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**Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat,
including reporting on the programmatic activities of
UN-Habitat and the implementation of
subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical
cooperation activities and the engagement of
UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected
by conflict and disaster**

**Report of the Executive Director on normative and operational
activities of UN-Habitat, including updates on the Flagship
Programme 1 ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’, the
Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe)
initiative, the initiatives on urban crises prevention and response
and activities for the period July–December 2023**

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report highlights progress made by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) from July - December 2023 on the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme, the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative and on the work on urban crisis situations. The first section provides an update on the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme. The second section of the report presents an update on the engagement and commitments to SURGe initiative since the previous update on this initiative to the Executive Board during its third session in 2023. The final section updates on the initiatives of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, including the conflict in Gaza. In addition, annex HSP/EB.2024/INF.6 presents a preliminary report on the “status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip” and the annex HSP/EB.2024/INF.7 highlights progress made on selected normative and operational activities during the period July – December 2023 which contributed towards each subprogramme of the strategic plan 2020-2025 of UN-Habitat, the SDG11 as well as towards other SDGs.

II. Update on the ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ Flagship Programme

1. UN-Habitat’s Flagship Programme on ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ was launched during the World Urban Forum 10 in Abu Dhabi in 2019 under the title ‘Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities’. The objective of the programme is to promote social and environmental value creation globally by supporting governments and urban actors to build more inclusive and thriving neighbourhoods and communities through integrated urban regeneration.

A. Background

2. Since 2019, UN-Habitat has developed an area- and human rights-based approach to urban regeneration. The approach focuses on spatial inclusion - through reduction of poverty, inequality and vulnerability - and on enhanced prosperity through local socio-economic development. Placing people at the centre, this programme promotes transformative urban policies, programmes, plans and projects which can improve access to jobs, services, facilities and public space, increased social mix, adequate housing, improved urban environment, sustainable urban mobility, safety and vibrant urban cultures.

3. UN-Habitat’s integrated approach to urban regeneration also seeks to avoid, mitigate and manage the possible risks associated with urban regeneration and transformation, such as involuntary relocation, gentrification, and spatial discrimination. UN-Habitat advocates that for the impacts of urban regeneration and transformation to reach neighbourhoods and communities, the process should be tailored to the local context, utilising strategic entry-points and socio-economic potential.

4. UN-Habitat alongside relevant like-minded institutions and professionals around the world recognize urban regeneration as one of the most comprehensive and effective tools to promote more inclusive, resilient, safer, and sustainable cities, while advancing the integrated localisation of the SDGs. In view of the growing inequality due to the enduring impacts of climate change, COVID-19, accelerating urbanization, digitalization and migration, urban regeneration becomes a particularly relevant instrument to address diverse challenges at once and localize multiple SDGs. In policies, programmes, projects, meetings, events and publications, member States, such as the United States, Spain, Israel, Mexico, Morocco and Tunisia have shared and promoted the positive social and economic impacts of inclusive urban regeneration.

5. The present document reports on the global and country-specific work of UN-Habitat through the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme for the implementation of the UN-Habitat strategic plan. Although the Flagship Programme is reported “*stricto sensu*” through the strategic plan outcome 1.3: Effective settlements growth and regeneration of the strategic plan, the Programme becomes specifically powerful for the integrated delivery and impacts it generates in UN-Habitat’s specific priorities and furthermore, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. The report enables the Executive Board to discuss further prioritization of the work of UN-Habitat on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration as a tool for localizing the SDGs following the recently approved resolution on the Localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and establish strong linkages and a mechanism for implementation of the resolutions on Adequate Housing for All, Slum Transformation and Urban Planning and Sustainable Infrastructure.

B. The normative and operational portfolio of UN-Habitat through Flagship Programme on Inclusive communities, Thriving Cities

Integrated and multi-sectoral approach to urban regeneration:

7. The Flagship Programme on ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ is a convening platform for multistakeholder collaboration, technical assistance, and resource mobilisation to promote inclusive, resilient, safer and healthier urban regeneration, enabling neighbourhoods and communities to become more equal and vibrant. To reach the integrative potential of urban regeneration, the programme brings together different areas of expertise to promote inter-sectorial collaboration.

