



Summary of the fifty-fifth meeting of the ad-hoc working group of the UN-Habitat Executive Board on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters.

Wednesday, 9 October 2024 – 09:30 - 13:00 East Africa Time (EAT)

Chair: H.E. Dr. Pedro Leon Cortes Ruiz
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia to UN-Habitat

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

1. The fifty-fifth meeting of the ad hoc working group of the Executive Board on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters was called to order at 9:35 am EAT. The working group adopted the provisional Agenda for its meeting without any change as follows:
 - Adoption of the agenda.
 - Update on preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12).
 - Discussion on normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat:
 - Updates on the Nepal Country Programme and the Jordan Country Programme.
 - Update on urban crisis prevention and response initiatives by UN-Habitat.
 - Clarifications on the Report of the Executive Director on normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat (HSP/EB.2024/6), as related to the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship, in line with paragraph 1 of Decision 2024/2 of the Executive Board.
 - Any Other Business.

Agenda item 2: Update on the preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12)

2. The Chair recalled that on 11 September 2024, the Secretariat updated Member States on preparations for WUF12 and received guidance and clarifications on the same, including that the preparations had advanced well.
3. The Secretariat provided a briefing on the progress in preparations for WUF12 and the full presentation can be accessed [here](#). The Secretariat further added the following information after the presentation:
 - a. All VIPs will be received and taken to the VIP lounges and dropped off at their hotels upon arrival. The Secretariat encouraged Member States to consider other means of transportation as the buses availed will be on timely basis.
 - b. Protocol for Heads of States and Heads of Government coming to Egypt will be within the purview of the Government of Egypt.
 - c. The Secretariat emphasized that the Government of Egypt had requested for the information necessary for advance clearance of visas for participants. With respect to countries without Egyptian embassies, participants were encouraged to mail their applications to the nearest Egyptian embassy in time enough for the issuance of visas.
 - d. The categories of the VIPs will range from ambassadorial level upwards.
 - e. Visa on arrival will be extremely limited.



4. The representative of Egypt urged participants to apply for the visas physically because the online platform was not ready.

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

5. A Member State enquired how digital communication assets, such as the repository of marketing materials, could be accessed.
6. Another Member State enquired whether Member States would be allowed to join the WUF12 Advisory Group and how Member States might express interest to be part of the Group.
7. With regard to the WUF12 Key Takeaways, a Member State inquired about the following:
 - What was the difference between the WUF12 outcome report and the Key Takeaways;
 - Whether the final outcomes or Key Takeaways would be shared with Member States prior to being presented by the Advisory Group;
 - How would the WUF12 outcome document or the Key Takeaways be used after the Forum;
 - Whether the Key Takeaways would serve as the WUF12 Advisory Group summary of the Forum, and not be presented as a document agreed by Member States;
 - If the Key Takeaways would be endorsed by Member States, and what would be the process for that endorsement;
 - If the Key Takeaways would be translated into the United Nations official languages.
8. One Member State further inquired whether translation and streaming/recording services would be provided for side events and, if so, what the process would be to request such support.
9. One Member State requested the Secretariat to share the list of Ministers who had confirmed participation in WUF12 for planning purposes.
10. Another Member State inquired how delegations could secure rooms for bilateral engagements at the WUF12 venue.
11. The representative of the Kingdom of Morocco informed that the Minister of National Territory and Urban Planning, Housing and City Policy of Morocco would lead the delegation of Morocco, shared information regarding the following side events and exhibition during WUF12, and extended an invitation to Member States, stakeholders and partners:
 - *“Housing for all – navigating the affordability in a changing world”*, to take place on 5 November 2024 at 3:00 pm in the multifunction room.
 - *“The Medinas – resilience strategy for sustainable cities”*, which will take place on 6 November 2024 at 3:00 pm in Multifunction Room 6.
 - *“Resilient Urban Planning against Climate Change, true local solutions for resilient cities and communities”*, which will take place on 7 November 2024 at 3:00 pm at the Multifunction Room.
 - An exhibition stand at the Urban Expo, in which a programme of animation was being finalized with national stakeholders.
12. The representative of the Republic of Kenya announced that Kenya would co-host, with France, a forum for Heads of Delegations at WUF12 and requested that this be reflected in the programme of the Forum.



