



**BRIEFING BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON THE PREPARATIONS  
FOR THE 2024 SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO BE  
HELD FROM 4 TO 6 DECEMBER 2024.**

25 November 2024, 10.00pm to 12.30 p.m. East Africa Time EAT

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*(Draft of 20 November 2024 -11am)*

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening from wherever you are joining us from.

I welcome you all to this briefing on the preparation for the second session of the Executive Board for the year 2024 scheduled to take place from 4 to 6 December 2024, here at the UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi.

As you are aware, this is a standard briefing which usually takes place before each session of the Executive Board as a requirement of rule 6.10 the rules of procedure of the Executive Board. That rule provides that a briefing on the matters to be covered under each item on the provisional agenda be done at least two weeks before each session.

I would like to focus today on the overall expectations of the upcoming session of the Executive Board, particularly under the substantive agenda items to be considered at the session.

Mr. Chairman.

If it is ok, I would also like to take a few minutes during this meeting to update Member States on the preparations for the first session on the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all which will take place from 9 to 11 December 2024, right after the Executive Board session.

We will then have room for any clarifications regarding the logistical arrangements for the session and to respond to any questions you may have.

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies.

The formal notification and provisional agenda for the upcoming session was shared with Member States on 17 October 2024, well ahead of the required 42 days prior to the session as provided for in the rules of procedure.

The core pre-session documents for the session were also made available online in the six UN official languages by 7 November 2024, four weeks prior to the session as expected in rules.

The provisional agenda for the session as decided upon by the Executive Board in Decision 2024/4 and further reviewed by the Bureau of the Executive Board is now on the screen.

*(NOTE: ED you do not have to read these out as they will be on the screen)*

### **Provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
  - (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the second session of 2024;
  - (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its first session of 2024.
3. Reports of the ad hoc working groups established by the Executive Board.
4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters.
5. Consideration and possible approval of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025.
6. Strategic plan:
  - (a) Annual report for 2023 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025;
  - (b) Update on the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029.
7. Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2024 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters.

8. Outcomes of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum and of the Africa Urban Forum.
9. Briefing by the Executive Director on the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly.
10. Update by the Executive Director on the preparations for the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.
11. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board and results of the assessment of the organizational effectiveness of UN-Habitat by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network.
12. Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board.
13. Follow-up on implementation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of management and administration in UN-Habitat.
14. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the first session of 2025.
15. Other matters.
16. Closure of the session.

Before moving on to the expectations for the upcoming session, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Colombia and Nigeria as co-Chairs of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters (PBA) and also to Portugal as Chair of the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy. Alongside the Bureau of the Executive Board, the two ad hoc working groups have played an important role in the preparations for the upcoming session of the Executive Board. Accordingly, under agenda item 3, it is expected that the Chairs will brief the Executive Board on the work of these two important ad hoc working groups.

I now move to focus on the substantive items of the provisional Agenda, specifically, items 4 to 13, and share with you our expectations in that regard.

#### **Agenda item 4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters.**

With regard to the **financial status of UN-Habitat**, the interim financial statuses as at 30 June, and as at 30 September are available to Member States. By the end of September of this year, core voluntary contributions were up 56% as compared to the same time last year.

For 2024, the Executive Board approved a budget of 4 million US dollars in the non-earmarked Foundation fund. As of 30 September 2024, we recorded total revenue of 3.1 million, while expenses totaled 2.6 million, resulting in a net operational surplus of 0.5 million. We project to have healthy net assets in the Foundation as we go into 2025.

During the upcoming session we will share with you the most updated figures and look forward to your guidance. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your financial support to the Organization and for the goodwill already shown to me since my arrival, including through pledges. Thank you very much.

**Agenda item 5.** Consideration and possible approval of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat and the draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025.