8. Within the UN System, UN-Habitat is collaborating on inclusive urban regeneration and transformation with UNESCO, UNDRR and UNWTO, focusing on the linkages between urban regeneration, natural and cultural heritage, climate change and disaster risk reduction, mega-events¹ and

¹ Urban mega-events and events are ambulatory occasions of a fixed duration that attract a large number of visitors, have a large mediated reach, include large investments and have large impacts on the built environment and population. Olympic Games, football World Cups, World EXPOs, Conference of the Parties, and World Urban Forum are examples of such urban mega-events.

sustainable tourism. This has created linkages with other areas of work, such as slum upgrading and housing, to provide solutions for the most vulnerable and the most deprived in terms of living standards.

9. The Flagship Programme is also uniquely positioned as a vehicle for the collaboration with other flagship programmes of UN-Habitat:

- ‘Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor’ Flagship – working on conjunctions between urban regeneration, slums and climate, and the delivery of adaptation, mitigation and resource efficiency for climate action through concrete Global Climate Fund projects;
- ‘Inclusive cities: Enhancing the positive impact of urban migration’ Flagship – working on conjunctions between urban regeneration and migration and the capacity to respond to migration through inclusive urban regeneration; and
- ‘SDG Cities’ Flagship – addressing conjunctions between urban regeneration, the localisation of the SDGs in cities, and the development of a portfolio of municipal projects that localise the SDGs through urban regeneration.

10. Since its inception, the programme has also established result-driven normative and operational partnerships with the following stakeholder groups:

- Governments: to build capacity, provide technical assistance for the formulation and implementation of strategies
- Private sector and investors: to develop inclusive business models, benchmarks and methodologies, and to facilitate public–private people-centred collaboration.
- Community Groups: to provide capacity building, technical assistance, and tools for community-led urban regeneration initiatives.
- Research institutions: to co-develop normative and technical guidelines, tools, reports and training materials.

11. In relation to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, the Flagship Programme provides an integrative multiscale and multistakeholder process and tool for the localization of the SDGs and implementing the New Urban Agenda. In relation to the SDGs localisation as well as the SDG Cities Flagship Programme, urban regeneration captures the value of urban transformations towards poverty reduction, enhanced safety, improved participation, access to services, promotion of economic growth, and improved social inclusion. Urban regeneration interventions have demonstrated to have simultaneous positive impact in 15 of the 17 SDGs and in over 45 of the SDG targets.

12. Paragraphs 38 and 52 of the New Urban Agenda highlight the specific interlinkages between urban regeneration and renewal and the provision of basic infrastructure and services, the prevention of sprawl and marginalisation, while improving social participation and the integration of natural and cultural heritage.

13. With a view to the resolutions approved during the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, urban regeneration is delivering outcomes towards the localization of the SDG’s, slum transformation, housing, biodiversity and resilience, climate change and urban planning and infrastructure. This positions the Flagship Programme as a solid vehicle for the delivery of the related resolutions.

14. Within the strategic plan of UN-Habitat, the Flagship Programme contributes to the delivery of Subprogramme 1. It has established strong linkages between the Subprogramme’s components on services, mobility and public space, land, slum transformation and affordable housing and effective urban growth, which are delivered through inclusive urban regeneration. The Flagship Programme also connects with Subprogramme 2, linking to spatial connectivity and productivity, local economic development and people-centered smart cities. The linkages with the Subprogrammes 3 and 4, as well as Flagship Programmes 3 and 4, become evident through the contributions of inclusive urban regeneration to the outcomes of green gas emission reduction, improved air quality, resource efficiency, protection of ecological assets and adaptation, and the socio-economic components that link with migration and disaster-risk reduction.

Collaboration framework of the Flagship Programme:

15. Given the confluence of three determinant factors in the nature of the programme; i) integrative and multisectoral scope, ii) multi-partner implementation and iii) lack of funding predictability, a collaboration framework between partners was established to facilitate the focus and advancement of the programme towards a clear objective, with outcomes, outputs and activities:

Objective: Promote social and environmental value creation globally by supporting governments and urban actors to build more inclusive and thriving neighbourhoods and communities through urban regeneration.

– Outcome 1: Enhanced knowledge and evidence-based data on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration, including data analysis and monitoring and knowledge on spatial inclusion, vulnerability and urban regeneration.

– Outcome 2: Strengthened global and regional collaboration and capacity on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration, including networks and partnerships, events and capacity development and advocacy and campaigns.

