



GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE GOVERNING BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This note is prepared by the Secretariat of Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat to provide an explanatory overview of UN-Habitat's governance structure, the meetings of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, as well as the role and functions of the three the Governing Bodies and theirs Bureaus as well as the role of the UN-Habitat secretariat.

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF UN-HABITAT'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

UN-Habitat's governance structure is three-tiered, consisting of the [United Nations Habitat Assembly \(UN-Habitat Assembly\)](#), the [Executive Board](#) and the [Committee of Permanent Representatives](#). The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Executive Board are the two permanent intersessional organs of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

2.1 [The United Nations Habitat Assembly](#)

The United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) is a universal body composed of the 193 member states of the United Nations and convenes every four years at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. It is the highest decision-making body in the UN on human settlements and sustainable urbanization. Its main responsibilities are to provide guidance on the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat; review trends related to human settlements and urbanization; examine global norms and standards in human settlements and sustainable urbanization; recommend strategies for implementation of urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda; examine and approve UN-Habitat's strategic plan; review progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. and adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, within its mandate.

- The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly took place from [27-31 May 2019](#).
- The second session of the Assembly took place [from 5 to 9 June 2023](#) and resumed from [29 to 30 May 2025](#).
- The next session of the UN-Habitat Assembly will be held from 25 to 29 June 2029.

2.2 [The Committee of Permanent Representatives](#)

The Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat (CPR) is a subsidiary body to the UN-Habitat Assembly and has universal membership. It meets twice every four years - in an open-ended manner - at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi and has a two-fold mandate; to conduct a high-level mid-term review of the work of UN-Habitat; and to prepare for each session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

- The [first](#) and [second](#) open-ended meetings of the CPR took place in 2021 and 2023 respectively.
- The [third open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (OECPR-3) took place from [26-28 May 2025](#), at the UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi.
- The next sessions of the CPR are scheduled as follows: OECPR-4 will take place from [14 to 18 June 2027](#), and OECPR-5 from 18 to 22 June 2029.
- The main webpage for the CPR can be accessed here: [Committee of Permanent Representatives | UN-Habitat](#)

2.3 [The Executive Board](#)

The Executive Board is a subsidiary body to the UN-Habitat Assembly and is composed of [36 Member States](#) elected by the Assembly. It meets two to three times a year at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. Its main mandate is to approve and oversee the implementation of UN-Habitat's annual programme of work and budget, and resource mobilization strategy.

- The last previous session of the Executive Board took place from [21 to 22 April 2026](#).
- The next session of the Executive Board is scheduled for [24 to 25 November 2026](#)
- The main webpage for the Executive Board can be accessed here: [Executive Board | UN-Habitat](#).

2.4 Meetings: All UN-Habitat governing bodies meetings are in an online roadmap: [here](#).

3. THE UNITED NATIONS HABITAT ASSEMBLY AND ITS BUREAU

3.1 Role of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

The [United Nations Habitat Assembly](#) (UN-Habitat Assembly) was established through UN [General Assembly resolution 73/239](#) as the highest global decision-making body on sustainable urbanization and human settlements, with a universal membership composed of the 193 Member States of the United Nations.

The specific functions of the UN-Habitat Assembly are as follows:

- i. To identify key issues and areas of focus for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat.
- ii. To review major trends related to human settlements and urbanization.
- iii. To examine global norms and standards in human settlements and sustainable urbanization.
- iv. To adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, formal decisions, reports and other documents pertaining to strategic vision and political guidance, in accordance with its mandate.
- v. To recommend strategies for coherent implementation of urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and other global agendas, including the work of the United Nations System.
- vi. To examine and approve UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan, to be prepared by the Executive Board.
- vii. To ensure the active engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in the Assembly, in its subsidiary bodies and in intersessional meetings.

3.2 Sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly

The UN-Habitat Assembly convenes every four years at the UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi in line with its functions to, among others things identify key issues and areas of focus for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat; to adopt resolutions, declarations, recommendations, formal decisions, reports and other documents, providing strategic vision and political guidance in accordance with its mandate; and to examine and approve the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, as prepared by the Executive Board.

The regular sessions are organized as five-day sessions, consisting of plenary meetings, national and regional statements and, if needed, a sessional body called the Committee of the Whole which is established to consider any outstanding issues related to the outcomes of the session as prepared by the Open-ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The outcomes are submitted for consideration and adoption at the closing plenary of the Assembly, on the final day of the session.

3.3 The Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

Members of the Assembly Bureau are elected for a four-year period at the final meeting of a regular session of the UN-Habitat Assembly. It is composed of five Member States elected to hold the offices of President, Rapporteur and three Vice-Presidents, with the five members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives serving as additional Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Assembly. The Members of the Bureau begin their terms of office at the closure of each session at which they are elected and remain in Office until the closure of the next regular session.

