

Background Note

Rotation of members of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Executive Board

I. Background

a. Rotation of members of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Executive Board

1. Rule 9 (3) of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board EB-RoP (“Elections”) states as follows: “The offices of Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year to a different regional group. Each regional group shall occupy the office of Chair and Rapporteur once during a period of five years.”
2. During its third session, that was held from 28-30 November 2023, the Executive Board confirmed the rotation of the officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board “to serve from the closure of the third session of 2023, for the period 2023–2024.”¹
3. At the same meeting, the Chair of the Executive Board confirmed that it was the turn of the regional group of the African States, as the only regional group not having held the position since the entry into force in 2019 of the new governance structure of UN-Habitat, to chair the Executive Board. The Chair also confirmed that it was the turn of the regional group of the Asia-Pacific States to hold the position of Rapporteur.²
4. The Executive Board’s confirmation was based on the understanding that the then Vice-Chair, Kenya, would take over from GRULAC (Group of Latin American and the Caribbean), represented by Brazil, as Chair of the Bureau, whose tenure had lasted for more than one year due to exceptional circumstances, in breach of rule 9 (3). In a communication from Kenya dated 28 March 2024,³ the Secretariat was informed that Nigeria would serve as a Chair of the Executive Board, on behalf of the African Group of States.
5. In accordance with Rule 9(3) EB-RoP, read in conjunction with the decision of the Executive Board to confirm the rotation “for the period 2023-2024”, the term of the current Chair has come to an end, and the offices of Chair and Rapporteur need to rotate.

¹ Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on the work of its third session of 2023, 28-30 November 2023, dated 27 December 2023, paragraph 98.

² Loc. cit., paragraph 97.

³ Note Verbale from Kenya Ref no: KMUH/LHS/9 dated 28 March 2024

b. 2025 Election of the Bureau of the Executive Board

6. In conformity with the decision of the Executive Board at its second session of 2023, held on 8 June 2023, to extend the terms of office of the current Bureau members until the closure of the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, in 2025, the Executive Board is expected to elect a new Bureau for a one-year term, which will take place at a session of the Executive Board right after the Elections of its Members, at the margins of the Resumed Second Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, to be held from 28-30 May 2025.

II. Decisions to be taken by the Executive Board

7. During the meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board that was held on 31 January 2025, Bureau members considered the rotation of the Chair from the African Group to the Western European and Other States Group (WEOG).
 8. Delegations took note of the legal framework, as set out above, and agreed on the need to clarify the current transition from the African Group to the WEOG. Mindful of the upcoming elections of the Executive Board and the Bureau of the Executive Board and the termination of the mandate of the current Chair, they noted that a decision on such transition is a matter of urgency.
 9. Therefore, Bureau members expressed the need for further consultations within the Regional Groups. They equally requested a briefing with the Secretariat support to inform the membership of the legal framework governing the rotation process.
 10. In addition, Bureau members, having acknowledged the ad-hoc nature of the present rotation arrangements, identified the need for a permanent mechanism that would allow for the implementation of Rule 9(3) of the Eb-RoP, in an equal, just, and transparent manner. Taking into account the various legal and practical considerations, Bureau members agreed that such an arrangement should align with the election cycle.
 11. The permanent arrangement would be taken by way of a formal decision for adoption by the Executive Board.
- a. For the rotation in accordance with Rule 9(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the Chair in 2025**

12. The Secretariat recommends the Executive Board to consider confirming the rotation of the officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board at the end of the upcoming first session of the Executive Board (25-27 March 2025), for the period 2025.

b. For permanent arrangement

13. The Executive Board may consider the adoption of the following decision:

“The Executive Board of Habitat, following internal consultations and information provided by the secretariat on legal and practical considerations pertaining to the implementation of Rule 9(3) of its Rules of Procedure, decides as follows”:

[Option 1] “*Any decision on the rotation of the office of Chair and Rapporteur shall be taken at the end of the first regular session of the Executive Board each year.*”

[Option 2] “*Any decision on the rotation of the office of Chair and Rapporteur shall be taken at the end of the last regular session of the Executive Board each year, taking effect at the beginning of the following calendar year.*”

14. The secretariat recommends the adoption of **option 1**, because it would be aligned with rule 9 (1), according to which the Executive Board shall elect a Bureau at its first session each year. Since the election takes place at the end of the first session, option 2 would imply that the first and the second session each year would be chaired by two different countries from the same regional group.