– Outcome 3: Initiatives and solutions implemented to generate social and environmental value through urban regeneration, including technical assistance in urban regeneration and global initiatives for inclusive urban transformation.

16. The implementation experience so far has proven the potential of the Flagship Programme for delivering social inclusion at the city scale and diversifying social structures and land use, as well as for increasing awareness on the transformative power of urban regeneration, if it is well managed and informed by sustainable urban planning principles in line the New Urban Agenda.

17. The implementation of the programme has further demonstrated how urban regeneration can provide an entry-point to diversified housing solutions. In addition, it has produced the following substantial progress in the three outcome areas:

– Normative work – outcome 1: the programme has completed the first draft Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Regeneration, the Spatial Inclusion Indicators Framework, the Urban Regeneration and Viruses Report: learning from past and present health crisis, the Local Development Agencies Whitepaper, the Spatial Inclusion: Regional Trends report and the Urban Regeneration for Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals paper. The Atlas of Urban Regeneration and the SDG-ESG Framework for Urban Regeneration are being prepared.

– Networks and partnerships – outcome 2: the programme co-organized or participated in various collaboration opportunities and is expanding its networks. An Expert Group Meeting - Urban Regeneration as a Tool for Inclusive and Sustainable Recovery – was a key event for multidisciplinary knowledge exchange and kickstarted the programme network building. An external multisector Reference Group on urban regeneration was established with 25 members from different countries, including the US, Canada, Chile, England, France, Italy, Spain, South Africa, Australia, and from international technical, education and government organisations and businesses.

– Operational activities – outcome 3: UN-Habitat is providing technical assistance in urban regeneration initiatives in collaboration with national and local governments, the private sector, academia and other UN entities at the country level, for example with the Nairobi River Regeneration / Nairobi Life Initiative in Kenya; San Nicolas de los Garza Urban Vision in Mexico; Green Climate Fund neighbourhood efficiency and resilience in Cuba; Integral Urban Operations in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica; Participatory urban planning with communities and local authorities in Bossaso, Somalia; and works on Inclusive Datacenter Communities initiative with Microsoft in Mexico and Sweden.

Integrated impact through inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration – highlights of country activities:

– Reduction of inequalities and urban inclusion through urban regeneration – Equity Park in Cancun, Mexico: The objective is to revert the existing socio-spatial segregation patterns in the city and use the Equity Park to develop, improve and consolidate urban infrastructure and services that can make the urban environment more safe, inclusive, accessible and resilient. Close to 200,000 people live in the sphere of influence of the Equity Park. The scheme includes 16 km of bike lanes and pedestrian walkways, 61 recreational services (for football, volleyball, basketball, skate parks, children's playgrounds, a music school, martial arts sports centre, and open-air stages). The project identified vulnerable communities within the project area who were consulted to understand their social and economic needs that can be addressed through urban regeneration, such as improved access to services and sustainable mobility, tenure security, safety, quality of the built environment and skills training and employment creation.

– Urban regeneration and housing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: The objective is to develop a socio-economic strategy and an impact and mitigation strategy for urban regeneration with specific focus on the vulnerable groups – the majority of the population – and to provide social and economic

opportunities for local residents while minimising negative impacts arising from relocation, gentrification. The main medium-term impacts are the reduction of involuntary relocations, the development of social programmes to generate jobs, the improved access to health and education, the use of heritage as an entry-point to generate construction and rehabilitation related opportunities, and the provision of adequate housing in central Riyadh.

– Urban regeneration and nature-based solutions for open and public space in Nairobi, Kenya: The objective is to develop an integrated socio-environmental river area regeneration programme that improves the safety, housing conditions, infrastructure and services and the environmental qualities of the Nairobi rivers.

– Urban regeneration for climate change resilience and energy efficiency in Cuba: The objective is to design strategic frameworks that better address policy gaps and improve sectoral expertise in climate resilience, energy efficiency and regeneration in the neighbourhoods and communities in Cuba, including the housing sector, and to increase the number of potential projects developed and submitted by Cuba as a Small Island Developing State to the Green Climate Fund.

– Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building for Sustainable Urban Regeneration in Vietnam: The objective is to support the capacity of national and local governments by training and learning-by-doing during urban regeneration project collaboration and the development of 3 specific urban regeneration projects.

