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

Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report provides an update by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session. The following are being issued as addenda to the present report: the joint progress report of the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and UN-Habitat on joint activities in the urban environment (HSP/HA/1/2/Add.1); the report on cooperation with other United Nations system entities and other UN-Habitat partners in the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019 (HSP/HA/1/2/Add.2); and the draft United Nations system-wide guidelines on safer cities and human settlements (HSP/HA/1/2/Add.3). The present report is also complemented by the country activities report for 2019 (HSP/HA/1/INF/3).

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolutions 26/1, 26/2, 26/3, 26/4, 26/5, 26/6, 26/7, 26/8 and 26/9 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), by which the Council requested updates on the implementation of those resolutions.
2. The work of UN-Habitat has been guided by three main policy bodies: the United Nations General Assembly, including through the Economic and Social Council; the Governing Council of UN-Habitat; and its intersessional body, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. In the discussions leading up to the adoption by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) of the outcome document of the Conference, the New Urban Agenda (General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex), Member States generally agreed on the need to review the current governance structure of UN-Habitat. Subsequently, in April 2017, the Secretary-General established the High-level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat. The findings and recommendations of the Panel were discussed by Member States, representatives of subnational and local governments, and other stakeholders at consultations convened by the President of the General Assembly on 5 and 6 September 2017 in New York. The consultations focused on strengthening the normative mandate of UN-Habitat, with a clearer link to its operations; reviewing the governance framework of UN-Habitat, with a view to

* HSP/HA/1/1.

strengthening oversight, transparency and accountability; and increasing stakeholder engagement and the financial capacity of UN-Habitat.

3. On 20 December 2018, by its resolution 73/239, the General Assembly abolished the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and replaced it with the universal-membership United Nations Habitat Assembly. By the same resolution, it maintained the Committee of Permanent Representatives and called for the establishment of a 36-member Executive Board of UN-Habitat, to be elected by the UN-Habitat Assembly.

4. With the arrival of a new Executive Director in January 2018, UN-Habitat embarked upon a series of transformational initiatives. This included the elaboration of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, the development of an internal change process, and the organizational restructuring of UN-Habitat to make it more streamlined, agile, innovative and fit for the purpose of implementing the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to align it with the Secretary-General's reform of the United Nations Secretariat.

A. Formulation of the strategic plan (2020–2025)

5. In order to ensure a seamless transition from the conclusion of the current strategic plan (2014–2019) to the new planning cycle, in early 2018 UN-Habitat began formulating a new results-oriented strategic plan for the period 2020–2025. Pursuant to the new strategic plan, the programmatic activities from the current seven subprogrammes have been consolidated into four domains of change: (1) reducing poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities; (2) enhancing the shared prosperity of cities and regions; (3) strengthening climate action and improving the urban environment; and (4) effectively preventing and responding to urban crises. In December 2018, the Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed this strategic plan for presentation to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its inaugural session.

B. Internal change

6. In February 2018, UN-Habitat began a process of internal change. The impetus to do so came from the calls by Member States for UN-Habitat to strive to be a trusted, transparent and accountable organization that operates effectively, efficiently and collaboratively, with expertise that is relevant, valued and in demand. Consequently, the internal change process is being implemented along the following seven main streams of work:

- (a) *Vision*: To foster a values-driven way of working together around a shared vision and purpose;
- (b) *Impact*: To be able to deliver at scale in order to change lives for the better;
- (c) *Funding*: To regain the trust and confidence of partners in order to deliver on the mandate;
- (d) *Collaboration*: To work effectively within and outside the United Nations system;
- (e) *Team*: To create a safe and productive workplace where talent thrives;
- (f) *Processes*: To improve systems and processes for maximum efficiency;
- (g) *Leadership*: To engage and empower staff to collectively drive change.

C. Organizational restructuring

7. In order to remain relevant in the midst of changes in both the internal and external environment, in October 2018, UN-Habitat launched an organizational restructuring process meant to equip it with a robust, yet agile structure. A new structure was expected to be proposed at the end of the first quarter of 2019, for implementation beginning 1 July 2019.

8. In response to the constant and long-term decline in revenue versus expenditure of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and the programme support accounts since 2012, in July 2018, the Executive Director introduced measures to reduce expenditure against those accounts, in order to manage a deficit that at the time was forecast to reach approximately \$5.5 million¹ by the end of 2018. The measures included moratoriums on recruitment and promotion, together with the discontinuation of non-staff contracts against affected funds, the restriction of overtime and the implementation of stringent approval requirements, and restrictions on the reclassification of posts to higher levels. In October 2018, it was decided to limit the extension of

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all dollar amounts in the present document are in United States dollars.

fixed-term appointments funded from these accounts to three months at a time to manage the contractual liabilities of UN-Habitat. These short-term contract extensions, which have a significant practical impact on concerned staff, will be reviewed during the first quarter of 2019. Those measures were accompanied by staffing table management measures that made maximum use of posts that were funded from other sources. The austerity measures were partly responsible for the reduction of the forecast deficit to some \$3.9 million by the end of 2018. Interim results show a deficit of approximately \$1.9 million.

II. Implementation of resolutions pertaining to the strategic plan, the work programme and the budget

A. Resolution 26/1: UN-Habitat governance reform and extension of the mandate of the working group on programme and budget

9. Following the extension of the mandate of the working group on programme and budget pursuant to resolution 26/1, the Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed the list of regional representatives to the working group for the period 2017–2019 at its sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth regular meetings, held in June and September 2017, respectively. The working group held two formal meetings during the reporting period.

