



1. Background

During the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (June 2023), member States committed to aligning the strategic planning process of UN-Habitat with the cycle of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, to promote policy coherence across the United Nations system, by extending the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 to also cover the period 2024–2025, and to convening, in 2025, a resumed regular second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly to adopt the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2026–2029.

At the third session of 2023 of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat (November 2023), member States took note of the Report of the Executive Director on the preparations for the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 and further requested UN-Habitat’s Executive Director to continue the development the strategic plan for the period 2026-2029. Accordingly, UN-Habitat’s preparation of the strategic plan for the period 2026-2029 is currently underway, in line with the deliberations at the Third Session of the Executive Board.

As per the Report of the Executive Director on the preparations for the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029, the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 will be developed through a consultative process, in an open and inclusive manner. The development process will be guided by lessons learnt and recommendations from consultations, assessments, and evaluations such including through in-depth consultations with Member States, United Nations Development System entities, UN-Habitat personnel and partners on lessons learnt both in terms of the preparation of the last Strategic Plan, its substance, and the modalities to support its implementation. Towards this end, UN-Habitat proposes a roadmap for Member States’ consultations at relevant points in the preparation of the Strategic Plan, starting with a first retreat in January 2024.

2. Kick off retreat of the Member States

The retreat aims to consider the **principles and priorities** of the Strategic Plan, as well the **framework and** the most effective modalities **for consultations** with Member States, UN system, key stakeholders and other relevant actors.

In this context, UN-Habitat proposes adopting a *structured, sequential, and hierarchical approach* to the Strategic Plan preparation process and likewise consultations with Member States on the preparation of the SP 2026-2029. This would mean consulting with Member States as per the structured hierarchy of the Strategic Plan. Member States consultations could first articulate **priorities**, then formulate **attainable goals** defining UN-Habitat’s role in addressing the priority issues, and subsequently define **measurable objectives**, before considering subsequent stages of the Strategic Plan preparation process.

2.1 Setting guiding principles

The Secretariat, following evaluations of the current Strategic Plan (2020-2025), and assessing lessons learned, suggests seeking that the **Strategic Plan 2026-2029 is relevant, focussed and prioritised, evidence and knowledge-based, and manageable.**

- **Relevant:**
defining role of UN-Habitat in the UN where its work contributes broader UN priorities, adds value, and responds to the needs of the Member States;
- **Focussed and Prioritised:**
addressing reasonable and workable number of relevant priority issues and/or challenges rather than broadly covering all relevant themes and activities;
- **Evidence and knowledge-based:**
Informed by experience by UN-Habitat and other partners and stakeholders;
- **Manageable:**
Clearly structured in attainable goals and measurable objectives - easy to align to and to implement; so that it can be supported by a clear framework of meaningful indicators; unambiguously assigning responsibilities and accountabilities across organisational structure;

2.2 Articulating priorities for impact

The articulation of priorities would be anchored **in the broader priorities of the UN through the SDGs and including** the Six Transitions of the SDG Summit¹ **through the lens of UN-Habitat's mandate**, defining where it is complementary of other UN entities, and where it adds value. The priorities also **need to originate from the NUA commitments.**

In particular, the question is **how far and wide the Member States wish to depart from the current framework of priorities**, as encouraged by the OP 15 of A/RES/77/173:

- access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing,
- inclusive urban prosperity and finance,
- effective climate action and environmental sustainability,
- multilevel governance and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, and
- effective urban crisis response and recovery.

At the same time, they need to be **visionary, responding to the rapid changes in the world, and looking forward past 2030.**

Importantly, the scope of the Strategic Plan requires careful deliberation to avoid **including everything in UN-Habitat's mandate or the ongoing work programme.** While **all of UN-Habitat's operations contribute to the Strategic Plan, they might not need to serve the strategic priorities directly, and not all activities and projects must be aligned to the priorities.**

¹ <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Six%20Transitions%20English.pdf>

Once **priorities** for the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 have been reconfirmed by the Member States, we suggest **articulating them as issues to be addressed or challenges to be resolved**, where **UN-Habitat has a critical, if not leading, role**.

Thereafter, these **priority issues would be translated into attainable strategic goals** for the period, which will clearly determine the role of UN-Habitat and guide its activities in attaining the goals.

For the purposes of building annual work programmes and budgets, the **Strategic goals will be supported by measurable objectives**, which will also serve in monitoring progress of attaining the Strategic goals.

2.3 Framework for consultations

The Secretariat proposes **engaging the MS and key stakeholders** through **structured dialogues** facilitated by UN-Habitat's Task force and its Secretariat.

The themes of the dialogues would generally **follow the vector of the approved structure of the Strategic Plan**: from priorities to objectives.

The dialogues, focussing on clearly determined issues, and driven to concrete conclusions on these issues, would facilitate the debate within and among the categories of constituencies:

- **Member States** and their designated experts;
- Relevant representatives of the **UN System entities**, and – where required – other multilateral organisations; and
- **Key stakeholders and partners**, such as civil society organisations, professional associations, academia, and other.

These constituencies would sometimes have an **internal dialogue**, and sometimes – a **joint one** – as required. Some of the dialogue sessions would be **convened globally**, and some – **in the regions**, to ensure respect to **varied specific contexts of the world**.

The **conclusions of each these dialogues** will be synthesized by the Secretariat and **inform the structure and content of the following dialogue sessions**. The synthesized reporting on conclusions of the dialogues will **feed into the drafting of the Strategic Plan**.

The Secretariat will also use opportunities to arrange consultations on the margins of key events - such as UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi in May, Summit of the Future in New York in September 2024, and other events as appropriate.

The proposed tentative sequence of the dialogues:

Jan 31	MS Dialogue 1: Principles discussed, and the scope of priorities launched	MS retreat 1
Feb-Mar tbd	Dialogues on vision and scope of priorities	
Mar 11	MS Dialogue 2: Scope of priorities discussed, priorities as issues launched	ad-hoc WG
Mar tbd	Dialogues on formulating priorities as issues	
Apr 8	MS Dialogue 3: Priorities as issues discussed, strategic goals launched	ad-hoc WG
Apr tbd	Dialogues on formulating strategic goals	
May 6-8	MS Dialogue 4: Principles, priorities endorsed, and strategic goals discussed	EB
May-Aug	Dialogues on strategic goals and global-local links	
Jul tbd	<i>margins of HLPF: coordination with UN System</i>	<i>UN retreat</i>
Sep tbd	MS Dialogue 5: check in global and local links	MS retreat 2
“MIDDLE OF THE ROAD”		
Sep tbd	margins of Africa Urban Forum: regional dialogue	
Oct-Nov tbd	other regional dialogues on strategic goals	
Nov tbd	MS Dialogue 6: Goals endorsed in principle, measurable objectives discussed	EB
Nov 2024	Consultations at the WUF12 in Cairo	
Nov-Mar	Drafting the SP for presentation to EB in Mar 2025; Dialogues as required on contentious issues	
Mar 2025	MS Dialogue 7: SP draft endorsed in principle	EB
Apr-May	Final draft of SP	
May 29-31	MS Dialogue 8: SP presented to the UN-Habitat Assembly	UNHA 2