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**Preparations for the high-level meeting of the General
Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the
New Urban Agenda**

Preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including a briefing on the preparation of the quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

Report of the Executive Director

1. The present report provides an update on: (a) the mandate and context for the midterm review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda; (b) the status and methodology for preparing the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and the road map to 2026; and (c) preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including the process for developing a concise, action-oriented political declaration. It draws on the most recent briefing of the Executive Board on this agenda item and the working draft of the 2026 quadrennial report.

I. Introduction

2. Adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 71/256, the New Urban Agenda is the global framework for guiding sustainable urbanization towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on progress in implementation every four years. Quadrennial reports were submitted in 2018 and 2022, and the 2026 report will constitute the midterm review of implementation. UN-Habitat is supporting this process, including with regard to Member State reporting, stakeholder engagement and technical guidance, in alignment with the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2026–2029.

3. The New Urban Agenda operationalizes the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 11, and advances cross-cutting outcomes relating to poverty, inequality, climate and crisis response. The 2026 quadrennial report will include an assessment of progress and challenges in implementing the New Urban Agenda over the past decade and identify priority actions to accelerate implementation in the decade leading up to

* HSP/EB.2026/1.

2036. It will highlight how well-planned and well-managed urbanization can act as a lever for social inclusion, environmental sustainability and economic transformation, while reinforcing coherence with other global commitments, including those contained in the Paris Agreement, the Pact for the Future and other instruments, through strengthened multilevel governance, financing data and capacity development for decision-making.

II. Quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: midterm review

A. Preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report

4. UN-Habitat has initiated a structured process to prepare the 2026 quadrennial report, combining the following: (a) national input, including national progress reports, survey responses and dialogues; (b) United Nations system and multilateral contributions, including input from surveys, dialogues and regional and global data sets; (c) stakeholder input and local case material; and (d) complementary reviews of related processes, such as voluntary national reviews, voluntary local reviews and thematic assessments. Further engagement will also align with “The road to Baku”, the global consultation process leading towards the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, further enabling the inclusive engagement of relevant stakeholders.

5. While quantitative data underpin the analysis, extensive qualitative evidence is also synthesized from the sources mentioned above, and the quadrennial report emphasizes actionable and scalable practices with demonstrated impact. In order to ensure coherence and policy relevance, the report is being prepared in close coordination with the 2026 global synthesis report on Sustainable Development Goal 11, which will be considered at the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

6. Building on the previous cycle, in which 40 national progress reports were submitted, UN-Habitat has updated reporting guidelines, templates and outreach materials to increase both the quantity and quality of Member State reports in the period 2022–2026. Those efforts are complemented by targeted capacity-building support, peer exchange and regional engagement, as well as a redevelopment of the global New Urban Agenda platform – including new regional platforms for the Asia-Pacific and African regions – to strengthen localized monitoring and the generation of context-specific evidence.

7. In 2026, a total of 69 national progress reports¹ are expected, with 41 already received at the time of reporting. This represents a 73 per cent increase in national reporting, suggesting increased mobilization and engagement in the lead-up to the midterm review. In addition, Member States have been engaged through other mechanisms, including surveys and dialogues.

8. In the context of the global capacity-building efforts of UN-Habitat, the New Urban Agenda learning series reached 1,042 participants, including 170 government representatives, 159 stakeholders, 221 independent participants and 492 United Nations staff members, across 110 countries through nine global and regional online sessions delivered in English and French. In parallel, one e-learning course was translated into Spanish and French and is under revision for translation into Chinese, thereby expanding the linguistic coverage of the series. In addition, 10,819 enrolments in e-learning courses related to the New Urban Agenda were recorded on the UN-Habitat Learn platform.

9. Engagement with the United Nations system has been further advanced through tailored consultations and surveys (with 22 United Nations entities responding) intended to capture evidence across relevant mandates, including those related to housing, land, basic services, climate, resilience, social protection, the urban economy and data systems. That input has contributed to a system-wide perspective on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and informed both the quadrennial report and the global synthesis report on Sustainable Development Goal 11. Local2030, a coalition of

¹ Sixty-nine countries with national progress reports planned, in preparation or submitted (in alphabetical order): Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, China, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

14 United Nations entities, offers additional opportunities for this effort, building on its role in mobilizing United Nations entities for the report of the Secretary-General on engagement with local and regional authorities (A/79/968).