– Urban regeneration and slum transformation in Central America through Integral Urban Operations: The objective is to transform four precarious neighbourhoods into environments of sustainable well-being, highlighting the opportunity for regeneration and greater integration with the city and the metropolitan area through integrated interventions that require public-private cooperation.

– Unlocking the social and economic potentials of Kenya’s refugee camps through areas-based regeneration: The objective is to promote urban resilience, self-sufficiency and communities’ integration in one of the largest and longest-standing refugee camps in Kenya, the Kakuma-Kalobeyei through regeneration that delivers inclusion and livelihoods for the host and refugee communities.

C. Operational model and main impacts

18. The impact of the Flagship Programme is measured by the number of beneficiaries reached, human and financial resources mobilised, knowledge products developed, partnerships created and initiatives implemented. As of June 2023, UN-Habitat has supported 64 cities in 22 countries to adopt urban regeneration policies. The programme has developed 15 knowledge and evidence-based data outputs and engaged 60 partners from 32 countries.

19. The programme is operated by a team of five full-time and five part-time experts (one staff, one seconded staff and eight consultants), and project teams based in regional and country offices. The portfolio of USD9.6 million as of 2023 relies on resource mobilization of ear-marked funding. The Flagship Programme has mobilised resources from national, regional and local governments, bilateral cooperation and private sector.

D. Way forward

20. UN-Habitat is strengthening the integration between the five flagship programmes and thematic focus areas for the delivery of the strategic plan 2020-2025, the current priority themes and the resolutions made in the second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly.

21. The main focus areas of the ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ for the next two years of the Strategic Plan are completion of the advanced drafts of global normative guidance products (detailed in section 2), the development of the partnership networks of the programme with regional hubs as well as countries and cities that champion the implementation of inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration.

22. The programme is strongly focusing on portfolio acquisition, with project proposals for over 12 national and local governments, multilateral and bi-lateral cooperation, vertical climate funds and foundations. The global initiative on “Mega-events as catalysers of sustainable urban development” aims at exploiting the opportunities of mega-events for inclusive, sustainable and resilient urban development in collaboration with SDG Cities programme.

23. Regarding the priority themes of localization of SDGs, the programme will advance integrated policies and programmes for the localized delivery of 15 of the 17 SDGs as well as 45 of the total 169 SDG targets. The Flagship will serve as a vehicle to place housing, informal settlements and slum transformations, land and public space at the centre of UN-Habitat strategic plan and programming. The resolution on Adequate Housing for All provides an opportunity to politically engage housing stakeholders to the urban regeneration Flagship Programme and position housing as an instrument for reduction of spatial inequalities.

24. Finally, the ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ can scale up its contributions to the UN System’s work on urban planning and infrastructure, climate action and biodiversity by concrete spatialization, prioritization and execution of city-wide and neighbourhood planning processes and infrastructure that are resilient to climate change.

III. Update on the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative

25. The COP27 Presidency launched the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative to connect the local, national and global level levels to coordinate collective climate action and for improved collaboration between sectoral initiatives. SURGe responds to the challenge that current national pledges are not sufficient to reduce harmful emissions to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. SURGe also directly supports ongoing work under Subprogramme 3, focusing on multilevel climate action.

26. The COP27 Presidency has asked UN-Habitat, with facilitation support from ICLEI, to operationalize SURGe. Through the partner network, work in five working groups has started by identifying the needs for local level capacity building, tools and guidance.

A. UNHA resolution and the development of options and recommendations for the operationalizing the SURGe initiative

27. The UN-Habitat Assembly Resolution HSP/HA.2/Res.5 on Enhancing the interlinkages between urbanization and climate change resilience “Welcomes the Executive Director’s efforts to launch the SURGe initiative during the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and in this regard requests the Executive Director to inform the Executive Board, and subsequently develop options and recommendations for operationalizing the SURGe initiative as a meaningful institutional arrangement for the Executive Board to consider”.

28. The resolution HSP/HA.2/Res.5 also requests the Executive Director to “further enhance the linkage between urbanization and climate change in the work of UN-Habitat in order to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement” and “to continue the practice of organizing meetings, including ministerial meetings as appropriate, following the organization of the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change held in the margins of the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” and “...to continue efforts to mobilize resources; disseminate information on innovations, good practices and policies relating to climate action; and support Member States in this regard”.