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,

The **draft work programme and budget for 2025** has already benefited from the review and inputs from the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters, as well as from the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The draft work programme remains guided by our strategic plan for the period from 2020 to 2025 and takes into account the new mandates from the resolutions in the adjourned second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

To implement the work programme for 2025, I have proposed an annual budget of 4.7 million US dollars in the non-earmarked Foundation. This budget level incorporates the recent increases in staff salaries in Nairobi, following the decisions by the International Civil Service Commission that effectively restore salaries to pre-

Covid levels, plus inflation. In response to the endorsed scalability model, I have also included the option of package one, at a total proposed budget level of 5.9 million US dollars.

It is my expectation and hope that Member States will approve one of the proposed budget levels in the non-earmarked Foundation.

**Agenda item 6. Strategic plan:**

- (a) Annual report for 2023 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025;
- (b) Update on the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029

Excellencies,

Under Agenda item 6, we will first brief the Executive Board on the **Annual report for 2023** on the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025. Our Annual report for 2023 entitled “Local Action in a time of crisis” has been made available to all Member States and to the public.

Secondly, as you are aware, the UN-Habitat Assembly at its resumed second session to be held in May 2025 is expected to approve our **next strategic plan for the period 2026-2029**. So far, we have worked closely with Member States in preparing the draft of that Strategic plan, through retreats and meetings of the ad hoc working group on PBA. I am most grateful to you all for your valuable input into the current version of the draft strategic plan, including at the latest meeting held on 13 November 2024. Since that meeting, we have worked on an updated version of the draft strategic plan, taking into account your guidance. That **updated version** will be presented to the Executive Board at the upcoming session and has **been uploaded on the meeting website** for your further consideration.

We are looking forward to the guidance by the Executive Board on the proposed Strategic Plan 2026-2029 at the upcoming 2024 second session of the Executive Board.

It is our hope that the draft strategic plan will be reviewed and recommended by the Executive Board to the UN-Habitat Assembly for possible approval in a timely manner.

**Agenda item 7.** Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2024 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters.

Excellencies,

At the upcoming session, the agenda item related to the **Normative and Operational activities** of UN-Habitat will focus on:

1. UN-Habitat country programmes in Nepal and Jordan,
2. Urban crisis prevention and response initiatives and
3. UN-Habitat activities for the period January–June 2024

Under the Nepal country programme, we will highlight our work related to:

1. Urban planning and climate resilience
2. Land reform and management
3. Water, sanitation and hygiene and
4. Inclusive development through localization

Under the Jordan country programme, we will highlight our work related to:

1. Urban planning frameworks for sustainable urban development
2. Community-led public space development
3. Localizing the SDGs & Implementing the New Urban Agenda, and
4. Building climate resilience

Mr. Chairman,

The Executive Board continues to place due focus on our work in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters and in this regard, the latest documents including the report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct human settlements in the Gaza Strip has been shared with Member states and will be presented to the Board.

As an established practice, under this agenda item, we hope to have one or two partners share their experiences on the impact of UN-Habitat's work.

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the support of Member States that continue to operationalize the regional architecture and ensure a growing footprint of UN-Habitat across the globe through our normative and operational activities in full alignment with the UN reform.

I also wish to take this opportunity to also invite you all to the briefing that I will give to all Member States this Friday, 29 November 2024, which will be focused Urban crisis and on the 2024 World Cities report.

### **Agenda item 8. Outcomes of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum and of the Africa Urban Forum.**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

I am pleased to update you that the recently concluded twelfth session of the World Urban Forum held in Egypt from 4 to 8 November 2024 was very successful.

WUF12 witnessed a number of action-oriented deliberations on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and aligned with the Pact for the Future, with a record-breaking registration of over **37,000**, over **25,000 participants** in attendance from **182 countries, 4 Head of states, 1 Prime Minister, 4 deputy Prime Ministers, 60 Ministers and 45 Deputy Ministers** (from 84 countries), 96 Mayors and Governors, more than 700 partner-led events from over **1,500** applications.

Over the 5 days of the session, participants actively engaged in dialogues, special sessions, and discussions. These deliberations resulted in the Cairo **Call to Action** which embodies the voices of WUF12, and cuts across all stakeholders.

