



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

Wednesday 13 November 2024 –10.00 -12.00 East Africa Time
UNON Conference Room 4

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

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the provisional Agenda

1. The fifty-seventh 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 Agenda
 - Annual Report for 2023 on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025
 - The Draft Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029
 - Any Other Business

Agenda item 2: Annual Report for 2023 on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025

2. The Secretariat briefed the ad hoc working group on annual report for 2023 on the implementation of the strategic plan 2020-2025. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).
3. Member States commended the work done in various areas by the Secretariat and provided following feedback:
 - Requested further information on the challenges and lessons learned and suggested that the information be incorporated in the future annual reports;
 - Referring to the challenges outlined in the OIOS mid-term review related to the plans execution, requested more information on the main challenges and shortfalls encountered in 2023 and further requested to include the challenges in the strategic plans implementation in the report as such details would help Member States monitor the strategic plan's progress and discuss ways forward when challenges arise;
 - Acknowledged the extensive portfolio on effective urban crisis prevention and response and outlined the importance in years to come of programmes and initiatives aiming to deliver on urban migration and inclusive urban planning, along with participatory methodologies to better integrate and protect migrants, refugees, displaced persons and returnees;
 - Suggested to include a table showcasing the work in different regions to have better insight and visibility for Member States to monitor and follow up;
 - Suggested to have comparison or progress compared to strategic plan objectives.
4. The Secretariat took note of the comments by Member States and provided following clarifications:
 - Explained that this annual report was developed at the beginning of the year and that the OIOS evaluation had not been finalized;
 - Further explained that the nature of this report was showing the sample of the work of UN-Habitat and confirmed that the Secretariat would consider exploring ways to incorporate the challenges and lessons learned in the future reports;

- Stated that the recommendation in OIOS evaluation report would be reference points for the future annual reports and had been taken into consideration during the development of the strategic plan 2026-2029;
- Confirmed that the Independent Evaluation Unit within the Office of the Executive Director had developed a detailed action plan to respond to the six recommendations in the OIOS evaluation report, and that actions had been assigned to specific unit or branch within UN-Habitat;
- Confirmed that additional information on progress distribution by regions would be shared as requested and that the Secretariat would incorporate the comparison and progress in future reports.

Agenda item 3: The draft strategic plan for the period 2026-2029

5. The Chair noted that the ad hoc working group on PBA of the Executive Board was partially a means to ensure continuous consultations on the preparations strategic plan for 2026–2029 and invited the working group to provide comments on the zero draft of the strategic plan 2026-2029.
6. The Secretariat presented the latest update regarding the draft strategic plan for the period 2026–2029, which can be accessed [here](#).
7. Member States welcomed the zero-draft presented by the Secretariat and expressed gratitude on the incorporation and reflection of comments in the draft.
8. Member States highlighted the development of the strategic plan as a Member State-led process, in particular, given that its adoption would take place during the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. Member States also highlighted that the upcoming second session of Executive Board for 2024 was a key point on the way to finalizing the strategic plan.
9. Member States provided following general comments to the zero draft of the strategic plan 2026-2029:
 - Underlined that the zero draft needs to be more comprehensible and digestible, potentially by including graphics instead of data points;
 - Stated that the language in some parts was too abstract and general and needed to be refined, especially in the Outcome parts;
 - Stressed that the mandate of UN-Habitat should be clarified and made more prominent;
 - Emphasized the need to balance further the what and the how. This included a request for further elaboration on what were the implementation plans and when could they be presented to Member States, as well as how to implement at the different levels. It further included the need to understand the interplay between the operational and the normative work, and what kind of mechanisms and what kind of tools could be used to develop this interplay and what this would mean for the organizational structure of UN-Habitat;
 - Referred to the UN-Habitat flagship programmes which served as a practical and high impact initiatives that addressed specific elements of the current strategic plan and inquired to what extent would the flagship programmes be continued and whether there would new global programmes.
 - Requested to include more concrete goals and targets that the strategic plan 2026-2029 aims to achieve, either in the strategic plan or separately.
10. Member States also provided following specific comments:
 - Inquired on how the outcomes of WUF12 would be incorporated into the draft strategic plan;

- Requested to use exact language of the SDGs when referring to them, such as in page nine under Strategic focus the referring to SDG1 should adhere to eradication of poverty;
- Requested that “man-made disasters” be replaced with “human-caused disasters”;
- Requested to integrate the concept of urban regeneration in the draft strategic plan;
- Welcomed further incorporation of text on the Water-Food-Nexus.