10. At its fifth formal meeting, held on 11 and 12 October 2017, the working group discussed the financial situation of UN-Habitat, the status of the implementation of the work programme and of the strategic plan, the report of the High-level Independent Panel to Assess and Enhance the Effectiveness of UN-Habitat, and financial reports for 2016.

11. At that meeting, the working group recommended that the Executive Director: (1) measure the efficiency of UN-Habitat by comparing the administrative costs to the total budget of each project; (2) produce an analytical document providing an adequate overview of the distribution of resources across programmatic areas and regions in order to help the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Governing Council to better identify possible imbalances and take into account the development needs of various regions, including emerging issues such as risk reduction and rehabilitation; (3) provide written proposals on specific rules, regulations and procedures that are hindering the efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat, including but not limited to various options for its transformation, and specify the respective changes implied, including a comprehensive analysis of their implications; (4) improve access to the UN-Habitat website in order to ensure the transparency and visibility of UN-Habitat activities, including by showcasing the work that it does in countries; and (5) enhance the normative functions of UN-Habitat.

12. At its sixth formal meeting, held on 20 November 2018, the working group discussed the following: (1) financial figures, austerity measures and resource mobilization; (2) management reform and staffing; (3) an update on the development of the new strategic plan; and (4) an update on General Assembly discussions on UN-Habitat governance reform. At that meeting, UN-Habitat provided responses regarding the recommendations from the fifth formal meeting, accompanied by appropriate documentation and explanation. The working group expressed its satisfaction with the responses. In the light of the positive discussions at the meeting and the envisaged establishment of an executive board, the working group agreed that there was no need to issue recommendations at its sixth formal meeting.

B. Resolution 26/3: Revised strategic plan for 2014–2019 and work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the biennium 2018–2019

13. UN-Habitat translated the guidance received from Member States into organizational efforts to change and transform the organization into a more trusted, transparent, accountable and efficient organization whose work is valued and in demand, and increase the confidence of Member States and partners. It undertook several parallel initiatives to formulate a conceptual and programmatic framework. In order to underpin the work of UN-Habitat conceptually, it embarked on a wide and comprehensive consultative process that involved Member States, other stakeholders and staff at all levels in the design of a new strategic plan. The new strategic plan consolidated the programme activities from seven subprogrammes into four domains and was endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives in December 2018.

14. In addition, UN-Habitat held over 20 strategic dialogues with Member States and partners (including Bahrain, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland Viet Nam, the European Commission and the League of Arab States) on, inter alia, the provision of predictable, multi-year financing to achieve results pursuant to the strategic plan.

15. UN-Habitat also supported the efforts of Member States to conclude an agreement on governance reform, in order to strengthen ownership, leadership and oversight of UN-Habitat.

16. The lack of core resources continued to be a constraining factor that impacted the ability of UN-Habitat to meet the demands of Member States. The situation of the general purpose fund of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation remained difficult, with a deficit of \$0.8 million by the end of 2018. There was a positive trend in the contributions of non-earmarked funds, which increased from \$2.6 million in 2017 to \$3.6 million in 2018.

1. Resource mobilization

17. As at the end of December 2018, preliminary figures showed that total income of UN-Habitat, without cost recovery, amounted to \$ 178.8 million, of which extrabudgetary income of \$ 164.5 accounted for 92 per cent of total income.

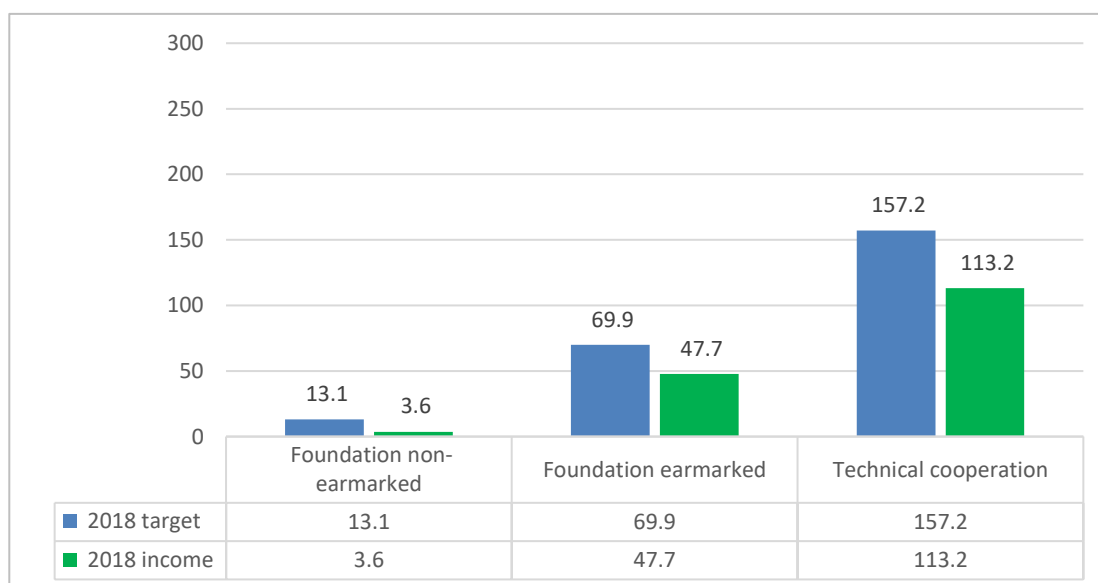
18. UN-Habitat continued to appeal for voluntary contributions, to allow for adequate and predictable financial resources. As a result of the initiatives described above, UN-Habitat received \$3.6 million in voluntary contributions from Member States in 2018, approximately 28 per cent of the total target for the year. That represents an increase of 38 per cent from the previous year.

