

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Commemoration of the fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme ("HABITAT@50")

I. Background

1. The year 2027 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of United Nations Human Settlements Programme ("HABITAT@50"), created pursuant to the Habitat I Conference held in Vancouver, Canada in 1977. The Organization is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. Over five decades, UN-Habitat has served as the focal point of the United Nations system for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, supporting Member States in addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with rapid urbanization.
2. UN-Habitat's Headquarters is located in Nairobi, Kenya and is present in over 90 countries to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action.
3. The United Nations Habitat Assembly is the highest global decision-making body on sustainable urbanization, with universal membership of all UN Member States. In 2023, at its second session, the Habitat Assembly adopted a [Ministerial Declaration](#), which welcomed "*a commemoration in Nairobi of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UN-Habitat before the third regular session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly*".
4. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly, in its [resolution 79/214](#) of December 2024, adopted the following paragraph:
"looks forward to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UN-Habitat, to be held in Nairobi before the third regular session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, in 2027; requests UN-Habitat, in consultation with Member States, to finalize the preparatory process and organizational arrangements; encourages participation at the highest possible level; requests the Secretary-General to support the commemoration; and encourages voluntary contributions, including to support the participation of developing countries".

The commemoration will provide a strategic opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to reflect achievements, consolidate lessons learned, and position UN-Habitat for the future, including in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and beyond. It may also be a timely opportunity to take stock of the outcomes of the high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the High Level Political Forum on the review of Sustainable Development Goal 11 in July 2026, as well as outcomes of the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 13).

II. Guidance provided by the Joint Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Governing Bodies

At its meeting on 1 September 2026, Members of the Bureaux of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly), the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the Executive Board, considered the proposal presented by the host Country Kenya on the organization of the commemoration (statement available [here](#)), and provided the following guidance:

- Welcomed the proposal to hold the commemoration in Nairobi back-to-back with the 4th the Open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-4), scheduled for 14-18 June 2027, and suggested possible additional commemorative events in New York and in the regions and countries, to broaden outreach, increase visibility, promote resource mobilization and engage stakeholders interested in UN-Habitat's work.
- Expressed support for advancing the proposal through the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- Took note of the update by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly that, following informal discussions with the United Arab Emirates as the incoming President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, both countries are open to organizing the commemoration as an informal high-level meeting in Nairobi, immediately following the OECPR-4, possibly also including a handover ceremony from Malaysia to UAE.

Following the discussion, the Joint Bureaux agreed on the following next steps towards the commemoration:

- Invited Kenya and Sweden to work with the secretariat to prepare a draft concept note, providing more detail to the proposal, taking into account the discussion of the joint bureaux meeting.
 - Invited Sweden as Chair of the CPR to convene a Bureau meeting in October to consider the concept note, and to consider holding open consultations with the Member States in November 2026.
 - Invited Sweden as Chair of the CPR to provide an update to the joint meeting of the bureaux, if possible before the second session of the Executive Board for further guidance.
 - Invited the Executive Director to prepare a draft roadmap of key milestones towards the commemoration, as well as a Communication and a Resource Mobilization Strategy to support the organization of the anniversary.
5. Following the above guidance by the Joint Bureau, representatives of Sweden as Chair of the CPR Bureau and Kenya as host country met on 29 September and provided additional guidance on the concept note.

III. Proposed approach for the commemoration

6. Taking into account the outcome of the Joint Bureau meeting and the meeting between Sweden and Kenya, the proposal has been adjusted as follows:

a) *Date and location*

Friday 18 June 2027 (last day / immediately after OECPR-4), in Nairobi, Kenya.

b) *Level of participation*

Heads of State and Governments, Ministers, Permanent Representatives, Member States delegates, accredited stakeholders.

c) *Format*

The commemoration will be integrated into the program of OECPR-4, organized under the overall leadership of Sweden as Chair of the CPR and the Bureau of the CPR, in close consultation with Member States, in particular Members of the Joint Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Governing Bodies. The commemoration segment could be organized as a self-standing informal one-day high-level segment fully dedicated to the commemoration, chaired by the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, Malaysia.

d) *Agenda and programme*

The agenda and programme of the high-level segment will be focused entirely on the commemoration, consisting of a high-level opening with speeches from Heads of States and Governments, followed by 2-3 panel discussions focusing on relevant sub-themes that are yet to be defined, with the overall focus to take stock of achievements made in the past 50 years and offer a vision for the future UN-Habitat and sustainable urbanization.