13. One Member State, at the outset, announced that it had contributed \$1.4 million to UN-Habitat, doubling its previous contribution and signaling its support for the important work of UN-Habitat.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

14. The Secretariat informed that all materials related to WUF12 could be accessed on the [website](#) and that digital communication assets were available on the “on-stop shop” [here](#).
15. The Secretariat clarified that the WUF12 Advisory Group was composed of 11 members and that Member States would be represented by the Host Country with two line ministers from Egypt, the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the alumni of WUF which consisted of countries that had hosted the Forum.
16. The Secretariat informed that the Key Takeaways would feed into the work of the Organization, including through the development of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029, and would further be informing the Secretary General’s quadrennial report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, which was scheduled to be published in 2026 but developed in 2025.
17. The Secretariat introduced that the Key Takeaways would be drafted by the WUF12 Advisory Group on the discussions and outcomes from the reporting teams for all events, in consultation with the organizers of the events. The Secretariat also clarified that the Key Takeaways would be presented in different platforms with Member States for discussion, but would not be a negotiated document, and would not be endorsed by Member States.
18. The Secretariat also clarified that the WUF outcome report and Key Takeaway were two separate documents: the Key Takeaways would serve as a soundbite of the Forum, while the WUF outcome report would be a comprehensive and detailed document to include outcomes from all events, the exhibition, as well as participation.
19. The Secretariat informed that the Key Takeaways document would be announced in English and Arabic at the closing ceremony of WUF12 and that the translated versions into the other United Nations official languages would be made available after the closing of the Forum.
20. The Secretariat confirmed that the interpretation service was arranged for the main sessions of the Forum and the Ministerial Roundtables. For partner-led events, the service would need to be requested and paid for by the requestor. The Secretariat further informed that there were 550 partner-led events in six categories including Networking, Voices from Cities, Training, SDGs in Action, Urban Library, and ONE UN.
21. The Secretariat informed that 59 Ministers and Deputy Ministers had confirmed participation through notes verbales, with more than 90 Ministers having registered, and further informed that a list of Ministers with only the country names and the title of the Ministers could be provided upon request.
22. The Secretariat noted that information on securing rooms for bilateral meetings could be accessed on the [website](#) and a reminder on the same would be shared with Member States.
23. The Secretariat informed that all partner-led events were already on the agenda of the Forum. Other events including bilateral meetings or events organized by Member States during the Forum would not be reflected on the main agenda of the Forum.



24. The Secretariat expressed gratitude for the contribution made to the Organization.

Agenda item 3: Discussion on Normative and Operational activities of UN-Habitat

25. The Chair noted that this item was part of the provisional agenda of the upcoming 2024 second session of the Executive Board to be held in December and stated that the purpose of the discussion was to hold preliminary discussions and provide guidance to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Organization's normative and operational activities.

26. The Chair proposed, given that the three sub-items were substantive, that the floor would be open after presentations on each sub-item for comments by Member States.

a. Updates on the Nepal Country Programme and the Jordan Country Programme.

27. The Secretariat provided updates on the Nepal Country Programme and the Jordan Country Programme. Presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).

28. The representative of Nepal, Mr. Padma Kumar Mainalee, Joint Secretary of the Urban Development Division, Ministry of Urban Development of Nepal, who joined the meeting online, highlighted the influential work of UN-Habitat in Nepal, including policy reviewing and revisiting, and community mobilization, with the engagement with academia, governments, communities and municipalities.

29. Member States welcomed the presentation and commended the work done by UN-Habitat in Nepal and Jordan, and provided following points:

- Suggested that a list of all UN-Habitat's normative work be made available to Member States and partners in a centralized way, and welcomed further discussions;
- Requested for regular updates on country programmes to ensure transparency and alignment with shared objective;
- Emphasized the importance of learning from similar experiences, and requested more information on the impact of work instead of outputs;
- Inquired about UN-Habitat's plan to upscale local experience and successful models of urban resilience to other regions, especially to those facing similar challenges in terms of resource constraints and socio-economic vulnerabilities;
- Inquired how the frameworks could be adapted to better support local governments in aligning their urban policies with the SDGs, especially in countries facing diverse and complex urban challenges that require localized solutions;
- Requested for more information on the division of work on the ground, including the roles of UN-Habitat and its country team, and the roles of country partners;
- Inquired on how to achieve coherence between different components of country programmes, given that different country programmes had different projects funded by different donors with different timelines.

30. The Secretariat thanked Member States for the questions and comments and provided following responses:

- Confirmed that an information document entitled "Highlights on Normative and Operational Activities" was issued every six months and confirmed that further discussions could be conducted internally and with Member States on a way to share UN-Habitat's normative and



operation activities in a more systemic and in-depth way, perhaps in the framework of the Executive Board;

- Informed that a considerable range of activities at country level had been developed over the past 20 years, and that impact could be tracked, gradually moving from policy to the application of policy in several cities and to impact in actual communities;
- Informed that an updated version of the Catalogue of Services would be released in 2025 at the resumed Habitat Assembly, and further informed that the Catalogue of Services was modelled for use by all relevant Member States, which provided a global normative guidance that was tested at regional, country and city levels and fed back into global levels, thereby informing new versions and additions to the normative work of the Organization;
- Explained that the division of work varied from case to case, and that in some cases the country teams undertook the work while in other cases the work was implemented in conjunction with other United Nations agencies or implementing partners from different levels through cooperation agreements—one of the most frequently used tools of UN-Habitat to conduct work at the country level.
- Informed that UN-Habitat was part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and a member of most of the Cooperation Frameworks, and that the Organization’s Programme Review Committee would ensure the projects were aligned with the outcomes of the Cooperation Frameworks. Further informed that the Organization’s reports were included in the UNCT’s report on results, which were accessible to Member States on the UN Info [website](#);
- Elaborated on the sustainability and scalability of UN-Habitat's urban resilience work in the City of Amman, Jordan, where the initial project to prevent flash floods was promoted and upscaled with more funding to other areas and neighborhoods in the City of Amman.

