

# Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Liaison Offices



MARCH 2012

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UN  HABITAT

## Evaluation Report 6/2012

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Assessment and Classification of Emergencies
EC	European Commission
EUR	Euro
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LENSS	Local Estimate of Needs for Shelter and Settlement
MTSIP	Mid-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USD	United States Dollar

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the UN-Habitat liaison offices was conducted at the request of UN-Habitat Management. It served to fulfil task 118 identified in the One UN-Habitat Action Plan of 19 October 2011, which called for an assessment of the implications of the UN-Habitat organizational reform of its liaison offices in New York, Geneva, Brussels and Washington, D.C.

The liaison offices were established one-by-one over several decades and have carried out their generic functions to different degrees facing various challenges at systemic level and related to the specific context in which each liaison office operates. The primary function of the offices is to forge partnerships with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, donors and civil society at global centres. Other functions include advocacy and marketing of UN-Habitat key priorities, programmes and products; resource mobilization; information sharing; and follow-up. In the new reform of UN-Habitat, the project-based management approach has been adopted and is expected to affect all entities of the Agency, including the liaison offices, in ensuring that they contribute towards increasing efficiency, productivity as well as transparency and accountability of UN-Habitat.

### II. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the roles, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness and implications of the new reform on the liaison offices. Specifically, the objectives were to assess effectiveness and efficiency of the liaisons offices in carrying out key functions in terms of organizations and technical representation, information sharing, advocacy and outreach, building of partnerships, resource mobilization and the way in which each office delivers and conducts its work. The evaluation also assessed how the new reform could impact the liaison offices and suggested how the strategic roles of the liaison offices could be enhanced in the new reform.

The evaluation was managed and conducted by the Evaluation Unit with the support of an external consultant, Ms. Nefise Bazoğlu. The evaluation took place over the period from November 2011 to March 2012. Different methods of data collection were used, and included desk review of documents, visits to the liaison offices to conduct interviews with staff and other stakeholders, and a questionnaire was administered to staff at headquarters and liaison offices. No cost-benefit analysis was carried out due to difficulties encountered in collating the different sources. Another limitation was that it was not possible to interview all stakeholders, in particular national officials in the host cities of the liaison offices.

### III. KEY FINDINGS

#### Organizational and Technical Representation

The offices have represented UN-Habitat at political and technical levels within United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional bodies and civil society. The New York office has played a critical role in following up on UN-Habitat's work programme approval processes lobbied delegates to the United Nations General Assembly for negotiating critical resolutions of interest to the agency and participated in a wide range of working groups, task forces and executive committees, including the United Nations Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The Geneva office has focused more on programmatic aspects of humanitarian aid, representing UN-Habitat in meetings aimed at resolving humanitarian challenges. The office has actively represented UN-Habitat and participated in the Consolidated Appeal Processes, and the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund. The Brussels office has represented UN-Habitat in the European Union and its subsidiary bodies and institutions, advocating policy dialogue that has led to improved working relationships between the agency and the European Union. The Washington office has represented UN-Habitat in political and technical meetings of the Global Environment Facility, the Organization of American States, and the World Bank. This representation has improved UN-Habitat's visibility and, among its partners, demonstrated its unique technical capacity.

#### Partnerships

The liaison offices have forged key partnerships. Some of these partnerships are the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Others are the Norwegian Refugee Council and non-governmental organization consortia in Geneva, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. Partners also include the United Nations Development Group in New York, European Union institutions in Brussels, the World Bank, Cities Alliance, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, and the Inter-America Coalition for the Presentation of Violence in Washington, D.C. These partners have appreciated UN-Habitat's activities, events and contributions.

#### Advocacy

New York, Geneva, Washington, D.C., and Brussels host a range of events — international conferences, forums and meetings — through which liaison offices have taken the initiative to promote UN-Habitat's mission and priorities. In addition, the offices have played a key role in promoting UN-Habitat major events including World Habitat Day, the World Urban Forum, World Water Day,



ministerial conferences and the launch of global reports on human settlements. The New York office serves as the UN-Habitat focal point for the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat and this has improved the communication and advocacy of UN-Habitat activities. UN-Habitat has developed a number of normative products on humanitarian issues under the Geneva office's leadership, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Strategy and Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas, the post-disaster and post-conflict land guidelines, risk mapping and shelter needs assessment model and shelter project catalogue. The Brussels office has added value to advocacy and marketing of UN-Habitat priorities within European Union institutions. As a consequence, sustainable urban development issues are a priority on the European Union agenda. The Washington office has elevated discussions on sustainable urbanization issues among United States policymakers by engaging them through the global celebrations of World Habitat Day 2009, and the process of the World Urban Forum 2010, which led to attendance of a 50-member United States delegation at the fifth Forum and the development of a framework for sustainable urbanization. These efforts have raised awareness of UN-Habitat's work, sustainable urbanization and in some cases, led to the introduction of legislations on urban development and poverty reduction.

### Information Sharing

Sharing of information with other United Nations agencies and relevant intergovernmental, regional organization as well as civil society organizations has also increased

the visibility of UN-Habitat. However, UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi has been concerned that the liaison offices have been working in isolation and have failed to share adequate information.

### Fundraising

The contributions of UN-Habitat liaison offices have attracted funding and helped to establish new partnerships. The Geneva office has participated in Consolidated Appeals Process and the Central Emergency Relief Fund, which has resulted in increased humanitarian financing for UN-Habitat field projects over the past three years (USD 6.1 million in 2009; USD18.7 million in 2010; USD 80.4 million in 2011). In 2008, the Brussels office lobbied the European Commission resulting in a contribution of about USD 7 million earmarked funds to UN-Habitat for the implementation of the first phase of projects in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. The European Commission further approved about USD 14 million for the second phase to projects in these countries. Pipeline projects and programmes worth EUR 77 million (more than USD 100 million) are under negotiation with the Commission as of December 2011. Contributions of non-earmarked from United States of America funding increased from USD 148,000 in 2007 to USD 2 million in 2011.

## IV. CHALLENGES

To improve the effectiveness of the liaison offices, it is necessary to address some of the key constraints and challenges, which were identified by the evaluation team and apply to all UN-Habitat's liaison offices.

***A disconnect between the UN-Habitat headquarters and liaison offices:***

Aside from the geographical isolation of Nairobi from the global cities of the Northern Hemisphere where the offices are located, there is an organizational distance between the offices and headquarters. While staff members at the offices feel isolated from the mainstream programme, those from headquarters feel that the offices fail to provide enough substantive information to partners based in cities hosting the liaison offices.

***Lack of policy or guidelines on the work of liaison offices:***

This is further complicated by the overwhelming responsibility each office bears for liaising and for performing programme functions. For instance, the New York office is involved in a continuous series of meetings with the United Nations Secretariat, intergovernmental processes, inter-agency matters and outreach activities with partners outside the United Nations System. The Geneva office collaborates with various United Nations agencies, especially those in the humanitarian sector dealing with post-conflict and post-disaster affairs. The Brussels office focuses on the institutions of the European Union, and the Washington, D.C., office deals with inter-institutional affairs, including fostering cooperation with international and intergovernmental institutions such as the World Bank and the Organization of American States.

***Limited resources and capacities in liaison offices:***

The scale of the demands and the high expectations the offices must meet are disproportionate to the capacity and low staff levels. These demands will grow as a new vision of UN-Habitat takes root and as the organization prepares for

Rio+20 in 2012 and Habitat III in 2016. Discussions with the liaison offices in Geneva and New York, partner organizations and staff at headquarters revealed that office staff lacked the capacity to deal with liaison and programme functions. At the same time, partners emphasized the importance of UN-Habitat providing technical expertise to processes. There is a need to review office priorities so that efficiency and effectiveness in their technical and liaison roles can be maximized.