The Bureau usually meets three to six times a year, with more frequent meetings as the date of the next Assembly approaches. The meetings serve to assist the President in conducting the business of the Assembly and carrying out any tasks assigned by the Assembly, particularly in support of the preparation and organization of the next Assembly session, without the authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau will, in particular, consider issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Assembly. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

For the purpose of coordinating their activities, and in accordance with the rules of procedures of the

UN-Habitat Assembly, the three Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the CPR and the Executive Board may meet jointly.

The Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly 2025-2029

President:	Malaysia (2025 to 2027) and UAE (2027 to 2029) (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
Vice-President:	Ethiopia (Group of African States) Vacant (Group of Western European and Other States) Vacant (Group of Eastern European States)
Rapporteur:	Mexico (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)

3.4 Rules of Procedure: The rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly are available [here](#).

4. THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES AND ITS BUREAU

4.1 Role of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

The [Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (CPR) is a permanent intersessional subsidiary body of the UN-Habitat Assembly composed of all Permanent Representatives of Member States of the United Nations and members of the United Nations specialized agencies that are accredited to UN-Habitat. which is tasked to regularly review the implementation of the outcomes of the Assembly; monitor the implementation of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat, review progress in implementation of the New Urban Agenda; and provide oversight regarding the work of the UN-Habitat. Importantly, it is also responsible for preparing the sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly including recommending potential resolutions and decisions to the UN-Habitat Assembly.

4.2 Meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee convenes in an open-ended manner, twice every four years: once prior to the UN-Habitat Assembly, in preparation for that session, and once for a high-level midterm review. If necessary to efficiently implement its mandate to prepare the next session of the Assembly, the Committee may, on a basis of consensus, establish subcommittees.

The meetings of the CPR are open to all Member States and observers and are usually five-day meetings for each open-ended meeting. The meetings are presided over by the elected Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

During the open-ended CPR meetings, representatives of Member States meet in formal plenary sessions, as well as informally in dedicated working groups which are established to negotiate the outcomes of each session. When the Committee meets for preparation of the UN-Habitat Assembly, it specifically considers draft resolutions and decisions for subsequent consideration and possible adoption by the Assembly. Informal consultations may also take place in advance of the meetings of the OECPR to seek consensus on draft outcomes of the Committee and/or of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

4.3 Applicable rules of Procedure: The rules of procedure of the CPR are the same as those of the UN-Habitat Assembly and are available [here](#).

4.4 The Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

The work of the CPR is supported by a five-member Bureau, consisting of a Chair, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur, elected from among its members for a period of two years, and taking into account

the need for regional balance. The Bureau meets, as necessary, to support the Chair, help prepare and organize the Committee meetings, facilitate transparent decision-making and promote dialogue. It does not have the authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau considers issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Committee. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

Notably, all five members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives also serve as additional Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the UN-Habitat Assembly and are therefore invited to participate in all the meetings of the UN-Habitat Assembly Bureau.

Membership of the Bureau Committee of Permanent Representatives 2025-2027

Chair:	Sweden (Group of Western European and Other States)
Vice Chair:	China (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
	Costa Rica (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)
	Vacant (Group of Eastern European States)
Rapporteur:	Kenya (Group of African States)

5. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, ITS BUREAU AND WORKING GROUPS

5.1 Role of the Executive Board

The work of the [UN-Habitat Executive Board](#) is guided by its own [rules of procedure](#) and [Document A/73/726](#) on the work of the Open-ended Working Group established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, pursuant to [General Assembly resolution 72/226](#).

The Executive Board's main task is to oversee the implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, to ensure accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness. The functions of the Executive Board are as follows:

- To approve and oversee the implementation of UN-Habitat's annual programme of work and budget, and resource mobilization strategy, in accordance with the strategic plans and political guidelines provided by the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- To adopt decisions within the scope of its mandate on, among other things, programmatic, operational and budgetary issues for the adequate and effective implementation of resolutions and other decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly.
- To guide and support efforts to finance the work of UN-Habitat.
- To oversee the compliance of UN-Habitat with evaluations and support auditing functions.
- To collaborate with the Executive Boards of other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in accordance with the management reform programme of the United Nations Secretary-General.

5.2 Sessions of the Executive Board

The Executive Board meets two to three times a year at the Headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi. All Board members participate in the sessions of the Executive Board on an equal basis. In addition, the sessions of the Executive Board are also open to any State Member of the United Nations that is not a member of the Executive Board and to any member of a specialized agency.

The Executive Board adopts its annual workplan at its first regular session each year, based on an initial discussion of the workplan held at the last session of the Board during the previous year. All items brought forward for discussion and consideration must have a direct link to the mandate, activities and area of competence of UN-Habitat.

5.3. Working groups of the Executive Board

The Executive Board may also establish ad hoc working groups with specific functions, as and when

necessary, and refer to any matters within the scope of its mandate for consideration and reporting. Currently, the Board is supported by one working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters. Other previous working groups of the Executive Board that have already concluded their mandates were the ad hoc working group on Stakeholder Engagement Policy and the ad hoc working group on working methods.

