



Third meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2024

Monday, 22 April 2024

15:00hrs -17:00 hrs, East Africa Time (EAT)

Hybrid meeting- UN-Habitat OED Boardroom

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the provisional Agenda.

1. Ms. Winnie Mwanjala, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to UN-Habitat representing Africa as Chair of the Executive Board, opened the meeting at 10:05 hrs EAT.

The following Executive Board Bureau members were present:

In-person

H.E. Mr. Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia to UN-Habitat and Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Mr. Ronney Almeida e Silva Filho, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federative Republic of Brazil to UN-Habitat

Mr. Clement Payeur, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of France to UN-Habitat

Ms. Angelica Gutierrez, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia

On-line

Ms. Joanna Szymanska, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland

Dr. Victory Jaja, Acting Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and expected incoming Chair of the Executive Board and co-chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Mr. Antonio Miguel Luis, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Portugal

The following UN Habitat Secretariat members were also present :

Mr. Michal Mlynar, Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Mr. Raf Tuts, Director, Global Solutions Division.

Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Bodies.

Mr. Stephen Slawsky, Director, Management Advisory and Compliance

Mr. Saidou N'Dow, Chief Legal Officer, UN-Habitat Legal Unit

2. The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting. The provisional Agenda was adopted without any changes and can be accessed [here](#).

Agenda item 2: Status of preparation for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board

a. Update on the documentation for the session.

3. The Chair invited the Acting Executive Director to provide an update on the status of preparation for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board.
4. The Acting Executive Director confirmed that all the pre-session documents had been made available on the dedicated website for the session and relevant communication was sent out to Member States on 8 April 2024 in line with the rules of procedures.
5. The Acting Executive Director noted that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) report on the Mid-term Evaluation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme Strategic Plan 2020-2025 which had been expected to be delayed had become available and duly shared with all Member States.
6. The presentation by the Acting Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and his detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).

b. Technical inputs into the proposed draft outcomes of the upcoming session

7. The Acting Executive Director confirmed that as requested by the Bureau, the technical inputs for the session were shared with all Member States on 2 April 2024, covering four draft decisions as follows:
 1. Draft decision 2024/A: Draft work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025, and financial, budgetary and administrative matters and the strategic plan of UN-Habitat.
 2. Draft decision 2024/B: Implementation of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
 3. Draft Decision 2024 / C: Update on the implementation of resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
 4. Draft decision 2024/D: Methods of work of the Executive Board and the workplan of the Executive Board for 2024.
8. The Acting Executive Director noted that the ad hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters was making progress in considering the draft decisions through informal consultations.

c. Registration and Programme for the session

9. The Acting Executive Director noted that registration for the first session of the Executive Board opened on 25 March 2024 and would close on 2 May 2024 at 2 pm East Africa Time and requested the Bureau to encourage their respective regional groups to register for the

session online and to send formal communication on the list of their respective delegations as required by the rules of procedure of the Executive Board.

10. The Acting Executive Director informed that the programme for the session had been shared with all Member States and that the general information for participants is available on the dedicated website [here](#). In addition, he noted that the following two aspects related to the programme that had not been explicitly indicated in the programme required the attention and guidance of the Bureau:
 - a. Under the agenda item 14 of the provisional Agenda for the session which is “any other matters”, MOPAN would brief the Executive Board on its ongoing assessment of UN-Habitat.
 - b. A side event by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on “Quality of Life Initiative” was being planned to be held on the sidelines of the Executive Board on 7 May 2024 in the evening but which would not coincide with plenary meetings of the Executive Board.
11. The Acting Executive Director noted the above two items would be included in an updated programme and further added that the [Quality of Life Initiative](#) is being implemented by UN-Habitat, with the support of the Quality of Life Programme Center of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is an innovative new global programme that focuses on enhancing urban quality of life through innovative approaches to data collection and policy-making.
12. The presentation by the Acting Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and his detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
13. The Bureau took note of the good progress made so far in preparing for the upcoming first session of the Executive Board for the year 2024.
14. The Bureau took note of the good progress made in the preparations for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board and did not object to the inclusion of the two items into the agenda.

Agenda item 3: Status of draft decisions to be possibly adopted during the first session of the Executive Board in 2024.

