



# UN-Habitat Executive Board, 21-23 November 2022 – Statements by Switzerland

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## Agenda item 5: Draft Programme of Work and Budget 2023

My delegation would like to commend the Secretariat for the presentation of a conservative budget for 2023. The call for a realistic budget was heard and we welcome the reduction of the budget of the Foundation non-earmarked funds to USD 3 mio. in the current proposal. We trust that this budget and the transparency with which it is presented, will strengthen the trust of donors.

As a consequence of this transparent budget process, the UN-Secretary General proposes to increase the contribution from the regular budget of the UN to UN-Habitat. Switzerland fully supports this proposal and the relevant recommendation of the ACABQ. My delegation recommends that in the recruitment of new personal, be they funded by regular budget or other resources, due consideration is given to gender aspects and to regional diversity of UN-Habitat's staff. We note with concern that women are still largely underrepresented in leading position (P5 and above) and encourage the Executive Director to continue her efforts in this regard.

On the scalability model: My delegation concurs with the priorities set by the Secretariat, i.e. return to solvency with positive net assets of the non-earmarked Foundation fund, repayment of loan and establishment of a reasonable reserve. On the latter, a fine line has to be drawn between amounts put in the reserve and reinvested in the organization. In our view, the establishment of a reasonable reserve should also allow for reinvesting parts of a surplus of revenues in the organization.

On diversification of funding: While we welcome UN-Habitat's efforts to diversify its funding resources, we also recommend the Secretariat not to get lost in diversification. What do we mean by this? Given the limited human resources, we strongly suggest that the Secretariat focuses on high potential areas of funding diversification. Apart from Member States contributions, we see high potential in partnerships with foundations. In this context, we note with satisfaction the new partnership with the Botnar Foundation, which is based in Switzerland, on the Youth 2030 Cities Initiative. On the other hand, the ACABQ report on the draft programme of work and the draft budget mentions crowd-sourced funding campaigns. Could the Secretariat provide us an overview of UN-Habitat's crowd-sourced funding campaigns and the results achieved?

Mr. Chair

We encourage UN-Habitat to continue to inject its unique expertise into the Geneva based discussions and to benefit from synergies with all stakeholders. Also in 2023, it

will be important that UN-Habitat contributes to the discussions on human rights and local governance in the Human Rights Council and that it engages with the different humanitarian actors and the Working Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on humanitarian policies and emergencies. We note with concern that the position of the Head of UN Habitat's liaison office in Geneva has been vacant for a long time and we invite the Executive Director to fill this vacancy at the earliest convenience.

UN-Habitat's collaboration with the Geneva Cities Hub and the UN regional commission UNECE as organizer of the Forum of Mayors has raised attention on the inter-linkages between local, national and international action to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. In this regards, we see a potential of cross-fertilization between Geneva-based actors and the new Local 2030 Coalition to advance the localization of the SDGs.

Finally, UN-Habitat, by its nature, benefits from a broad range of expertise from stakeholders in its inter-governmental deliberations and in the implementation of its programs. We regret, that so far stakeholders are only allowed to intervene at the very end of the Executive Board meetings, when Member States and Secretariat are tired and glad to wind up and go home. Not allowing stakeholders to raise their voice under relevant agenda items prevents them from a meaningful engagement in these meetings. We would hope that this be addressed in the new stakeholder engagement policy that is currently being developed.

### **Agenda Item 7 on Operational Activities:**

La Suisse et ONU-Habitat entretiennent un partenariat solide et de longue date. ONU-Habitat met en œuvre un grand nombre de projets financés par la Suisse en collaboration avec les autorités nationales et locales et d'autres partenaires. Dans l'ensemble, nous sommes très satisfaits de la mise en œuvre de ces projets. Permettez-moi de souligner un très bon exemple, et un moins bon exemple de notre collaboration.

La collaboration de la Suisse avec ONU-Habitat en Egypte, en Jordanie et au Cameroun continue d'être mise en œuvre avec succès. En particulier, le programme « Urbanisme et infrastructures dans les contextes de migration » (Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts UPIMC) produit des résultats significatifs et prévoit de s'étendre à d'autres villes et quartiers dans les mois à venir.