10. UN-Habitat is mobilizing multi-stakeholder contributions through forums, consultations and dedicated instruments, including stakeholder surveys that capture diverse perspectives, emerging trends and forward-looking priorities from cities, civil society, academia and the private sector. Stakeholders have engaged in several ways, with 120 of them responding to surveys on the New Urban Agenda and others providing insights through the stakeholder engagement road map for the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum. That input has complemented national reporting and reinforced the participatory ethos of the Agenda.

11. Desk reviews of national progress reports and related submissions, supported by artificial intelligence-enabled analysis, are being used to systematically classify and triangulate input, including by transformative commitment, implementation enablers and alignment with recommendations from previous quadrennial reports. This approach strengthens comparability across submissions and supports a more comprehensive assessment of progress and gaps.

B. A decade of implementation of the New Urban Agenda: highlights

12. Member State submissions highlight areas of progress, including wider adoption of national urban and housing policies, stronger recognition of the importance of multilevel governance, expanded use of social protection measures during shocks, increased urban climate commitments, the growing role of city networks, and increased uptake of voluntary local reviews and local components of voluntary national reviews in order to align local action with national and global frameworks. Progress, however, remains uneven across regions, and mixed overall.

13. The analysis also points to persistent challenges, including gaps in the implementation and institutionalization of policies and legislation, limited availability of disaggregated, timely and comparable urban data, financing gaps and uneven national and local capacities for monitoring and reporting. Together, those constraints hinder the effective translation of data into informed policy and investment decisions.

14. The global housing crisis, which affects nearly 3 billion people, is a key barrier to advancing the vision of the New Urban Agenda. Housing affordability challenges persist, with informal settlements and homelessness continuing to grow in absolute terms across many regions. In addition, spatial mismatches between housing, transport and employment continue to pose significant barriers to inclusive and productive urban development. The urgency of accelerating action for adequate housing is evident from the review of the first decade of implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

15. The review also points to localization as a decisive factor in the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda, reflecting the role of cities and territories as primary sites of delivery. Over the past decade, local and regional governments have played an increasingly important role in advancing housing provision, basic services and local recovery efforts, as well as in coordinating action across sectors and levels of government. This is reflected in the growing use of localization tools, including voluntary local reviews, with nearly 300 cities and subnational governments having published such reviews as of 2025, supporting closer alignment between local action, national policy frameworks and global commitments. At the same time, the review highlights that progress depends on moving beyond isolated, project-based interventions towards more systemic territorial approaches, supported by clear mandates, adequate resourcing and effective multilevel governance arrangements.

16. Regional variations are evident. While parts of Europe and Latin America report progress in developing integrated policy frameworks and strengthening urban data systems, rapidly urbanizing regions in Africa and Asia face heightened pressures driven by demographic changes, climate risks and limited fiscal space. In the Arab States, urbanization challenges remain closely linked to water scarcity, migration dynamics and resilience concerns, underscoring the need for context-specific approaches.

17. Taken together, the emerging messages underscore the importance of several potential accelerators. These include housing-centred approaches that integrate upgrading, affordability measures and climate-resilient construction; strengthened multilevel and metropolitan governance; integrated land-use, mobility and service planning; diversified and pro-poor urban financing linked to robust planning systems; and scaled capacity-building paired with interoperable urban data systems to help close the implementation gap.

