

Overall Briefing Note

Briefing Note on the UN-Habitat Assembly



27-31 May 2019



UN Office at Nairobi (UNON), Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya

Background

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) will hold its first ever Assembly from 27 to 31 May 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The theme of the UN-Habitat Assembly is “Innovation for a Better Quality of Life in Cities and Communities – Accelerated Implementation of the New Urban Agenda towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”.

The UN-Habitat Assembly will adopt global norms and policies that will guide how cities and communities are planned, managed and governed. It will also determine the strategic priorities for accelerating implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for the next six years, through UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan (2020-2025). The Assembly is a great opportunity for all actors in the urbanization arena, including national and local governments, business, civil society and others to engage in a vibrant and dynamic week of interaction.

The UN-Habitat Assembly replaces the Governing Council, as decided by the General Assembly in its resolution of 20th December 2018 on Strengthening UN-Habitat. The UN-Habitat Assembly will be the highest-level decision-making body focused on sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

The Assembly is universal, with all 193 United Nations Member States, and is expected to make decisions and adopt resolutions that will frame the global urbanization agenda, look at major trends, develop norms and standards related to sustainable urbanization and human settlements and provide strategic guidance to UN-Habitat in its work.

Principles

The UN-Habitat Assembly preparations encompass the following principles:

1. Inclusivity and consensus-based decision making among the Member States;
2. Innovative organization to encourage full and dynamic participation, learning and partnerships;
3. High level participation to raise the profile of sustainable urbanization and UN-Habitat as a focal point agency in the United Nations system;
4. Wide stakeholder participation and contribution
5. Strong commitment to gender equality and inclusivity in all deliberations.

Overall Objective

The objective of the UN-Habitat Assembly is to unpack the challenges of urbanization (urban poverty, marginalization, unemployment, climate change, humanitarian crises, etc.) and propose innovative solutions, including best practices, to leverage the opportunities of sustainable urban development so as to leave no one and no place behind.

To accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN-Habitat Assembly provides opportunities to form strategic alliances to advance the sustainable urbanization and human settlements agenda while mobilising strong political and financial support for UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan and its role as a centre of excellence and global leader in the field. The UN-Habitat Assembly will determine global norms and policies on the theme of the Assembly, to be outlined in the final Nairobi Ministerial Declaration. It will also be a place to find innovative solutions on how cities and communities are planned, designed, managed and governed to ensure a good quality of life for all, in line with the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.

Expected Outcomes

1. Innovative solutions and best practices to successfully leverage the opportunities of sustainable urban development and human settlements, including non-traditional financing mechanisms for development of cities and regions.
2. Strong normative and policy outcomes on the theme of the Assembly: “Innovation for a better quality of life in cities and communities” and a Nairobi Ministerial declaration outlining commitments to action.
3. Strategic alliances among national and local government, business, civil society and international institutions harnessed to scale up innovative solutions in sustainable urbanization and human settlements.
4. Business and stakeholder commitments to accelerating progress in implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs through innovation and strategic partnerships.
5. Strong political and sustainable financial commitments to sustainable urbanization and UN-Habitat as a focal point and centre of excellence in this field.
6. A foundation for strong oversight of UN-Habitat’s work is established through the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board and a strong framework for the conduct of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2019-2023.

Legislative Deliverables

1. Adoption of rules of procedure for the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board.
2. Election of the 36 Member Executive Board and its Bureau.
3. Adoption of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2020-2025
4. Adoption of the Work Programme and Budget by the Executive Board at its first meeting
5. Adoption of key resolutions.
6. A Nairobi Ministerial Declaration on the theme of the Assembly with concrete commitments to action.

UN-Habitat Assembly: 27-31 May 2019

27 May: Ceremonial Opening attended by President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya;

27 – 28 May: Establish the rules of procedure for the UN-Habitat Assembly and Executive Board; election of the Executive Board; negotiation and endorsement of resolutions;

29 May: High-level segment focused on the theme of the Assembly in a dynamic and interactive strategic dialogue; The Interactive Strategic Dialogue will bring together decision-makers and leaders, representatives from public and business sector partners and relevant stakeholders. These key representatives and partners will interactively debate on policies, co-creation and investment opportunities to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs at city-level.