***Clear reporting and accountability lines are not in place:***

Structurally, the liaison offices are in the Office of the Executive Director and report to it on all matters. Given that liaison offices are involved in advocacy, organizational and technical representation, programming, resource mobilization, information sharing and follow-up, reporting to the Office of the Executive Director does not optimize cooperation with the rest of the agency in terms of substantive programme issues and day-to-day administration.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The liaison offices have successfully represented UN-Habitat within constraints of limited resources. The New York office has provided political representation of UN-Habitat. For the period from Rio+20 in 2012 to the Habitat III in 2016, intense political work is foreseen and a boost is needed either by rotation of relevant staff over critical periods or by re-prioritizing the work of the office and improve technical representation. The liaison office in Geneva has demonstrated its added value, representing UN-Habitat in technical meetings and improving the visibility and recognition of UN-Habitat's

technical capacity which has contributed to increase funding for humanitarian projects and forged partnerships. The Brussels office has shown positive results in the area of resource mobilization. By defining key function and priorities, the office could further tap into resource mobilization opportunities and a growing community of UN agencies represented in Brussels. The Washington, D.C., office has in a short period of time, demonstrated its potential for resource mobilization and building of partnerships.

The achievements of the liaison offices are highly dependent on the local institutional context in which they are working, and the context determines to a large extent the prioritization of functions. This assessment found that staff levels and budgets varied significantly between the liaison offices. Over the period of 2008 to 2011, the budget of the liaison office has decreased overall, in particularly that of the Washington, D.C. and Brussels offices. At the same time there is no indication that the workload required to maintain the functions of the liaison offices has decreased based on interviews of staff at the offices and headquarters.

## VI. SCENARIOS

The future of the liaison offices, based on their achievements, strengths and challenges has been captured in three scenarios. Each scenario has its advantages and disadvantages and builds on the individual office scenarios contained in the assessment of each of the offices. Regardless of the option preferred, there is a need for policy guidelines on liaison offices. Their roles have to be redefined and aligned with the new project-

based management approach; priorities and clear expectations have to be articulated for each office; reporting lines have to be clarified to improve efficiency and internal collaboration, and minimum resources have to be set aside for offices to fulfil their responsibilities. Communication between offices and headquarters must improve.

### *Scenario I: Maintain the Status Quo*

In the view of the limited resources available, the liaison offices are maintained under the same arrangements but each will need to be redefined in terms of priorities, terms of references established, reporting lines aligned with the new organizational structure. This could strengthen the relationship between the offices and headquarters, but the offices' effectiveness in the delivery of results would only improve negligibly, at best. One disadvantage of maintaining the *status quo* is the lack of adequate presence and regular substantive inputs to technical representation, which UN-Habitat's partners perceive as the agency's lack of commitment.

### *Scenario II: Concentrate on Liaison Functions*

Liaison offices will not be much involved in technical representation; headquarters would be sending substantive inputs and staff to the liaison offices to participate in technical meetings and working groups. Under this option UN-Habitat liaison offices would, at a minimum, consist of the head of the office, one professional staff, one information officer and an administrative staff. The offices could add stronger information and communication function to their work portfolio as well as a well-structured resource mobilization function. Although

this option may lead to cost savings overall, one of the disadvantages of this option is that opportunities may be missed because Nairobi is located geographically far from key global policymakers, nodes of resource allocation and distribution, and centres of excellence.

### *Scenario III: Strengthen Liaison Offices*

The technical strengthening of the offices could be achieved by creating fully fledged substantive offices in a substantive area (e.g. humanitarian aid), transforming the office teams to match the substantive areas in question, or simply increasing staff capacity. To this aim, the offices could be integrated into the agency's skills inventory, so as to enable staff swaps and rotation between headquarters and liaison offices. At the same time, job descriptions of liaison office staff should be reviewed and additional personnel assigned to offices to cover those areas of highest priority for UN-Habitat with adequate budgets approved for the offices. This option could involve systematic integration of the liaison office staff in the project teams at headquarters. The scenario would come with incremental costs but would strengthen presence, efficiency and effectiveness of the liaison offices. The New York and Geneva offices could thrive as the strong outposts of the UN-Habitat's advocacy, outreach and communications functions and could improve their effectiveness on humanitarian affairs. The Washington, D.C. and Brussels offices could be strengthened and tap into donor opportunities that exist in the United States and the European Union.

## VII. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1:**

Enhance the contribution of the liaison offices in the new project-based management approach. Changes should be considered in view of three scenarios, (maintain status quo, concentrate on liaison functions, or strengthening of the offices) for long-term decision-making on the future of the liaison office. Strategic guidelines should be developed based on the roles and tasks of each liaison office with key priorities, contribution to the project-based approach, and expectations of headquarters and contribution to partnerships.

### **Recommendation 2:**

Develop terms of reference to spell out the priorities and tasks of each liaison office. Heads of offices would then be held accountable for the delivery of the tasks specified. Job descriptions of liaison office staff also need to be reviewed to ensure their alignment with the new organizational structure.

### **Recommendation 3:**

Establish new reporting and communication lines in alignment with the organizational structure. Liaison offices could report on the administrative and management matters to the Office of Executive Director and the Office of Management, and provide substantive reports to the Project Office. The reporting lines should also take into consideration the extent to which technical contribution is expected from liaison office staff and ensuring support from substantive offices at headquarters in Nairobi.

**Recommendation 4:**

Establish, as *modus operandi*, that technical advice should be the domain of UN-Habitat headquarters and provided by headquarters substantive offices to the liaison offices. While the existing liaison office staff should strengthen their “generalist” profiles, there should also be a minimum number of staff specialized in the technical competencies relevant to the particular liaison office.

**Recommendation 5:**

Clarify fundraising expectations for liaison offices and develop appropriate fundraising strategies while linking them horizontally or vertically to the resource mobilization structures at UN-Habitat headquarters.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The United Nations General Assembly mandated UN-Habitat to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The agency has both normative and operational mandates.

UN-Habitat was initially established in Geneva in 1977 through the General Assembly Resolution 32/162 as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The Geneva office was initially created as a mission office before the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in 1976 and in 1978 it became the UN-Habitat Information Office for Western Europe. The New York office was established in 1978 for administration purposes and with close proximity to the UN System and decision making bodies.

In 1996, during the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, a new normative mandate the Centre was added: to support and monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Istanbul+5 conference, which was a special session of the Generally Assembly held in 2001 on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, recommended strengthening the Centre. This led to the decision to elevate the Centre to a fully-fledged “Programme”, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) through resolution 56/206 of

21 December 2001. Other important decisions in this resolution include strengthening UN-Habitat’s normative role, designating the agency as the focal point within the United Nations System for human settlements and establishing the World Urban Forum to foster dialogue and debate on human settlements. The adoption of the resolution also showed commitment of United Nations Member States to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goal target of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

In 2002, governments attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development further gave UN-Habitat the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress towards the Millennium Development Goal targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation. The elevation of the organization from a centre to a programme and the added global responsibilities resulted in expansion of the agency into new areas. It was also during this period that the Brussels Liaison Office was added.

The biennial work programme for 2002-2003 was approved with an increased budget of about 30 per cent and additional staff posts. The programme focused on integrating normative work and technical activities driven by two global campaigns for secure tenure and urban governance. Promotion

of cross-cutting issues such as gender and youth were also prioritized. Campaigning structures including the World Urban Forum, ministerial conferences and expert group meetings were also put in place.

