



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

## **Induction Seminar on the Work and Governance of UN-Habitat**

10 September 2025

9:00 - 13:00 EAT

### **Guidance Note on the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat**

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## 1. Introduction

This note is prepared by the Secretariat of Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat to provide an explanatory overview of UN-Habitat's governance structure, the meetings of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, as well as the role and functions of the three Bureaus of the Governing Bodies and of the UN-Habitat secretariat.

## 2. Brief overview of UN-Habitat's governance structure

UN-Habitat's governance structure is three-tiered, consisting of the [United Nations Habitat Assembly](#), the [Executive Board](#) and the [Committee of Permanent Representatives](#).

### The United Nations Habitat Assembly

The UN-Habitat Assembly is a universal body composed of the 193 member states of the United Nations and convenes every four years at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. It is the highest decision-making body in the UN relating to human settlements and sustainable urbanization. Its main responsibilities are to provide guidance on the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat; review trends related to human settlements and urbanization; examine global norms and standards in human settlements and sustainable urbanization; adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, etc., within its mandate; recommend strategies for implementation of urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda; examine and approve UN-Habitat's strategic plan; and Review the Secretary-General's quadrennial report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

- The second session of the Assembly took place [from 5 to 9 June 2023](#) and [29 to 30 May 2025](#).
- The next session of the UN-Habitat Assembly will be held from 25 to 29 June 2029.
- The main webpage for the UNHA can be accessed here: [UN-Habitat Assembly | UN-Habitat](#)

### The Executive Board

The Executive Board is a subsidiary body to the UN-Habitat Assembly and is composed of **36 Member States** elected by the Assembly. It meets two to three times a year at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. Its main mandate is to approve and oversee the implementation of UN-Habitat's annual programme of work and budget, and resource mobilization strategy.

- The two previous sessions of the Executive Board took place from [25 to 27 March](#) and [30 May 2025](#).
- The next session of the Executive Board is scheduled for [25 to 26 November 2025](#).
- The main webpage for the Executive Board can be accessed here: [Executive Board | UN-Habitat](#).

### The Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat (CPR) is a subsidiary body to the UN-Habitat Assembly and has universal membership. It meets twice every four years - in an open-ended manner - at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi and has a two-fold mandate; to conduct a high-level mid-term review of the work of UN-Habitat every four years; and to prepare for the next session of the Assembly every four years, taking place the week before the Assembly.

- The [third open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (OECPR-3) took place from [26-28 May](#) 2025, at the UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi.
- The next sessions of the CPR are scheduled as follows: OECPR-4 will take place from [14 to 18 June 2027](#), and OECPR-5 from 18 to 22 June 2029.
- The main webpage for the CPR can be accessed here: [Committee of Permanent Representatives | UN-Habitat](#)

All UN-Habitat governing bodies meetings are listed in an online roadmap, available [here](#).

### 3. The Executive Board and its bureau

The work of the [UN-Habitat Executive Board](#) is guided by its own [rules of procedure](#) and [Document A/73/726](#) on the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, pursuant to [General Assembly resolution 72/226](#).

The Executive Board's main task is to oversee the implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, to ensure accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The Board is composed of 36 Member States, elected by the UN-Habitat Assembly for a four-year period, and meets two to three times a year at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. All Board members participate in the Board meeting on an equal basis.

The mandated functions of the Executive Board are as follows:

- To approve and oversee the implementation of UN-Habitat's annual programme of work and budget, and resource mobilization strategy, in accordance with the strategic plans and political guidelines provided by the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- To adopt decisions within the scope of its mandate on, among other things, programmatic, operational and budgetary issues for the adequate and effective implementation of resolutions and other decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- To guide and support efforts to finance the work of UN-Habitat.
- To oversee the compliance of UN-Habitat with evaluations and support auditing functions.
- To collaborate with the Executive Boards of other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in accordance with the management reform programme of the United Nations Secretary-General.

The Executive Board adopts its annual workplan at its first regular session each year, based on an initial discussion of the workplan held at the last session of the Board during the previous year.