C. Overview of the road map to the 2026 midterm review: key milestones in 2026

18. In preparation for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat is implementing a road map that integrates capacity development, advocacy and participatory review. Throughout the process, UN-Habitat will play a facilitative and substantive role in order to ensure coherence across inputs, the use of agreed language, alignment with related intergovernmental processes and the inclusive engagement of Member States, stakeholders – in particular civil society organizations and the private sector – and the United Nations system. Key milestones ahead include:

(a) April 2026: finalization of the quadrennial report and clearance for transmission to the Economic and Social Council;

(b) May 2026 (thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, Baku): platform for ministerial engagement on the New Urban Agenda; opportunity to “socialize” a zero draft of the political declaration for the high-level meeting;

(c) May–July 2026: intergovernmental negotiations among Member States to consolidate input and finalize the political declaration;

(d) June 2026: presentation of the quadrennial report to the Economic and Social Council during its management segment;

(e) July 2026 (high-level meeting on the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development): consideration of the finalized political declaration by the General Assembly.

19. The thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Baku from 17 to 22 May 2026, will feature a dedicated full-day ministerial meeting on the New Urban Agenda (“Quito+10”) on 17 May, marking the midpoint of the 20-year implementation horizon of the Agenda. The meeting will include a high-level opening, national statements delivered through parallel ministerial round tables, and an afternoon substantive segment organized around the three transformative commitments under the New Urban Agenda in connection with the core theme of the Forum, namely “Housing the world: safe and resilient cities and communities”. The ministerial meeting will provide Member States with a platform to reflect on a decade of implementation, identify progress and persistent gaps – particularly in relation to housing – and articulate priority actions for the decade ahead. Deliberations are expected to culminate in a chair’s summary capturing key messages, challenges and forward-looking commitments. Outputs from the meeting are expected to reinforce momentum for accelerating implementation in the decade leading up to 2036.

III. Preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda

20. Further to the report of the Executive Director to the Executive Board at its third session of 2025 (HSP/EB.2025/INF/14), and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 79/214, the President of the General Assembly will convene a two-day high-level meeting on the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda on 16 and 17 July 2026, on the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to assess progress, identify good practices, gaps and challenges, and accelerate implementation towards the goals of the New Urban Agenda by 2036, taking into account the 2026 quadrennial report. The meeting will comprise an opening, a plenary session, interactive multi-stakeholder panels and a closing segment, and will adopt a concise, action-oriented political declaration that is agreed on in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations led by two co-facilitators appointed by the President. In May 2026, the Office of the President will share with Member States a draft concept paper outlining the purpose, scope, programme and modalities of the meeting, in line with General Assembly mandates.

21. Malawi and Poland have been appointed by the President of the General Assembly as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process. The Executive Director has been holding regular coordination meetings with the co-facilitators in New York since December 2025. Under the leadership of the co-facilitators, technical teams have worked to ensure a coherent sequence for consultations and negotiations, consistent with General Assembly resolution 79/214.

22. A group of friends briefing was convened in New York in January 2026 to provide delegations with an update on preparations.

23. In accordance with the mandate, the co-facilitators will steer an intergovernmental process to define modalities and develop a concise, action-oriented political declaration, to be agreed by consensus prior to the high-level meeting. UN-Habitat will provide technical and facilitative support, including analytical input and procedural support to facilitate inclusive participation and policy coherence, upon request and under the guidance of the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators.
24. Subject to guidance from the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators, as well as to consultations with Member States, the indicative sequence could be as follows:
- (a) Mid-March 2026: upon release of the Secretary-General's 2026 quadrennial report, the co-facilitators will conduct a short consultation phase with Member States and stakeholders to inform an elements paper;
 - (b) March to mid-April 2026: preparation by the co-facilitators of a concise elements paper, to be shared with the Executive Board at its first session (Nairobi, 21 and 22 April 2026) for information;
 - (c) May 2026: circulation of a first draft of the political declaration, and text-based negotiations;
 - (d) 17–22 May 2026 (thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, Baku): stakeholder consultations, including at the ministerial meeting on New Urban Agenda outcomes, to test emerging language and inform negotiations;
 - (e) June 2026: negotiations to consolidate a consensus draft, to be agreed on in advance of the high-level meeting;
 - (f) Prior to 16 July 2026: finalization of the political declaration agreed by consensus in advance, for adoption at the high-level meeting to be held on 16 and 17 July 2026.
25. Throughout the preparatory process, UN-Habitat stands ready to provide technical and facilitative support at the request of the President of the General Assembly and the co-facilitators.
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