

Regional Groups Consultations Meetings
(AFRICAN GROUP & ARAB STATES)

6 & 7 November 2023

Talking Points for the Deputy Executive Director

(6 November 2023)

9:00 – 10:30

Excellencies,

Let me start by expressing our gratitude to the Dean and the members of the African Group for the strong support received in the preparations and holding of the recently concluded Second UN-Habitat's Assembly from 5 to 9 June 2023, devoted to achieving SDGs in times of global crises. The Assembly – held ahead of the review of SDG 11 by the High-Level Political Forum (10 to 19 July 2023) and ahead of the SDG Summit (18-19 September 2023) provided your Group with an opportunity to re-affirm its commitments to continue to work with UN Habitat to effectively deliver on its mandate and *engage with all countries in assisting the organization to deliver, through increased efficiency, transparency and accountability.*

Excellencies, *on 2 November I had the honour to brief you on our plans and progress so far in implementing all resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly. We will do our best to maintain these briefings.* Today also in the afternoon, the Executive Director will give detailed briefing on the preparations for the 2023 third session of the Executive Board to be held from 28 to 30 November 2023. This briefing will highlight on the preparations for the different agenda items that include:

- *the financial status of UN-Habitat*
- *The scalability model as requested by the Board*
- *The draft work Programme and budget for the year 2024*

- *the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation,*
- *the report on the obstacles to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda*
- *the roadmap for preparing the next strategic plan*
- *the urban action funding window to support the implementation of United Nations Habitat Assembly resolutions*
- *the update on the Guidelines on Smart Cities*
- *the Normative and Operational activities of UN-Habitat*
- *reparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum*
- *implementation of the United Nations development system reform in UN-Habitat*

Programmatic updates and Key Asks

Africa

- The continent is facing both political instability and climate change crisis causing massive displacement from rural to urban center (Fredy Cyclone in Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa); (political crisis in the Sahel Region: Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali). Local governments and municipalities are requesting for more and more support for resilience building and to territorial planning.

Against this background, I convey on behalf of UN-Habitat the following **requests and key asks:**

- To continue supporting our efforts to strengthen Regional Representation and the deployment of a new Regional Architecture for our programmes in Africa in order to improve UN-Habitat's programme delivery in the region. (This can be achieved through supporting our outreach and engagement/communication on the work and achievements so far. Influencing action at all levels and engaging various stakeholders wherever and whenever possible.

- To continue lobbying for opportunities to establishing crucial Multi Country Offices (MCO) in the region. (This will enable the UN-Habitat Regional Representation to efficiently serve multiple countries in a manner that better leverages assets and resources, increase scale to improve the scope).
- Unfortunately – the core contributions from Member States in the African region aren't up to date, and the Group is expected to intensify efforts to contribute to improved funding of the Programme.
- The Group may also consider supporting actively our mobilization efforts to work closely with International and Regional Financial Institutions (WB, AFDB) with Regional Institutions (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC....)

Arab States

- In the Arab States, the situation isn't much better. The Arab region is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change impact. Water scarcity is a major issue in 19 of the 22 Arab countries, while desertification and land degradation affect 17 countries.
- The escalated conflict in Sudan represented a major challenge for our delivery in this region. We lost one staff member and most of our team members are relocated outside their homes while trying to maintain our humanitarian efforts and recovery efforts with significant security and logistics obstacles.

The recent earthquake hitting Morocco and the floods in Derna/Libya have caused widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure, forcing additional displacement of populations, who are in need for relief as well as support to recovery and reconstruction efforts. UN-Habitat deploys its crisis-response expertise, to perform rapid damage assessments of buildings and infrastructure, as well as support in the planning and establishment of settlements for the displaced. In the longer term, UN-Habitat will work with authorities to develop a recovery plan for the city, drawing on its experiences in countries as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, to achieve building back better.

- In these recent few weeks and months we have seen how the region has become too volatile and very vulnerable. Environmental and physical risks escalate rapidly, and major crises emerge seemingly out of thin air, without a warning. And we find ourselves in dire situations in which the UN is unable to support human lives, and most importantly is not able to provide proper humanitarian response and aid. **Member states are kindly asked to support UN-Habitat's capacity to provide timely and effective humanitarian response by: 1) availing appropriate resources; 2) advocate for importance of humanitarian aid in times of crises and ensuring rights of those in need are protected and that their needs are being met.**

Upcoming Events

- ICCCASU 5 Conference in Nairobi on 14th -15th Dec 2023
- African Urban Forum & World Urban Forum in 2024
The Africa Investment Forum (Mayoral Round Table) 8-10 November 2023
- The fifth Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development (AM-FHUD V) is taking place in Tripoli, Libya, 19-21 December 2023
- Global Refugee Forum - Geneva, Switzerland, 13-15 December 2023
World Urban Forum 2024 - Cairo, Egypt, 4-8 November 2024

Thank you.

NOTE: DED to invite **Oumar S.** and **Rania H.** for detailed presentations, including specific projects updates, pipeline and acquisition overviews (hard, medium, soft etc.), and regional thematic trends.