



UNITED
NATIONS

HSP

HSP/GC/26/3*



**Governing Council
of the United Nations Human
Settlements Programme**

Distr.: General
25 January 2017

Original: English

Twenty-sixth session

Nairobi, 8–12 May 2017

Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

**Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme, including coordination matters**

**Work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during
the intersessional period**

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat hereby transmits to the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on its work for the period 2015–2017.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 5 April 2017.

** HSP/GC/26/1.

Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on its work during the intersessional period

Summary

At its sixty-fourth regular meeting, held on 20 March 2017, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted its report for the period 2015–2017 for consideration by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session.

I. Introduction

1. The Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat, the intersessional subsidiary body of the Governing Council, held the following regular meetings during the period between the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council (17–23 April 2015) and the twenty-sixth session (8–12 May 2017):

- (a) Meetings held during 2015:
57th regular meeting: 12 June 2015
58th regular meeting: 16 September 2015
59th regular meeting: 2 December 2015
- (b) Meetings held during 2016:
60th regular meeting: 23 March 2016
61st regular meeting: 15 June 2016
62nd regular meeting: 14 September 2016
63rd regular meeting: 1 December 2016
- (c) Meetings to be held during 2017:
64th regular meeting: 20 March 2017

II. Members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

2. The members of the Bureau during the period 2014–2015 were as follows:
Mr. Michal Mlynar (Slovakia): Chair
Ms. Maria Eugenia Correa (Colombia): Vice-Chair
Mr. Sunu M. Soemarno (Indonesia): Vice-Chair
Mr. Tobias Glucksman (United States of America): Vice-Chair
Mr. Akin Oyateru (Nigeria): Rapporteur (replaced during the year by Mr. Okai Friday)
Mr. Okai Friday (Nigeria): Rapporteur (upon the departure of Mr. Akin Oyateru)
3. The members of the Bureau during the period 2016–2017 are as follows:
Mr. James Kimonyo (Rwanda): Chair
Ms. Maria Eugenia Correa (Colombia): Vice-Chair (replaced during the year by Ms. Elizabeth Taylor)
Ms. Elizabeth Taylor (Colombia): Vice-Chair (upon the departure of Ms. Maria Eugenia Correa)
Mr. Tobias Glucksman (United States of America): Vice-Chair (replaced during the year by Ms. Lori Dando)
Ms. Lori Dando (United States of America): Vice-Chair (upon the departure of Mr. Tobias Glucksman)
Mr. Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): Vice-Chair
Mr. Li Zhe (China): Rapporteur

III. Summary of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in 2015

A. 57th regular meeting, 12 June 2015

4. At the 57th regular meeting, the Executive Director expressed his gratitude to member States for the successful outcome of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, held in April 2015, noting that seven significant resolutions had been adopted at the session. He thanked the Chair and the representatives of Nigeria and the United States of America for their work on the governance review process in the weeks leading up to the Council session. He also thanked the Government of Kenya for its support and for its generous non-earmarked contribution of \$1 million to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) Trust Fund. The Executive Director also provided an update on the deployment of the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and briefed the Committee on his missions to Ecuador in preparation for Habitat III, to New York for a meeting of the Economic and Social Council where he had presented the 22 issue papers for Habitat III together with summary documents on topics related to housing and sustainable development; and to Brussels, where he had attended the European Development Days organized by the European Commission. There was widespread agreement in the Committee that the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council and the second session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III had been successful. The Chair drew attention to the proceedings of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, the revised rules of procedure as agreed upon during the session, and the list of representatives nominated for membership of the working group on programme and budget that was to be established in accordance with Governing Council resolution 25/7 on the UN-Habitat governance review. Accordingly, the Committee established the working group on programme and budget and approved the list of the regional representatives nominated for membership of the Group, consisting of 15 member States, with three member States representing each of the five regional groupings. The Chair introduced a report on the work of its subcommittees.

