The seventy-fourth meeting of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Wednesday, 25 February 2026, from 9.00 to 12.00 East Africa Time

Consolidated Secretariat Response to Comments on the Monitoring Framework (Agenda item 2: Preparations for the first session of the Executive Board 2026)

- **General observations**

The Secretariat would like to thank Member States for their constructive and detailed comments on the indicators of the Monitoring Framework of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029. It is recalled that the Monitoring Framework, including its indicators, was approved by the Executive Board in November 2025. The current phase of work focuses on its operationalization through the development of methodologies and establishment of baselines values and targets for the duration of the Strategic Plan.

- **Nature and purpose of the indicators**

Several comments raised questions regarding the nature of indicators and their alignment with outcome-level results. The Secretariat would like to clarify that the indicators are primarily designed at impact and outcome level, capturing system-level changes in policies, institutional practices, access to services and capacities to which UN-Habitat contributes.

In line with United Nations results-based management principles, the framework follows a contribution logic. Accordingly, indicators such as policy adoption, institutionalization, investment mobilization or use of knowledge products are used as proxies to track progress towards broader system-level outcomes. While they do not capture complete systemic transformation on their own, they provide measurable signals of change.

- **Methodological development and data availability**

Member States highlighted the need for further clarity on methodologies, data sources and means of verification. The Secretariat confirms that:

- Detailed indicator definition sheets have been developed for all indicators, including definitions, calculation methods, data sources, disaggregation and verification mechanisms;
- Methodologies continue to be refined as implementation progresses and data availability improves;
- Several indicators rely on evolving datasets (including SDG-related data and programme-generated data), which may require progressive consolidation.

In this context, baseline establishment is an iterative process, particularly in the early phase of implementation of a new Strategic Plan.

- **Baselines, targets and timing**

Questions were raised regarding the completeness of baselines and targets ahead of the Executive Board session and the overall level of ambition. The Secretariat confirms that:

- Approximately 90–95% of baselines and targets are expected to be finalized ahead of the April 2026 session of the Executive Board;
- Any remaining elements will be clearly explained and updated in subsequent reporting;
- The framework will function as a living instrument, subject to refinement as methodologies are strengthened and data improves;
- Targets have been defined based on realistic assessments of available capacity, resources and projected programme pipelines, resulting in differentiated levels of ambition across indicators.

- **Attribution and contribution**

Several comments raised were concerns regarding attribution, particularly for impact-level indicators. The Secretariat reiterates that UN-Habitat operates within complex, multi-stakeholder environments where impact and outcomes cannot be attributed to a single actor. To address this:

- Outcome level indicators are focused, where possible, on partner cities and countries directly supported by UN-Habitat;
- Narrative reporting will complement quantitative data to explain context, contribution pathways and external influencing factors;

- **Outcome–indicator alignment**

Member States noted potential gaps between outcome indicator formulations (system-level change) and indicators (often measuring adoption or implementation). The Secretariat acknowledges this observation and notes that:

- This reflects a common methodological challenge in measuring systemic change;
- Indicators have been designed to capture observable intermediate results that are methodologically robust and measurable;
- Further refinement will continue to strengthen alignment, including through improved articulation of contribution pathways.

- **Output vs outcome balance**

Concerns were raised that some indicators are more output-oriented than outcome-focused. The Secretariat acknowledges that:

- In certain areas, methodological constraints limit the ability to measure higher-level outcomes directly;
- Output-oriented indicators have been retained where they provide reliable and verifiable data;
- The Secretariat remains open to further guidance from Member States on strengthening outcome-level measurement.

In this regard, it is important to note that Indicators 21, 22 and 23 on advocacy, partnerships and communications act as accelerators of UN-Habitat's work under the Impact Areas and Means of Implementation. While the ultimate outcomes relate to policy uptake or improvements in living conditions, Subprogramme 4 measures engagement of individuals and institutions with UN-Habitat, which contributes to systemic and behavioural change.

Furthermore, the data collection methodology for these indicators will demonstrate how increased participation and engagement can go beyond output-level evidence, including by linking policy uptake, new operations and actions to UN-Habitat's communications, partnerships and advocacy efforts.

- **Data sources, transparency and annex**

Member States requested greater transparency of sources and data collection methods, including detailed metadata on all indicators. The Secretariat welcomes this recommendation and confirms that:

- Future updates to the Monitoring Framework will include a comprehensive technical annex ("Guide on the monitoring of the Strategic Plan 20026-2029"), covering indicator, baselines, targets and specific methodologies
- Data sources will be clearly referenced in the Guide.

- **Specific thematic clarifications**

- **Indicator 1:** The Secretariat acknowledges existing data gaps in SDG 11 coverage. To address this, the Monitoring Framework will complement SDG data with programme-level data, partner reporting and other relevant datasets where available. Data limitations will be transparently reflected in the accompanying documentation.
- **Indicator 8:** The Secretariat acknowledges the methodological complexity of the indicator. Ongoing refinement will aim to strengthen clarity and robustness, including further specification of indicator components where appropriate, while maintaining its capacity to capture system-level change supported by UN-Habitat.
  Indicator 15: The indicator is primarily gender-focused, addressing a specific dimension of Means of Implementation 2. At the same time, the Monitoring Framework promotes disaggregation to the greatest extent possible, including by age, disability, migration status and other relevant criteria.
- **Indicator 17:** A survey has been launched to establish baseline data and targets and has been disseminated across the partner database to assess how UN-Habitat knowledge products are used. Results are expected ahead of the Executive Board session. For annual reporting, similar questions will be incorporated into regular end-of-year surveys.
- **Indicator 20:** This indicator is not linked to, nor dependent on, the International Guidelines on People-Centred Smart Cities (IGPCSC) and therefore its inclusion does not presuppose their adoption at the 2025 UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2025. Rather, Indicator 20 reflects UN-Habitat's ongoing work on smart cities, digital transformation, and the increasing importance of digitalization as one of the means of implementation in UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026-2029. Globally, demand for support in this area continues to rise, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Global Digital Compact and the growing interest of governments in leveraging digital tools for sustainable urban development. Importantly, the strong and consistent interest in solutions developed through initiatives such as the UN Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) further demonstrates that Member States are actively seeking practical, people-centred digital innovations.
- **Indicators 21–22 – Link to behavioural change.** The Secretariat acknowledges that these indicators function as proxies capturing engagement and outreach. Efforts will continue to strengthen the linkage between these indicators and evidence of behavioural and policy uptake, including through complementary data and narrative reporting.

The Secretariat remains committed to ensuring that the Monitoring Framework is methodologically sound, transparent and robust, aligned with United Nations standards, and responsive to Member States' guidance.