19. Grants to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation special purpose account, which finances the earmarked normative programmes of UN-Habitat, amounted to \$47.7 million, representing 68 per cent of the annual target of \$ 69.9 million. Earmarked grants for technical cooperation activities at the country level amounted to \$113.2 million, or 72 per cent of the annual target of \$ 157.2 in that area (see figure below).

Figure

Extrabudgetary income in 2018: target vs. actual

(Millions of United States dollars)



20. UN-Habitat continued to implement the 2018–2019 resource mobilization strategy, with a focus on greater transparency, results-focused communications, broadening the donor base through pooled funds, large-scale integrated programming to deliver greater impact and partnerships with non-State actors, including the private sector.

Regular budget allocation

21. UN-Habitat received a regular budget allocation of \$ 14.3 million in 2019, representing 8 per cent of total income.

C. **Resolution 26/8: Promoting the effective implementation, follow-up to and review of the New Urban Agenda**

22. Resolution 26/8, on promoting the effective implementation, follow-up to and review of the New Urban Agenda, was implemented through the consolidated activities of the seven subprogrammes of the work programme and budget.

23. In the New Urban Agenda, Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives invited the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General, with voluntary inputs from countries and relevant regional and international organizations, to report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years. The first progress report, known as the “quadrennial report”, was presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development some 18 months after Habitat III. That was the first in a series of five quadrennial reports that the Secretary-General will present to the General Assembly between 2016 and 2036. The report, prepared by UN-Habitat in close consultation with over 20 United Nations agencies, the 5 regional commissions, government representatives and more than 40 development and research partners, was a critical first step towards system-wide collaboration and reporting on sustainable urbanization.

24. The report provided an overview of collaborative implementation to date, a review of relevant data and knowledge platforms and an assessment of the capacity necessary to implement the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator of the 2030 Agenda. Among other things, it included the recommendation that an incremental approach be adopted for the preparation of subsequent reports, focusing on four interrelated elements: (1) reinforcing systems for the production of user-friendly and participatory data platforms; (2) building on existing dynamic platforms for engagement, participation and partnership; (3) strengthening partnerships with relevant entities of the United Nations to create a system-wide coordination mechanism; and (4) developing capacities to report on the effective implementation of sustainable urban development agendas.

1. **Research and capacity development**

25. As part of its global monitoring function, UN-Habitat created a global sample of 200 cities to measure trends in world urbanization and progress made towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda. In close collaboration with the regional commissions, UN-Habitat organized 12 expert group meetings to strengthen the methodologies for monitoring progress made towards the urban-related Sustainable Development Goals and their indicators, in particular Goal 11 (on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable). It further recommended to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators that Member States should adopt a national sample of cities and the spatial disaggregation of data. Over the reporting period, more than 40 national statistical offices were trained in the adoption and use of those methodologies.

26. UN-Habitat has begun preparing for the 2020 edition of its flagship publication, *The State of the World's Cities*. The theme of the 2020 edition will be “True value of urbanization”, which will highlight the advantages of sustainable urban growth and development. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat also supported the preparation of regional and national reports, such as *The State of African Cities 2018: The Geography of African Investment*, along with state of cities reports for Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka, among others.

27. To promote knowledge-sharing and best practices, UN-Habitat continued its work on an on-line New Urban Agenda implementation platform, a dynamic tool by which Member States and other stakeholders (including United Nations agencies) can report on progress they have made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018, UN-Habitat conducted 97 days of capacity-building activities, involving over 470 mayors, decision-makers and urban experts. In cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Colab, a Brazilian start-up company, UN-Habitat developed a mobile app to facilitate city-wide public consultations in 800 cities in Brazil.

28. UN-Habitat expanded its City Prosperity Initiative, which covers more than 550 cities in 12 countries. The City Prosperity Initiative monitors performance along several dimensions, presenting spatial analysis and providing data to support the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level.

2. **Risk reduction and rehabilitation**

29. UN-Habitat strengthened the focus of the international humanitarian community on the issue of displaced populations in complex urban emergencies. Its focus on area-based programming allowed

for new approaches to recovery and response, engaging local authorities and facilitating the participation of affected communities to increase accountability. This focus was reflected in programmes in ongoing emergencies and recovery operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, where it supported damage assessment and urban functionality in crisis-affected cities. The “City profile” tool, developed by the UN-Habitat regional office for the Arab States, provided critical analysis to support partners in prioritizing rehabilitation and reconstruction planning.

30. As a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN-Habitat continued to influence and improve emergency response in cities and other human settlements. In addition to participating in Committee mechanisms, it led the Committee’s Task Force on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration, UN-Habitat supported the coordination of urban refugees and others in Brazil who migrated to that country from Venezuela as a result of the crisis in Venezuela.

31. UN-Habitat contributed to more effective response to crises through the Global Alliance for Urban Crises. With more than 70 member organizations now a part of the Alliance, UN-Habitat was elected to chair its steering group. The Alliance worked on key initiatives, including a protocol for engagement between local governments and humanitarian actors, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

32. Under the City Resilience Profiling Programme, UN-Habitat entered the final stages of a campaign under the theme “Making cities sustainable and resilient: implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 at the local level”. Municipal staff, focal points and partners have received training as part of this initiative. Resilience profiles were developed for Maputo, Mozambique, and Asunción, Paraguay, to define and build consensus around priority resilience actions.