B. 58th regular meeting, 16 September 2015

5. At the 58th regular meeting, the Executive Director provided an update on the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat since 12 June 2015. Such activities included the provision of support to member States during the negotiations to finalize the draft sustainable development goals, in New York in July 2015, and at the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa that same month, at which the UN-Habitat secretariat had requested that the financial framework for sustainable development include financing for urbanization and local authorities in developing countries, where urbanization was especially significant and would require considerable resources. The secretariat had also collaborated with the office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in preparing for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015. He described his missions to Monrovia, where he had met with the President of Liberia and the Mayor of Monrovia to discuss the implementation of the post-Ebola virus disease urban renewal needed in the country, and to Bratislava and Prague in connection with Habitat III, and his participation in a high-level symposium organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He said that UN-Habitat had accelerated its implementation of Umoja, whose launch on 1 June 2015 had required significant resources and staff time, including during a two-week blackout period to facilitate the transition to the new system. He noted that the working group on programme and budget had begun its work. The secretariat presented the quarterly financial report, which complied with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and summarized UN-Habitat revenue and expenses for the period starting on 1 January and ending on 30 June 2015. The coordinator of the Habitat III secretariat briefed the Committee on progress made in the preparations for the Conference and in the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III at its second session, held in Nairobi in April 2015. The Chair drew attention to the report of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council (A/70/8), which had been submitted for adoption by the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations General Assembly through the Second Committee. The Chair also introduced a report on the work of the subcommittees. The chair of the working group on programme and budget introduced the report on the first meeting of the working group, held on 10 and 11 September 2015, describing the meeting as an important milestone for UN-Habitat and a great success. The Committee took note of the report. The secretariat introduced the six-monthly report on UN-Habitat country activities, highlighting key projects successfully initiated or concluded in the previous six months in various countries and regions. In addition, a high-level dialogue on Somalia was convened during the meeting, with the

participation of high-level representatives of the Government of Somalia, led by Ms. Hawo Hassan Mohamed, Minister of Health, and representatives of other United Nations entities working in Somalia.

C. 59th regular meeting, 2 December 2015

6. At the 59th regular meeting, the Committee elected its Bureau for the period 2015–2017 as well as an alternate to replace a departing member of the Bureau for the period 2013–2015 for the remainder of the term. The Chair congratulated the Holy See and the Government of Kenya on the visit of Pope Francis to Kenya and thanked the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi for arranging the papal visit to the United Nations compound and affording the diplomatic community the opportunity to participate therein. The Executive Director welcomed the adoption during the United Nations Summit for Sustainable Development, held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, which he described as a milestone for UN-Habitat, stating that, for the first time, urbanization was recognized as a pillar of sustainable development, notably in Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda, while also stressing the importance of the linkage between the 2030 Agenda and Habitat III. He described UN-Habitat involvement in preparations for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would take place in Paris in late November and early December 2015, as well as preparations for Habitat III, including regional and thematic meetings. He noted with appreciation the work of the working group on programme and budget, which, he said, was increasing dialogue between member States and the secretariat. He also provided an update on the implementation of Umoja within UN-Habitat. The secretariat presented its work in the Arab States region with a focus on Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Executive Director, speaking in his capacity as Secretary-General of Habitat III, gave a detailed briefing on preparations for Habitat III. The representative of the United States of America, in his capacity as chair of the subcommittee on policy and programme of work, provided an overview of the discussions held by that subcommittee on the UN-Habitat strategic framework for 2018–2019. The Committee requested the subcommittee to resume its work and to hold in-depth consultations on the strategic framework with a view to submitting the strategic framework to the office of the United Nations Controller by 22 January 2016. The Executive Director and several representatives expressed appreciation to the outgoing Chair of the Committee for his leadership, dedication and commitment to the work of the Committee and of UN-Habitat, including in particular the governance review process. The Chair introduced a report on the work of its subcommittees.

