



Summary of the fifty-sixth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Wednesday, 16 October 2024, 10:00 – 13:00 East Africa Time
UNON Conference Room 4

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-sixth meeting of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board was called to order at 10:05 EAT. The working group adopted the provisional Agenda for its meeting without any change as follows:
 - Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
 - Implementation of all resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) at its first and second sessions including in depth discussions on:
 - a. the progress in the development of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities in line with Resolution 2/1.
 - b. the preparations for the first session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental expert Working Group on adequate Housing for All in line with resolution 2/7 of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Decision 2024/3 of the Executive Board.
 - c. the operationalization of the SURGe Initiative to accelerate multilevel climate action in line with Resolution 2/5 of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Decision 2024/3 of the Executive Board.
 - Any other Business.

Agenda item 2 – Implementation of all resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) at its first and second sessions.

2. The Chair recalled that the UN-Habitat Assembly adopted 5 resolutions at its first session in 2019 and 10 resolutions at its adjourned second session in 2023, and Member States have benefited from updates by the Secretariat on the progress in implementing the resolutions. In preparation for the second session of the Executive Board to be held from 4 to 6 December 2024, the Chair noted that the Secretariat would update the working group on all resolutions for the working group to guide the Secretariat and formulate any recommendations to the Executive Board.
3. The Chair recommend that the Secretariat first update the working group on all resolutions which do not have a firm timeframe in implementation, starting from the resolutions adopted at the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly followed by the ones adopted at the second session. Then the Secretariat would provide detailed presentation on the resolutions that are time bound, including resolutions [2/1](#), [2/5](#) and [2/7](#).
4. Following the background information by the Chair, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the implementation of resolutions. The full presentation can be accessed [here](#).

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

5. Member States expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for the comprehensive update on the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, despite the constraints in budget and resources.
6. A Member State requested that future updates include challenges affecting the implementation of the resolutions and lessons learned or best practices identified.
7. A Member State inquired if UN-Habitat had a strategy to bring together the sponsors of resolutions to discuss the way forward or if the work would be conducted at only regional office level.
8. The Chair inquired if the clarifications and questions made by Member States would be integrated in the new version of the report of the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly that would be submitted to the second session of the Executive Board in December 2024.

Resolution 1/2 - UN System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements

9. A Member State highlighted that the development of the urban safety monitoring tool was an invaluable asset in improving the quality and consistency of municipality safety policies.
10. Another Member State requested the Secretariat to provide more information and next steps on the second phase of the project to mainstream the human security approach in UN-Habitat.
11. Another Member State requested statistics and the progress of the e-learning course on “urban safety and human security in cities”.
12. Another Member State inquired when the first phase of the project involving the development of an e-learning course was operationally closed and who were the beneficiaries of this initiative.
13. A Member State requested the Secretariat to provide more insight on how the UN system was engaged in the system-wide guidelines.

Resolution 1/3 - Enhancing capacity building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

14. A Member State requested further details on the Capacity Building Help Desk and how developing countries can benefit from services provided by the Help Desk.
15. A Member State referred to the annual training programmes in collaboration with regional centres of excellence and inquired how other Member States could benefit from these training programmes.
16. Another Member State welcomed the efforts to continue implementing capacity building strategy and encouraged the Organization to work toward overcoming language barrier, regional socio-economic disparities and limited access to information and communication technologies.

Resolution 1/4 - Achieving gender equality through the work of the UN-Habitat to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

17. Member States commended the effort in advancing key initiatives such as the Women Led Cities Initiative and requested more information on the status of the Women Led Cities Initiative.
18. A Member State highlighted the importance of the Human Rights, Gender and Social Inclusion Handbook for Project Managers and inquired how the Secretariat envisioned Member States integrating the guidelines in the Handbook into their ongoing urban development projects.

19. A Member State requested further clarification on gender transformative approach and examples of on gender transformative approach in cities.

Resolution 1/5 - Enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

20. A Member State inquired if the best practices from the training for the government officials would be disseminated to enable others to benefit from that experience.

Resolution 2/2 – Accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030

21. A Member State emphasized its support for the ongoing partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Slum Dwellers International in the For Resilient Children Initiative aiming at child-responsive slum transformation.

Resolution 2/4 – Biodiverse and resilient cities: mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning

22. A Member State emphasized that the development of Hotspot Spotlight tool was a promising step towards integrating biodiversity into urban planning and noted that it would be presented at the UN Biodiversity Summit (COP16) in Colombia. The Member State inquired the plan to refine the tool and scale up to other countries, as well as the difference between the playbook and hotspot spotlight.

