

UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This stakeholder engagement policy only applies to stakeholder engagement in the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the Executive Board (EB) and its related working groups¹, hereafter referred to as intergovernmental meetings. This policy responds to relevant UN-Habitat and UN rules and regulations and builds on the experience of UN-Habitat at all levels. The Stakeholder Engagement Policy applies to the following three different forms of Stakeholder Engagement:

- a) In the preparations for UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings,
- b) During UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings,
- c) Post UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings and follow-up, including structured dialogues and consultations with UN Habitat senior management.

1.2 The UN-Habitat partnership strategy, implementing partners' policy and standard operating procedures, and other legal instruments,² including Agreements of Cooperation, Memorandum of Understanding, community contracts, and private sector partnership agreements provide for stakeholder engagement in the implementation of UN-Habitat programmes and projects.

1.3 UN-Habitat is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly³ to promote sustainable cities and human settlements and adequate shelter for all. It is the focal point and coordinating agency for sustainable urbanization, Sustainable Development Goal #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities⁴) and the custodial agency for the New Urban Agenda⁵. In fulfilling its functions, UN-Habitat works with member states as well as with local and regional governments, major groups, and other stakeholders.

1.4 Stakeholders may attend and contribute to the intergovernmental meetings in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as well as the resolutions and decisions of the UN-Habitat Assembly⁶, the Committee of Permanent Representatives⁷, and the Executive Board⁸. Expert advice, the sharing of experiences, and scientific contributions to discussions are examples of stakeholder engagement that

¹ This policy does not apply to non-legislative meetings such as sessions of the World Urban Forum, World Cities Day, and World Habitat Day.

² UN-Habitat agreements and legal instruments.

https://habnet.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/11662_UN_Habitat_Agreements_&_Legal_Instruments_Clearance_&_Signatories.pdf

³ GA Resolutions [32/162](#) of 19 December 1977, [56/206](#) of 21 December 2001, [65/165](#) of 20 December 2010, [66/207](#) of 22 December 2011, [67/216](#) of 21 December 2012, [68/239](#) of 27 December 2013, [69/226](#) of 19 December 2014, [70/210](#) of 22 December 2015, [71/235](#) of 21 December 2016, [72/226](#) of 20 December 2017, [73/239](#) of 20 December 2018 and [75/224](#) of 21 December 2020.

⁴ SDG 11: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

⁵ The New Urban Agenda: <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>

⁶ The UN-Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedure: <https://unhabitat.org/hspha1hls2-decision-11-rules-of-procedure-of-the-united-nations-habitat-assembly>: Rules 10.5, 65-69

⁷ The rules of procedures of the UN-Habitat Assembly apply, mutatis mutandis, to the Committee of Permanent Representatives: Rule 29.

⁸ The UN-Habitat Executive Board Rules of Procedure: <https://unhabitat.org/hspha1hls3-rules-of-procedure-of-the-executive-board-of-the-united-nations-human-settlements>: Rule 17.3

can be provided either through oral or written submissions, presentations, or the organisation of side events during intergovernmental meetings. Stakeholders are encouraged to enhance their coordinated engagement in the intergovernmental meetings, including through the organization of stakeholder meetings such as the global stakeholder forum in the run up to the UN-Habitat Assembly.

1.5 While inputs from stakeholders can provide valuable contributions to intergovernmental meetings, decision-making within UN-Habitat governing bodies remains the prerogative of member states. Nonetheless, intergovernmental decisions have broader recognition and support from the public if stakeholders' views are considered in agenda setting, policy-making, and decision-making processes.

1.6 Stakeholders may organize themselves and identify representatives from accredited organisations within their respective groups to facilitate their contributions to UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings. Such arrangements are referred to as a Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism. Stakeholders will be guided by the Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board and adhere to the principles outlined in this policy.

1.7 UN-Habitat's Executive Director will facilitate the participation and preparations of stakeholders in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings, subject to the availability of funding.

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1. The purpose of the policy is to ensure effective, informed, and meaningful stakeholder engagement and involvement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings. The policy will guide stakeholder contribution in support of Member States and UN-Habitat at three different levels of stakeholder engagement⁹.

2.2. Stakeholder engagement contributes to inclusive decision-making and to building support for the implementation of the decisions, recommendations, strategic plans, and work programmes approved by the UN-Habitat governing bodies. It also facilitates the implementation of the decisions coming from the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in relation to UN-Habitat's mandate and work.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings is guided by the following overarching guiding principles:

- a. **Acknowledging the intergovernmental nature of UN Habitat processes:** decision-making within UN-Habitat is the prerogative of Member States.
- b. **Actively contribute to the decision-making processes and agenda setting** in accordance with the UN-Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedure¹⁰, UN Habitat will provide access and participation privileges to all accredited stakeholders to allow them to contribute to decision making in support of Member States in a continuous way during UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings as well as during inter-sessional periods.
- c. **Emphasizing accessibility to public information:** acknowledging the critical importance of consistent, timely, and accurate information for meaningful stakeholder engagement, UN-

⁹ As described in item 1.1 above.

