

2026 First Meeting of the Bureau of the Executive Board

Friday, 13 February 2026

Draft speaking points for the Co-Chairs of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H)

Agenda item 6. Consideration of dates and possible arrangements for the third session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

Introduction

1. On behalf of Azerbaijan and Somalia, newly elected Co-Chairs of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, I have the honor to provide an update on the work of the Working Group. The update reflects both a short progress report of the latest developments, and an outlook for the next phase of the work of the Working Group, under our stewardship.

Progress update

2. Following the first session held in Nairobi in December 2024, the second session of the Working Group took place on 22–23 October 2025 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi.
3. The second session demonstrated strong engagement by Member States and stakeholders, with broad representation from all regions and active participation from capitals, UN entities and partners. 288 participants attended the meeting, mainly from governments and UN entities. 48 Member States were represented in person, from all UN region. The session was livestreamed for external participants.
4. Discussions confirmed a sustained political interest in advancing practical, policy-oriented guidance on how to ensure affordable adequate housing, grounded in diverse local, national and regional experiences.

Outcomes of OEWG-H2

5. The report of the second session of the OEWG-H has been finalized by the secretariat. It will be cleared by the Co-Chairs and will be made available online in all six UN languages in advance of the Executive Board meeting, and will provide a basis for our work at upcoming sessions of the Working Group in 2026, 2027 and 2028.
6. The second session adopted 4 decisions by consensus, as follows:
 - **Decision OEWG-H/2: Consideration of draft recommendations under the four thematic areas** (housing finance, tenure security, informal settlements and social housing), by which the Working Group commended the work carried out by the Co-Chairs, welcomed the draft recommendations, and invited the next co-chairs of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to review the recommendations, based on the guidance provided by Member States, with on the understanding that they may be further developed by Working Group at its future

meetings sessions as appropriate, and subsequently submitted for final consideration and possible adoption at the third Habitat Assembly in June 2029.

- **Decision OEWG-H/3: Guidance on the housing knowledge platform**, by which the Working Group welcomed the progress report on the establishment of a housing knowledge platform, encouraged Member States and partners to provide substantive inputs to support the establishment and further development and maintenance of the platform, and requested the Executive Director to continue the work on the establishment and further development of the platform, based on the guidance provided by Member States at session.
 - **Decision OEWG-H/4: Roadmap for the period 2025–2029**, by which the Working Group welcomed the proposed roadmap for the period 2025–2029 on the understanding that it may be adjusted, requested the Executive Director to support the Co-Chairs in the implementation of the roadmap, and encouraged Member States to provide technical and financial support to the work of the Working Group.
 - **Decision OEWG-H/5: Dates and provisional agenda of the third session**, by which the Working Group endorsed the provisional agenda and took note of the indicative dates for the third session, with on the understanding that it may be adjusted based on guidance provided by Executive Board, and requested the Co-Chairs to consult with the Executive Board, and encouraged Member States to consider providing financial support for upcoming sessions and for intersessional work.
7. In line with the decisions adopted at the second session, the draft recommendations that were considered at the meeting have been reviewed and further refined on the basis of the guidance received from Member State experts at the meeting, and will be made available on the OEWG-H website as a post-session document. This document will provide the basis for a review of all draft recommendations in 2028, with a view of submitting a consensual proposal to the third UN-Habitat Assembly for final consideration.

Programme of work for 2026

8. Looking ahead, and based on the roadmap for 2026-29, the third session in 2026 will focus on the following thematic areas: **housing sustainability; definitions of homelessness and informal settlements; and the housing monitoring framework**. We further propose that two additional thematic areas be added for our work programme 2026, namely: **Housing and climate resilience**, and **Enabling land management tools for housing provision**. These themes derive from the list of potential thematic areas set out in the endorsed roadmap for 2026–2029. Furthermore, if possible we also propose to advance work on an additional theme, **Housing for older persons**, for consideration at OEWGH-4 in 2027.
9. A provisional schedule of intersessional activities will include the following main activities:
- An Expert Group Meeting (e.g. Housing Climate Resilience), planned for early April (to be potentially organized in a hybrid format in conjunction with the African Urban Forum taking place in Nairobi),
 - 2 or 3 online Expert Group Meetings aiming at preparing the documentation for the informal intersessional meetings,

- An informal intersessional meeting to be held in a hybrid format in the margins of the World Urban Forum in May 2026 in Baku (e.g. Housing Climate Resilience),
 - An additional online intersessional meeting focusing on the preparation of draft recommendations to be presented at the OEWG-H3, to be potentially planned for June,
 - Third session of the OEWG-H, 26–27 November 2026,
 - Depending on resources available, an additional event could be organised at the High Level Political Forum in NY.
- 10.** Following consultations with the secretariat, it is proposed that the third session of the OEWG-H take place on 26–27 November 2026, back-to-back with the Executive Board meeting on 24–25 November 2026. We look forward to the Board’s endorsement of this proposal at its first meeting in April. The provisional agenda was endorsed at the second session of the Working Group.
- 11.** We as Co-Chairs, with the support of the Secretariat, will continue our efforts to broaden Member State participation, including increasing the number of countries with nominated experts. To date, 190 focal points have been nominated from 69 countries, demonstrating broad and geographically diverse engagement with the process.
- 12.** Engagement with other partners will also continue, notably through intersessional activities and ongoing work on the development of a Housing Knowledge Platform.

Alignment with the broader work of UN Habitat

- 13.** The activities of the Working Group will remain closely aligned with the broader priorities of UN-Habitat, in particular with regard to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029, the 23th World Urban Forum, the 10 year-review of the New Urban Agenda and of Sustainable Development Goal 11, as well as other related housing initiatives - including with a view to further strengthening coherence between normative and operational work.

Limited available resources

- 14.** The Working Group continues to operate with very limited extrabudgetary resources to support the work of the Working Group. Efforts to mobilize the human and financial resources required to support its work will continue, and the support of the Executive Board in this regard remains essential. However, without the provision of additional financial or in-kind resources by Member States, the delivery of the Working Group is at risk, by jeopardizing basic meeting services such as document preparation and translation, and meeting interpretation.

Thank you for your attention.