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

23. The Secretariat noted that the feedback by the Member States that would be received at the current meeting would be incorporated in the presentation to be made at the 2024 second session of the Executive Board, as the report on the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly was being formally edited by the Division of Conferences Services.
24. The Secretariat clarified that resolutions would be owned by the full membership of the Assembly after the adoption, while in some cases, the initiators and sponsors would have interest to conduct specific discussions on certain resolutions.

Resolution 1/2 - UN System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements

25. The Secretariat explained that the e-learning product was posted towards end of June 2024 and so far, there were no record on how many people accessed the e-learning and confirmed that efforts were made to advocate the country teams to invite their partners to undertake the e-learning courses. The Secretariat further confirmed that analytics of the participants to the e-learning courses could be provided upon request.
26. The Secretariat informed that discussions had started among the UN Country Teams in Mexico and South Africa to encourage UN systemwide coordination to promote the role of cities on human security, in partnership with the Human Security Unit and as part of a UNTFHS funded project entitled 'Making Cities and Human Settlements Safer after COVID-19: Strengthening Awareness of Safer Cities Tools applying a Human Security Framework' that was implemented between March 2022 to April 2024.
27. The Secretariat further informed that although an inter-agency coordinating framework was not established yet as part of the UN systemwide strategy for sustainable urbanization, a presentation session of the human security approach among UN agencies was facilitated at the UN country level, which resulted in expressions of interest for follow-up capacity building and peer-to-peer learning interventions to be jointly designed by the UN Country Team.

Resolution 1/3 - Enhancing capacity building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

28. The Secretariat explained that regional programmes were implemented with different governments under different frameworks and actions were taken to expand beneficiaries. The Secretariat provided example of the programme with the regional centre of excellence in the Republic of Korea, which was specifically indicated for city managers in Asia and Pacific region and since 2020, the programme was opened for beneficiaries in other regions through online participation.
29. The Secretariat explained that the scope of the annual training programme in collaboration with the Government of Singapore was for 100 cities all over the world particularly secondary cities and cities in developing and least developed countries, and that the targeted region for 2025 would be Africa. The Secretariat confirmed that the regional office of Africa was in close collaboration to share information to the Member States of Africa.
30. The Secretariat confirmed that some tools were developed and used to support the monitoring of the New Urban Agenda.

Resolution 1/4 - Achieving gender equality through the work of the UN-Habitat to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

31. The Secretariat confirmed that the Human Rights, Gender and Social Inclusion Handbook for Project managers would be launched at the end of 2024 and a draft would be shared with Member States.
32. The Secretariat informed that the country teams were asked to provide gender transformative examples and impacts on the ground, and that the Gender Champion Award was launched in January 2024 and the projects from the State of Palestine and Mozambique were the winners. The Secretariat added that this provided peer learning for other country teams to demonstrate and put forward projects that are gender transformative.
33. The Secretariat updated that the Women Led Cities Initiative would be a joint programme with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and EllaImpacta, a consortium of NGOs based mainly in Latin America, and further updated that the programme was passed by the Programme Review Committee and that fundraising efforts have started to support the launch of the programme by the end of 2024.

Resolution 1/5 - Enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

34. The Secretariat explained that the training for government officials in Kenya on the urban-rural linkages was jointly conducted with the Centre for Urban Rural Linkages at the University of Nairobi, and that the learning document would be available on the platform of the University of Nairobi and was planned to be made available on UN-Habitat's website to complement other e-learning courses on urban-rural linkages.
35. The Secretariat added that other avenues to disseminate knowledge included the Compendium of Inspiring Practices which was released every 18 months, as well as the [Urban-Rural Linkages Newsletter](#).

Resolution 2/4 – Biodiverse and resilient cities: mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning

36. Regarding the upscaling of the Hotspot Stoplight, the Secretariat provided an example where outreach had been done to the World Bank requesting to apply the Hotspot Stoplight to 100 cities, enabling the Organization to collect information and to expand the tool in other locations.

37. The Secretariat explained that the Playbook was a collection of methodologies that were aligned to UN-Habitat's previous tools but more focused on how to deliver nature-based solution development plans to municipalities.
38. The Chair then invited the Secretariat to provide a briefing on the following:
 - a. The progress in the development of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities in line with Resolution 2/1 of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).
 - b. The preparations for the first session of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H) in line with Resolution 2/7 of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Decision 2024/3 of the Executive Board. The presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).
 - c. The operationalization of the SURGe Initiative to accelerate multilevel climate action in line with Resolution 2/5 of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Decision 2024/3 of the Executive Board. The presentation by the Secretariat can be accessed [here](#).