¹⁰ Rule 10.5 of the UN-Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedure:

https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/hsp_ha.1_hls.2_e.pdf

Habitat ensures access to public documents and information related to UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings in a timely manner.

- d. **Respecting diversity of views, equality, non-discrimination, and the principle self-organization:** all parties acknowledge that there is diversity of views, and are committed to a fair, transparent, open, accountable, and accessible engagement process.
- e. **Striving for transparency, accountability, and mutual benefit:** engagement is based on the premise of mutual trust and benefit, transparency, responsibility, and accountability.
- f. **Improving engagement practices:** All parties are committed to continual improvements to current engagement practices, including by exploring the use of innovative tools, mechanisms, and technology.

4. Definition of Stakeholders

4.1 For purposes of this policy, stakeholders are non-members of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and Major Groups and other stakeholders accredited to UN-Habitat or in consultative status with ECOSOC, especially:

- a. Non-members of the UN-Habitat Assembly as identified in Rules 66 – 69 of the UN-Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedure, provided they support or work in the fields of housing, sustainable urban development, and human settlements, and support the work and mandate of UN-Habitat namely:
 - (i) international, regional, and national organizations
 - (ii) local and regional governments of UN Member States or States not members of the UN¹¹, and local government networks and associations; and
 - (iii) the major groups and other stakeholders outlined below, as well as UN-Habitat established advisory boards and professional networks.
- b. Major groups and other stakeholders consist of 18 groups¹²:
Nine major groups that were formalized by Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit in 1992:
 - (i) Women
 - (ii) Children and Youth
 - (iii) Indigenous People
 - (iv) Non-Governmental Organizations (also known as civil society organizations).
 - (v) Local Authorities (currently referred to as local and regional governments)
 - (vi) Workers and Trade Unions
 - (vii) Business and Industry
 - (viii) Scientific and Technological Community (the group also includes academia and researchers); and
 - (ix) Farmers.

Nine stakeholder groups that were recognized by the Habitat Agenda, adopted in 1996, at the second UN conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and by the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016 at Habitat III, consist of:

- (i) Foundations and Philanthropists

¹¹ “States not members of the United Nations are Cook Islands, Holy See, Niue and the State of Palestine”
(note: This is according to the foot note of Rule 64 of the UN Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedures)

¹² Also referred to as Habitat Agenda Partners in the context of Habitat II.

- (ii) Parliamentarians
- (iii) Professional Organizations
- (iv) Persons with Disabilities
- (v) Older Persons
- (vi) Media
- (vii) Grassroots and Informal Sector Organizations
- (viii) Migrants and Refugees; and
- (ix) Volunteer Organizations.

4.2 Furthermore, coalitions, networks and umbrella organisations that comprise accredited and non-accredited member organisations will only be represented in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings by members of respective accredited organisations.

5. Accreditation, criteria, and process

The Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly (66-69) and the Executive Board (17.3) respectively provide for participation in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings for:

- a) accredited intergovernmental organisations and other entities (Rule 66),
- b) local authorities (Rule 67),
- c) other Habitat Agenda Partners (Rule 68), and
- d) Non-Governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC (Rule 69).

Below is the accreditation procedure for participation of Major Groups and other stakeholders in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings, and is derived from:

- a) the UN-Habitat Assembly and Executive Board rules of procedure identified above,
- b) the UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolutions 19/8: *Arrangements regarding accreditation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda Partners of 9 May 2003*, and 26/7: *Accreditation of 12 May 2017*.

Organizations accredited to the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board

5.1 Reconfirmation, on request, the accreditation of organisations accredited to the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board subject to submission of a quadrennial report on the scope and relevance of their activities to the work and mandate of UN-Habitat including the agenda items under discussion by the intergovernmental meeting.

Local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners accredited to Habitat II and III

5.2 Reconfirmation, on request, the accreditation to the UN-Habitat Assembly of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners that were accredited to Habitat II, the special session of the General Assembly for overall review and appraisal of implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and Habitat III. This is subject to submission of a quadrennial report on the scope and relevance of their activities to the work and mandate of UN-Habitat including the agenda items under discussion by the intergovernmental meeting, except for local authorities.

Other local authorities, national or international associations and organizations

5.3 Accreditation of other local authorities or representatives of national or international associations and organisations recognized by the United Nations referred to in rule 67 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly shall be approved by the Executive Board on the recommendation of the Executive Director in consultation with their Governments where requested.