33. In November 2018, at Barcelona Resilience Week 2018, UN-Habitat brought together over 500 participants to develop and foster new working partnerships and collectively face the resilience challenges of our time. The event was held in parallel with the Smart City Expo World Congress and featured sessions that had been co-convened with local government associations, the private sector and development partners. UN-Habitat also continued to chair Medellín Collaboration for Urban Resilience, a community of practice that brings together international organizations leading global resilience efforts, including those of the World Bank, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, the 100 Resilient Cities initiative and the Cities Alliance initiative. Collectively, partners work in over 4,000 cities globally, with more than \$2 billion committed annually towards advancing resilient and sustainable urban growth.

34. Building on the City Resilience Profiling Tool methodology, UN-Habitat released six “urban resilience enhancers”, which are practical tools with a concrete set of indicators that city actors can use to evaluate their own resilience performance and to identify priority resilience actions. Each tool addresses one of the following cross-cutting issues in relation to urban resilience: climate action, gender equality, informality, social resilience, resource efficiency and human rights.

3. Urban basic services

35. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to work closely with UNEP to jointly develop energy strategies for sustainable planning and city design. UN-Habitat and UNEP have planned an event for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to raise awareness among Member States of the potential for improving urban air quality through the use of low-cost air quality sensors and by better managing urban activities such as transport and waste disposal. With the support of the International Climate Initiative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany, UN-Habitat and UNEP have carried out work under the theme “Low-carbon basic services in the New Urban Agenda” to help cities to develop bankable project proposals to improve transport, energy and waste management services.

36. Under the aegis of the United Nations road safety trust fund, UN-Habitat has collaborated on road safety projects in Ethiopia and the Philippines. It has continued to work on other similar road safety initiatives, to develop the capacity of city officials to design better cycling lanes, footpaths and streets to make cycling and walking safer.

37. To support operational activities under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Tanzania, as a part of the Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster, UN-Habitat has worked in Dar es Salaam to support decentralized wastewater management in the informal

settlements of Mwanza, on the shores of Lake Victoria, to enhance investments and capacity for the improvement of sewage, sanitation and waste water management.

38. UN-Habitat assisted Member States in mainstreaming energy efficiency into national building codes and policies. Tools and materials to raise awareness on energy and resource efficiency measures were also developed for practitioners and academia, to promote sustainable, low-emission and environmentally friendly building designs.

39. In addition, to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), UN-Habitat assisted Member States in monitoring their progress against specific targets on transport and waste management. As a member of the technical advisory group on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), UN-Habitat developed a policy paper on energy and sustainable cities, to support the first review of Goal 7 at the 2018 session of the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development.

40. Following the completion of projects funded by the Global Environment Facility on sustainable transport and energy efficiency in buildings, UN-Habitat continued to prepare proposals to access climate funds for projects to improve mobility and energy efficiency in buildings and to build the capacity of city authorities in developing such projects.

4. Urban economy and finance

41. UN-Habitat continued to provide Member States and cities with advisory services to address the integration of the urban economy, municipal finance and local economic development with urban planning, with the aim of strengthening policy design.

42. Regarding municipal finance, UN-Habitat worked to increase the understanding of land value finance mechanisms and methods for increasing the value of land and land revenues for local governments by: (1) training public servants in more than 10 cities in Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia; (2) producing discussion papers on revenue generation and land value capture; (3) implementing field projects in Afghanistan, Kenya and Somalia, among others; and (4) developing a global municipal database.

43. A major focus of work in the area of urban economics and finance has been on youth as a driver of prosperity. The UN-Habitat youth programme continued operations in, inter alia, Colombia, Kenya, Rwanda and Somalia. Through one-stop youth centres, the programme fostered entrepreneurship, innovation and urban renewal by providing training on those topics to more than 1,000 youth. By creating opportunities for youth, UN-Habitat worked to catalyse the growth of urban economies. An example of such efforts occurred in Somalia, where young people received training to develop skills that were sought by employers, thereby facilitating the access of those young people to jobs.

44. The combination of productivity and finance has also been shown to be driver of local economic development. UN-Habitat supported efforts in 17 cities in Saudi Arabia in this regard. In Egypt, UN-Habitat assisted local authorities in the creation of the new city of Alamayn. In both countries, a productive strategy – to design policies that foster the growth of private companies and industries – was prepared, in addition to a master planning study, to enable cities to integrate urban development with job creation, and thereby support local productive development. Further examples of this are projects in Colombia on informality and crime reduction, in Kenya on market development from an economic perspective, and in Mexico on municipal development.

45. Through its Global Urban Competitiveness Report database, which is maintained in coordination with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, UN-Habitat measures 1,000 cities worldwide annually on specific topics. The 2017–2018 report analysed housing prices; the 2018–2019 report focused on global value chains; and the theme of the 2019–2020 report will be on urban finance and competitiveness.

5. Urban legislation, land and governance

46. The work of UN-Habitat on urban legislation and on land governance informs the normative and operational work of many Governments on urban development, including in post-conflict situations. UN-Habitat has developed and tested a slum upgrading legal assessment tool, which provides a methodology for reviewing water and sanitation, land, planning, housing and financing laws and regulations to allow city managers to conduct a quick qualitative assessment of prospects for the upgrading of slums, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Field testing of the tool in Kenya contributed to the development of a national slum upgrading bill. In collaboration with UNEP, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change and the Commonwealth secretariat, UN-Habitat continued to work on the development of a law and climate change toolkit, which will serve as a global resource to help countries to put in place the legal frameworks necessary for the effective national implementation of the Paris Agreement and of nationally determined contributions.