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

39. Member States welcomed the detailed presentation and the work done by UN-Habitat. A Member State commended the Secretariat's self-recognition and awareness of the challenges and limitations in the ongoing process.
40. A Member State requested that the presentations made by the Secretariat be shared in advance for future meetings as they included more details than the background documents.

Resolution 2/1 - International guidelines on people-centred smart cities

41. A Member State underlined that resolution 2/1 was time-bound, and reassured its commitment to its implementation, stating that the voluntary contribution of more than 300,000 Euros would support the implementation and delivery of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities. The Member State further called upon other Member States to provide additional financial or in-kind support towards a consensual adoption of the guidelines in May 2025.
42. A Member State inquired the roadmap following the circulation of the final draft of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities early 2025, and if further engagement with Member States and stakeholders in finetuning the draft guidelines would be arranged, in line with operative paragraph four and five of the resolution.
43. Regarding the regional consultations on the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities, one Member State requested the Secretariat to resend the Note Verbale on this matter, another Member State inquired if the regional consultations would take place at regional office or in Nairobi. One Member State encouraged all countries to nominate regional experts to participate in the regional consultations.
44. A Member State requested details on the lead technology companies that participated in the consultation on international guidelines in October 2024 in California.
45. A Member State requested further clarification on how the World Smart Cities Outlook 2024, to be launched at WUF12, would be used to shape the future strategies of UN-Habitat and inquired the UN-Habitat's plans to support Member States in applying the findings from the Outlook to implement smart cities strategies in their own urban context.

Resolution 2/7 - Adequate housing for all

46. With regard to the formalities of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H) scheduled for 9-11 December 2024, Member States emphasized the importance for hybrid meeting for the OEWG-H meeting to facilitate broader participation and ease participation from capitals and further requested that the Joint Bureaux discusses the matter.
47. Member States inquired when the background documents of the OEWG-H meeting would be made available online and underlined the need to receiving all the documents early enough to adequately prepare for the meeting.
48. Member States inquired the plan for consultation on the organizational matters of the OEWG-H meeting and requested more information on the rules of procedure that would be used for the OEWG-H meeting, noting the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly applied at the moment.
49. Member States inquired the number of experts per country that could participate in the OEWG-H meeting.
50. A Member State inquired if a Note Verbale informing of the opening of the registration would be sent and if the Secretariat would facilitate the issuance of visa for delegates, as well as if there were any funding to support participants to attend the OEWG-H meeting.
51. Another Member State requested further information on the adequate housing platform including its accessibility to stakeholders and the mechanism for continuous updating of information measurement, and impact on housing conditions.
52. The delegate from France informed that France and Kenya would convene a Head of Delegation meeting on Adequate Housing for All during WUF12 on 6 November 2024 from 10 am to 12 am, which would be a platform for Member States to share domestic housing issues, best practices and express their expectations for the OEWG-H. The delegate from France informed that a save-the-date had been shared with all Permanent Missions and an invitation signed by Ministers for Housing of Kenya and France would be circulated soon and invited Heads of Delegations to confirm their participation.

Resolution 2/5: Enhancing the interlinkage between urbanization and climate change resilience

53. A Member State requested elaboration on the interplay between various initiatives launched at various multilateral forums in recent years, especially at the COPs of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), such as the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the next Generation (SURGe) Initiative, the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (Champ) for Climate Action Initiative and the Multisectoral Actions Pathways (MAP) Declaration to Resilient and Healthy Cities. The Member State further inquired how to prevent overlap of these initiatives and how to align their missions, ensuring adequate visibility for each of the added value of these initiatives.

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

54. The Secretariat noted that the working method endorsed by Member States was that the background reports were to be submitted 7 days before the meeting and explained that the presentations by the Secretariat served as talking points with more details including pictures and examples. The Secretariat committed to make the presentations available as early as possible after the meeting.

Resolution 2/1- International guidelines on people-centred smart cities

55. The Secretariat explained that development process of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities was guided by Member States through firstly the 31 experts nominated by

Member States, and a brief update would be made at the 2024 second session of the Executive Board in December 2024. The Secretariat added that after circulation of the guidelines in 2025, further update was expected at the 2025 first session of the Executive Board in March 2025. The Secretariat stated that it would Consult with the Chair of the ad hoc working group on PBA for potential presentations of the guidelines as needed.

