



Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme
First session of 2025
Nairobi, 25–27 March 2025
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Update on the preparation of, and possible recommendation
of, the draft strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period
2026–2029**

Development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029**

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. In decision 2/1 of the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly¹, to promote policy coherence across the United Nations system, Member States committed to the alignment of the strategic planning process of UN-Habitat with the cycle of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, by extending the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020–2023 to also cover the period 2024–2025. In its decision 2/2, the United Nations Habitat Assembly adjourned its second session, to resume from 29 to 30 May 2025, with the consideration of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 on the provisional agenda.

2. Following the report of the Executive Director to the Executive Board at its third session of 2023 on the preparations for the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029, the strategic plan is being developed through a consultative process, guided by lessons learned and consultations with Member States, United Nations Development System entities, staff, stakeholders, and partners.

3. In decision 2024/5¹ during its second session of 2024, the Executive Board took note of the report of the Executive Director on the development of the draft strategic plan for the period 2026–2029²; welcomed the ongoing consultative process undertaken by the Executive Director in preparing the draft strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 in an open and inclusive manner; and requested the Executive Director to continue such practice in the final stages of preparation of the draft strategic plan until its adoption; and requested the Executive Director to finalize the draft strategic plan taking into account the inputs of Member States during the second session of the Executive Board of 2024 and the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters, for consideration by the Executive Board at its first session of 2025, mindful of the complementarity with the work of other entities within the United Nations Development System.

* HSP/EB.2025/1.

** The present document has not been formally edited.

¹ HSP/EB.2024/23.

² HSP/EB.2024/5.

II. Our preparatory process

4. The preparatory process includes elements that sequentially, incrementally, and iteratively articulate the development of the plan. The key stages of the process of developing the strategic plan are:

- (a) Guiding principles, defining the purposes, approach, and other considerations;
- (b) Key elements of the substantive framework: global challenges, strategic focus in the context of the vision for the period of 2026-2029, impact areas, and means of implementation;
- (c) Planned results: impact on people's lives, and outcomes for the key actors and stakeholders in the process.

5. At the time of publication, the first two stages have been carried out in consultation with Member States, and following their guidance, the discussions proceed on how to articulate the planned results. The approach to implementation and monitoring include as section V below.

III. Our consultative process

6. Four retreats of the Member States were organized by the Executive Director for the development of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026-2029 to present the progress and to solicit guidance, comments, and suggestions from Member States:

- (a) 31 January 2024 on the proposed guiding principles;
- (b) 30 May 2024 on the priorities and goals to be included in the strategic plan;
- (c) 16 September 2024 on the draft annotated outline, containing the proposed key elements of the substantive framework, the proposed hierarchy of the planned results, and examples of the proposed formulation of the impact and outputs; and,
- (d) 15 January 2025 on the proposed outcomes, implementation guidance, and monitoring of implementation performance of the strategic plan

7. Additional consultations on the development of the strategic plan were conducted at the meetings the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters on 11 March, 8 April, 3 July, and 13 November 2024.

8. The Executive Director held retreats with staff members on the development of the strategic plan 9 on 15-16 April, 19 August, 28 August 2024, and 14 January 2025.

9. Consultations on the alignment of the strategic plan with those of other United Nations Development System entities took place during the 12th session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, from 4 to 8 November 2024, and at the annual meeting of the United Nations Strategic Planning Network in Rome, Italy, from 18 to 21 November 2024.

10. The consultations with stakeholders and partners, including civil society, professional associations, and academia, are organized by the Stakeholder Advisory Group to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat (SAGE), which has established a dedicated working group to facilitate the consultations. At the 12th session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt, from 4 to 8 November 2024, a dedicated consultation took place.

IV. Executive summary of the draft Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2029

11. The achievement of the universal and transformative goals and targets as set out in the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements is directly tied to how we plan, manage, and govern our territories, cities, and human settlements.

12. This plan introduces a strategic focus for 2026–2029: adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, including the urgent transformation of informal settlements and slums. This integrated focus is a powerful approach, directly or indirectly, to achieving an impact on peoples' lives.

13. With this focus, in the context of sustainable urbanization, the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for 2026-2029, adding value to the efforts of the United Nations and the broader multilateral system, seeks to address global challenges mirrored by three impact areas:

- (a) equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication;

- (b) preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction; and
- (c) environment and climate action.