Non-governmental organizations

5.4 Accreditation shall be granted, on request, to non-governmental organizations, including other Habitat Agenda partners, which are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. This is subject to submission of a quadrennial report on the scope and relevance of their activities to the work and mandate of UN-Habitat including the agenda items under discussion by the intergovernmental meeting.

Other Habitat Agenda partners

5.5 Other Habitat Agenda partners referred to in rule 68 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly that were not accredited according to paragraphs 5.2 and 5.4 above may be invited by the Executive Director and accredited to the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Executive Director shall submit the list of such Major Groups and other stakeholders to the Executive Board and to Governments not represented on the Executive Board for approval on a no-objection basis on 1 February and 1 September of each year. Final approval will be done by the Executive Board. The following criteria for accreditation in 5.6 must be met and supporting documents in 5.7 submitted.

5.6 Criteria for accreditation¹³

- a. Be a legal entity in at least one country.
- b. The organization must have been in existence (officially registered) for at least two years as of the date of receipt of the application by the Secretariat.
- c. The organisation's activities must be relevant to housing and sustainable urban development.
- d. The organization must have a democratic decision-making mechanism.

5.7 Supporting documents required¹⁴

Organisations that seek accreditation and meet the above criteria in (5.6) are required to apply for accreditation and to submit the following supporting documents to UN-Habitat Secretariat by 30 June or 30 November of each year:

- a. A letter requesting accreditation on the organization's official letterhead signed by the Head of the organization. The letter should include a summary of the organization's activities, geographical coverage, and a list of its affiliates.
- b. A copy of the organisation's constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents.
- c. A copy of the organisation's certificate of registration or other proof of existence/recognition by a government authority in countries where registration is not required as proof of existence for two years including stamp of the issuing authority.
- d. Copies of the organisation's most recent financial statement and annual report, at least issued within the last two years.
- e. Information on the governance structure and current office bearers.
- f. Optional: Copy of examples of the organisation's most recent publications, articles, or statements.
- g. Optional: Organisational chart.

¹³ This is adapted from ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.

¹⁴ Ibid.

5.8 The Process

The following processes will apply for relevant partner categories:

- a. Major Groups and other stakeholders in 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4 may submit a letter on the organization's official letterhead signed by the Head of the organization, requesting reconfirmation. Additionally, establish a profile and submit the report online.
- b. Local authorities and associations or organisations in 5.3 above may respectively register and submit a letter on the organization's official letterhead signed by the Head of the organization.
- c. The applying organization in 5.5 above must establish a profile and complete a questionnaire online and attach all supporting documents.

A new list of all accredited organisations will be circulated to all Member States of the UN-Habitat Assembly and published on the UN-Habitat website twice a year.

5.9 Renewal of Accreditation

Accreditation is valid for 4 years until the next session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, especially for organisations in 5.1, 5.2, and 5.4 above. At that point, all accredited organizations, including those in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and accredited to Habitat II, *the General Assembly special session* for overall review and appraisal of implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and Habitat III, will be required to submit to the Secretariat a report on relevant activities carried out in the last four years for review by the Secretariat to ensure renewal of accreditation. These reports should be submitted at least six months before the next Assembly, so that accreditation status can be confirmed three months beforehand.

6. Benefits for accredited stakeholders

All accredited stakeholders enjoy the same privileges, including the following:

6.1 Stakeholder participation in preparatory processes for UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings

- a) Timely access to public information and documents of the respective UN-Habitat intergovernmental meeting.
- b) Ability to circulate written submissions to the respective UN-Habitat intergovernmental meeting to be made available to Member States in a timely manner.
- c) Contribution to agenda setting through written submissions to the Executive Director for consideration and onward transmission to the Bureaus of the relevant governing bodies.
- d) Structured and inclusive dialogue with the leadership of UN-Habitat's governing bodies and with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat.
- e) Ability to organize side events on issues relevant to the UN Habitat Assembly.

6.2 Stakeholder engagement during UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings:

- a. Participation in public meetings as observers.
- b. Availability of designated seats in public meetings.
- c. An invitation to make oral statements at public meetings. The presidents or chairpersons will provide opportunities for major groups and other stakeholders to speak on relevant agenda items in an organised manner.

- d. Publication of written statements made by accredited stakeholders during intergovernmental meetings.
- e. Participation in thematic discussions during UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings
- f. Possibility for stakeholders to share their reflections during the sessions of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, including on the preparation of the provisional agenda and during discussions on draft decisions and resolutions.
- g. Strategic interaction with various delegations/delegates on sustainable urban development issues.