29. Subsequently, all three options introduced below recognize the SURGe Initiative as: 1) an ongoing initiative, 2) a partnership initiative and 3) as an initiative that is fully aligned with Subprogramme 3 of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat. Thus, the options differ in terms of the degree to which SURGe is developed as one delivery platform for Subprogramme 3: Option 1 assumes that additional core resources are not required. Option 2 requires limited core resources with the aim to significantly built up the initiative through project funding and partnership engagement. Option 3 requires significant core resources in the range of USD5 million per year (some of which would result from internal reprioritization, some from soft earmarked funding, an additional regular budget allocation is not absolutely necessary). Option 2 provides a middle ground with this regard.

B. Overview of options

30. **Option 1.** SURGe will be implemented as part of the ongoing work under Subprogramme 3
- This option assumes that limited SURGe coordination will be provided by UN-Habitat in support of the broader partnership. Existing partnerships, networks and projects will be leveraged for SURGe operationalization. In particular the engagement with the COP28 CHAMP pledge and the Marrakech Partnership will support SURGe.
 - **Priorities:** Emphasis will be placed on partnerships in support of multilevel climate action and strengthening the normative work around the urban content of the NDCs. Light support to the five sectoral Track working groups will be provided as long as these are self-sufficient.
 - Under Option 1 it will not be possible to provide institutional support to the global SURGe Alliance, the five track working groups, neither will be advocacy and communications support, nor will it be possible to strengthen capacities for integrated urban climate action, project development that contribute to national and local SURGe efforts.
 - **Funding:** No additional core resources will be actively sought unless the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, working within existing means, some project funding and leveraging of partnerships.
31. **Option 2.** The SURGe initiative will be developed as an entry point for accelerated climate action
- This option builds on Option 1 and supports stronger collaboration with additional partnerships encompassing the members of the SURGe Alliance, coordinated by a dedicated secretariat. Collectively, partners would advance the multilevel climate action work.
 - UN-Habitat would support the coordination and monitoring of the five Track working groups and the development of a SURGe website, as an opportunity to showcase best practices and opportunities for collaboration. SURGe would also be developed as an opportunity to strengthen UN-Habitat's climate related work, in line with the SURGe work packages. SURGe would further support COP presidencies in the organization of the Ministerial Meetings on Urbanization and Climate Change.
 - **Priorities:** In support of member states, UN-Habitat, using the urban content of Nationally Determined Contributions analysis as an entry point, would accelerate the development of project proposals that contribute to the SURGe efforts (supporting national capacity development and city-level roll-out). Project funding could be provided by local or national partners or international development or climate finance amongst others. A network of country-level SURGe focal points would be supported in terms of capacity building peer learning.
 - Under option 2, SURGe will remain an initiative with significant potential to develop into a platform for global multilevel climate action and for providing direct services to Member States through the mobilization of partnerships and project funding. However, under Option 2, the initiative will fall short of the ambitions initially set out by the COP27 presidency.
 - **Funding:** Core funding at USD1 million per year with emphasis on soft earmarked funding covering: additional staff in headquarters and one focal point each in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, workshop and communications cost. It is expected that this option would leverage USD 50 million over six years of additional project funding in support of Member States.
32. **Option 3.** The SURGe initiative provides internal coherence for UN-Habitat's climate work, accelerates support to member states and cities and acts as a Coordination Platform
- This option would enable a full integration of SURGe across UN-Habitat including coherence between thematic sections in HQ in particular those aligned with the 5 Sector Working Tracks and the key cross-cutting themes of SURGe as well as regional and country offices. SURGe would be used as a mechanism to accelerate the implementation of all elements of the second session of UN Habitat Assembly Resolution HSP/HA.2/Res.5.
 - **Priorities:** In addition to accelerating the implementation under options 1 and 2, this option would emphasize additional support to Member States and priority cities to build up multilevel climate action including policy and planning support as well as project identification and development. Regional level support would build technical advisory capacities and provide knowledge management and shared learning opportunities. At the global level, the SURGe secretariat would provide a regular report to the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change and other relevant events.

- **Funding:** USD5 million per year of core funding, of which a significant amount would come from internal reassignments; additional core resources needed. It is expected that this option would leverage USD 500 million over 6 years of additional project funding in support of member states.