47. During the reporting period, the UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme worked with Plan International to establish a joint programme on safer cities for girls, with a view to putting adolescent girls at the centre of transforming cities into places of inclusion, tolerance and opportunity for everyone. In 2018, in cooperation with governments, urban institutions, families and communities in five cities (Cairo, Hanoi, Kampala, Lima and New Delhi), the Safer Cities Programme worked to increase the safety of girls and their access to public spaces, to promote their active and meaningful participation in urban development and governance, and to facilitate their autonomous mobility in those cities.

48. In 2018, the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities co-organized a “sustainable cities dialogue”, bringing together representatives from 25 national Governments to discuss the joint implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with ministers and mayors. On the sidelines of the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development, UN-Habitat co-organized the first session of the Local and Regional Governments Forum, together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments.

49. The Global Land Tool Network, composed of 80 partners and facilitated by UN-Habitat, continues the process of tool development to secure land rights in both rural and urban settings. The fit-for-purpose land administration tool is being used to support land information systems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Laos, Nepal, the Philippines, Uganda and Zambia. Through the application of the land tools, such as the social tenure domain model, more than 2,000 women received land certificates in Iraq, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia during the reporting period. The Global Land Tool Network supported the development of national land policies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal and Zambia.

50. During the April 2018 meeting of Global Land Tool Network partners, they adopted the new strategy for addressing land tenure security and governance reflected in the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy is meant to scale up good practices and their impact to support land reform during the period 2018–2030. To kick-start the implementation of the new strategy, partners, donors and development partners gathered at an induction steering committee meeting in February 2019 in Stockholm at the headquarters of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

51. The Global Land Tool Network provided training on land-based financing to more than 100 mayors and local authorities to strengthen the land-based revenue streams of local governments. The Network organized the first Arab land conference, in Dubai in 2018, in collaboration with the World Bank, the Dubai Land Department and the Arab Union of Surveyors, to launch an Arab land governance initiative to foster peace, development and social equity in the Arab region.

52. UN-Habitat is the custodian agency, along with the World Bank, of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 1.4.2 on access to land, whose classification to Tier 2 was secured in 2018 with the support of national statistical offices. The methodology for data collection on land tenure security has been aligned with the national reporting framework on the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Urban planning and design

53. UN-Habitat continued to receive and respond to requests from Member States to support the development of national and subnational urban policies, to enhance and enlarge the scope of work of the Urban Planning and Design Lab, and to expand the portfolio and consolidate the partnerships of UN-Habitat for climate change action.

54. As at January 2019, UN-Habitat was providing technical assistance to 41 countries relating to national urban policy development. In 2018, UN-Habitat, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Cities Alliance initiative launched the National Urban Policy Programme, under which a global report on urban policy was published in 2018. UN-Habitat has created a series of normative products, tools and guides to scale up and systematize efforts to support national urban policy development.

55. Emerging as an important integrative facility, the UN-Habitat Urban Planning and Design Lab has been acknowledged as a valuable source for identifying, validating and further formulating urban projects that not only respond to the Sustainable Development Goals, but also attract financing for

implementation through development banks and public–private partnerships. Since the previous report, the Lab has expanded or established new partnerships at the city level with United Nations agencies, the World Bank and regional development banks. The Lab has led the strategic development phase of the Global Future Cities Programme, created in response to a request by the United Kingdom in 2018 and with activities in 19 cities in 10 countries. The Netherlands Enterprise Agency also engaged the Lab to support the Water as Leverage Programme in 3 countries.

56. UN-Habitat continued to pursue accreditation to the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility. In the meantime, at the request of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN-Habitat engaged several States (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kiribati, Norway, the State of Palestine, Sweden, Thailand and Togo) and other partners in a consultative process that resulted in the formulation of a guide entitled “Addressing Urban and Human Settlements Issues in National Adaptation Plans: a supplement to the UNFCCC technical guidelines on National Adaptation Plan process”. The guide was launched at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018. Through the Global Covenant of Mayors, the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance and a new initiative on building climate resilience for the urban poor in the lead-up to the United Nations Climate Action Summit to be held in 2019, UN-Habitat has engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, civil society, the private sector, professionals and academia to increase the focus on global climate ambitions.

7. Housing and slum upgrading

57. Challenges to sustainable housing and slum upgrading continued to be a key element of the work of UN-Habitat. Those challenges are related to the issues of environmental sustainability, including resource- and energy-efficient designs, materials and construction processes; economic sustainability, in particular the affordability of housing and slum upgrading, both upon purchasing housing and over the long run; and social sustainability, in respect of offering owners and renters secure rights and facilitating their integration into the urban social fabric.

58. Through the Global Housing Strategy, UN-Habitat supported all levels of government in formulating and implementing housing sector reform and legislation. By the end of the reporting period, some 40 partner countries were implementing housing policies, programmes and strategies. UN-Habitat strove to strengthen its signature solutions for affordability. At the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat convened an inception meeting for a programme focused on affordable housing for Africa, which would be aimed at connecting local, national and regional efforts to promote housing affordability across the continent through coherent and linked actions. Work in this area included a rental financing scheme for internally displaced persons in Mogadishu.