11. Furthermore, Member States provided detailed inputs to several sections in the zero draft respectively.

Introduction

12. One Member State highlighted that the first global challenge referenced in this section should be more closely related to mandates of UN-Habitat.
13. One Member State requested that in the first paragraph of the introduction, the recommendations from the OIOS mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 are cited rather than interpreted or summarized.
14. One Member State suggested the introduction section on what has changed from the previous and the guiding principles, be removed or moved to a separate document, as it is introspective and might not be relevant for global readers, this being a communication document

Impact areas to address the challenges

15. One Member State commended on the impact statement on page 5 as being concise and suggested to further elaborate on it as to be clear to readers and to enable UN-Habitat to clarify its position in an ever more competitive multilateral sphere.
16. Another Member State suggested to consider rebranding the first paragraph under this section as a vision.
17. Regarding the impact area 2 entitled “prevention, recovery and reconstruction after humanitarian crisis”, one Member State noted that the title had shifted from “crisis prevention, response and recovery” and requested clarification on the reason to include “reconstruction”, specifically about what type of reconstruction was envisioned and whether the programme currently involved in the physical reconstruction in areas affected by conflict and disaster.
18. The Member State further inquired the reason to focus specifically on humanitarian crisis, excluding other urban crisis where UN habitat could have a meaningful role, and suggested that the impact area 2 read “urban crisis prevention, response and recovery with a focus on protecting people in vulnerable situations after recovery”, which would align with target 11.5 of SDG11.
19. One Member State stated that crisis prevention should come before the humanitarian crisis and requested further clarification from the Secretariat on the change of the title.
20. Another Member State proposed a change in the title for the impact area 2 to be “prevention, recovery and reconstruction in the context of humanitarian crisis” and suggested to also reflect UN-Habitat’s work relevant to migration and refugees.

Means of implementation and outcomes

21. One Member State sought clarification on how the five elements in the means of implementation hang together, and inquired how to measure them and how to track progress

22. Regarding the first means of implementation entitled “Integrated urban and territorial planning, management and finance”, one Member State requested clarification on the reason of removal of the investment component from the original formulation and underlined the importance to reinstate the term “investment” in the title of this means of implementation.
23. Another Member State highlighted the importance of transport for urbanization and urban planning and requested to include “access to transport” into the first means of implementation as it was done in the earlier draft
24. Regarding the third means of implementation entitled “Knowledge, data, digitalization, foresight, and capacity building”, one Member State requested to include an element on enhancing capacity building on reporting by Member States on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.
25. Regarding the fourth means of implementation entitled “Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication”, one Member State requested to have more concrete text on how UN-Habitat intended to work with partners, especially on cross cutting themes, such as with UNEP in the area of environment.
26. Regarding the fifth means of implementation entitled “Effective resource mobilization”, one Member State inquired whether a separate resource mobilisation strategy to finance the strategic plan would be expected as done with the current strategic plan or a different approach would be taken for the new strategic plan. Another Member State requested clarification on the roles of key UN-Habitat partners and other key actors including multi-lateral development banks.
27. Regarding the outcomes under the means of implementation, one Member State was of the view that these should fall directly under UN-Habitat’s while in the zero draft the outcomes would rather reflect indirect influence by UN-Habitat. The Member State reiterated the call for outcomes that are realistic and measurable and pointed out that some outcomes reflected neither criterion.
28. Another Member State stated that some outcomes were not measurable and it would be difficult to comment on them without a clear indication of the core indicators.
29. One Member State requested a strong connection between the outcomes and their core indicators in the work plans, for specific outputs that can be tracked through performance measure. The Member State encouraged the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative outputs within the work plans to translate outcomes into measurable results on the ground.
30. Some Member States underlined the need for substantial refinement of the language of the outcomes.
31. In addition, one Member State inquired on whether consultative meetings with regional groups were conducted on the drafting of the strategic plan.
32. Member States welcomed the planned retreat on January 2025 for further discussion on the draft strategic plan 2026-2029 and requested further information on the next steps including whether the zero draft would be presented to the 2024 second session of the Executive Board, and whether it would be endorsed by the 2025 first session of the Executive Board before submitted to the UN-Habitat Assembly, as well as the way forward if the 2025 first session of the Executive Board would not agree on draft strategic plan.
33. One Member State emphasized the importance of making documents for the meetings available on the webpage.

34. The Secretariat extended the appreciation to Member States for the detailed feedback provided to enrich and improve the draft strategic plan and provided following responses:
- Confirmed that the global housing crisis and UN-Habitat’s mandate in the areas of housing, land and basic services would serve as a starting point for the strategic plan 2026-2029, and that it would be re-articulated and clarified in the text
 - Confirmed that the outcomes would be more specific and clearer in language, pointing to more measurable approach, keeping a balance between simplicity and specificity;
 - Confirmed that an early version of the draft strategic plan 2026-2029 would be submitted to Conference Services by 22 March 2025 and that the deliberations by Member States during the 2025 first session of the Executive Board would be incorporated as the Conference Service continues to edit and translate the document;
- Called for further guidance from Member States on how to reconcile the various requests for further developing the draft strategic plan, such as the requests for developing a brief, clear document with a logical structure that is communicable, whilst providing measurable outcomes and reflecting on the organizational re-adjustment; and whether this should be achieved in one document or separate documents could be developed.

Agenda item 4: Any Other Business

35. One Member State requested for the breakdown of re-costed draft budget for 2025.

The fifty-seventh meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Executive Board for the year 2024 was adjourned at 12:00 hrs East African Time (EAT).