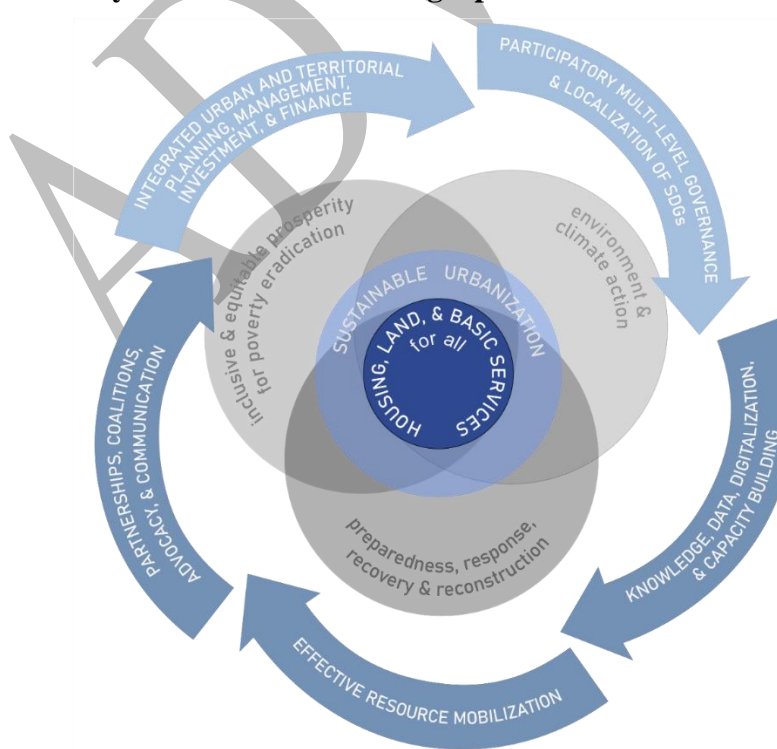
14. The expected global impact is that more people in cities and human settlements, including people living in informal settlements and slums and those affected by humanitarian crises and climate impacts, prosper and have their lives transformed through increased access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

15. Driven by strategic focus, the improvement of people's lives in all impact areas will be sought through five means of implementation. They enable UN-Habitat to seek the impact through expected outcomes:

- (a) integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance;
Outcome: Spatial development plans, policies and legislation, planning systems and finance frameworks foster the social and ecological function of land and catalyse public and private investments for adequate housing, land and basic services for all.
- (b) participatory multi-level governance and localization of the SDGs;
Outcome: Age- and gender-responsive participatory multi-level governance mechanisms support adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, and accelerated SDG localization.
- (c) knowledge, data, digitalization, and capacity development;
Outcome: Improved knowledge and capacities inform evidence-based, innovative policies on adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.
- (d) partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication;
Outcome: Increased awareness and strengthened collaboration among relevant stakeholders promote adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.
- (e) effective resource mobilization.
Outcome: Increased and predictable resources for UN-Habitat and its partners advance adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

16. The outcomes of these means of implementation will be delivered through outputs that are defined as planned results of the annual work programmes.

Key elements of the strategic plan



V. Our implementation and monitoring

A. Proposed implementation approach

17. The overall quadrennial implementation will be guided by a set of brief documents bridging the strategic plan with the annual work programme and budget. Global action plans for each mean of implementation will be developed to work towards expected outcomes. Regional implementation guidance will be developed, tailoring the outcomes in specific contexts.

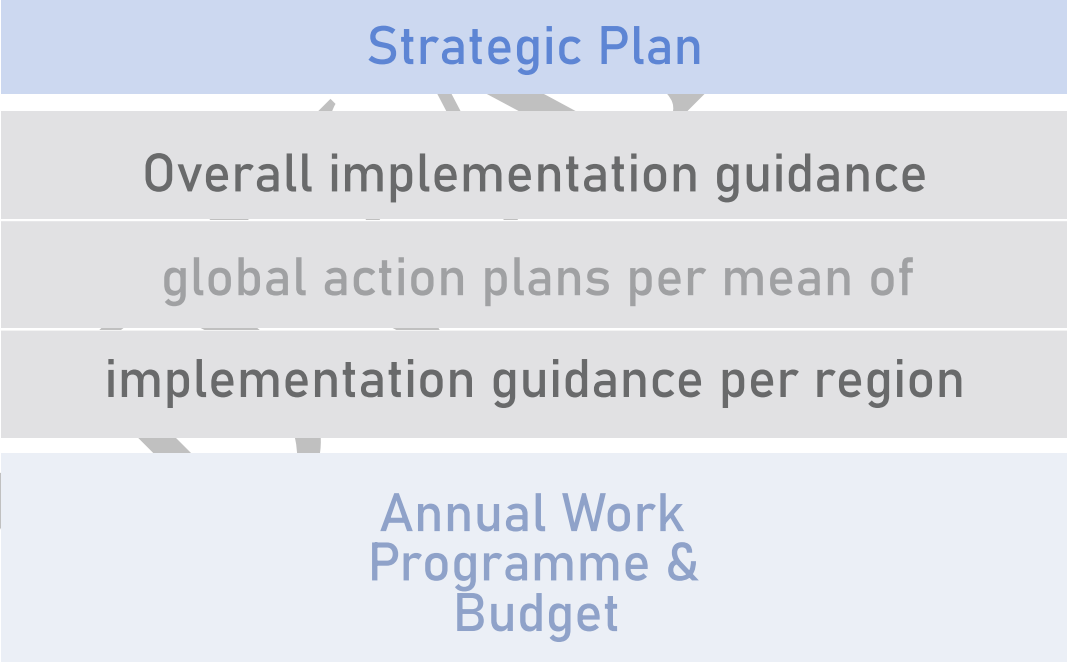
18. Three goals will be set for implementation mechanisms:

(a) Ensure horizontal coherence and collaboration across all five means of implementation (MoI) by gearing all work in support of the strategic focus. This includes seeking alignment and integrated delivery through the global programmes and initiatives to integrate MoI across normative and operational pillars;

(b) Ensure symbiotic vertical coherence between the headquarters and field operations. To that end, global programmes and services work with country and regional-level field projects managed by country offices to promote the strategic focus. Whilst the headquarters supports with relevant knowledge and expertise, it harvests new and contextualised knowledge. This constant feedback loop enhances the expertise and serves as an interregional knowledge exchange;

(c) Prioritise, encourage and support collaboration with other United Nations entities and the broader multilateral system where the strategic focus adds value in the three impact areas. This will primarily assure the overall impact in the three impact areas in coordination with the United Nations system entities leading in those impact areas.

B. Proposed implementation documents



19. The Annual Work Programme and Budget is the only statutory document for implementing the strategic plan. It is structured in subprogrammes and their results, which build on the strategic plan’s key elements and results chain. The implementation documents are proposed with the purpose of bridging the strategic plan and the Annual Work Programme and Budget of UN-Habitat so that they are fully aligned.

20. The documents guiding implementation will outline coordination of collaboration in pursuing the strategic focus for achieving the global impact and how the responsibilities seeking outcomes under individual MoI will be assigned. The responsibilities for individual MoI and related outcomes, including for horizontal and vertical collaboration, will be assigned as appropriate at the headquarters and the regional offices, Executive Director being responsible for horizontal and vertical coordination and coherence. These responsibilities will be supported by organisational and resource alignment to ensure integration and coherence so that accountability mechanisms can be established.

C. Monitoring implementation

21. A robust monitoring framework is essential for tackling the progress and assessing the impact of the strategic plan during this period. The proposed framework:

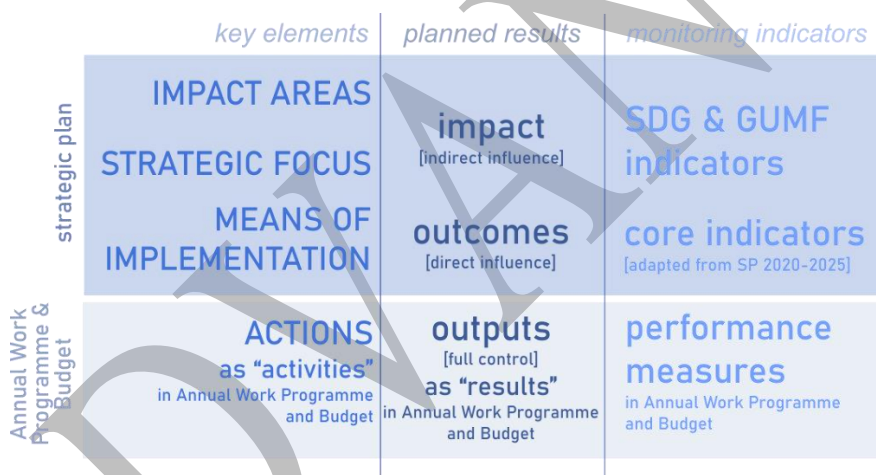
- (a) Draws on lessons learned from previous monitoring efforts;
- (b) Ensures coherence between global goals and organisational efforts;
- (c) Incorporates an analysis of existing indicators and performance measures to ensure relevance and efficiency;
- (d) Takes into account UN-Habitat's capacity for data collection, analysis, and monitoring.

22. In subsequent stages, the monitoring framework will provide clear guidance on collecting, analysing, reporting, and effectively utilising data. This will support evidence-based decision-making, enabling UN-Habitat to adjust its strategies and actions to achieve its planned results.

23. This framework will be closely linked to the strategic plan's planned results, focusing on assessing impact and outcomes at various levels. By aligning monitoring efforts with these results, UN-Habitat can ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement in delivering on its mandate.

24. Key lessons for developing the monitoring framework were drawn from the practices of other United Nations entities, including common principles of alignment with global goals, innovative data approaches, and capacity-building.

D. Key elements, planned results and monitoring indicators



25. The proposed monitoring framework for UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026-2029 is designed to systematically track and evaluate progress across the three levels of the plan: from the broad, transformative impacts, through outcomes, to outputs that occur as a result of UN-Habitat's actions.

26. By integrating a diverse set of indicators, the framework will provide clear, measurable data that informs decision-making, enhances accountability, and ensures that UN-Habitat's efforts are aligned with its long-term goals of fostering sustainable urban development.

27. This comprehensive approach uses selected indicators from global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (GUMF) and leverages existing tools to measure outcomes.