IV. Summary of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in 2016

A. 60th regular meeting, 23 March 2016

7. At the 60th regular meeting, the Committee held an election to fill a vacant seat on the Bureau for the biennium 2016–2017. The Executive Director highlighted efforts by UN-Habitat to ensure optimal implementation of Umoja as well the challenges of the system. He described his missions to Dakar, Havana and Yaoundé, where he had discussed urbanization issues and the role of urbanization as a tool for sustainable development with national and local government officials. He gave an overview of his briefing to the working group on programme and budget with regard to the ability of UN-Habitat to fully meet the increasing demand for technical cooperation in the field, highlighting strengths and weaknesses as well as suggested transformative reforms. He drew attention to the thematic and regional meetings in preparation for Habitat III that had taken place since the previous meeting of the Committee as well as progress in finalizing policy papers and regional reports for Habitat III. Representatives commended the active participation of member States and the secretariat in the meetings of the working group on programme and budget, saying that the discussions of the working group had served to enhance the transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of UN-Habitat and to strengthen its governing bodies. The Executive Director gave a presentation on the financial situation of UN-Habitat as at 31 December 2015, stating that UN-Habitat had experienced a severe decrease in non-earmarked contributions to its budget of over \$3.7 million, but that the Programme had been able to contain the operating deficit through cost recovery efforts, additional cost reductions and efforts to increase its core income from other sources, including earmarked contributions from member States and technical cooperation overheads. The Executive Director presented the annual progress report for 2015 on the implementation of the strategic plan for 2014–2019, which had been the subject of discussions at the subcommittee level. The secretariat gave a presentation on its work in Haiti, where it had been working for over 25 years to support the Government and local authorities on issues of urban development, municipal strengthening and

housing. The chair of the working group on programme and budget drew attention to the highlights of the group's meeting, held on 14 and 15 March 2016, at which it had addressed three main agenda items, namely a review of and updates on actions taken on previous recommendations of the working group; a presentation on the Nigeria country programme; and how to make UN-Habitat fit for purpose in the post-Habitat III period. The Committee took note of the report on the work of its subcommittees.

B. 61st regular meeting, 15 June 2016

8. The Deputy Executive Director, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, provided an overview of preparations for Habitat III; work undertaken by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination; the implementation of Umoja; and recent missions undertaken by the Executive Director and his Deputy. At its first regular session of 2016, held in Vienna in April 2016, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination had adopted a joint statement to Habitat III presenting 10 guiding principles for the United Nations system for transformative change towards sustainable urbanization. The Board had also approved a paper entitled "Urbanization and sustainable development: a United Nations system input to a new urban agenda", to which UN-Habitat and other entities had contributed. The Deputy Executive Director described actions being taken to reduce Umoja-related challenges, such as those pertaining to travel and the hiring of consultants. She said that UN-Habitat lacked access to the Umoja reporting database, making the timely production of reports to member States and partners difficult. She described the Executive Director's missions to Saudi Arabia for the Saudi Urban Forum 2016; the first African Ministerial Forum on Housing and Urban Development, held in Rabat on 11 and 12 May 2016, where ministers had adopted a strong message in support of the new urban agenda; the first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul on 23 and 24 May 2016, during which UN-Habitat and 65 other organizations had launched the Global Alliance for Urban Crises to better support member States, local authorities and other partners in addressing humanitarian crises; and an informal meeting of European Union ministers responsible for urban matters, held in Amsterdam on 30 May 2016, where ministers had adopted a document entitled "Pact of Amsterdam", which set out an urban agenda for the European Union in the framework of the Habitat III preparations. The representative of Japan announced that his Government would co-host the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held in Nairobi on 27 and 28 August 2016, which was expected to discuss sustainable urbanization as a main theme. The secretariat gave a presentation on the financial situation of UN-Habitat for the quarter ending on 31 March 2016, drawing attention to the quarterly report, which was the first such report to be prepared fully in compliance with Umoja. The Deputy Secretary-General of Habitat III provided an update on the preparations for the Conference, stating that the process of preparing technical inputs for Habitat III had been completed in April 2016. He summarized the process as having involved four regional meetings and seven thematic meetings, each of which had resulted in the adoption of a declaration and had involved consultations with a large number of experts and online open dialogues; the production of 10 policy papers by 10 policy units led by 20 co-leaders, including UN-Habitat, and by 200 worldwide experts; and the production of 22 issue papers by the United Nations task team on Habitat III. The task team, which was made up of 25 United Nations agencies and programmes, including UN-Habitat, had held monthly meetings to finalize the issue papers and to provide inputs to the preparation of the Habitat III draft outcome document. All the declarations and papers were available on the Habitat III website. He provided an update on the release of the "zero draft" of the outcome document and follow-up informal and formal consultations on the document. One representative requested frequent and timely updates on preparations for Habitat III through the subcommittees, and others emphasized the importance of the contributions and views of the Committee members in the preparatory process. The Committee heard presentations on the semi-annual programme activity report for the period ending December 2015 as well as on the work of UN-Habitat in Iraq over the past 20 years. The Committee took note of the report on the work of the working group on programme and budget and the report on the work of the subcommittees.