15. The Chair invited the Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters (Colombia) to provide an update on the status of draft decisions that would be considered and possibly adopted during the first session of the Executive Board in 2024.
16. The statement by the Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters which was supported by the co- Chair (Nigeria) can be accessed [here](#).
17. The Chair of the Bureau thanked the Chair and co-Chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters for taking on the leadership of the ad hoc working on behalf on the Bureau.
18. A member of the Bureau requested the Secretariat to clarify if the figures of the draft budget for 2025 should be included in the draft decisions and enquired if there would be any implications on the 2025 budget. In addition, the Bureau member enquired if draft decisions in the past included the figures of the budget.

19. The Secretariat noted that in the past, the decision language made explicit reference to the figures of the budget level. The removal of the figures would not present a parliamentary issue for the Secretariat because the decision on the figures for the draft budget for 2025 would be made by the Executive Board at its 2024 second session. The Secretariat added that, how the Executive Board chooses to respond to the draft work programme and budget in terms of decisions in the first session, is not envisioned to have any impact on the work of the Executive Board and expected re-costing of the proposed budget for 2025 prior to the 2024 second session of the Board.
20. The Bureau took note of the progress being made on the informal consultations in the ad hoc working groups on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters towards the upcoming session noting that further informal consultations were scheduled prior to the session.

Agenda item 4: Discussion on the roadmap for the development of the draft Stakeholder Engagement Policy towards submission to the second resumed session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

21. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Acting Executive Director noted that with respect to the roadmap for the development of the draft Stakeholder Engagement Policy, which is supposed to be submitted to the second resumed session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly), the Chair of the working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy and the Executive Board are working very hard and hopefully towards its success.
22. The Acting Executive Director informed that the Executive Board needs to have the stakeholder engagement policy ready for review and possible adoption by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its resumed second session in May 2025 in line with the Decision 2/4 of the Assembly. The document would need to be presented to the Assembly as a pre-session document available in six Official languages and six weeks in advance of the session, in line with the rules of procedure by 17 April 2025 and therefore the Division of Conference Services would require the Organization to submit all pre-session documents for the Assembly by 6 March 2025.
23. The Acting Executive Director noted that the Secretariat would continue providing all necessary technical support and advice to the ad hoc working group.
24. The presentation by the Acting Executive Director can be accessed [here](#) and his detailed statement can be accessed [here](#).
25. Upon invitation by the Chair of the Bureau, the Chair of the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy noted the following:
 - a. The first meeting of the ad hoc working group under his leadership held on 25 March 2024 provided historical context of the negotiations of the draft stakeholder engagement policy.
 - b. The second meeting under his leadership held on 27 March 2024 continued with the reading of the draft stakeholder engagement policy.
 - c. The Chair had held several bilateral meetings with interested countries; particularly with those that showed problems with the text and the stakeholder engagement policy.
 - d. The Chair was in talks with the Secretariat of Governing bodies on the possibilities of having four meetings in June 2024 and dates had been identified.

- e. Delegations expressed to the Chair that it was fundamental to give time to capitals to process the draft stakeholder engagement policy.
 - f. The Chair took note of the deadlines provided by the Secretariat to have the stakeholder engagement policy possibly by the end of 2024 but expressed that there was need to give time to delegations and capitals.
 - g. The Chair noted that the first session of the Executive Board in 2025 was the indicated deadline to finish the process of drafting the stakeholder engagement policy.
26. The Chair of the Executive Board thanked the Chair of the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy for his leadership in the working group and counted on his support.
 27. A member of the Bureau requested the Secretariat to provide the legal requirements and dates for the deadline for the draft stakeholder engagement policy to be submitted and considered in time for the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly to enable the ad hoc working group to plan accordingly with the remaining time.
 28. A member of the Bureau (Nigeria) thanked the Chair of the ad hoc working group for his leadership so far and encouraged him to submit the status of progress of the draft stakeholder engagement policy to the second session of the Executive Board in 2024 to encourage all relevant parties to contribute towards finalizing it.
 29. Several members of the Bureau enquired about the legal provision for the document to be submitted and considered in time at the resumed second session on the UN-Habitat Assembly.
 30. The Secretariat reiterated the provisions of the rules of procedure to submit documents to the Assembly in languages six week prior to the session and that it would continue to provide technical assistance to Member States in the negotiations on the draft stakeholder engagement policy.
 31. The Secretariat noted that if Member States were unable to complete drafting the stakeholder engagement policy as required by the Assembly, a resolution language could be proposed for the Assembly to direct the ad hoc working group to extend the time for negotiation or give other guidelines on the way forward.
 32. A member of the Bureau noted the possibility of the draft stakeholder engagement policy being an in-session document and therefore an extension of the deadline if the policy is not ready.
 33. The Chair of the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy reaffirmed it is his intention to complete the drafting of the policy by end of February 2025 in time for the document to be ready as a pre-session document for the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Chair of the ad hoc working group also endorsed option 3 as recommended by the Secretariat on options to consider for the roadmap for the development of the draft stakeholder engagement policy which is as follows “The timing of the first session of the Executive Board in 2025 be diarised early enough to consider and recommend the priority documents requiring UN-Habitat Assembly approval including the draft stakeholder engagement policy, in addition to other agenda items”.
 34. The Chair of the Bureau recommended that the Bureau should remain flexible on the timeline for the draft stakeholder engagement policy and examine the progress of the ad hoc working group during the last quarter of 2024 just before the second session of the Executive Board in order to determine an appropriate timeline for the Executive Board to consider the draft stakeholder engagement policy and submit it to the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Agenda item 6: Any other matters

