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Implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029: update on the structure and the division of responsibilities

Implications of the UN80 initiative for the structure, staffing, budgetary planning and work of UN-Habitat **

Annex to the report of the Executive Director on the structure and division of responsibilities for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029; (HSP/EB.2026/4)

I: Introduction

1. Pursuant to *Decision 2025/6* of the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the present document provides an analysis of the implications of the UN80 initiative for UN-Habitat. This document is comprised of four sections, addressing, respectively, UN-Habitat's structure (Section II), staffing (Section III), budgetary planning and work (Section IV). A short summary of ways forward is also featured, serving as a conclusion (Section V). This document accompanies the **report of the Executive Director on the structure and division of responsibilities for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029.**
2. To date, as of March 3, 2026, the implications of the UN80 initiative for UN-Habitat's structure, staffing and budgetary and work remain limited overall. The following sections provide further details.

II: Implications of the UN80 initiative on UN-Habitat's structure

3. As a direct result of the UN80 initiative, all entities within the United Nations Secretariat entities were requested to reduce Regular Budget positions by 20 per cent. In response, UN-Habitat identified and proposed the abolition of 16 Regular Budget-funded positions. In December 2025, the General Assembly approved the proposal from UN-Habitat to abolish these positions, which included 10 professional and 6 local posts under Section 15, Human Settlements. This abolishment took effect on January 1, 2026.
4. The impact of this measure on UN-Habitat's organizational structure remains limited. This is partly attributable to the fact that 8 of the proposed 16 positions were already vacant owing to the freeze on recruitment against Regular Budget positions, on account of liquidity challenges.

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** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

5. Another contributing factor is UN-Habitat's anticipation of the post cuts within its new organizational structure. Following the adoption of UN-Habitat's 2026-2029 strategic plan at the second resumed session of the Habitat Assembly in May 2025, UN-Habitat's structure was revised. While this revision focused on aligning internal division of responsibilities with the delivery of the strategic plan, it also provided an opportunity to reflect on the possible implications of the potential abolishment of the 16 Regular Budget-funded positions. Therefore, through its new organizational structure, UN-Habitat was able to anticipate on function realignment, task reabsorption and redistribution, resulting in minimal internal operational disruption. This includes consolidating administrative and programmatic functions, streamlining reporting lines, and strengthening efficiency through a more agile organizational structure.

6. In summary, despite the 20 per cent reduction in Regular Budget-funded positions under the UN80 initiative, UN-Habitat's organizational structure remains unchanged. It corresponds to the structure presented at the third session of the Executive Board in 2025, which was developed to align with the Strategic Plan for 2026–2029 and has been in effect since 1 December 2025. UN-Habitat's five divisions are the Office of the Executive Director (OED), the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division (GKAD), the Global Solutions Division (GSD), the Regional Programmes Division (RPD), and the Corporate Management Division (CMD).

III : Implications of the UN80 initiative on UN-Habitat's staffing

7. The abolishment of 16 Regular Budget–funded posts, resulting from the UN80 Initiative, reduced UN-Habitat's Regular Budget staff capacity from 82 to 66 posts, marking a reduction in core staff.

8. As the revised organizational structure, effective 1st December 2025, had already factored in the anticipated loss of the 16 posts funded by Regular Budget, the organization was able to absorb the impact on staffing by reconfiguring roles and responsibilities, in alignment with the Strategic Plan 2026-29.

9. Looking ahead, UN-Habitat's human resources model will continue to depend substantially on project-based personnel. To ensure that UN-Habitat can sustainably deliver on its mandate within the streamlined structure, UN-Habitat appeals to Member States to increase their support through the provision of Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and Gratis Personnel. Additional contributions in these categories, coupled with enhanced capacity-building for existing teams—will be essential to help UN-Habitat absorb consolidated functions and maintain the level of technical expertise required to implement the Strategic Plan 2026–2029.

IV: Implications of the UN80 initiative on the budgetary planning and work of UN-Habitat

10. The implications of the UN80 initiative on the budgetary planning and work of UN-Habitat have been significant, further affecting an already challenging context of constrained financial resources. These implications include budget reductions, as well as the introduction of measures towards result-based budgeting and the establishment of common-based platforms (CAP).

11. With regards to budget reductions, UN-Habitat was required to submit a revised, reduced budget proposal in June 2025, under the UN80 initiative. This request came as a result of the requirement to consider reduction in regular budget positions. Indeed, the abolishment of the 16 positions resulted in post costs falling from $13.5 million to $11.0 million in the planned budget, which corresponds to an 18.5% budget cut amounting to $2.5 million including non-post costs.

12. The UN80 initiative also calls for a shift in the ways in which we plan and administer resources. As indicated under the staffing section above, internal restructuring aimed at maximizing efficiency is essential to achieving cost reductions, yielding not only budgetary savings but also more optimal use of the scarce resources. To this end, UN-Habitat has started to implement mechanisms for streamlined and strengthened work programming, to facilitate the use of result-based budgeting.

13. In parallel, also under the UN80 initiative, Common Administrative Platforms (CAP) will be established to support system-wide coordination and cooperation in certain administrative functions, such as Human Resources, Budget and Finance, and other administrative services. The goal of CAP is to eliminate the duplication of roles and responsibilities, ultimately reducing cost drivers. UN-Habitat will participate in and support the implementation of CAP. No reduction of human resources requirements is expected for UN-Habitat as a result of CAP, as such optimization has already been undertaken via the Common Back

Office implementation and the service arrangement with the United Nations Office of Nairobi (UNON).

V. Ways forward

14. Beyond the direct implications of the UN80 initiative on UN-Habitat's structure, staffing and budgetary and work programme, the initiative has, as of 3 March 2026, reached UN-Habitat in multiple ways, creating opportunities to reflect on mandate implementation and operational efficiency. In November 2025, the United Nations Secretariat issued a UN80 Initiative Action Plan[1] to guide the implementation of the initiative. This Action Plan groups 87 actions into 31 Work Packages (WGs) across three workstreams: (1) efficiency in the UN Secretariat; (2) mandates[2] review implementation; and (3) structural and programmatic realignments.

15. UN-Habitat has not been assigned any leading or co-leading role for any of the UN80 workstreams. However, UN-Habitat is part of the Development (Secretariat) Cluster, co-led by DESA, UNCTAD, UNEP and ECA, and actively engages in United Nations system-wide discussions on a request basis.

16. Executive Director Anacláudia Rossbach has sustained UN-Habitat's engagement in all UN80 discussions and surveys proposed within the framework of the UN80 initiative. UN-Habitat's strategic priorities were conveyed, in alignment with UN-Habitat's 2026-2029 strategic plan, including on regional and country resets.

17. To further facilitate internal alignment and coordination, UN-Habitat undertook an internal mapping of relevant actions and identified internal responsible divisions. As of 3 March 2026, contributions have been under workstreams 2 and 3. Under **workstream 2**, focused on improving mandate lifecycle management, UN-Habitat provided inputs towards consultations on Secretary-General Reports. Under **workstream 3**, focused on structural and programmatic realignments, suggestions by UN-Habitat have been provided towards work programme 8 ("expertise-on-demand mechanism"), work programme 27 ("environment"), and work programme 15 ("technology").

18. Importantly, through its co-chairing role in the Local2030 Coalition and the convening of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat also contributes to advancing system-wide coherence and integration, at the global, regional and local levels.

[1] https://www.un.org/un80-initiative/en/un80-initiative-action-plan
[2] https://mandates.un.org/