59. To promote environmentally sustainable housing, in 2018, UN-Habitat launched the “SHERPA for Sustainable Housing Projects online self-evaluation tool for project managers, communities and other stakeholders involved in the planning, design, construction and assessment of housing projects. The tool, with its emphasis on qualitative self-assessment of economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability, is the first of its kind. It is offered free of charge and is available in English, French and Spanish.²

60. UN-Habitat also supported other dimensions of social sustainability, including the integration of vulnerable groups, such as indigenous groups, youth, the disabled and migrants, through the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project, with the aim of contributing to improved rights-based governance of migration in cities through dialogue, knowledge-sharing and action, and of anchoring migration governance to the urban development planning process.

61. UN-Habitat continued to implement the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme, initiated by the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and financed by the European Commission, through which some 40 countries and 190 cities have worked with more than 5 million slum dwellers to improve living conditions. In November 2018, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, the European Commission and UN-Habitat organized the third international conference on engagement in large-scale financing in slums. The conference was attended by representatives from 61 countries and concluded with a global declaration and an action framework to be implemented in the coming two years. Furthermore, UN-Habitat engaged with ECLAC to support a regional strategy for improving the lives in informal settlements and slums in the Caribbean region within the framework of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

² Available at www.sherpa4housing.org/.

62. UN-Habitat, in cooperation with global partners, has produced publications to guide the practical implementation and development of tools under the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. The publications address topics such as the informal economy and livelihoods, pro-poor climate action in informal settlements and the Slum Upgrading Legal Assessment Tool. UN-Habitat developed a knowledge platform that includes an innovative e-learning and e-participation component. The platform will be launched during the inaugural session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2019. The Slums and Informal Settlements Network launched focus groups composed of ministers, mayors and academics to devise ways to augment the capacity of stakeholders to scale up improvements to living conditions in slums and informal settlements around three pillars: monitoring, knowledge and innovation.

8. Cross-cutting issues

63. UN-Habitat continued its normative and operational work focusing on those furthest behind, in order to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities. A primary mechanism for doing so remained the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issues of climate change, gender equality, human rights and youth. The outcome of these efforts at mainstreaming were reflected in a number of independent evaluations that were concluded in 2018. In Sri Lanka, for example, an evaluation found that community development councils had provided women in the plantation sector with safe and proper childcare. According to an evaluation by the Global Land Tool Network, an estimated 2,259 people had improved their knowledge of pro-poor and gender-responsive land tools and approaches through the implementation of 101 capacity-development initiatives. In total, 40 per cent of the participants in the capacity-development initiative under the aegis of the Global Land Tool Network were women. Evaluations of country, regional and global programmes demonstrated the transformative impact that mainstreaming has on UN-Habitat programmes. Complementing issue-specific work on cross-cutting issues, mainstreaming has reinforced the integration of “inclusion issues”, both conceptually and operationally.

64. UN-Habitat has been working closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care in preparing a Fast-Track Cities conference that will be held in September 2019. The conference will be the first international gathering of representatives of more than 250 cities that are accelerating their responses to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and viral hepatitis – three diseases cited as urban health priorities in the New Urban Agenda and in the declaration entitled “Fast-track cities: ending the AIDS epidemic”.

9. System-wide strategy on the New Urban Agenda and the action framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

65. Following the call for a United Nations system-wide strategy and action framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat led a process of consultation with Member States and regional consultative structures in February 2018, resulting in the adoption of key elements of an action framework for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in regional contexts.³

66. At consultations held during the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, United Nations agencies agreed to collaborate on a system-wide strategy. On 6 June 2018, the Senior Management Group of the Secretary-General called upon UN-Habitat to facilitate cooperation among agencies to advance system-wide coherence with regard to sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat subsequently led a task team of representatives from 12 United Nations agencies, which presented a draft framework to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat in September 2018, in which it was indicated that work would centre on knowledge, operations, finance and sharing. In October 2018, an annotated outline of the process was endorsed by the High-Level Committee on Programmes, which paved the way to final consideration by the High-Level Committee on Programmes in April 2019. Once endorsed, the strategy will be presented to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, possibly as early as May 2019, for review and approval.

10. Financing for sustainable urbanization

67. In order to improve financing for sustainable urbanization, UN-Habitat continued to work with partners such as the World Bank on a multi-partner implementation facility for sustainable urban development. Initiatives in pilot countries (Egypt, Kenya, Mexico and Uganda) will contribute to a proof of concept before embarking on resource mobilization. Efforts to identify further projects through feasibility studies continued, to enable UN-Habitat and others to help cities to identify

³ See resolution 26/5 for more information regarding regional technical support on sustainable housing and urban development by regional consultative structures.

bankable projects and to match them with potential investors. In Merida, Mexico, an analysis using City Prosperity Initiative-generated data allowed for feasibility studies to be conducted to identify potential projects. In Kenya, the World Bank and UN-Habitat have engaged intensively with the Government on an action plan to address elements of integrated urban planning, affordable housing, slum upgrading, municipal revenue generation and capacity-building for county governments. Joint scoping missions to Rwanda and Uganda took place in 2018. As part of the reform of the United Nations development system, UN-Habitat participated in the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals Fund and advocated for the creation of an urban window in the Fund.

68. New synergies and financing for sustainable urbanization have also been created through UN-Habitat engagement in the Adaptation Fund, with three projects totalling \$13 million approved in 2018. Concepts and proposals under development in 2019 total approximately \$50 million. The Adaptation Fund Board approved two new proposals from UN-Habitat for work in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Another project was initiated in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In Africa, a regional resilience programme for the Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique was submitted for final approval. In the Arab States, a regional programme for Jordan and Lebanon as well as a project for the Khartoum metropolitan area were being developed. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional project was being developed in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Meanwhile, a UN-Habitat proposal for the provision of expert services to the Green Climate Fund was found technically acceptable in three areas: adaptation planning, transport and urban development. UN-Habitat's accreditation as a multilateral Green Climate Fund project entity advanced, with the adaptation of several internal policies to meet the accreditation criteria, including the addition of environmental and social safeguards.