The Forum presented a unique opportunity as the first UN conference after the Summit of the Future and unanimous adoption of the Pact for the Future. It provided a platform for considering the critical role and contribution of stakeholders for actioning the Pact for the Future.

UN-Habitat also took the opportunity of WUF 12 to consult with stakeholders, including the UN system, on its new strategic plan for 2026-2029 gaining valuable insights to inform the plan's preparation.

At the upcoming session, we will brief you in detail on the outcome of WUF 12 and also on the outcome of the first session of the Africa Urban Forum held in Ethiopia in September 2024. The document related to this agenda item **has already been prepared and shared with you** as an in-session document, to inform the discussions during the session and for any guidance that the Executive Board may wish to make.

I take this early opportunity to sincerely thank the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, our host, for the support and collaboration which greatly contributed to the success of WUF 12. I was also deeply honoured to see the presence of a high number of Member States, including at the Ministerial level, several Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives from here in Nairobi present with us in Cairo. Thank you very much!

**Agenda item 9: Briefing by the Executive Director on the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly.**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

We have continued to brief Member States on the progress so far in **implementing all resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly** and the last such briefing was held under the leadership of the ad hoc working group on PBA on 16 October 2024.

At the upcoming session of the Executive Board, we will formally brief the Executive Board on the progress in implementing all resolutions from both the first session and adjourned second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

At the session, we hope to devote a little more time on the timebound resolutions, particularly on Resolution 2/1. Resolution 2/4 and Resolution 2/7.

On **resolution 2/1 on the international Guidelines on people centered Smart Cities**, we intend to report on the progress made so far in the inclusive consultations towards the development of the draft guidelines which are to be considered and possibly approved by the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2025. In this regard let me thank Member States sincerely for recommending experts to contribute to the



guideline's development. The 31 global experts have so far made tremendous contributions to the development of the draft guidelines and have been complemented by experts participating in the regional consultations to support the development of guidelines. We have further undertaken very wide stakeholder consultations globally to inform the drafting. I am grateful to the Member States who have hosted the consultations, offered voluntary contribution and in-kind support towards the implementation of the resolution and delivery of the international guidelines on people-centred smart cities.

It is important that we continue to report to the Executive Board on the progress in developing the guidelines as expected in the resolution and for the Executive Board to continue monitoring this progress.

On resolution **2/4 on biodiverse and resilient cities**, we will particularly update the Executive Board on the links between biodiverse and resilient cities and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and, the toolkit on urban development for more biodiverse and resilient cities as requested in that resolution,

On **resolution 2/7 on adequate housing for all**, let me first thank Member States and the Executive Board on the adoption of Decision 2024/3 which gave us guidance on the dates and the agenda for the first session on the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all. As you are all aware, that session will take place from 9 to 11 December 2024 right after the Executive Board session.

Mr. Chairman.

As stated in the beginning, allow me to come back to update you on resolution 2/7 particularly as it relates to the preparations for the upcoming intergovernmental expert working group, once I conclude on the updates related to the upcoming session of the Executive Board.

**Agenda item 10.** Update by the Executive Director on the preparations for the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,

You will recall that the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly was held from 5 to 9 June 2023 in Nairobi. During that session, the Assembly decided, in accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure, to adjourn its second regular session and to resume the session for a duration of two days, on 29 and 30 May 2025, in order to achieve the alignment of the planning cycle of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system.

Accordingly, preparations for the resumed session have now begun. At the upcoming session, we will update the Executive Board on the preparations and expectations for the resumed second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, guided by the provisional Agenda as adopted in Decision 2/2 of the Assembly and the recommendations of the Bureau of the CPR. We will also share the provisional Agenda of the third open-ended meeting of the CPR (OECPR) which is scheduled to be held just prior to the resumed second session of the Assembly from 26 to 28 May 2025.