a. Discussion on the request from a Member State from the regional group of WEOG for a possible hybrid format of the first session of the Executive Board in 2024

35. Upon invitation by the Chair, the Acting Executive Director noted that the matter on possible hybrid format of the first session of the Executive Board in 2024 was being brought to the attention of the Bureau once again because the Secretariat had received an email from a Member of WEOG after the Bureau meeting held on 15 March 2024 in which the Bureau did not reverse its decision of 2 February 2024 on holding the upcoming session fully in person.
36. The Acting Executive Director also noted that preparations for any session of the Executive Board, including the upcoming session, had always been guided by the Bureau through its recommendations in line with established practice. Following the further inquiry by the Member of WEOG on whether the session can be held in a hybrid format, in their very valid view, to ensure “meaningful participation of Member States and stakeholders in Executive Board meetings”, the Secretariat had done two things:
 - a. First, in line with the practice at the 2023 third session of the Executive Board held in November 2023, the Secretariat had created a Microsoft Teams link to allow delegations from headquarters who would not be in a position to travel to Nairobi to follow the proceedings in English only and possibly communicate with their delegations in Nairobi accordingly for any interventions.
 - b. Secondly, the Secretariat had liaised with the UNON Division of Conference Services on the possibility of putting in place a hybrid meeting with remote simultaneous interpretation for the upcoming session of the Executive Board. The response to the Secretariat by the UNON DCS was that “On an exceptional measure, UNON DCS did offer remote interpretation services as a business continuity measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the increased resumption of in-person meetings, UNON, like the other headquarter duty stations, is no longer offering re-mote simultaneous interpretation. The provision of hybrid and virtual meetings with RSI requires a mandate from the General Assembly (GA) to define, inter alia, the legal and technical parameters of these meetings and on how the rules of procedure would be applied in a formal meeting being held in a hybrid or virtual format. Given that the GA has not established such a mandate, continuation of these modalities would contravene their current mandates.” It further read that “DCS will not offer remote simultaneous interpretation until a mandate is established by the GA, including for UNEP’s governing bodies.”
37. The Secretariat noted that as part of the UN Secretariat, it would need to conform with the policy guidance received from the Division of Conference Services which was originally sent from the UN Assistance Secretary General for General Assembly and Conference Management addressed to the Director General of UNON and the guidance is now applicable across the UN.
38. The Bureau member representing WEOG thanked the Acting Executive Director for the comprehensive explanation and noted that the preference for the hybrid meeting was from the entire regional group to better engage capital experts.
39. The Bureau member noted the impossibility of the hybrid meetings and favored the solution for a live stream only in English.

40. The Chair noted that Member States have the obligation to put in place rules that would allow the Secretariat to effectively service them, and in this this case, Member States at the General Assembly had not given the mandate to the Secretariat and to Member States, for a hybrid or online legislative meeting.
41. The Chair requested the Secretariat to share the Microsoft Teams link that would allow delegations not travelling to Nairobi to follow the proceedings remotely in English.
42. The Bureau took note of the recommendations by the Chair.

The third meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2024 was adjourned at 16:30 hrs. East African Time (EAT).