6.3 Stakeholder engagement post intergovernmental meetings and follow-up:

- a) Support for implementation, monitoring, and accountability for norms and standards through the sharing of experiences on the impact of UN-Habitat work at relevant Executive Board sessions upon invitation by the Executive Director.

7. Responsibilities and obligations of accredited stakeholders

7.1 Effective stakeholder engagement comes with the responsibilities and obligations of accredited organizations. These include:

- a. Respect for the UN Charter, including the UN System Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment.
- b. Act in accordance with the Rules of Procedures of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board, and to the guiding principles laid out in this policy.
- c. Compliance with registration requirements and seating arrangements for each meeting.
- d. Wide dissemination of and adherence by stakeholders to UN-Habitat's policies, decisions, norms, and standards approved by UN-Habitat intergovernmental bodies.
- e. Regular communication with UN-Habitat, exchange of information, including reporting on activities relevant to UN-Habitat's mandate and programme of work every four years in line with the UN-Habitat Assembly using a questionnaire provided by the Secretariat.
- f. Support the operationalization of an inclusive Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism while adhering to the guiding principles, particularly self-organization, transparency, responsibility, and accountability.
- g. Accredited stakeholders will cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate actions related to engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings with other stakeholders, member states, and UN-Habitat, as appropriate.
- h. Provide feedback on stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings through stakeholder satisfaction surveys, focused group discussions, consultations, and other means as necessary.
- i. Protect UN-Habitat from any undue influence, especially in the processes of setting and applying policies, norms, and standards.

8. The role of UN-Habitat

8.1 UN-Habitat facilitates all relevant stakeholder organizations to engage in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings and ensures geographical representation through mobilizing participation from all regions and engaging with associations and networks at national, regional, and global levels. UN-Habitat's contribution is subject to the availability of funds and includes:

- a. Regular consultations and liaison with accredited stakeholders on matters of governing bodies, including information sharing and dissemination, the development of policies, strategic plans, annual work programmes and analytical reports.

- b. Facilitate stakeholders' accreditation, including online application and processing for approval by member states, online and on-site registration for participation in UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings.
- c. Mobilisation and facilitation of stakeholder engagement and participation through:
 - (i) Special dialogues and consultations
 - (ii) Expert Group Meetings
 - (iii) Surveys
 - (iv) Advocacy initiatives within the context of UN-Habitat intergovernmental meetings.
- d. Support the convening of the global stakeholder forum prior to the UN-Habitat Assembly, regional stakeholder forums, and annual global stakeholder consultations, and relevant regional meetings, where appropriate and subject to the availability of funding.
- e. Promote monitoring, accountability, reporting, and the harnessing and dissemination of lessons learned on stakeholder engagement and participation in UN-Habitat policy related work.
- f. Facilitate a review and update of this stakeholder engagement policy as appropriate.
- g. Dedicate a unit/section which also serves as the Secretariat and an internal focal point for stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes.
- h. Facilitate cross-linkages with other stakeholders working on other relevant global commitments, for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction and resilience, financing of urban infrastructure, housing, and localization of Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

9. Funding

- 9.1 The UN-Habitat work programme and budget will include a budget for stakeholder engagement, including financing activities related to the implementation of this policy.
- 9.2 Funding will be allocated over a time consistent with the strategic plan for resources like UN Habitat staff, publications, event organization, and the production of knowledge products.
- 9.3 UN-Habitat will include stakeholder engagement in its resource mobilization strategy, with an emphasis on joint fundraising, and the possibility of supporting the participation of stakeholders from Least Developed Countries like the Trust Fund set up to support the participation of member states from LDCs.

References: *[Note: This is not part of the draft policy]*

1. ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 Consultation between the United Nations and Non-governmental organizations - chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfefindmkaj/http://csonet.org/content/documents/199631.pdf
2. UN-Habitat Assembly Rules of Procedure
3. UN-Habitat Executive Board Rules of Procedure
4. Accreditation procedure draft 08May 2019 – Chair's draft (005)
5. UNCTAD Partnering with Civil Society: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgiclfefindmkaj/https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osgiomisc2014d3_en.pdf
6. EU Joint Evaluation: Civil Society Engagement in Policy Dialogues, 2012.
7. AfDB CSO Committee TORs
8. GA Resolution 67/290 Format for HLPF.
9. UNAIDS Guidance for Partnerships- Civil Society 2011

10. WHO Basic documents, 49th Edition 2020
11. WHO Stakeholder Engagement Framework 2016.
12. FAO Rules of Procedure
13. ILO Guide to participation in general conference.
14. World Bank Civil Society Engagement
15. [Modalities for Stakeholder Engagement in the high-level political forum \(civicus.org\).](#)