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**Executive Board of the United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme  
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**Annual report on action by the Executive Director to update  
and improve the internal management, policies and  
procedures of UN-Habitat**

## **Actions to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The present report provides a comprehensive overview of the actions taken in order to strengthen the internal management, policies and procedures of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) during the year 2025. The efforts described are aligned with the organization's strategic objectives of promoting efficiency, transparency and accountability across its operations. The report highlights key achievements and improvements in the following critical areas:

- (a) Management of financial and human resources;
- (b) Delegation of authority;
- (c) Procurement guidance;
- (d) Digital workflow management;
- (e) Communication procedures;
- (f) Legal and compliance oversight;
- (g) Management of internal policies and procedures.

#### **II. Management of financial and human resources**

2. During the reporting period, the following measures were taken in order to ensure the efficient management of financial and human resources:

- (a) In collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, UN-Habitat rolled out the new guidelines on the management of programme support costs, including the process of approving reduced programme support cost rates compared with the standard rate of 13%. The guidance also outlines the areas in which programme support revenue is to be used. In addition, UN-Habitat adopted

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a business planning and consolidation budgeting tool for the preparation of the programme support budget, thereby improving the budgeting and approval processes through automation;

(b) UN-Habitat policies are fully aligned with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, including all policies governing the various contractual modalities for staff and non-staff personnel. To support the consistent application of those policies, the Human Resources and Training Unit developed a comprehensive guidance document outlining the contractual modalities available at UN-Habitat. The document provides managers with clear, practical information to assist in selecting the most appropriate modality when creating or modifying positions and when recruiting personnel or engaging consultants. The guidance strengthens informed managerial decision-making and ensures alignment with organizational objectives and evolving staffing requirements;

(c) UN-Habitat launched a guidance document on the recruitment process that provides a clear and standardized framework for all stages of recruitment, including post creation and budget approval, development of job descriptions, job analysis and classification, eligibility screening, evaluation, and final selection. In addition to the internal guidance, UN-Habitat works closely with the United Nations Office at Nairobi – its recruitment service provider – to strengthen the capacity of hiring managers through monthly training sessions on the staff selection system. This ongoing training support has further enhanced the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the recruitment process, while ensuring full compliance with organizational policies.

### **III. Delegation of authority**

3. The Executive Director has taken proactive steps towards enhancing the delegation of authority within UN-Habitat, signalling a commitment to empowering staff with greater decision-making responsibilities. UN-Habitat has continued its consultations with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support in relation to the current limit of \$50,000 applied to the delegation of authority, and in order to explore opportunities to enhance decision-making responsibilities within the organization.

### **IV. Procurement guidance**

4. Efforts to improve procurement processes during the reporting period focused on simplification and enhanced guidance in the following areas:

(a) Significant steps have been taken to enhance the submission of technical advice requests, which can now be made through the iNeed system or directly via a dedicated United Nations Global Service Centre email address. The streamlined process facilitates access to support and ensures timely responses. In addition, a dedicated website has been introduced in order to maintain up-to-date product identification numbers for all goods and services, ensuring efficient procurement tracking;

(b) The Corporate Management Division is actively developing a comprehensive standard operating procedure to provide clear, authoritative guidance to country programmes on the appropriate selection and application of different procurement modalities and purchase order types, with the objective of ensuring consistency, compliance and risk-informed decision-making across operations.

### **V. Digital workflow management**

5. During the reporting period, the Executive Director initiated and oversaw a series of strategic actions to advance the digitalization of internal processes, with the aim of improving operational efficiency, transparency and internal coordination across the organization. The actions were focused on streamlining selected priority workflows and laying the foundation for a more integrated digital working environment, and included the following:

(a) The digital transformation task force within UN-Habitat has reviewed and mapped existing workflows relevant to priority internal processes with the aim of informing their digitalization through a strategic collaboration with the United Nations International Computing Centre. This work has contributed to preparatory efforts towards the development of the future digital workspace;

(b) The task force on internal processes compiled a centralized repository of existing standard operating procedures to support process clarity, institutional memory and future archiving. The repository improves staff access to organizational workflows and supports compliance with established protocols;

(c) Select checklists previously hosted on the UN-Habitat intranet (known as “Habnet”) were migrated, where appropriate, to a user-friendly planning application, thus improving usability, traceability and consistency across internal processes. These actions form part of a phased approach to digital workflow enablement. While preparatory work and foundational components have been established, the digital workspace remains under development and has not yet been deployed. Further work will focus on governance, refining priority workflows, and readiness for a future roll-out.

## **VI. Communication procedures**

6. In order to improve communication procedures and thus enhance internal coordination and external engagement, the following measures were taken:

(a) The Communications and Media Section continued to operate the internal communications resources portal, known as the Communications Hub and Toolkit (CHAT). In 2025, the portal recorded more than 25,000 visits and had nearly 1,000 unique users;

(b) An online communications request form was soft-launched with a view to streamlining the submission of requests for communications services. Workflow efficiencies were enhanced through clearer prioritization of intake and tracking of requests;

(c) Five standard operating procedures were updated to guide communications processes, and eight manuals and guideline documents are in place and available to users;

(d) A global communications network was established, supported by clear terms of reference and comprising more than 20 communications experts across regions, who serve as a platform for forward editorial planning and co-development of communications materials for UN-Habitat activities and events. Members of the network meet on a monthly basis and convene ad hoc sessions as needed.

## **VII. Legal and compliance oversight**

7. UN-Habitat took the following actions to enhance legal and compliance frameworks:

(a) The UN-Habitat implementing partnership risk management policy, together with the accompanying procedures and templates, was updated and became effective on 1 November 2025. The policy addresses gaps and risks identified by various oversight bodies and is aligned with best practices adopted by other United Nations entities;

(b) The terms of reference for the implementing partners review committee are currently under review to strengthen oversight mechanisms in the assessment, review and approval of implementing partner agreements and related documents.

## **VIII. Management of internal policies and procedures**

8. UN-Habitat is finalizing its new policy on the regulatory framework. The purpose of the policy is to establish a uniform, reliable and efficient system for the development, approval, communication, publication and archiving of all regulatory framework documents (i.e. policies, procedures and guidance documents) in UN-Habitat. It is also intended to ensure that all regulatory framework documents governing UN-Habitat activities are managed in a consistent, efficient, reliable and easily accessible manner, and it will serve as a guiding tool for streamlining the creation, dissemination and compliance of regulatory documents across the organization.

## **IX. Conclusion**

9. As demonstrated in the present update, UN-Habitat is committed to continuing to improve its internal management policies and procedures to enhance organizational efficiency and accountability.