All items brought forward for discussion and consideration must have a direct link to the mandate, activities and area of competence of UN-Habitat. The UN-Habitat secretariat serves as the secretariat to the Executive Board and provides the Board with any assistance and information necessary for the Board to fulfil its functions and accomplish the objectives set out in its annual workplan.

The Executive Board may also establish ad hoc working groups with specific functions, as and when necessary, and refer to any matters within the scope of its mandate for consideration and reporting. In 2025, the Board was supported by two working groups: one working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters, and one the proposed UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Policy. The current Chairs of the working groups are expected to be replaced in advance of the next Executive Board meeting in November 2025.

The rules of procedure of the Board are available [here](#).

#### **Current Membership of the Executive Board**

##### **A. Africa (10 seats)**

Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia and Zimbabwe

##### **B. Asia-Pacific (8 seats)**

China, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates (2025-2027) and Malaysia (2027-2029)

### **C. Eastern Europe (4 seats)**

Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Ukraine

### **D. Latin America and the Caribbean (6 seats)**

Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay

### **E. Western Europe and Others (8 seats)**

France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, United States of America, and [vacant]

## **The Bureau of the Executive Board**

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Board shall elect, at its first regular session each year, a Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected—also considering the need to ensure equitable geographical representation. The functions of the Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year among the five regional groups, to ensure that each regional group of the United Nations is equally represented in these functions. The Bureau of the Executive Board meets as necessary to support the Chair; help prepare for and organize the Board meetings; facilitate transparent decision-making and promote dialogue. However, it does not have authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau will, in particular, consider issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Board. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

## **Current Membership of the Bureau of the Executive Board 2025-2026**

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Germany</b> (Group of Western European and Other States)
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	<b>Brazil</b> (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)
	<b>China</b> (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
	<b>Slovakia</b> (Group of Eastern European States)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	<b>Cameroon</b> (Group of African States)

## **4. The Committee of Permanent Representatives and its bureau**

The [Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (CPR) is an intersessional subsidiary body of the UN-Habitat Assembly composed of all Permanent Representatives of Member States of the United Nations, and of the Members of UN Specialized Agencies, which is tasked to regularly review the implementation of the outcomes of the Assembly; guide the development of the programme of work and budget and monitor its implementation; and provide oversight regarding the work of the secretariat. Importantly, it is also responsible for preparing the sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The Committee meets in an open-ended manner, twice every four years: once prior to the UN-Habitat Assembly, in preparation for that session, and once for a high-level midterm review. If necessary to efficiently implement its mandate to prepare the next session of the Assembly, the Committee may, on a basis of consensus, establish subcommittees.

## **Meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives**

Every second year (2021, 2023, 2025, 2027, 2029, etc.), the CPR meets in the format of an open-ended Committee, meaning that it is open to all Member States. It holds a five-day meeting, chaired by the elected Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, either 2 years before (when it undertakes

a mid-term review) or immediately before the upcoming session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. During the meeting, representatives of Member States meet in formal plenary sessions as well as informally, in dedicated working groups, which are established to negotiate the outcomes of each session. When the Committee meets for preparation of the UN-Habitat Assembly, it will specifically consider draft resolutions and decisions for subsequent consideration and possible adoption by the Assembly. Informal consultations may also take place in advance of the meeting of the OECPR to seek consensus on draft outcomes of the Committee and/or of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The rules of procedure of the CPR are the same as those of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and are available [here](#).

### **The Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

The work of the CPR Representatives is supported by a five-member Bureau, consisting of a Chair, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur, elected from among its members for a period of two years, and taking into account the need for regional balance. The Bureau meets, as necessary, to support the Chair, help prepare and organize the Committee meetings, facilitate transparent decision-making and promote dialogue. It does not have the authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau will, in particular, consider issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Committee. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

Notably, all five members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives also serve as additional Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Assembly and are therefore invited to attend all the meetings of the UN-Habitat Assembly Bureau.