III. Implementation of other resolutions

A. Resolution 26/2: Enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response

69. Despite the lack of voluntary contributions to the fund established under resolution 26/2, UN-Habitat continued its efforts to update its policy on human settlement in crisis. The policy will be based on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, in which effective urban crisis prevention and response has been identified as one of the four domains of change. The new strategic plan will address issues such as bridging the divide between humanitarian aid and development, displacement, migration, disaster risk reduction and resilience-building.

70. In this connection, partnership has continued with members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, in particular with UNHCR, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with which it coordinates activities under the Global Shelter Cluster, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in respect of the Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster.

71. Separately, UN-Habitat led the development of the United Nations Guidance Note on Land and Conflict, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat, and the United Nations Development Programme. It was anticipated that the Guidance Note, once approved, would help the United Nations system to address the root causes of conflict in both rural and urban settings.

B. Resolution 26/4: Promoting safety in cities and human settlements

72. Further to the call to increase the visibility of available tools, methods and expertise on safety in cities, UN-Habitat published "Enhancing the culture of community crime prevention: 20 years of Safer Cities experience in Africa,"⁴ presenting municipal experiences and practices in preventing crime and violence in urban settings and stressing safety as a criterion in municipal planning, legislation and financing strategies. The Safer Cities Programme has also developed open data partnerships with the private sector. In conjunction with Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., UN-Habitat developed a white paper on big data for safer cities to support dialogues on strengthening evidence-based policy and practice.

73. A key United Nations partner on the issue of safer cities has been the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime, with which UN-Habitat has engaged in joint programming operations in Cali, Colombia, in Querétaro, Mexico, and in Durban, South Africa, and developed a guide for participatory

⁴ Available at www.mile.org.za/AFUS2018/DocumentsAFUS2017/20%20Years%20of%20Safer%20Cities%20in%20Africa%20-%20Report.pdf.

safety audits.⁵ With urban safety identified as a cross-cutting theme in the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, UN-Habitat will continue to develop and strengthen its tools, methods and expertise relating to safety in cities.

74. Details of the draft United Nations guidelines on safer cities, a key element of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, are provided in document HSP/HA/1/2/Add.3. Following consideration by the General Assembly, it is anticipated that a collective United Nations implementation plan will help to further improve safety and security in urban settings and human settlements.

C. Resolution 26/5: Regional technical support on sustainable housing and urban development by regional consultative structures

75. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to support regional consultative structures in order to achieve the aims of the New Urban Agenda. In Asia and the Pacific region, a regional task team on sustainable urbanization reviewed country-level interventions on sustainable urbanization in Cambodia and Nepal. Participants in a forum for partners identified priorities for implementing the New Urban Agenda through a peer-review process involving United Nations entities at the regional level.

76. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat and ECLAC contributed to a regional action plan for the New Urban Agenda. This has led to further collaboration, including a joint project proposal for inter-regional cooperation in the area of sustainable urban development, with a view to increasing policy coherence among Member States, which will in turn align their priorities.

77. UN-Habitat contributed to the development of the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, led by the Council of Housing and Construction Ministers of the League of Arab States. The second Arab Ministerial Forum on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development endorsed an implementation plan for the Strategy in December 2017 in Morocco. This was followed by capacity development and South-South cooperation in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco. UN-Habitat also supported the development of UN-Habitat country programme documents in the State of Palestine and the Sudan.

78. In Africa, UN-Habitat, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission organized a dialogue in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2017, on implementation and monitoring frameworks for the New Urban Agenda. Collaboration with the African Union has also included work on a model law on housing, human settlements and urban development, to support a regional implementation framework for the New Urban Agenda. At the country level, UN-Habitat published country programme documents in Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda.

79. UN-Habitat is also collaborating with the Department for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission regarding indicator-based monitoring of the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in regions and cities of the European Union.

D. Resolution 26/6: World Urban Forum

80. The ninth session of the World Urban Forum was held in Kuala Lumpur from 7 to 13 February 2018 under the theme “Cities 2030 – cities for all: implementing the New Urban Agenda”. Some 24,000 participants from 164 countries took part in open debates, dialogues, exhibitions, events to share lessons learned and good practices, and sessions on urban solutions, policies and legislative frameworks. The Forum reflected the role of the New Urban Agenda in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030, in which emphasis was placed on the necessary enablers for positive transformation, persistent challenges faced by cities and human settlements, and emerging issues that require urgent attention, also contained concrete recommendations on frameworks, governance, partnerships and innovative solutions.

81. A wide range of stakeholders from global, regional, national, local, grassroots and informal sector organizations engaged in the ninth session of the Forum and its preparatory process. A subcommittee under the Committee of Permanent Representatives met monthly, starting in March 2017, to guide preparations for the Forum.

82. A results-based approach was applied to all components of the ninth session of the Forum to enhance the quality of discussions and the measurability of results. The rapporteurs captured

⁵ Available at www.cdeunodc.inegi.org.mx/unodc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guide-safety-audits_final_predesign_EN.pdf.

substantive outcomes in pre-established templates. In preparation for the Forum, all substantive work units of UN-Habitat set out the expected results for their respective sessions within a logical framework. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the result framework and the impact of the Forum was initiated in May 2018. A draft report is under consideration by UN-Habitat, Member States and stakeholders.