IV. Update on initiatives on urban crisis prevention and response

A. Progress in institutional and normative support to partners

33. In response to the Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internally Displaced People and as requested by the Special Adviser to the SG on Solutions to Internal Displacement, UN-Habitat adopted its Institutional Plan on Solutions to Internal Displacement in June 2023. This allowed the development of a whole-of-house approach to solutions for IDPs in urban areas with a focus on sustainability, scalability and transformability in line with HDP nexus.
34. UN-Habitat published a Guide to Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement in National Urban Policy in September 2023. This supports national governments, local authorities and other stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive roadmap for developing an integrated approach to urban migration and displacement.
35. An agency-wide Community of Practice on forced displacement has been set up to fast-track the exchange of good practice and scale programme development support on IDPs. This includes five countries (Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia), where joint programmes with other UN entities have been accepted by the newly established Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF).
36. As part of UN-Habitat’s commitments, an informal task force has been set up with UN agencies, international NGOs and the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to develop a conceptual framework for urban forced displacement solutions with the support of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). It will provide guidance on “do’s” and “don’ts” and on key dimensions that need to be part of programming to deliver solutions that are sustainable, scalable and transformational. Key components identified so far are integrated urban planning, land tenure, access to public services, financing and social inclusion. An Expert Group Meeting will take place in March 2024.
37. UN-Habitat co-lead with UNHCR the preparation and adoption of two multistakeholder pledges, one on Housing, Land and Property and one calling for investments in integrated Climate Resilient, Sustainable Human Settlements for refugees and hosting communities, at the Global Refugee Forum (Geneva, December 2023). UN-Habitat furthermore contributed to three pledges: the UN Common pledge, a pledge on localisation and one, spearheaded by local governments, a call for local action. With UNHCR and the World Bank, UN-Habitat is now exploring how to further support national governments, with an initial focus on Africa, in joining the pledge and adopting the human settlements approach in managing long term refugee presence. This will build on ongoing work of the institutions, such as the joint programming in Kenya.

B. Progress on support to countries experiencing crisis

38. In response to the request of the last Executive Board in November 2023, UN-Habitat has deployed a mission to explore how to support the development of UN-Habitat’s response to the acute crisis in the Gaza Strip and to collect inputs for the preparation of the “comprehensive and up-to-date report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip”. The mission met with relevant actors in Cairo and Amman. A visa request to access Palestine is still pending with the relevant Israeli Authorities. The meetings planned for East Jerusalem and Ramallah were ultimately conducted virtually from Cairo. A visit to the Gaza Strip itself was not planned at this time due to the active status of the war and the UN focus on the acute humanitarian response.
39. The ongoing nature of the war and the impossibility to conduct any field-based assessments means that only a preliminary report is possible at this point. The report, attached in annex as an information document [HSPxxxINF.X], sets out first, the scope and the limitations of the report; secondly, sets out what is needed and what is already going on in terms of assessing the impact of the war on the human settlements in the Gaza Strip, calling for a focus on neighbourhood functionality; thirdly, summarizes principles derived from lessons learned from previous reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip and relevant examples from elsewhere; fourthly, set outs pathways from emergency response to recovery and reconstruction taking into account the immense scale of the damage and the uncertainty

of when and how the war will end and lastly proposes next steps. All will be informed based on feedback received from relevant stakeholders and the realities on the ground.

40. UN-Habitat has contributed to the interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment in February 2024, conducted in partnership between the World Bank Group, the United Nations and the European Union. Building on that UN-Habitat is advocating for and working on disaggregated data neighbourhood by neighbourhood. This will facilitate an area-based approach to prioritize response. The assessment includes an understanding of the typology of buildings in each neighbourhood, the level of damage to buildings, infrastructure and services, on the basis of which interventions can be prioritized to restore functionality and fast track return and recovery where-ever and when-ever possible.

V. Conclusions

41. This report of the Executive Director on the progress of normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat from July to December 2023 highlighted activities that support Member States in priority areas of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat. The development of the flagship programme ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’ demonstrates the integrative potential of the urban regeneration approach of UN-Habitat and its normative and operational contributions. The report also highlighted the ways how the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation programme is seeking implementation modalities that strengthen the alignment with priorities of partners and internally between the subprogrammes of UN-Habitat. Lastly, the report on urban crises response accounted how UN-Habitat has taken actions on the request from Member States to step up its crisis response in urban contexts.