most cases are direct support to Member States, the cut varied across Subprogrammes from approximately 28 per cent to 53 per cent (SP1 28 per cent; SP2 42 per cent; SP3 53 per cent; SP4 39 per cent), resulting in an average reduction of 39 per cent of planned deliverables for 2022.
- xxix. The Secretariat also expanded on the principles of prioritizing expansion of functions when adequate funding made available. Specifically, the Secretariat outlined that with adequate funding available, scaling up can take multiple dimensions depending on the strategic objectives. A 'functional dimension' allows the addition of new positions to execute new functions, that is, to do activities currently unfunded by the non-earmarked foundation, while 'expansive dimension' adds new positions to execute existing functions. Moreover, the scalability model for the Foundation non-earmarked acts as the guiding principle for UN-Habitat to systematically identify priorities in staffing to fulfil strategic objectives within the framework of available funds.
- xxx. The Secretariat noted that there are many areas of work that would be revived through increased funding such as:

- i. Running essential programme design, inclusion of social and environmental issues, coordination and reporting functions for expanded implementation and partnerships.
- ii. Adoption of urban data systems is critical to UN-Habitat's role as an urban SDG indicators' custodian agency, especially global functions such as leading the production of the SDG 11 progress report
- iii. Strengthened knowledge management and knowledge sharing
- iv. Prioritization of core functions such as the positions of the Chief of the Management and Compliance Services (MACS), strengthening management oversight and audit, risk analysis and risk mitigation measures.
- v. Finalisation of the organisational restructuring regarding the reformed sub-regional architecture of UN-Habitat.
- vi. Broader mandated work on establishing human settlement norms and follow through their adoption process by countries and cities.
- vii. Catalysation of UN-Habitat's transformative priorities for 2022 - 2023 – adequate housing for all, cities' contribution to climate solutions, localising the SDGs, and urban crises response.

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

- xxxi. One Member States noted the small number of Member States contributing to UN-Habitat's Foundation non-earmarked budget and encouraged all Member States to further contribute.

Agenda item 5 - Any other matters

There were no other matters considered by the ad hoc working group.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 16:00 East Africa Time.