31 May: Closure and agreement on the Ministerial Declaration

Non-Legislative events

1. First Global Stakeholders Forum: Saturday and Sunday, 25-26 May 2019

The Forum promotes a strategic stakeholders’ collaborative approach in preparation for the UN-Habitat Assembly by consolidating views of stakeholders, including business sector, based on the theme and the sub-theme of the Assembly. The Forum will result in stakeholders’ outcome documents to be shared at the Assembly and in agreement on enhanced stakeholder engagement and partnership with UN-Habitat

2. Global Strategic Business Leaders Dialogue Series: Sunday, 26 May 2019 10:00 - 1700

The one-day event will bring together high-level participants from business, local and national governments to discuss “Innovating for Cities and Communities: How Industry and Investors are addressing the Sustainable Development Goals”. The dialogue will demonstrate the advantages of sustainable urban growth and development, and the proactive role to be played by the private sector. It will result in consensus on a framework for private sector collaboration with UN-Habitat and other stakeholders (including launch of the UN-Habitat Business Network), in accelerating implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs. Specific actions will be identified to: enhance investments and financing; scale-up innovative practices; strengthen joint advocacy; and address global norms and standards in specific areas.

3. One UN Meeting: Tuesday 28 May 13:00 – 14:45

The One-UN meeting will be attended by over 20 United Nations agencies and seeks to enhance the United Nations system-wide approach to sustainable urbanization and Human Settlements as well as UN-Habitat's contribution to the United Nations reform. The United Nations collaborative implementation framework that covers the areas of knowledge/data; operations and policy, partnerships and financing will also be addressed.

4. A reception hosted by the Government of Kenya: Tuesday, 28 May 2019 19:00 – 22:00

5. A Partnership and Pledging Conference: Wednesday, 29 May 2019 08:00 – 10:00

The conference will frame the challenges of urbanization (e.g. urban poverty, marginalization, climate change, unemployment, etc.) in the context of an increasingly urbanizing world and the urgency of collective actions.

The conference will articulate the role of UN-Habitat as a worthy and reliable partner in providing integrated and innovative solutions in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

Ultimately the conference will lead to identification of sustainable funding resources for UN-Habitat with high-level participation from the Governments and other relevant partners.

6. Local and Regional Governments' Forum: Wednesday 29 May 18:00 – 19:00

This brings together cities, policy makers and business to dialogue on innovations in accelerating implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve the SDGs locally.

Mayors, Governors and other key actors will inspire each other through discussion on best practices that address cities' issues and leverage opportunities.

The Forum will look at ways to engage and bridge the communication gap between mayors/local and regional governments, national governments, the UN and the private sector.

7. A reception for the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10): Wednesday, 29 May 2019 19:00 – 22:00

The reception is to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, the host country of WUF10, and the city of Abu Dhabi to promote the WUF10 to be held in February 2020, and to also provide a network building partnership within the participating governments, local governments and relevant partners.

Engaging and bridging the communication gap between mayors/local governments, national governments, the UN and the Private sector.

Other Events at the Assembly

1. External Side Events

Side events will be held early morning, at lunchtime and in the evenings Monday – Thursday

2. Exhibition – Urban Solutions Expo

The Urban Solutions Expo will continue throughout the UN-Habitat Assembly and will promote innovative and sustainable solutions to the challenges facing cities and communities.

The Expo will feature an Urban Tech and Innovation Tent showcasing frontier technologies and cutting-edge initiatives, exhibition booths and networking and informal discussion spaces.

3. City Stage

This will provide a space for content to be shared by UN-Habitat and stakeholders in an informal environment with panels, presentations, films, music and much more.

To register to attend and for more information go to

<https://unhabitat.org/habitatassembly> or contact

unhabitat-info@un.org