Commensurate with its status and substantive focus, UN-Habitat's work programme for 2004-2005 was structured around four sub-programmes corresponding to four divisional structures. In addition to the sub-programmes, the Executive Direction Management and the Programme Support Division became part of the organizational structures for implementation of UN-Habitat objectives, with all liaison offices structurally under the Executive Direction Management.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services' 2005 in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat commended the organization's achievements. However, given its broad mandate and limited resources, it recommended sharpening of UN-Habitat's focus for greater impact. Thus, UN-Habitat developed the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for 2008-2013 to strengthen the programme and channel delivery through six focus areas: advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; urban planning, management and governance; land and housing; urban infrastructure and basic services; human settlements financing; and excellence in management. With the intent of increasing partnership, the Washington office was established in 2007.

The implementation of the first phase of the MTSIP (2008-2009) was assessed in a 2010 peer review. The review recommended further reforms including the establishment of an organizational structure to achieve

better results within priority areas; establishment of cooperation mechanisms at all levels; and intensification of efforts to raise the agency's profile. In rationalizing the organizational structure to optimize efficiency, productivity, transparency and accountability, the agency has adopted a project-based management approach. The evaluation of its liaison offices aims at enhancing their contribution towards improving the agency's performance in the new project-based organization.

## 1.2 ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF LIAISON OFFICES

The prime function of a liaison office is to represent UN-Habitat. These offices are in cities of global importance, hosting United Nations agencies, international institutions, multilateral and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, these are cities in which donors provide a wide diversity of opportunities for UN-Habitat. The liaison offices are to use every opportunity to market the mandate and activities of UN-Habitat.

The generic functions of the liaison offices can be summarized as follows:

- **Organizational and technical representation**, acting as representatives of UN-Habitat in numerous events, meetings, some being political and others technical
- **Forging partnerships with United Nations agencies**, intergovernmental and regional organizations, institutions, donors as well as civil society

- **Advocacy and marketing** of UN-Habitat priorities and programmes/products
- **Information sharing and follow-up**, channelling information between various departments of UN-Habitat with other United Nations agencies and relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations
- **Mobilizing resources** from development partners, including donors

With the exception of that of Geneva, the liaison offices are not involved in programme and project formulation and implementation. The functions — representation, advocacy, resource mobilization, information sharing and follow-up, and partnership — are carried out by each office at different degrees. Liaison office staff members spend considerable time on organizational representation. Technical representation, on the other hand, depends upon: (i) the capacity of the liaison offices; and (ii) the extent to which headquarters staff are able to engage with the liaison offices.

### 1.3 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the role and functions of the liaison offices, identify constraints and challenges, and provide recommendations to UN-Habitat management on how to enhance the work of the offices and their contribution to improve efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and accountability of the agency in the new project-based management approach. The evaluation findings and recommendations would feed into the agency's overall reform.

The reform is intended to contribute to help rationalizing the organizational structure and to optimize effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, transparency as well as accountability in delivering the agency's mandate at the country, regional and global levels. The main characteristic of the proposed organizational reform is the project-based management approach, which brings together the normative and operational work under each project. All projects will be managed through a Project Accrual and Accounting System. This evaluation of UN-Habitat's liaison offices in Brussels, Geneva, New York and Washington, D.C. was carried out as task 118 of the One UN-Habitat Action Plan of 19 October 2011 to assess implications of the agency's new reform on its liaison offices.

The specific objectives of the evaluation, as provided in the terms of references (Annex I), requested an assessment of:

- (a) Effectiveness of liaison offices in representing UN-Habitat, particularly in inter-agency meetings;
- (b) Efficiency of the liaison offices in advocacy and sharing of information between UN-Habitat and other United Nations agencies and intergovernmental institutions;
- (c) Effectiveness of the offices in increasing UN-Habitat's visibility and disseminating information on UN-Habitat's mission, work programme and activities;
- (d) Effectiveness of relationships of the offices with relevant partners;



- (e) Productivity, transparency and accountability of the offices;
- (f) Effectiveness of resource mobilization by the offices.

The evaluation would provide recommendations on how the offices could contribute to UN-Habitat's new project approach. The recommendations would also take into account the specific tasks assigned to each office and would be supported by individual scenarios providing two to three options as well as an overall scenario for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the offices in the future.

## 1.4 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 is an introduction, and presents the context and background of the liaison offices, the purpose and objectives of the evaluation. Chapter 2 describes the evaluation methodology. Chapter 3 presents the main evaluation findings with emphasis on background, achievements, challenges and scenarios. Chapter 4 is on the conclusions, challenges and scenarios, as well as key recommendations for the future of the liaison offices.

## 2. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

### 2.1 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was based on key evaluation criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. It examined the extent to which the offices had delivered against their key functions, identified challenges and assessed the implications of the Agency's reform on the role and functions of the liaison offices.

The evaluation made use of various methods for data and information collection. It began with a desk review of relevant documents including documents related to the reform process followed by staff interviews conducted at the liaison offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Geneva and Brussels. The evaluation also relied heavily on interviews with staff at UN-Habitat headquarters and the agency's partners. The evaluation team met and discussed with key partners, in particular those in New York and Geneva, to gain a better understanding of and identify concerns of the offices. In addition, a questionnaire that captured views on the scope and work of the offices from staff and

headquarters was administered. The list of people interviewed and respondents to the e-mail survey is appended in Annex II.

The evaluation was managed and conducted by the Evaluation Unit with the support of an external consultant, Ms. Nefise Bazoglu. The evaluation took place over the period from November 2011 to March 2012.

### 2.2 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation was less comprehensive than a full scale evaluation but applied key principles of such an assessment, including triangulation of information. Due to time limitations, it was impossible to conduct interviews with all external stakeholders, in particular the representatives of national governments in the cities hosting the liaison offices. Another limitation was that an in-depth cost-benefit analysis of the offices could not be carried out at the time of the evaluation because of the difficulties encountered in collating different budget sources.

## 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 3.1 KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

This chapter has two sections. The first section (3.1) presents the findings of the assessment of the liaison offices. It provides a description of the background, achievements, challenges and scenarios for each office. Staffing levels, budget and achievements of the liaison offices were assessed against their expected functions in terms of organizational and technical representation, partnerships, advocacy, information sharing and fundraising. The next section (3.2) contains an analysis of strategic and operational issues of systemic nature affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the liaison offices.

#### 3.1.1 NEW YORK LIAISON OFFICE

##### Office Background

New York City hosts the headquarters and secretariat of the United Nations Organization and for this alone the city is important in the world development context. The United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and the headquarters of a number of the organization's agencies such as United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund all operate from New York City. In addition, the city is host to a number of multilateral and non-governmental organizations, companies and centres of knowledge.

The New York Liaison Office was established in 1978. Its capacity, however, remained quite low (one professional and one general services staff) until the early 2000s. The capacity of the office was increased when the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements was elevated to the Human Settlements Programme in 2001. Currently, the office has five professionals (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, and 1 P-3, and a junior professional officer). In addition, the office frequently uses interns for its work. Table 3.1, provides a summary of approved funds for the office over the last four years. However, the table does not include staff costs. The approved budgets decreased by 67 per cent from USD 64,000 in 2009 to USD 21,042 in 2011. Information on actual resources allocated to the office in 2011 was not provided to the evaluation team. The Programme Support Division informed that such information was difficult to collate because office costs were taken from different sources in 2011 and not necessarily from approved budgets. The office does not pay rent (N/A) because it is housed in the United Nations building. Table 3.1, which excludes staff costs, does not allow for a detailed cost-benefit analysis. However, the table clearly indicates that, aside from staff, the liaison operation in New York has a very limited budget.

