



2025 Eighth Meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat

Hybrid format – Wednesday, 19 November 2025

16:00hrs-18:00hrs East Africa Time (EAT)

Statement by the Executive Director

SLIDE 1: Title slide

Slide 2: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda to be led by the Chair.

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Update on the status of draft decisions for consideration at the third session of the Executive Board for 2025.
3. Review of the organization of work during the session.
4. Any other matters.

Slide 3: highlights of Introductory remarks by the ED

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Good afternoon to you all.

It is my pleasure to join you all at this eighth meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the year 2025. I want to thank you all for your guidance, as we are now finalizing the preparations for the third session Executive Board which is now only days away. I am confident that the preparations are well track.

Since the Bureau meeting held on 8 September 2025, where the provisional agenda for the session was endorsed, we have made good progress in preparing the **pre-session documents have been finalized on time** and shared with member states on **28 October 2025** in line with our rules of procedure.

We have also shared an updated **document** on the latest financial status, up until 30 September 2025.

There have also been several meetings of the ad hoc working on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters, to address all substantive topics of the agenda of the session, and to prepare the draft decisions.

In this regard I want to thank Member States for **inviting me to the PBA meeting held on 3 November 2025** – which provided an opportunity for a direct dialogue with Member States on several important issues, in particular the new **structure and division of responsibilities** within the organization for the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029. I remain attentive to these and other important matters such as the work programme and budget for 2026, and I look forward to continuing the discussions during the Executive Board session.

Mr. Chairman,

As guided by the Bureau on 8 September 2025, we prepared **the technical inputs as a basis for draft decisions** at an early stage, and these have now been subject to three informal consultations by Member States.

As part of the technical inputs, and in consultation with the Division of Conference Services, we have proposed that **the first session** of the Executive Board 2026 be held **from 21 to 23 April 2026** and that **the second session of 2026** be held **either from 9 to 11 November 2026 or from 23 to 25 November 2026**. These dates are already booked with DCS, pending the final decision by the Board. There has also been a discussion on whether the sessions should be 2 or 3 days.

Under item 2 today, I believe Kenya as Chair of the PBA working group will provide a full update on where we stand on the draft decisions, and I also take the opportunity to also welcome Kenya to this meeting and to thank them for their leadership as chair of the PBA. Thank you, Ambassador.

Excellencies,

As required by the rules of procedure, **I had the pleasure to brief Member States on the status of preparations for the Executive Board session on 3 November 2025**. My briefing covered several strategic elements for the upcoming session including among others:

- The work draft programme and proposed budget for 2027 which is expected to be approved at the upcoming session;
- The draft monitoring framework for the strategic plan,
- Updates related to WUF13 and the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on implementation of the New Urban Agenda; and
- Information related to our normative and operational activities.

Mr. Chairman – with regard to practical matters:

- **Registration for the session** is still open and will close on **Friday, 21 November 2025**, through UN-Habitat’s Global Events Management System website.
- We encourage more delegations to register, as the numbers are still relatively low.

Mr. Chairman,
Members of the Bureau,

Allow me to finalize my opening remarks by revisiting the issue of pre-session documents. **Regrettably, we are now experiencing challenges related to the funding from the UN regular budget for the translation of documents for the sessions** of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat.

As you may be aware, we have already faced challenges in financing the sessions of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on adequate housing - which has no dedicated Regular budget resources and no dedicated foundation non-earmarked Funds. Therefore, **at the second session of the Housing working group held from 22 to 23 October 2025, we were left with no option but to issue all pre- documents in English only** - except for the Provisional Agenda which was availed in all six UN official languages.

Similarly, **at the upcoming second session of the Executive Board, you may have noticed that two pre-session documents have been issued in English only** - owing to the continued financial constraints.

While the situation has worsened as part of the recent budget cuts from the regular budget cuts linked to the UN80 initiative, **the financial shortage for our current governing bodies began already in 2019** – where the decision to change or governance structure from meetings with a Governing Council every 2 years to three new governing bodies (the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Open-ended meeting of the CPR, and the Executive Board) was not matched by increased resources from the UN regular budget.

Therefore, UN-Habitat has been forced to **rely on the meager resources from our Foundation non-earmarked resources and a new UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund established in 2019, to bridge this gap**. Unfortunately, the funds from the UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund – which initially amounted to about 1,5 MUSD thanks to generous contributions from Germany, Kenya, Kuwait, Finland, Poland and China – are now almost depleted. We are also far from reaching the agreed budget of 4.7M USD of the Foundation non-earmarked resources.