83. Preparations for the tenth session of the World Urban Forum are well under way. Building on its previous experience and feedback received, UN-Habitat has actively involved other United Nations agencies in preparations for future sessions of the Forum. The selection process for hosting the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum has also been initiated. By the deadline of 30 July 2018, a total of seven cities had expressed their interest in hosting the eleventh session of the Forum. A selection committee comprising staff from UN-Habitat and two other United Nations agencies has been set up to consider the bids. The selection process is expected to be completed by April 2019.

E. Resolution 26/7: Accreditation

84. Pursuant to resolution 26/7, the current procedures for the accreditation of stakeholder organizations have been widely disseminated to stakeholders and are also available online. Work on a stakeholder engagement policy had been led by the Subcommittee on Policy and Programmes (under the Committee of Permanent Representatives) and the friends of the Chair of the working group established by the Subcommittee in June 2018. Ten meetings have been held, in addition to numerous consultations by the Chair (United States of America). UN-Habitat continued to support this process, including by preparing background documentation and extensive analyses of the practices, policies and strategies of other United Nations agencies and multilateral organizations with respect to stakeholders and civil society consultations and engagement.

85. Member States have agreed to consider the accreditation procedure as a component of a larger stakeholder engagement policy. There was a divergence in opinion, however. While still maintaining their decision-making prerogative, Member States generally recognized the need for an open and transparent system to allow diverse stakeholders to participate in the UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes. They further recognized the need to update the partner database, which currently contains information on some 4,000 accredited members, to retain only those that are active and to establish a consistent and objective basis for new and old stakeholders to apply for accreditation. Key areas of contention were (1) the course of action to be taken in case of an objection by a Member State; and (2) whether the provider of accreditation would be Member States or UN-Habitat. The Subcommittee was granted more time to allow Member States to reach consensus before the inaugural session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2019.

F. Resolution 26/9: Human settlements development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

86. The Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People provided technical support through a set of priority interventions as agreed with the State of Palestine and other partners identified in the UN-Habitat country programme document for the period 2018–2022. Activities under the Programme in 2018 totalled more than \$5 million and were implemented with over 35 local implementing partners, benefitting more than 220 communities across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Focus areas included the provision of policy advice, technical assistance, capacity-development assistance, protection and adequate access to shelter, and the fostering of tenure-responsive and gender-sensitive land-use planning at the local, regional and national levels to respond to unprecedented urbanization rates. These initiatives were undertaken through community-led participatory processes, to allow community residents themselves to determine the shape and design of their future built environment. The Programme has thus developed safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces that serve the most vulnerable groups – women and youth – and has increased municipal capacity to conduct and monitor participatory spatial planning processes. Housing rehabilitation interventions and support for land management processes continued unabated. Consultations with Member States continued in order to reconvene the advisory board and the technical cooperation trust fund.

IV. Conclusion

87. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects the opportunities for sustainable urbanization to drive equity, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 11, as well as in a number of other Goals and targets. It would be impossible to address poverty (Goal 1), gender equality (Goal 5), water and sanitation (Goal 6), economic growth and employment (Goal 8), industrialization and innovation (Goal 9), inequality

(Goal 10), consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) and climate change (Goal 13) without addressing the way in which cities grow and function. The transformative commitments, drivers of change and means of implementation of the New Urban Agenda provide a framework for accelerating progress in localizing and achieving the Goals in cities and other human settlements.

88. The year 2018 was a momentous one for UN-Habitat, as it embarked on a comprehensive reform process to address the financial crisis that it faced and the trust deficit vis-à-vis its partners: Member States, donors, staff members and other stakeholders. The staff of UN-Habitat, with the strong support of Member States, have made extraordinary efforts to meet those challenges.

89. Today, UN-Habitat has a strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, which, complemented by the change across the United Nations system led by the Secretary-General and the internal restructuring of UN-Habitat, will contribute to the reduction of poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities; the enhancement of shared prosperity of cities and regions; the strengthening of climate action; the improvement of the urban environment; and the effective prevention of and response to urban crises. These are critical entry points for implementing the New Urban Agenda and achieving the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. By focusing on the positive impact and outcomes for those furthest behind, the new strategic plan lays out a recalibrated vision and mission, with a sharpened focus on how to best serve Member States, subnational and local governments and other key urban actors. The new strategic plan seeks to reposition UN-Habitat as a centre of excellence and innovation.

90. However, no strategic plan can succeed without support, including the financial resources to implement it. The update on the implementation of resolution 26/2, on enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response, is a case in point. Many of the largest and most successful country-level programmes of UN-Habitat, such as those in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Syrian Arab Republic, grew out of initial crisis response initiatives. In those environments, UN-Habitat has time and again demonstrated that it is possible, from the outset of a crisis, to begin building resilience and supporting Member States in recovery and reconstruction with durable solutions that meet the commitments set out in the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. No Member States have contributed to the voluntary fund established to facilitate the rapid deployment of UN-Habitat in response to urban crises and emergencies. Member States are urged to consider this in future deliberations on the mandate of UN-Habitat.

91. Meanwhile, UN-Habitat will continue to align itself with the repositioned United Nations development system, including at the regional and country levels. Special attention will be paid to supporting regional urban knowledge capacity and providing urban advisory services to the offices of the resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and a new generation of common country assessments.

92. When successfully implemented, these measures will allow UN-Habitat to deliver on its vision of a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world, and to support Member States in implementing the New Urban Agenda and achieving the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals.