5.4 Rules of Procedure: The rules of procedure of the Executive Board are available [here](#).

5.5 Membership of the Executive Board for the period 2025 to 2029

Executive Board of UN-Habitat is composed of 36 Member States, elected by the UN-Habitat Assembly for a four-year period in accordance with the following criteria: 10 seats for African States; 8 seats for Asia-Pacific States; 4 seats for Eastern European States; 6 seats for Latin American and Caribbean States; and 8 seats for Western European and other States. The current Members elected by the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2025, for the period 2025 to 2029 are as follows:

A. Africa (10 seats)

Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia and Zimbabwe

B. Asia-Pacific (8 seats)

China, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates (2025-2027) and Malaysia (2027-2029)

C. Eastern Europe (4 seats)

Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Ukraine

D. Latin America and the Caribbean (6 seats)

Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay

E. Western Europe and Others (8 seats)

France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, and [2 vacant seats]

5.6 The Bureau of the Executive Board

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Board shall elect, at its first regular session each year, a Bureau comprising a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall hold office until their successors are elected—also considering the need to ensure equitable geographical representation. The functions of the Chair and Rapporteur shall rotate each year among the five regional groups, to ensure that each regional group of the United Nations is equally represented in these functions. The Bureau of the Executive Board meets as necessary to support the Chair; help prepare for and organize the Board meetings; facilitate transparent decision-making and promote dialogue. However, it does not have authority to make decisions on substantive matters. In practical terms, the Bureau will, in particular, consider issues related to the agenda, structure and documentation for the sessions, and highlight issues and recommendations that require consideration and action by the Board. The Bureau usually takes decisions by consensus.

Current Membership of the Bureau of the Executive Board for the period 2026-20267

Chair:	China (Group of Asia-Pacific States)
Vice Chair:	Mozambique (Group of African States)
	Mexico (Group of Latin America and Caribbean States)
	Germany (Group of Western European and Other States)

Rapporteur: Slovakia (Group of Eastern European States)

6. THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR ALL

6.1 Purpose of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

The [Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All](#) (OEWG-H) was established pursuant to [Resolution 2/7](#) on Adequate Housing for All, adopted UN-Habitat Assembly. The overall objective of the Working Group is to consider and make recommendations to the Assembly on the development and content of policies for accelerating progress towards the universal achievement of safe, sustainable, adequate and affordable housing. The UN-Habitat Assembly in Resolution 2/7 further called on the Executive Board to decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group and further resolved that the working group will not hold more than one regular session per year.

The [first session of the Working Group \(OEWG-H1\)](#) was held from 9 to 11 December 2024. France and Kenya were elected as Co-Chairs of the Working Group until the end of the second session.

The [second session of Working Group \(OEWG-H2\)](#) was held on 22 and 23 October 2025, Azerbaijan and Somalia were elected as Co-Chairs of the Working Group until the end of the third session.

The [third session of the Working Group \(OEWG-H3\)](#) will be held in Nairobi from 26 to 27 November 2026.

7. THE SECRETARIAT OF GOVERNING BODIES

The Secretariat of Governing Bodies (SGB) is a unit within UN-Habitat responsible for the preparation and coordination of meetings of the UN-Habitat governing bodies, and for supporting the President and Chairs of the Governing Bodies to conduct respective meetings. It also ensures that relevant meeting documentation is made available in accordance with stipulated time frames, and provides advice on procedural, protocol-related and other relevant issues.

During the meetings of the Governing Bodies, the Secretary of Governing Bodies and a high-level representative of UN-Habitat, such as the Executive Director or the Deputy Executive Director, assist the President in the general conduct of the meeting.

The SGB can be reached at the following email address: unhabitat-sgb@un.org.

8. KEY DOCUMENTS, RULES OF PROCEDURE AND RELEVANT WEBSITES

(a)Key documents:

- [General Assembly resolution 73/239](#); Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat;
- [General Assembly resolution 72/226](#); Implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat;
- [Report on the work of the Open-ended Working Group](#) established by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat, pursuant to General Assembly

resolution 72/226;

(b) Rules of Procedure:

- Rules of procedure of the United Nations Habitat Assembly: <https://unhabitat.org/hspha1hls2-decision-11-rules-of-procedure-of-the-united-nations-habitat-assembly>
- Rules of procedure of the Executive Board: [English](#); [Русский](#); [Español](#); [Français](#); [中文](#); [العربية](#)

(c) Relevant Websites:

- i. UN-Habitat Governance: <https://unhabitat.org/governance>
- ii. United Nations Habitat Assembly: <https://unhabitat.org/governance/un-habitat-assembly>
- iii. Committee of Permanent Representatives: <https://unhabitat.org/governance/committee-of-permanent-representatives>
- iv. Executive Board of UN-Habitat: <https://unhabitat.org/governance/executive-board>
- v. Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All: <https://unhabitat.org/governance/open-ended-intergovernmental-expert-working-group-on-adequate-housing-for-all>
- vi. Composition of the Bureaux of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Executive Board since 2019: [composition of the bureaux of the governing bodies of un-habitat since 2019 to date final.pdf](#).