I wish to point out at this early stage that some of the expected key outcomes of the resumed second session are:

- i. The possible approval of the next strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026 to 2029,
- ii. The possible adoption of the international guidelines on people centered smart cities.
- iii. The possible approval of the draft UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement policy,
- iv. The elections of 36 Member of the Executive Board for a four-year term until 2029, and
- v. The election of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly for a four-year term, until 2029.

The in-session document pertaining to this agenda item has now been made available on the website of the upcoming Executive Board session.

### **Agenda items 11, 12 and 13**

11. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to the Executive Board and results of the assessment of the organizational effectiveness of UN-Habitat by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network.

12. Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board.

13. Follow-up on implementation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of management and administration in UN-Habitat.

Excellencies:

Under agenda items 11 and 12, we will share the highlights of the latest reports of the OIOS and the Ethics office as related to UN-Habitat.

Under agenda item 11, I am pleased to share that representatives from the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) will be present to provide a briefing to the Executive Board on the preliminary results of the MOPAN assessment of the organizational effectiveness of UN-Habitat.

Finally, under agenda item 13, we will provide the latest status on the implementation of the 2022 report of the UN Joint Inspection Unit on the review of management and administration in UN-Habitat

It is the expectation that the Executive Board will take note and give guidance to the Organization including by formulating appropriate recommendations in its decisions.

In this respect, and as requested by the Bureau, we have provided the technical inputs into the draft decisions to be considered by the Executive Board at the upcoming session. I am aware that the ad hoc working group on PBA has already begun the discussion on the draft decisions.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

I thank you all for you for your attention to this first part of my presentation. I will come back with a quick update on the preparations for **the first session of the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all.**

*(Chair to open the floor for Questions and Answers as related to the 2024 second session of the Executive Board)*

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.**

*(After that)*

*(Chair gives the floor back to ED to brief on preparations for **the first session of the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all***

*( ED shares on the preparations for first session of the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all – **Talking points to be provided by Robert/Shipra**)*

*(After that)*

*(Chair to open the floor for Questions and Answers related to the first session of the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all )*

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.**

*(After that)*

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, Mr. Mensah will give some quick guidance in relation to logistical arrangements.

Back to you. Mr., Chairman. Thank you.

*(the Chair to hand over to Chris briefly on any logistical arrangements for the Executive Board session and intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all)*

*(Other pertinent information of preparations for the session to be shared by CHRIS MENSAH as below)*

Excellencies

- i. All the pre-session documents for the Executive Board are available on the website. We have also posted a few in-session documents that were projected.
- ii. We are organizing the travel of the five LDCs who are Members of the Executive Board to participate in the session in person.
- iii. For effective planning of the session, we request Permanent and Observer Missions, in addition to registering online to communicate the names of the members of their respective delegations as early as possible, but no later than Sunday, 1 December 2024.
- iv. We would also be grateful to receive names of the members of delegations participating in the intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all as early as possible.
- v. The registration for the Executive Board session and intergovernmental expert working group on adequate housing for all is currently on going and will close on Friday 29 November 2024, at 2:00 pm East Africa Time (EAT).
- vi. Onsite registration at the UN Compound will be as follows:
  - Monday, 2 December 2024 from 08:00 to 16:00, East Africa Time (EAT)
  - Tuesday, 3 December 2024 from 08:00 to 16:00, East Africa Time (EAT)
  - Wednesday, 4 December 2024 from 08:00 to 16:00, East Africa Time (EAT).
- vii. The proposed organization of work during the Executive Board session as approved by the Bureau has been shared in the form of a “Programme at a glance” and “detailed Programme” which are available on the website.

- viii. An “information for participants” document has also been placed on the dedicated website for the session.
  
- ix. Regional groups who wish to have meetings rooms for their consultations during the session, typically before the start of each morning meeting of both sessions may write to the Secretariat to request for meeting rooms to be allocated accordingly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*(Chair to open the floor for Questions and Answers as related to the logistical arrangements)*

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.**

END.