b. Update on urban crisis prevention and response initiatives by UN-Habitat

31. The Secretariat provided updates on urban crisis prevention and response initiatives by UN-Habitat. Presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).
32. Member States welcomed the presentation, commended the efforts exerted by UN-Habitat to strengthen partnerships with relevant organizations in the migration and displacement fields, and provided the following feedback:
 - Requested for the timeline for submitting the INF document for the 2024 second session of the Executive Board “Status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip”, requested that Member States be informed about ongoing activities, and for the alignment of the efforts accordingly;
 - Requested for further information on the three project proposals in the Gaza Strip as mentioned in the presentation, and inquired how the projects could fit into UN-Habitat’s approach;
 - Requested that the Secretariat share brief background and basic information on the new partnerships and initiatives expected to be launched with regard to the objective of the projects and how countries might benefit from them;
 - Requested for further information on the status of the Emergency Fund;
 - Requested clarification on how the reporting on progress and outcomes of the work being carried out through the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF) would be conducted and what mechanisms would be in place to keep Member States informed on the developments and lessons learned.
33. The Secretariat provided the following responses and clarifications:



- Confirmed that INF document for the 2024 second session of the Executive Board would be ready by 7 November 2024;
- Confirmed that it would share information on new partnerships and initiatives and would keep Member States informed on request-basis;
- Explained that the Emergency Fund, to date, was empty, and that UN-Habitat was currently working on a clear mechanism on how to use the Fund more effectively;
- Explained that reporting could be done directly by UN-Habitat to Member States, and could also be tracked through the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund [website](#);
- Further explained that an informal group of friends had been set up on engagement with Member States to discuss and draw lessons learnt on internal displacements but, for the moment, no forum existed with Member States—at the UN-level—to discuss internal displacement. The issue was included in the High-level Panel Report, initiated by the Secretary-General as an idea, but it was yet to be formalized.

c. Clarifications on the Report of the Executive Director on normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat (HSP/EB.2024/6) as related to the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship in line with paragraph 1 of Decision 2024/2 of the Executive Board.

34. The Secretariat provided clarifications on the Report of the Executive Director on normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat (HSP/EB.2024/6) as related to the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship in line with paragraph 1 of Decision 2024/2 of the Executive Board. Presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).
35. Member States welcomed the presentation and explanations by the Secretariat.
36. One Member State recalled that the main question raised during previous Executive Board session was the reference to urban regeneration in United Nations resolutions and documents, underlining that urban regeneration as a terminology was not agreed upon and was short of reference even in the New Urban Agenda. The Member State welcomed the discussion of the elements and programmes.
37. One Member State noted there was no multilaterally agreed document where the definition of urban regeneration had been negotiated and pointed out that several concepts used in multilateral outcomes also lacked agreed upon definitions. The Member State supported the concept of urban regeneration in UN-Habitat's programmes and expressed readiness to work with the term as an encompassing concept in line with the normative instruments that guided the work of UN-Habitat. The Member State further requested information on how the private sector could play a positive role in urban regeneration, the opportunities for public private partnerships as well as the business case for urban regeneration and the link to economic growth in cities and countries.
38. One Member State welcomed the clarification provided and the focus on reducing inequality, heritage restoration, environmental preservation and revitalizing public spaces, which aligned with the shared goals of social cohesion and improved urban living, and commended the integrated approach that linked policy, planning and finance. The Member State recognized that urban generation was not a standard language in documents within the UN system and stated it was comfortable with the concept, as well as its readiness to continue working towards supporting this concept within the Organization's programmes.



39. One Member State considered the clarification of urban regeneration as having been shaped to enable each country interpret the definition, adapting it to its own context, and welcomed the clarification, as it was in line with the mandate of UN-Habitat and the current Strategic Plan, stating it should be in line with the thematic focus of the next Strategic Plan 2026-2029.
40. The Secretariat thanked Member States for their comments and provided following clarifications:
- Confirmed that a [document](#) was prepared for consideration by the Executive Board with the language on urban regeneration;
 - Confirmed that partnership with the private sector and engagements with housing associations were ongoing and were important to the Organization as they were aligned with its priorities on affordable housing and on linkages with the integral transformation of neighborhoods.
 - Confirmed that there was considerable material related to public-private partnerships and business cases on urban regeneration and explained that the private sector represented around 50% of the investment.

Agenda item 4: Any other business

41. No other business were raised by Member States¹.

The fifty-fifth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board was adjourned at 12:30 hrs EAT.

¹ Two Member States made interventions regarding WUF12 and was captured under Agenda Item 2.