**TABLE 3.1:** New York Office Allocated Budgets for 2008 – 2011 (in USD)

Item	2008	2009	2010	2011
Travel	28 708	35 000	35 254	7 237
Office Costs	21 000	20 500	15 025	7 280
Office Rent	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Miscellaneous	7 500	8 500	3 050	6 525
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 208</b>	<b>64 000</b>	<b>53 329</b>	<b>21 042</b>

Source: UN-Habitat Programme Support Division, 2012

## Achievements

**Organizational and technical representation:** The New York Liaison Office has successfully represented the corporate management of UN-Habitat at the United Nations Secretariat. This in itself could be considered an achievement; the organizational machinery of headquarters and the intergovernmental processes organizational machinery have developed over decades, which dictates a wide array of standards and bureaucratic requirements are labour intensive and time-consuming to follow. The office has also been successful in representing UN-Habitat on the inter-agency front where liaising work has increased exponentially, as a necessary outcome of working towards the “One United Nations” goal.

The potential added value of the New York office is its role in following up work programme approval processes at the United Nations Secretariat. The office has continually lobbied with allies among delegates to the General Assembly for approval of the proposed regular budget. In addition, United Nations policymaking organs are in New York, where negotiations of critical resolu-

tions take place. For instance, the adoption of Resolution on Human Settlements by Member States of the General Assembly in 2011 acknowledged the importance of Habitat III and established national and global strategies to promote sustainable urbanization. Additionally, the Commission on Sustainable Development’s adoption in May 2011 of urban mobility and pro-poor sanitation as critical ingredients of sustainable development indicates the effectiveness of the New York office in advocating and promoting UN-Habitat’s priorities. It was due to the major revisions of the programme document that UN-Habitat headquarters made for the intergovernmental negotiations that push through the resolution. Naturally, these achievements have resulted from teamwork between the Executive Director, the Office of the Executive Director and the Programme Support Division, as well as the substantive programmes. Usually, liaison offices carry out the corporate vision set up at headquarters, but the relation is not linear as the New York staff and management have to use their judgement and initiative in representing the organization and guiding the Executive Director on the political

dynamics and nuances which, in turn, could feed into the corporate vision. Milestone documents prepared by headquarters in Nairobi, in some cases, undergo a critical reformulation (much beyond editing) in order to be able to increase UN-Habitat's negotiating power in New York.

The pattern of collaboration between UN-Habitat headquarters and the New York office, in substantive areas, shows that teams at headquarters prepare technical documents while the New York office conduct lobbying and networking. Often, the New York office reviews and modifies these technical documents to conform to the Secretariat's format. Although it may not be perceived as such, the evaluation team concludes that there is a reasonably good rapport between the work of headquarters and the New York office as most resolutions during the Commission of Sustainable Development, UN-Women and UN-Water have been adopted in the way the agency has formulated them.

**Partnerships:** The New York office participates in a wide range of working groups and taskforces providing substantive inputs to policies and programmes. This participation has increased the visibility of UN-Habitat work amongst other United Nations agencies and partners. The participation of the office in the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the supporting efforts of the Geneva Office, the Regional Offices and the Disaster Management Section raise the profile of UN-Habitat in the humanitarian community. The community sees UN-Habitat as adding

value, particularly in the protection (emergency response) and shelter (early recovery) clusters of humanitarian response, but also in the inter-agency platforms on issues of land, housing and planning — substantive issues which are the niche of UN-Habitat. Participation in the Executive Committee is crucial as about 60 per cent of UN-Habitat's budget comes from humanitarian aid.

The office is proving to be instrumental in pushing UN-Habitat towards the new project-based reform approach; the new partnerships forged for the emerging projects of the UN-Habitat are evidence of this effort. A significant example is the initiative transforming cities through place-making and public spaces, where the office initiated and supported the formalization of a partnership between the UN-Habitat and the Project for Public Spaces, a New York non-profit organization founded in 1975 with a mission to create and sustain public places that build communities. This strategic new partnership is directly linked to the Urban Planning and Design Branch.

**Advocacy:** New York hosts a wide range of international conferences and events. The liaison office has used these occasions as an entry point to promote UN-Habitat's mission and priorities. This has resulted in incorporating sustainable urbanization issues in reports of the High Level Committee on Programmes, the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Development Group, for example. It has also promoted major UN-Habitat events such as World Habitat Day, World Water Day, and the World Urban Forum. In addition, the New York office continues to sup-



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (front, centre) and Executive Director, UN-Habitat, Joan Clos with mayors and regional authorities on sustainable development and the UN Rio+20 Conference at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The meeting was organized by UN-Habitat, 2012 © **United Nations**

port partnerships such as the Earth Institute at Columbia University and feeds directly into projects on land, legislation and governance, as well as research and capacity-building projects.

The office has made good use of students from the distinguished universities of New York working as interns, especially for on-line advocacy. This group, which the junior professional officer and other young professionals coordinate, has successfully put the UN-Habitat mandate on the map of social media. Currently, UN-Habitat's mandate feature widely on Twitter and Facebook due to the activities of the interns.

**Information sharing:** The information and communication activities of the office (by a communications expert working as a

consultant) have improved the sharing of information. As a result, promotion of major UN-Habitat events, including the World Water Day, World Habitat Day, launches of the *Global Report on Human Settlements*, and of the Haiti Operations as Shelter Cluster are fully integrated in the activities of the United Nations Department of Public Information, an indication of improved efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat advocacy activities, which have contributed to the urban cause.

### Challenges

- **The office operates on a reactive strategy.** Priorities are unclear. Although the New York Liaison Office is on a steep learning curve in being more selective regarding the over-

whelming demands of the United Nations' intergovernmental and the inter-agency machinery, staff members continue attending, to the extent possible, all of these intergovernmental or inter-agency meetings. The lack of proactive strategies prioritizing UN-Habitat's involvement affects the delivery of the office in other areas as described below.

- ***Opportunities that New York City offers as potential entry points to resource mobilization, advocacy, learning and partnerships are missed.*** The plethora of non-governmental organizations; the vitality of the information and communication sector; and the centres of excellence remain unexplored. That the New York Liaison Office maintains its relationships with the traditional partners such as the Huairou Commission and the Earth Institute. However, there is room for wider partner outreach and to tap into non-conventional ways of doing business. An example is the unused avenue of online fundraising opportunities.
- ***There is need to improve technical representation,*** in view of the professional staff capacity available. While the office staff members are highly successful in political representation, the same conclusion cannot be drawn on representing the substantive core mandate of UN-Habitat. The headquarters staff members often claim that liaison office colleagues fail to represent UN-Habitat adequately at inter-agency

meetings and continue to ask headquarters for briefing notes. This situation is due to the lack of time for staff in New York and the confusion between the liaison office and headquarters over their respective roles and responsibilities. The evaluation team found that the value that the liaison offices added was appreciated during the milestone events (such as the Commission for Sustainable Development) in which relevant officers from headquarters participate. The criticism from the headquarters' teams applies to technical representation for the more routine activities of the intergovernmental and inter-agency set up. Professional staff members at UN-Habitat headquarters suggested that the New York staff could train themselves to be better generalists by reading the reports and knowledge products available to them, thereby become more self-reliant.

- ***Integration of the information function in the New York office's work is less than optimal.*** The New York office is active in two specialized areas: humanitarian aid, information and communications. Responsibilities related to the humanitarian aid programme are coordinated with offices in Nairobi and Geneva, whereas a consultant undertakes the information and communications function which needs to be integrated better into the work of UN-Habitat. Because the communications consultant recently working in the liai-

son office was viewed in a “guest capacity”, operating freely and equipped with resources in a generally resource-poor office environment could easily have created managerial problems. UN-Habitat’s information work in New York is too important to be hampered by managerial issues that might hinder the effectiveness of the consultant in the near future.