En revanche, la collaboration au Vietnam sur le « Renforcement institutionnel de la gouvernance urbaine » (Institutional Strengthening in Urban Governance) connaît des retards importants. Le personnel actuel d'ONU-Habitat au bureau local de Hanoi continue d'être insuffisant pour permettre une mise en œuvre efficace du projet en collaboration avec les partenaires vietnamiens, et nécessite des actions urgentes qui ont été convenues à Hanoi lors d'une récente mission. Tout en sachant qu'ONU-Habitat est malheureusement confronté à des restrictions de ressources sur de multiples fronts, nous recommandons vivement que les pénuries qui mettent en péril la bonne mise en œuvre des projets soient communiquées rapidement et de manière transparente afin de trouver conjointement des solutions.

Switzerland and UN-Habitat enjoy a longstanding and strong partnership. UN-Habitat implements a large number of projects funded by Switzerland together with national and local authorities and other partners. By and large, we are very pleased with the ongoing implementation of the projects. Allow-me to highlight one very good and one not so good example of our collaboration.

Switzerland's collaboration with UN Habitat in Egypt, Jordan and Cameroon continues to be implemented successfully. In particular the program on Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts (UPIMC) is delivering significant results, and is extending its successful collaboration to additional cities and neighborhoods in the coming months.

On the other hand, the collaboration in Vietnam on "Institutional Strengthening in Urban Governance" is facing significant delays. The current UN Habitat staffing at the local Hanoi office continues to be insufficient to allow for an effective implementation of the project in collaboration with Vietnamese partners, and requires urgent action that have been agreed on in Hanoi during a recent mission. While we know that UN-Habitat unfortunately faces resources restraints at multiple fronts, we strongly recommend that shortages that jeopardize the successful implementation of projects be communicated early and in a transparent way in order to jointly find solutions.

### **Agenda Item 9 on the World Urban Forum:**

La Suisse tient à féliciter ONU-Habitat pour l'organisation très réussie du 11<sup>ème</sup> Forum urbain mondial (FUM) en juin dernier à Katowice en Pologne. Avec 22'000 participants, 400 événements et 700 intervenants, le FUM a offert une fois de plus une occasion unique de débattre, discuter, créer des réseaux et échanger des connaissances entre les différents acteurs de l'urbanisation. Pour la Suisse, le FUM a été une occasion opportune de renouer le dialogue avec des partenaires clés et de discuter de sujets essentiels tels que la planification urbaine/territoriale inclusive et durable, la lutte contre les inégalités urbaines par le biais d'infrastructures résilientes, ou les investissements dans les infrastructures locales.

Switzerland would like to congratulate UN-Habitat for the very successful organization of the 11th World Urban Forum this June in Katowice Poland. With 22'000 participants and 400 events featuring 700 speakers, the WUF offered once more a unique opportunity of debate, discussion, networking and knowledge exchange among different stakeholders on urbanization. For Switzerland, the WUF was a timely occasion to reengage with key partners and discuss critical topics such as inclusive and sustainable urban/territorial planning, addressing urban inequalities through resilient Infrastructure, or area-based infrastructure investments.

### **Agenda item 14 – JIU Report**

Ma délégation se félicite du rapport du Corps Commun d'inspection (CCI) et du fait qu'il soit présenté et discuté lors de cette réunion du Conseil exécutif. Le rapport du CCI arrive à point nommé et formule des recommandations importantes. Ma délégation félicite la Directrice exécutive et le secrétariat pour l'esprit ouvert et

constructif avec lequel ils ont entamé la mise en œuvre de ces recommandations. Dans l'esprit de la dernière résolution de l'Assemblée Générale sur ONU-Habitat, nous demandons au Secrétariat de rendre compte de la mise en œuvre de ces recommandations lors des prochaines réunions de ce Conseil.

La mise en œuvre des projets d'ONU-Habitat dépend fortement de l'appui de consultants à court terme. Dans votre rapport, vous critiquez la qualité des services fournis par l'Office des Nations Unies à Nairobi (ONUN) dans le domaine des ressources humaines. Quelles recommandations formuleriez-vous à l'égard de l'ONUN pour une amélioration de la qualité de ses services et recommanderiez-vous au CCI d'établir un rapport sur la qualité des prestations de l'ONUN ?

My delegation welcomes the JIU report and the fact that it is presented and discussed in the EB meeting. The JIU report is very timely and makes important recommendations. My delegation welcomes the open and constructive spirit, in which the implementation of these recommendations was approached. In the spirit of the latest GA resolution on UN-Habitat, we call on the Secretariat to report on the implementation of these recommendations in subsequent meetings of this Executive Board.

Project implementation of UN-Habitat heavily depends on the support of short term consultancies. In your report, you criticize the quality of service delivery by UNON in the area of human resources. What recommendations would you give to UNON to improve its service delivery and would you recommend to do a JIU report on quality performance of UNON?