### **Current Membership of the Committee of Permanent Representatives 2025-2027**

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Sweden</b> (Group of Western European and Other States)
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	<b>China</b> (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
	<b>Costa Rica</b> (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)
	Vacant (Group of Eastern European States)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	<b>Kenya</b> (Group of African States)

## **5. The UN-Habitat Assembly and its bureau**

The [UN-Habitat Assembly](#) was established through [General Assembly resolution 73/239](#) as the highest global decision-making body on sustainable urbanization and human settlements, with a universal membership composed of the 193 Member States of the United Nations.

The Assembly convenes every four years at the UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi to identify key issues and areas of focus for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat; to adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, formal decisions, reports and other documents, providing strategic vision and political guidance in accordance with its mandate; and to examine and approve the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, as prepared by the Executive Board.

The regular sessions are organized as five-day meetings, consisting of plenary sessions, national and regional statements and, if needed, a sessional body called the Committee of the Whole which is established to consider any outstanding issues related to the outcomes of the session as prepared by the Open-ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The outcomes are submitted for adoption at the closing plenary of the Assembly, on the final day of the session.

The specific functions of the UN-Habitat Assembly are as follows:

- i. To identify key issues and areas of focus for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat.
- ii. To review major trends related to human settlements and urbanization.
- iii. To examine global norms and standards in human settlements and sustainable urbanization.
- iv. To adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, formal decisions, reports and other documents pertaining to strategic vision and political guidance, in accordance with its mandate.
- v. To recommend strategies for coherent implementation of urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and other global agendas, including the work of the United Nations System.
- vi. To examine and approve UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan, to be prepared by the Executive Board.
- vii. To ensure the active engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in the Assembly, in its subsidiary bodies and in intersessional meetings.

### **The Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly**

Members of the Assembly Bureau are elected for a four-year period at the final meeting of a regular session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. It is composed of five Member States elected to hold the offices of President, Rapporteur and three Vice-Presidents, with the five members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives serving as additional Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Assembly. The Members of the Bureau begin their terms of office at the closure of each session at which they are elected and remain in Office until the closure of the next regular session.

The Bureau usually meets three to six times a year, with more frequent meetings as the date of the next Assembly approaches. The meetings serve to assist the President in conducting the business of the Assembly and carrying out any tasks assigned by the Assembly, particularly in support of the preparation and organization of the next Assembly session, without the authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau will, in particular, consider issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Assembly. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

For the purpose of coordinating their activities, and in accordance with the rules of procedures of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the three Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the CPR and the Executive Board may sometimes meet jointly.

### **The Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly 2025-2029**

<b>President:</b>	<b>Malaysia (2025 to 2027) and UAE (2027 to 2029)</b> (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
<b>Vice-President:</b>	<b>Ethiopia</b> (Group of African States) Vacant (Group of Western European and Other States) Vacant (Group of Eastern European States)
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	<b>Mexico</b> (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)

### **Key founding documents and rules of procedure**

- [General Assembly resolution 73/239](#); Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat;

- [General Assembly resolution 72/226](#); Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat;
- [Report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group](#) established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/226;
- Rules of procedure for the UN-Habitat Assembly - available [here](#).
- Website: [UN-Habitat Assembly](#) | [UN-Habitat](#)

## 6. The Secretariat of Governing Bodies

The Secretariat of Governing Bodies (SGB) is a unit within the Office of the executive Director of UN-Habitat responsible for the preparation and coordination of meetings of the UN-Habitat governing bodies, and for supporting the President and Chairs to conduct the meetings. It also ensures that relevant meeting documentation is made available in accordance with stipulated time frames, and provides advice on procedural, protocol-related and other relevant issues.

SGB supports the Executive Director in his or her functions in relation to the UN-Habitat Assembly and other intersessional organs

During the meetings of the Governing Bodies, the Secretary of Governing Bodies and a high-level representative of UN-Habitat, such as the Executive Director or the Deputy Executive Director, assist the President in the general conduct of the meeting.

The SGB can be reached at the following email address: [unhabitat-sgb@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-sgb@un.org).