- **Resource mobilization is not a mandate of the New York office.** While New York is a hub of the global corporate world, the private sector and donors; the office has not yet tapped into the potential these institutions offer UN-Habitat. So far, the office has failed to devote enough time to resources mobilization because its mandate excludes this activity. Moreover, the focal point for foundations and funds is at the Washington, D.C., Liaison Office. The New York office, however, experiments with the online resource mobilization paths. However, these initiatives cannot yet be taken due to the absence of a legal framework of the United Nations Secretariat for fundraising online.

## Conclusions

The New York office has been successful over the years in the political representation of UN-Habitat. However, with Rio+20 in 2012 and the Habitat III in 2016, quick solutions should be found to the main challenges discussed above. For this extraordinary period, which requires intense political work, a boost is needed either by rotation

of relevant staff over critical periods or by urgently tackling the main challenges.

The senior management of UN-Habitat need to define a strategy of operations for the New York liaison office, which would strike the optimal balance between United Nations matters and those related to New York City. The current “introvert” nature of the New York liaison office could be transformed to more “extrovert” one and assume a reasonable dose of a “New Yorker” identity. This could be done by strengthening outreach to partners. Slowly, the office is beginning to explore opportunities in the city that are outside the circle of conventional partners, such as with Project for Public Space. However, other opportunities remain untapped.

With the new reform and project-based management approach, there is need to re-define the terms of reference for the office, balancing the internal and external duties of representing UN-Habitat. Without agreed priorities, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievements it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the office.

Reporting and communication between the office and headquarters require improvement as the current *modus operandi* fails to encourage collaboration between the two; between the New York and Geneva offices; and between the New York and Washington, D.C., offices.

The reporting line of the non-liaison and the political representation functions should be vertically tied to the individual projects or strategic functions in Nairobi. More specifically, the Professional Officer at P-4 level



working on humanitarian aid should also report to the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch; the information consultant (or officer) should also report to the Advocacy, Information and Communications Unit at headquarters, and so on. In order to guide the strategic approach and priorities that will shape the terms of reference for the New York Liaison Office, the evaluation team proposes three possible scenarios:

**Scenario 1: *Maintain status quo.***

The office continues to operate within its current work package, which embodies a strong liaison function combined with a defined niche in humanitarian aid coupled with a strategic focus on information and communication. To alleviate current bottlenecks, reporting and staffing issues need to be resolved. This can be done by instating a vertical reporting relationship to headquarters on thematic functions; improving technical representation; streamlining attendance at United Nations meetings; better defining the niche areas of staff according to their experience and background; and bringing the New York City factor into the liaison office's work.

**Scenario 2: *Expand the office so it formally embraces the information and communications function within its work portfolio.***

Although the work of the office has traditionally focused on liaison functions, demands dictate a strengthening of tasks that go beyond this and into the areas of disaster management, information and communications. A more established standing needs to be given to information and communication, by providing better defined teamwork,

in view of the vast opportunities that New York and the United Nations offer in the area of advocacy, information and communications.

**Scenario 3: *Expand the office to include resource mobilization, information and communications functions.***

The office becomes more outreach-oriented within New York and carves out a niche for the resource mobilization function, either by bringing in specialized capacity or training the existing staff. The office taps into the vast resource opportunities that exist in New York and North America as a whole, including online and non-conventional resource mobilization strategies.

The office responsible for resource mobilization at UN-Habitat's headquarters could benefit from the experience of the United Nations Children's Fund and other United Nations agencies that excel in online fundraising. If the resource mobilization function is given a more visible and formal place in the New York office then the staff should report to the resource mobilization office at headquarters. The senior management could also consider dividing responsibilities as focal points for donors and partners according to the location. The New York office would be the focal point for organizations and foundations in the city, while the Washington, D.C., office would be focal point for foundations, the Inter-American Development Bank and other organizations in the United States capital.

**TABLE 3.2:** Geneva Office Allocated Budgets for 2008 – 2011 (in USD)

Items	2008	2009	2010	2011
Staff Costs	5 000	4 000	-	-
Travel	40 022	40 000	20 000	7 237
Office Costs	24 000	30 300	10 550	-
Office Rent	-	132 000	126 591	152 068
Miscellaneous	40 300	35 500	5 000	18 450
Total	109 322	241 800	162 141	177 755

Source: UN-Habitat Programme Support Division 2012

### 3.1.2 GENEVA LIAISON OFFICE

#### Office Background

The Geneva office was initially created as a mission office before the first Conference on Human Settlements in 1976. The office was run by a general staff member until 1989, when a professional was assigned the task. After several Disaster Management Programme missions from headquarters to Geneva, and taking advantage of a large humanitarian system reform that took place in Geneva in 2005, a Professional Officer at P-4 level from the Disaster Management Programme was relocated to the Geneva office in 2005. The officer was given three main objectives: (1) be involved in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Humanitarian Reform; (2) represent UN-Habitat in the Humanitarian Cluster Approach System; and (3) facilitate UN-Habitat membership of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

The transfer of the staff member, who was specialized in humanitarian aid, also marked the expansion of the Geneva office from that of a purely liaison function to a semi-technical entity. Later in 2006, another staff member (P-5 level) was seconded to the

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and joined the Geneva office. In addition, a Professional Officer at P-4 level from the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office was posted to Geneva. The Geneva office is now staffed by one Chief (D-1 level), two Professional Officers at P-5 level, one at P-4 level and two at General Staff level. Table 3.2 shows funds approved for the Geneva office, which indicates that a substantial part of resources is spent on office rent.<sup>1</sup>

#### Achievements

The achievements of the office result from teamwork with the headquarters, regional offices, country teams and networks; and the Geneva office management and staff. Despite a moderate level of technical and substantive roles, the liaison role is very significant. The conventional liaison role of the office is mostly catalytic.

<sup>1</sup> Offices costs are not included in the costs for 2011. The office costs were not part of the approved funds but covered from different sources. At the time of the evaluation the Programme Support Division was not able to provide information on sources and amounts.

**Organizational and Technical Representation:**

The Geneva office has focused mainly on humanitarian activities, representing UN-Habitat among humanitarian partners and in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group and Reference Groups for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas. This has resulted in improved visibility and recognition of UN-Habitat's unique technical capacity in the humanitarian field.

**Partnerships:**

UN-Habitat Geneva partners include the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Immigration, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Populations Fund, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and non-governmental organization consortia. The technical capacity on humanitarian aid helped strengthen the partnerships of the Disaster Management Programme at UN-Habitat headquarters over the last decade with other organizations, as well as with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. New partnerships have also been forged with the International Labour Organization, for example.