So – when the already insufficient **regular budget resources** were further reduced by 20% this year, we are now in a position where we can no longer secure full translation of documents towards the Executive Board.

As for the use of the limited resources in the UN-Habitat Assembly Trust, we have prioritized travel support for LDC Board Members. We remain extremely grateful to the Member States who have contributed to that Fund - including China, Germany and Kenya who are here with us today. I particularly thank the Government of Germany that has contributed to the Trust Fund multiple times and allowed us to use its funding flexibly.

Because of the limited resources available to support our governing bodies, and unless we receive additional funds, I see no other choice than **to request consideration by the Executive Board to limit the number of translated documents to those that are directly linked to concrete**

decisions and approvals by the Board, as well as the formal reports of the sessions, while documents supporting discussions on other items remain in English only.

This proposal does not come lightly, and I understand that it will not be popular among Member States. However, the financial reality we face today through the mandated budget cuts in the UN Regular Budget Funds and the shortfall in the non-earmarked Foundation and UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund leaves us no choice but to propose new and innovative measures to manage our increasingly scarce resources.

I also wish to appeal once again to all Member States through this Executive Board Bureau to consider the replenishment of the UN-Habitat Assembly Trust Fund to bridge the funding gap and ensure the participation of LDCs in the meetings of the Governing bodies - as envisaged in GA Resolution 73/239.

I thank you Excellencies for your kind attention and remain available to respond to any matters that may arise up at this meeting.

Back to you Mr. Chairman.

Slide 4: (TITLE SLIDE) AGENDA ITEM 2: Update on the status of draft decisions for consideration at the third session of the Executive Board for 2025.

Slide 5: (TITLE SLIDE) AGENDA ITEM 3: Review of the organization of work during the session

Slide 6: Item 3. Review of the organization of work during the session

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

With regard to Agenda item 3, the Bureau has already addressed the organization of work at its meeting of 8 September 2025. As you will recall, we have **only two days for the session – covering 14 different Agenda items**. The Bureau may therefore wish to **consider and recommend appropriate time allocation for interventions by Member States**, as part of the working arrangements for the session.

On our part, we take due note of the time limitations and will ensure that our presentations are concise - with the understanding that the information is also made available in the pre-session documents.

Before I give the floor to the Secretary of the Governing Bodies, Mr. Ulf Björnholm to walk us through the proposed organization of work for each of the two days of the session, I wish to

highlight that the Bureau will meet again on day 2 of the session at 8am and make any adjustments as necessary.

It will be particularly important to ensure that all substantive items are concluded by the end of the morning Plenary on Day 2, and that the planned informal consultations on draft decision are finalized before the closing plenary meeting on day 2 when the outcomes are to be adopted.

I also wish to bring to your attention an invitation from Azerbaijan as host of WUF 13, to organize a briefing on the status of preparation for WUF 13 at lunchtime of day 1, and a reception at the evening of day 1 – after the informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, allow me to call on Mr. Ulf Björnholm to brief the Bureau on this item.

Slide 7: Organization of work for the third session of 2025 of the Executive Board (25–26 November 2025)

<i>Day/date</i>	<i>Time (UTC + 3)</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
DAY 1 Tuesday, 25 November	9 a.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening of the session. 2. Organizational matters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the third session of 2025; (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its first session of 2025; (c) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its second session of 2025. 3. Report by the chair of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board. 4. Report by the co-chairs of the open-ended expert working group on adequate housing for all. 5. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including updates on the structure and human resources of UN-Habitat and an updated draft version of the scalability model for the non-earmarked budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation.
	12noon to 2.00pm	<i>Informal consultations on draft outcomes</i>
	2 p.m.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Implementation of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Annual report for 2024 on the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025;

<i>Day/date</i>	<i>Time (UTC + 3)</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
		<p>(b) Update on the structure and division of responsibilities within the organization for the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029;</p> <p>(c) Draft monitoring framework for the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029.</p> <p>7. 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 2026.</p>
	5 pm to 7.00 pm	<i>Informal consultations on draft outcomes</i>
DAY 2	8 am to 8.45 am	Bureau meeting
Wednesday, 26 November	9 a.m.	<p>8. Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities and the engagement of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster.</p> <p>9. Preparations for the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum.</p> <p>10. Preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda.</p> <p>11. Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board.</p>
	12 noon to 2.00 pm	<i>Informal consultations on draft outcomes</i>
	2 p.m.	<p>12. Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including on the dates and provisional agenda of the first session of 2026.</p> <p>13. Other matters.</p> <p>14. Closure of the session.</p>

Slide 8: AGENDA ITEM 4. ANY OTHER MATTERS