C. 62nd regular meeting, 14 September 2016

9. At its sixty-second regular meeting, the Committee held elections to fill two vacant positions of Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the biennium 2016–2017 to replace departed members. In his briefing, the Executive Director focused on the preparations for Habitat III. He reported that member States had reached agreement on the content of the draft outcome document of the Conference, entitled "New Urban Agenda", at informal meetings held in New York from 7 to 9 September 2016, and he commended the work of the member States in that regard. He noted that partial agreement on the outcome document had been reached previously at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, held in Surabaya, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 July 2016. The Deputy Secretary-General of Habitat III gave a presentation entitled "Technical briefing on Quito 2016", providing an update on the

preparations for the Conference, including steps to be taken by participating delegations. He presented the quarterly financial situation for the period ending June 2016, noting that the report had already been audited and passed without notes from the auditors. With regard to the continuing deficit in core funding, the Executive Director emphasized a number of steps being taken to reduce the deficit to a manageable level, including a review of the UN-Habitat cost recovery policy and discussions with member States on how core financing was managed. He urged member States to consider the possibility of bridging funding to support the core capacity of the Programme. The secretariat presented the semi-annual programme activity report for the period ending June 2016 in a new, more readable format to showcase the work and impact of UN-Habitat activities at the country level. The secretariat also gave a presentation on its work in Myanmar, which included a general briefing on the operations and activities of the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The secretariat also gave a briefing on the preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council. The Committee agreed to the proposal of the Bureau that discussions on the theme of the twenty-sixth session be deferred until Habitat III had concluded. The chair of the working group on programme and budget provided an update on the work of the group in the period since the previous meeting of the Committee. The Committee took note of the report on the work of its subcommittees.