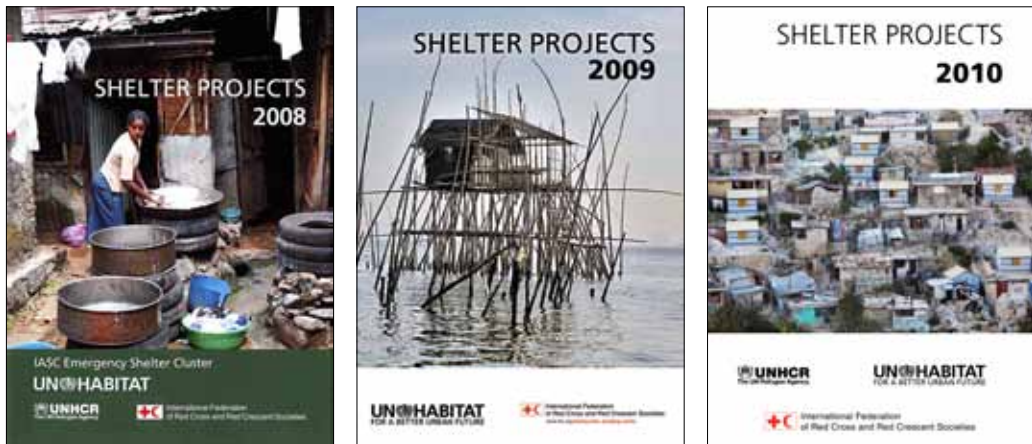
**Advocacy:**

The office has collaborated with partners in advocacy activities. It has produced normative products under the aegis of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee *Strategy and Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas; Land*

*and Natural Disasters: Guidance for Practitioners*. It has also produced shelter needs assessment tools for the *Assessment and Classification of Emergencies (ACE) Project: Mapping of Key Emergency Needs Assessment and Analysis Initiative*; and published a series on *Shelter Projects* (catalogue published annually); and *Local Estimate of Needs for Shelter and Settlement (LENSS) Tool Kit*—a useful means for assessing housing and settlement needs after a crisis. Partner organizations, UNHCR and IFRC, have appreciated collaborating with the Geneva office and expressed interest in continuing the collaboration in the future. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) believes that UN-Habitat's expertise and mandate in human settlements makes it an invaluable addition to the humanitarian aid effort.

**Fundraising:**

The office has actively participated in the Consolidated Appeals Process that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has directed and in the Central Emergency Relief Fund, facilitating the approval of funding for UN-Habitat humanitarian projects. This has resulted in increase of humanitarian financing for UN-Habitat field projects over the last three years through the Appeal Process, the Flash Appeal and Relief Fund (USD 6.1 million in 2009, USD 18.7 million in 2010, and USD 80.4 million in 2011). An important reason for these achievements is the harmonious teamwork that existed between UN-Habitat headquarters and the Geneva office.



The annual Shelter Projects publication provides a compilation of shelter programmes targeting humanitarian managers and shelter programme staff from local, national and international organizations. © UN-Habitat

## Challenges

**Lack of a corporate strategy for the role of the Geneva office:** There is not a corporate strategy that specifies the role of the liaison office. While a number of alternative routes could be chosen for the direction in which this office could evolve, the challenges of the Geneva office are made under the assumption that the office should be a substantive and technical office with minimal liaison functions.

**Absence of strategic guidance and coordination with headquarters:** The office has operated without an agreed strategy on what humanitarian aid work should be divided between headquarters, the offices in Geneva and New York and how to share the credits for achievements.

**Poor understanding of the value added by the Geneva office:** Linked to the lack of guidance, strategy and the blurred supervisory relationships is the perception at headquarters that the Geneva office operates independently from regional offices

and country teams. Some directors interviewed at headquarters were critical of the Geneva office taking on programmatic work (and capacity), which is meant to remain with the core programme in Nairobi. As a result, according to the Geneva team, technical support from and engagement of the headquarters team is weak. In addition, the managers at the Geneva office perceive that the liaison office does not get due credit for its work. For instance, the office supports fundraising through the Consolidated Appeal Process and the Central Emergency Relief Fund, but when the funds are approved they are sent to the regions and countries where projects are implemented; the office receives no funding for resource mobilization activities.

**Representation:** The representation of UN-Habitat by the Geneva office has been *ad hoc*. Lack of terms of references for the office overwhelms the staff and management, who are anxious to cover meetings that at times seem interesting but are not necessarily relevant or a priority. This may

not be attributed to the lack of capacity *per se*, but due to the particular skills composition of staff.

**Sharing of information with headquarters is below the desired level:** Although part of the Geneva office's functions is to participate in intergovernmental and inter-agency meetings and to share information with UN-Habitat headquarters, participation in such meetings has been *ad hoc*.

**Limited capacity to provide substantive support to global programmes:** The Geneva office may seem overstaffed, however, its technical capacity is insufficient to cover disaster management, risk reduction emergency and rehabilitation work. Only one of its four professional staff members has a background in the field of emergencies and rehabilitation. Without clear descriptions of posts that are aligned with humanitarian work for liaising with Geneva-based organizations, the technical capacity in the Geneva office remains limited. The United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have reaffirmed the need for a technically strong UN-Habitat in dealing with various projects. The United Nations Development Programme believes that UN-Habitat has expertise to offer in solving humanitarian crises but rarely finds it present in the working groups dealing with issues of substance.

**Unclear reporting lines and weak accountability:** Lack of clear reporting lines between the substantive section at headquarters, the Disaster Management Programme and the humanitarian aid function

in the Geneva office significantly weakens accountability and affects performance of that office. The office officially reports to the UN-Habitat Office of the Executive Director, which has no capacity to supervise on humanitarian issues.

**Missed programme opportunities on information and communications:** The Geneva office could make more efficient use of the city, as does the one in New York. One strategic organizational function with a high potential to flourish is the area of information and communications, which could benefit from collaboration with the wide range of institutions in Geneva.

## Conclusions

The Geneva Liaison Office has demonstrated its added value in terms of being a resource to the Geneva-based international humanitarian community. The office represents UN-Habitat in technical meetings and has improved the visibility and recognition of the agency's unique technical capacity, contributed increased funding for humanitarian projects and forged partnerships. There is, however, a need to further strengthen its technical competence by realigning its skills composition so it can be a more effective player in the international humanitarian community.

The office's working relationship and engagement with headquarters has not been optimal and representation in intergovernmental meetings has been *ad hoc*. There is a need to clarify functions of the office, develop terms of reference and revisit job descriptions of professional staff to ensure alignment with the new project-based structure. Existing reporting and communi-

cation lines should also be reviewed in light of the new project-based structure.

This evaluation proposes three scenarios, below, to guide the development of the terms of reference for the office:

### *Scenario 1: Maintain the status quo*

A semi-autonomous office that is semi-specialized in humanitarian aid with room for improvement on representation and other functions. The reporting lines with the headquarters are limited to the Office of the Executive Director, not the substantive agenda, the Disaster Management Programme. Remedial steps, such as better planning of how to build the capacity of the existing staff could be implemented. Keeping the status quo would imply that most of the structural challenges stated above would remain.

### *Scenario 2: Fully specialized thematic office on humanitarian aid*

A nearly fully autonomous office that follows private sector principles for sharing credits and financial resources; for example, funds raised by the office is shared. This scenario would be justified in view of the myriads of demands coming from partners in Geneva for UN-Habitat technical expertise and of the substantial share of funds for humanitarian aid in UN-Habitat's budget. This scenario, however, would create some organizational problems. First, this path would jeopardize the teamwork between headquarters and the Geneva office. Second, if more staff is added to the Geneva office, the distribution of human resources between the headquarters and the Geneva office would be skewed.

### *Scenario 3: Semi-specialized on humanitarian aid and full liaison office with information and communications function*

This scenario suggests a streamlined humanitarian aid role rather than an ambitious expansion of the office. Added expertise for filling the existing knowledge void on disaster management, risk reduction and rehabilitation would contribute to improving the effectiveness of the office. This scenario would work well if the reporting lines of the staff member engaged in humanitarian aid are aligned with the Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation Branch.

A critical strategic function to add to the work portfolio of the Geneva office would be information and communications. The office could also expand its advocacy and representation role on human rights as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as other agencies in Geneva dealing with human rights.