56. The Secretariat confirmed that the Note Verbale regarding the regional consultations was shared with all Member States and would reshare. The Secretariat explained that the regional consultations would be held fully online, co-hosted with the regional offices. The Secretariat further encouraged Member States to nominate experts to take part in the regional consultations, adding that the countries whose nominated experts were already in the group of 31 experts may nominate additional ones should they wish to do so.
57. The Secretariat explained that the consultations with the private sector on the international guidelines was organized in partnership with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a non-profit thinktank in the United States and introduced that some companies that participated included ACOME, NVIDIA, Google ventures and Deloitte. The Secretariat added that other constituencies and stakeholders representing academia, as well as 3 of the 31 experts also participated consultations with private sector.
58. The Secretariat clarified that the World Smart Cities Outlook 2024 provided assessment of the state of smart city development globally and regional variation and diversity. It also identified key gaps and challenges in smart city development, as well as opportunities. The Secretariat stated that through better understanding of the Outlook, UN-Habitat was able to design its work with a strong and robust evidence base when collaborating with cities and national governments. The Secretariat added that the Outlook was planned to be updated every two years, if feasible, to build a continuous profile of smart city development globally, and that through the Outlook, key indicators for monitoring of progress could be identified for cities and national governments to refer to, adapt and take up in developing and implementing their own smart cities strategies.
59. The Secretariat expressed gratitude to the Government of France and other Member States for the support in the preparatory process of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities.

Resolution 2/7 - Adequate housing for all

60. The Secretariat noted that inter-governmental meetings are governed by the United Nations General Assembly instructions including the OEWG-H meeting and that at the moment there were no means to facilitate a hybrid modality. The Secretariat confirmed that efforts would be made to broadcast the OEWG-H meeting, but online simultaneous interpretation would not be possible as there was no authorization from the United Nations General Assembly and there was also no budget in place.
61. The Secretariat confirmed that, pursuant to the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly, documents for the OEWG-H meeting would be available online by 28 October 2024 and that some documents had already been posted in English advanced version and would continue to be posted as they became available.
62. The Secretariat informed that the consultation of organizational matters of the OEWG-H would take place at the ad hoc working group on PBA and confirmed that it would be ready to support should Member States request further consultations or other means of consultations.
63. The Secretariat noted that, since the OEWG-H meeting was in an open-ended format, there were no restrictions on the size of delegations and that the participation of non-Member States would be guided by the usual procedures related to accredited observers to ECOSOC.

64. The Secretariat noted that it would consult with the Host Country on the issuance of visas and would circulate further logistical information as the practice of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board.
65. The Secretariat noted that there were no available voluntary contributions to support participants from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) and confirmed that the Secretariat stood ready to communicate should circumstances change.
66. Regarding stakeholders' access to the adequate housing platform, the Secretariat informed that the plan at the moment was to make information available publicly through a clearance process by the Secretariat to ensure the relevancy of information and further informed that the structure of information would depend on the way the platform was designed and developed. Regarding the updating of the adequate housing platform, the Secretariat noted that the challenge was lack of resources to enable regular updates. The Secretariat noted that further information would be accessed in the background documentation.
67. Regarding the impact on housing conditions, the Secretariat invited Member States to consider in particular agenda item 4 of the OEWG-H meeting on monitoring and indicators relating to adequate housing.
68. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of the United Nations General Assembly funding to UN-Habitat through the fifth committee to assist the meetings of the governing bodies UN-Habitat, including the expert working group on housing.
69. The Secretariat noted that any meeting established by the UN-Habitat Assembly and has no rules of procedure by itself, would use the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly to guide its processes.

Resolution 2/5 - Enhancing the interlinkage between urbanization and climate change resilience

70. The Secretariat assured that it had been following the various processes and initiatives including SURGe Initiative at COP27, the Champ Pledge at COP28 and the MAP Declaration at COP29 and had ensured that there were synergies amongst these initiatives and that they built on one another.
71. The Secretariat explained that the MAP Declaration built on both the SURGe Initiative and the Champ Pledge and used the existing elements to move forward. The Secretariat further explained that the Champ Pledge focused on strengthening the NDCs through engagement with subnational stakeholders and confirmed that the same element was in the SURGe Initiative.

Agenda item 3 – Any other Business.

72. No other business was raised by Member States.
73. **The fifty-sixth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board for the year 2024 was adjourned at 13:05 hrs. East African Time (EAT).**