D. 63rd regular meeting, 1 December 2016

10. At the 63rd regular meeting, the Committee adopted the proposed calendar of regular meetings for 2017 and recommended a change of date for the 67th regular meeting, to be held in December 2017. The Executive Director expressed his appreciation to all the member States for having contributed to the success of Habitat III, in Quito, which, according to official figures, had been the best-attended conference in the history of the United Nations. He also expressed appreciation to all involved in preparing the outcome document of the Conference, entitled “New Urban Agenda”, and in achieving the strategic objective of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III of ensuring that the text had been fully agreed before the opening of the Conference. Representatives underscored the need for synergies between the work of the Committee in Nairobi and discussions in New York regarding the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. One representative highlighted the importance of the Committee being involved in the anticipated forthcoming assessment of UN-Habitat. One representative sought clarification regarding the legal status of the General Assembly of Partners following the conclusion of Habitat III and the allegation of an attempt by a private citizen in the United States of America to register and patent the name, noting that the General Assembly of Partners had been established by UN-Habitat in the context of the World Urban Campaign. The Executive Director responded that an investigation was under way in that regard, and the Chair assured representatives that the secretariat would respond with an official communication on the matter. The Executive Director presented the report on the financial status of UN-Habitat covering the quarter ended 30 September 2016. He encouraged member States to submit any outstanding contributions for 2016, in particular those meant for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation general-purpose account, which continued to decline. Representatives expressed serious concern about the financial situation of UN-Habitat as outlined by the Executive Director and urged members to look into ways of responding to the request of the Executive Director for bridging finance for 2016 and 2017 so as to secure the additional resources the Programme needed to maintain its capacity to deliver. Representatives also highlighted the need for regular updates by the secretariat on the ninth session of the World Urban Forum. The Executive Director recalled Governing Council resolution 23/11, in which the Council had requested him to prepare a new strategic plan for 2014–2019. Outlining the preparatory process followed in pursuance of that resolution, he said that the time had come for the revision of the plan in the light of the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III, the lessons learned from the implementation of the plan over the previous three years and the other recent international agreements relevant to sustainable cities and human settlements. The draft revised strategic plan had to be ready by the end of February 2017 to meet the deadline for the submission of documents for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council. He had requested, therefore, that the dates of the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, originally scheduled to take place from 3 to 7 April 2017, be changed to May 2017 to enable UN-Habitat to respond to the outcome of Habitat III and to better prepare for the session.

V. Subcommittees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives 2015–2016

11. The following subcommittees were established by the Bureau of the Committee on 21 January 2014, following the approval of the proposed new working methods at the 51st regular meeting of the Committee, held on 4 December 2013:

A. Subcommittee I on finance and administration

12. The subcommittee was tasked with:
- (a) Considering the budgetary, financial and administrative issues of UN-Habitat;
 - (b) Engaging with member States in meeting the challenge of building a financially secure and operationally effective Programme;
 - (c) Dealing with any other matters referred to it by the Committee, including the provision of guidance and support to the secretariat in relation to resource mobilization.

B. Subcommittee II on policy and programme of work

13. The subcommittee was tasked with:
- (a) Reviewing progress in the implementation of the strategic plan for 2014–2019 and reviewing the plan;
 - (b) Reviewing the strategic framework for 2018–2019;
 - (c) Reviewing the programme of work, including the status of implementation of resolutions of the Governing Council and discussions on the seven subprogrammes of UN-Habitat;
 - (d) Preparing for sessions of the Governing Council, meetings of regional ministerial conferences, and sessions of the World Urban Forum;
 - (e) Considering sustainable development issues, including the post-2015 development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III.

VI. Working group on programme and budget established by the Committee in accordance with Governing Council resolution 25/7

14. On 12 June 2015, the Committee held its 57th regular meeting, at which it formally established the working group on programme and budget in accordance with Governing Council resolution 25/7 on UN-Habitat governance reform. The Committee also endorsed the list of regional representatives to the working group, consisting of 15 member States, with three member States representing each of the five regional groupings as follows:

African States:	Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa
Asia-Pacific States:	China, Iraq, Japan
Eastern European States:	Hungary, Poland, Romania
Latin American and Caribbean States:	Argentina, Brazil, Mexico
Western European and other States:	Germany, Norway, United States of America

15. The working group adopted a rotating chairship among the regional groupings as follows:

<i>Period</i>	<i>Group Chair</i>
July–December 2015	Western European and other States: United States of America
January–June 2016	African States: South Africa/Kenya
July 2016–February 2017	Asia-Pacific States: Iraq
February–August 2017	Eastern European States: Romania

16. Participation in the meetings of the working group has been, and continues to be, open to all member States.

VII. Resolutions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives

17. The draft resolutions prepared by the Committee for the consideration of the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session are contained in document HSP/GC/26/3/Add.1.