## **3.1.3 BRUSSELS LIAISON OFFICE**

### **Office Background**

The Brussels Liaison Office was established in February 2001 to improve UN-Habitat relations with the European Union and its institutions, including others such as the European Network of Implementing Development Agencies; the member states' Permanent Representations to the European Union; the Government of Belgium; the Northern European bilateral donors; international institutions such as the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States' bodies; civil society organizations; and media networks. At present, the Brussels office is located in the United Nations House,



which accommodates more than 20 United Nations Agencies. It is the only UN-Habitat Liaison Office headed by a staff member at Professional Level, assisted by an administrative assistant at General Service G-4 level. Table 3.3 shows annual budgets approved for the Brussels office for 2008-2011. The Programme Support Division did not provide office rent costs for 2010 and 2011 because the costs were covered from various sources and not the approved budgets.

### Achievements

The achievements summarized below are not attributed to the Brussels office alone but to teamwork between the liaison office and UN-Habitat headquarters' programmes and staff of projects. The activities described below are labour-intensive in nature and there is a long gestation period in dealing with a large organization like the European Union. In moving through the arduous project approval processes patience helps, but substantive knowledge of the liaison office staff, even as generalists, is a strong asset. The office has also successfully nurtured relationships with partners.

**Organizational and Technical Representation:** The Brussels office has represented UN-Habitat in the European Union and its subsidiary bodies and institutions, advocating policy dialogue which has led to improved working relations between the two bodies. The office has delivered outreach activities targeting European Union policy-makers and the Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States; mobilized the Council of the European Union (i.e., Council of Ministers) and other European Union institutions to support UN-Habitat. These activities have resulted in the inclusion of urbanization issues on the European Union's development agenda; this was not the case before the establishment of the Brussels office. Despite the limited resources, the office has also represented UN-Habitat in relevant international conferences, workshops, meetings and seminars in Europe.

**Advocacy:** The Brussels office has contributed to increasing awareness of the urban challenges in the European Union (EU). This has resulted in a number of European Commission and UN-Habitat joint conferences as well as to voluntary contribution to UN-Habitat's programmes and activi-

**TABLE 3.3:** Brussels Office Allocated Budgets for 2008 – 2011 (in USD)

Items	2008	2009	2010	2011
Travel	25 000	30 000	30 000	17 000
Office Costs	35 000	21 500	4 300	9 500
Office Rent	50 200	46 000	-	-
Miscellaneous	29 500	26 800	19 050	14 495
<b>Total</b>	<b>139 700</b>	<b>124 300</b>	<b>53 350</b>	<b>40 995</b>

Source: UN-Habitat Programme Support Division 2012

ties. This is evident from the memoranda of understanding between UN-Habitat and the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) in 2004; with the European Commission in 2006; and with the Committee of the Regions in 2010. In addition, global events and conferences have been celebrated in Brussels, including the World Habitat Day (2002), the European Commission and UN-Habitat Nanjing International Conference on Sustainable Urban Development (2005) in Nanjing, China; the European Commission and UN-Habitat Regional Workshop on Urbanization Challenges in Africa (2005) in Nairobi, Kenya. Others are the Tripartite ACP, EU and UN-Habitat Conference on Urbanization Challenges and Poverty Reduction in African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (2009) in Nairobi; and the Joint Conference on Small and Medium Cities with the Belgium Royal Academy of Sciences (2009) in Brussels.

**Fundraising:** The Brussels office has played a critical catalytic role in fundraising. In 2008, the European Commission (EC) contributed USD 7 million in funds to support projects in African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, capitalizing on the interest the European Union had shown in UN-Habitat's Regional Urban and Strategic Profiles. In 2010, the European Commission further approved about USD 14 million for the second phase of project implementation in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. As of December 2011, pipeline projects and programmes worth EUR 77 million (more than USD100 million) were being negotiated with the European Commission targeting projects on low carbon initiatives, water and sanitation, development of urban energy corridors in Africa, and development of a social, economic, geographical information system for African Cities.



Co-chairs at the first joint conference on the Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific Group of Countries (ACP I) Opening Ceremony, held in collaboration with the European Union and UN-Habitat, 2009 © UN-Habitat



**Partnerships:** The Brussels office has forged partnerships with various organizations, including European Union institutions (that is the European Commission, the European Investment Bank, the European Parliament); the Belgian government; United Nations agencies in Brussels; and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group's Secretariat. Other partners are the Economic Community of West African States; the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; the International Organization of La Francophonie; associations, including Friends of Europe; associations of architects and academic institutions, including Ghent University; the media; and civil society organizations.

### Challenges

The Office is understaffed and faced severe budget cuts in 2011. This makes its smooth running difficult and could slow down the momentum of partnership activities, which have been built over the last nine years.

The office expressed unsatisfactory interaction, engagement and communication from headquarters. UN-Habitat headquarters has not involved the Brussels office in UN-Habitat's strategic meetings and events, and staff at the office cited examples of how it was not asked to participate in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Governing Council and was not involved in the organization of the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum hosted by Naples, Italy.

### Conclusions

The achievements of the Brussels office are positive and encouraging. Building upon the momentum already generated, UN-Habitat should strengthen the office to tap into funding opportunities of the

European Union. It is a common strategy and trend for United Nations agencies to strengthen their offices in Brussels. Currently, there are 27 United Nations agencies with representations in Brussels, including recently established ones such as UN Women; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

There is a need to clarify key functions and priorities on which the office could concentrate its efforts, taking into account the expectations of headquarters and those of the organizations and partners with which UN-Habitat is liaising.

This evaluation proposes two scenarios for the future course of the Brussels Liaison Office:

#### *Scenario 1: Maintain the status quo*

The office to continue with one senior professional officer and maintain the existing relationships with the European Union institutions while continuing to work on the funding of projects that are in the pipeline. Seed funding for resource mobilization activities, however, is required to obtain more positive results.

#### *Scenario 2: Strengthen the office, keeping the focus on the liaison and fundraising function*

In view of the funding opportunities that are yet to be realized, strengthening the office would be a strategic decision. It would necessitate increasing the minimum staff personnel in Brussels to include the head of the office, one substantive officer, one communications officer and one support staff.

It is recommended that the office be headed by a Director at D-1 level in line with the practice in UN-Habitat's other liaison offices.

Regardless of which scenario is preferred, there is a need to clarify reporting and communications lines with UN-Habitat headquarters and regional offices so as to carry out liaison and programmatic functions efficiently and effectively.

### 3.1.4 WASHINGTON, D.C., LIAISON OFFICE

#### Office Background

The Washington, D.C., Liaison Office was established in September 2007 to develop relationships; raise funds; and advocate urbanization issues with the United States Congress, the United States Government departments and other international organizations and institutions. It is headed by a Director at D-1 level. The Director of the Washington office was transferred from UN-Habitat headquarters when he was working as a Professional Officer on inter-institutional affairs at P-5 level. In 2010, he was appointed Director of the

New York office and temporarily served as head of both New York and Washington, D.C., offices. He returned to the Washington, D.C., office in May 2011. The office is a "one man's bureau" with a limited budget. Table 3.4 shows the approved budgets for the office for 2008-2011. Over this period, the budget has declined from USD 58,400 to USD 6,800. The head of the office informed the evaluation team that important missions could not be undertaken, unless the third party paid for the mission, because the office did not have a travel budget.

