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United Nations Habitat Assembly of the  
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Item 9 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**

### **Addendum**

### **Working group on programme and budget**

#### **Report of the chair**

#### **I. Background**

1. At its twenty-fifth session, the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted resolution 25/7, on UN-Habitat governance reform, in which it decided to strengthen the oversight role of the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives by requesting the Committee to establish a working group on programme and budget, outlining its composition and specifying the tasks it was to perform.
2. Accordingly, the Committee established the working group on programme and budget at its fifty-seventh regular meeting, held on 12 June 2015.
3. At its twenty-sixth session, the Governing Council adopted resolution 26/1, on UN-Habitat governance reform and extension of the mandate of the working group on programme and budget, in which it extended the mandate of the working group and decided to review the implementation of resolutions 25/7 and 26/1 at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council, at which time a decision on the continuation of the activities of the working group would be taken.
4. The working group has held a total of six formal meetings since 2015 as well as several informal meetings.
5. Information about the working group, including its reports can be found at <https://unhabitat.org/cpr-workinggroup/>.

#### **II. Progress achieved by the working group in the period 2017–2019**

6. Following the extension of the mandate of the working group in resolution 26/1, the Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed the list of regional representatives to the working

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\* HSP/HA/1/1.

group for the period 2017–2019 at its sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth regular meetings, held in June and September 2017 respectively, as follows:

- (a) African States: Egypt, Uganda, Zimbabwe;
- (b) Asia-Pacific States: China, Iraq, Japan;
- (c) Eastern European States: Hungary, Poland, Romania;
- (d) Latin American and Caribbean States: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico;
- (e) Western European and other States: France, Germany, United States of America.

7. The working group held two formal meetings after the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council held in May 2017.

8. The working group held its fifth formal meeting since its establishment in 2015 on 11 and 12 October 2017. At that meeting, the working group discussed the financial situation of UN-Habitat, the status of implementation of the programme of work and the strategic plan for 2014–2019, the high-level independent panel's assessment of UN-Habitat, and the UN-Habitat accounts for the financial year 2016. It also discussed the status of implementation of the recommendations of the working group to the Executive Director.

9. The working group decided in its recommendations arising from the meeting:

- (a) To request the Executive Director, in measuring the efficiency of the Programme, to compare the administrative costs to the total budget for each project;
- (b) To request the Executive Director to 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 taking into account the development needs of various regions, including emerging issues such as risk reduction and rehabilitation;
- (c) To request the Executive Director to provide a written proposal on the specific rules, regulations and procedures that are hindering the efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat, including, but not limited to, various options for transformation in that regard, and to describe the respective changes required, including a comprehensive analysis of their implications. For each option, measures that would need to be taken and by whom, if such an option were to be pursued, should be outlined. Furthermore, the proposal should describe how the secretariat would establish the required internal control mechanism for the proposed expanded delegation of authority and for hiring authorities;
- (d) To request the Executive Director to facilitate unhindered access to the UN-Habitat website in order to ensure transparency in and visibility of the activities of the Programme, including showcasing the work undertaken by UN-Habitat in countries;
- (e) To welcome the integrated approach in programming and recommend that the normative function of the Programme be further enhanced.

10. The Executive Director responded to the above recommendations and provided an update to the working group at its following meeting, in November 2018.

11. On 20 November 2018, the working group held its sixth formal meeting, during which it discussed (a) financial issues, austerity measures and resource mobilization; (b) management reform and staffing; (c) an update on the development of the new strategic plan; (d) an update on the discussions of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the governance reform of UN-Habitat.

12. The secretariat presented responses to each of the recommendations made by the working group at its fifth formal meeting, which were accompanied by appropriate documentation. The working group expressed its satisfaction with the responses to its recommendations provided by the Executive Director.

13. In the light of the positive discussions at the sixth meeting and the envisaged establishment of an executive board pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/239 of 20 December 2018, in which the Assembly decided to dissolve the UN-Habitat Governing Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and to replace it with the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly), the working group agreed that there was no need to issue actionable recommendations.

### **III. Recommendation**

14. Pursuant to resolution 26/1 and in the light of the expected establishment of an executive board, it is recommended that the continued existence of the working group on programme and budget be reviewed by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session with a view to transferring the oversight responsibility to an executive board.

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