e) *Outcome*

The main outcome will be a Chair's Summary that captures the main messages from the Opening Ceremony and the Panel Dialogues. The summary may serve as a contribution to the third session of the UN-Habitat Assembly to be held in June 2029, inform ongoing efforts to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, and provide relevant perspectives for future Member State-led discussions on the global sustainable development agenda, as well as ongoing UN80 reform efforts.

f) *Background document*

The discussions may be supported by a forward-looking, strategic and inspirational background document, prepared by the secretariat, possibly with the support of external independent experts, which would providing an overview over UN-Habitat's past achievements since its establishments 1977, and offer an outlook / vision towards 2077, including future-looking recommendations. The document could serve as a landmark report for UN-Habitat that remains valuable also after the commemoration.

g) *Side events and exhibitions*

Several strategic side events and exhibitions relating to the commemoration may be arranged throughout the OECPR week and high-level meeting/segment.

h) *Handover ceremony of the Presidency of the UN-Habitat Assembly*

The commemoration may provide an opportunity to organize an informal handover ceremony between the current President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, Malaysia (2025 to 2027), and the future President, United Arab Emirates (2027 – 2029), at the end of the commemoration.

i) *Estimated budget*

If the commemoration is held as part of OECPR-4, additional costs related to the commemoration would be considerably lower and would therefore be largely covered by Regular Budget resources provided for UN calendar meetings towards the CPR. The extra costs for conference service and documentation are therefore likely to be manageable. However, if the commemoration is held as a separate meeting from OECPR-4, significant additional resources would be required in the form of extrabudgetary resources. Costs for travel support for delegates from Least Developed Countries will have to be covered by extrabudgetary resources. The estimated cost for one delegate per LDC from all LDCs is estimated to be between 250,000-300,000 USD. Any extra costs for side events, exhibitions, receptions and other events related to the commemoration are expected to be borne by the organizers. Any additional costs relating to communication initiatives and promotion of the commemoration will be considered separately, as part of the communication plan (see below).

j) *Resource mobilization*

All extra costs related to the commemoration will have to be covered by extrabudgetary resources, mainly through additional voluntary contributions from Member States. Member States who are members of one or more of the three UN-Habitat Bureaux (see [overview](#)) and of the Executive Board, and/or who have an important legacy role in the establishment and strengthening of UN-Habitat (such as the hosts of the Habitat I, II and III conferences; Canada, Türkiye and Ecuador), as

well as Kenya, the host country of UN-Habitat headquarters, may be encouraged to become political and financial champions of the commemoration.

k) Communication plan

The secretariat intends to develop a dedicated communication plan for the commemoration, including costing, before the end of 2026, in consultation with the Bureaux.

III. Proposed next steps

7. Further concrete guidance on the nature of the commemoration will be provided by the CPR Bureau, the Joint Bureaux, and the host country Kenya, and possibly by the General Assembly through its biannual resolution on UN-Habitat, with consultations scheduled in New York in November/December 2026.
8. Draft roadmap of preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme:
 - June - July 2026: the Executive Director and the UN-Habitat secretariat met informally with senior representatives of Kenya to consider options for the commemoration. and firm up UN-Habitat's proposed approach.
 - 1 September 2026: Kenya presents a proposal on the organization of the commemoration to meeting of the Bureaux of the Governing Bodies, for initial feedback from Bureau Members.
 - September 2026: The secretariat drafted a concept note and roadmap, for discussion with Sweden as Chair of the CPR, and Kenya as host country.
 - 29 September 2026 and 21 October 2026: The Chair of the CPR, Sweden, met with the host country, Kenya, to consider the draft concept note and related activities.
 - 22 October 2026: Meeting of the CPR Bureau, to consider the updated concept note and provide additional guidance and next steps.
 - 1 November October 2026: meeting of an expanded Executive Board Bureau, to consider next steps and make possible recommendations to the Joint bureau.
 - November 2026: Possible consultations in the General Assembly second Committee on the commemoration as part of the negotiations on the General Assembly resolution on UN-Habitat, tabled by G77.
 - 19 November 2026: meeting of the Joint Bureaux, to consider next steps.
 - 24-25 November 2026: The CPR Chair may provide a progress update at the second session of the Executive Board in 2026
 - December 2026: The secretariat will present a communication plan for the commemoration.
 - December 2026 – May 2027: Poss. informal consultations with Member States and meetings of the CPR and Joint Bureaux on the organization of the commemoration with Member States in Nairobi, under the leadership pf the CPR Chair.

- 13-14 April 2027: The CPR Chair may provide an update at the first session of the Executive Board in 2027.
- April-June 2027: Final preparations including issuance of background documents.
- 14-18 June 2027: Fourth Open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- 18 June 2027: Commemoration 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.