#### Achievements

Significant results were achieved with the establishment of the Washington, D.C., office. First, there was a more than 10-fold increase in the United States' contribution to non-earmarked funding by widening the array of partners to include senior policymakers in the White House and others. Second, the Director of the office has been successful in finding new entry points for UN-Habitat's programmes to the many potential opportunities that exist in Washing-

**TABLE 3.4:** Washington, D.C., Office Allocated Budgets for 2008 – 2011 (in USD)

Items	2008	2009	2010	2011
Staff Costs	-	-	-	-
Travel	40 000	33 420	17 085	-
Office Costs	1 000	9 500	6 455	-
Office Rent	6 400	6 000	6 300	6 800
Miscellaneous	11 000	4 200	2 500	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58 400</b>	<b>53 120</b>	<b>26 040</b>	<b>6 800</b>

Source: UN-Habitat Programme Support Division 2012

ton, D.C.

**Organizational and Technical Representation:** The Washington office represents UN-Habitat in meetings with organizations headquartered in the city. The level of participation is sometimes political and happens when it is not possible for the UN-Habitat Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director to go to Washington, D.C. In such cases, the Director of the Washington office represents the leadership of UN-Habitat. Examples of such representation include representation in Global Environment Facility Council meetings, the Organization of American States Consultative meetings, the United States Agency for International Development Futures Symposium, the World Bank's Sustainable Development Network Annual Conference and International Engagement Conference for Southern Sudan that the United States Department of State hosted. At times the representation is technical in nature. Examples of such representation include the Inter-American Coalition of the Prevention of Violence technical meetings, the Woodrow Wilson Centre for International Scholars seminars, the US-Asia Institute Lecture, the World Bank Global Urbanization Knowledge Platform, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies panel on Corporate Partnerships, the Brookings Institution panel on *"Rebuilding a City"* and the InterAction Panel on Shelter Recovery in post-conflict situations.

**Fundraising:** The office has contributed to securing annually non-earmarked voluntary contributions, rising from USD 148,000 in 2007 to USD 2 million in 2011. Securing this funding involves lobbying the United States

Department of State, the Office of Management and Budget, the White House, the National Security Council and other departments. The office meets formally and informally with senior policymakers in the United States White House, the Domestic Policy Council, the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of State, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of the Treasury. This has resulted in securing funding for UN-Habitat.

**Advocacy:** From 2007 to 2010, the Washington office, working with UN-Habitat headquarters, has elevated discussions on sustainable urbanization among United States policymakers by engaging them in three key UN-Habitat advocacy instruments: celebration of the World Habitat Day in Washington, D.C., in 2009; involvement and participation in the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum in 2010 where a 50-member delegation attended the event in Brazil; and development of a framework for sustainable urbanization (including benchmarks and indicators) as an initiative of World Urban Campaign.

**Information Sharing:** Specific substantive programmes at headquarters have benefited from the work carried out by the liaison office. As expressed by a staff member at the UN-Habitat headquarters:

*"UN-Habitat is currently in the process of applying for accreditation as a project agency of the Global Environment Facility and of the Adaptation Fund. For both processes, the Washington, D.C., office has been instrumental in providing substantive inputs to the multi-stage*

*technical submissions, liaising with the Global Environment Facility country focal points (Bolivia) as well as providing regular updates and advice on how UN-Habitat could best position itself in such a highly competitive and political process.”*

**Partnerships:** The office has forged partnerships with various departments, organizations and institutions including the World Bank, Cities Alliance, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the William J. Clinton Foundation, the Global Environ-



Director Domestic Policy Council, United States of America and Co-Chair, World Habitat Day Honorary Committee Ms. Melody Barnes during a video message delivered by President Obama at the 2009 World Habitat day Opening Ceremony held in Washington, D.C. © UN-Habitat

ment Facility and the Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Violence.

## Challenges

- **Insufficient capacity and resources:** There are huge demands on the Washington office while its capacity is insufficient to meet all expectations. The office is run by one professional and with a tiny budget. Official missions are undertaken only if the third party organization pays. While institutions based in the United States have taken steps to formulate policies on sustainable urbanization, it has been difficult to sustain the momentum that was created by World Habitat Day in 2009 and the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum. Efforts should be put into reviving the momentum by using the preparatory process of the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum in 2012 and World Urban Campaign to present the vision and new reform of UN-Habitat.
- **Less than optimal connectedness to UN-Habitat headquarters and the New York office:** Information from the Office of the Executive Director is *ad hoc* and confined to political issues and events pertaining to the Executive Director. In addition, the roles and responsibilities between the New York and Washington offices are not clearly demarcated. The reporting relationship with the headquarters is also unclear. Linked to this challenge is the splitting of partners between the New York and Wash-

ington offices. For example, while the Washington office is focal point for foundations and funds, whose core offices are in New York; the New York Office acts as *de facto* focal point for the Inter-American Development Bank, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

■ ***Strategic partnerships and relationship with the World Bank:***

The Washington office has identified new funding and programming entries that the United States capital offers to the UN-Habitat programme. However, success also bred its own challenges. As the number of partners has proliferated and activities increased, there have not been enough resources to nurture all important relationships established. According to the Director of the Washington, D.C., office, the relationship of the liaison office with the World Bank, which was established at the political level, has continued on a low-key level since 2010. The reason seems to be a protocol error that occurred during the Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum's opening session, and UN-Habitat has failed to apologise formally to the Bank. There is a need to how UN-Habitat should handle its strategic partners at global events like the Forum to avoid similar incidents in the future.

■ ***Underutilized fundraising opportunities within the United States.***

Although considerable progress has been made in increasing voluntary contributions from the United States to UN-Habitat, the contribu-

tion is still low compared to what the country provides to other United Nations agencies. United States government departments and foundations have made it clear that an increase in the funding to UN-Habitat would depend on how quickly the United States economy recovers from global recession and on how well UN-Habitat translates its new vision into a set of clearly defined and measurable outcomes. With only one person working in the Washington office, it is not possible to lobby and mobilize a large set of members of Congress and external actors.

## Conclusions

The liaison office has made notable achievements in the relative short time of its existence. It has demonstrated its potential for successful resource mobilization and that there are more opportunities for fundraising, which remain untapped. Formal and information consultations with senior policymakers and representative of United States Departments of State, and others, have supported the resource mobilization activities and representation of UN-Habitat. The office has built key partnerships, as it has been done with the Global Environment Facility. The two scenarios proposed for the Washington office are quite similar to those for Brussels:

### *Scenario 1: Maintain the status quo*

In view of the financial constraints the status quo is kept with the staffing situation and office space, but with provision for certain improvements in resource mobilization and communications. First, the niche of the Washington office should be on resource

mobilization activities by focusing on lobbying the United States legislative bodies, non-governmental organizations and partners in the city. This is only possible by providing seed funding to the office. Second, communications between the office and UN-Habitat headquarters need improvement.

***Scenario 2: Strengthen the office with one more professional staff and a proper office space.***

The office needs strengthening urgently with additional staff and money. Resource mobilization within the United States when enhanced will enable the office to engage with important partners such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank in the overall UN-Habitat programme. These partners possess funds and political influence which, if tapped, could advance sustainable urbanization and ensure their involvement in normative debates on policy and field operations. The consultative processes with these partners could be supported if greater human and financial resources were given to the office. In particular, the evolving partnership with the Global Environment Facility is of critical importance to UN-Habitat. Increasingly, the Facility recognises UN-Habitat's ability to add value to projects dealing with pressing environmental issues, particularly in UN-Habitat's domain of urban services, housing and transport as they relate to the Facility's priorities of energy efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Member States of the Facility's Council, including the United States Department of the Treasury, are keen to expand the number of the Facility's implementing part-

ners but seek to do so in ways that would not weaken efficiency. There is a need for UN-Habitat to work closely with the Facility's Council and Secretariat to ensure that UN-Habitat is afforded implementing partner status, speedily. The Washington office would benefit from an information and communication function, not necessarily through the recruitment of new staff, but through coordination with a communications officer at the New York office.

### **3.2 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL ISSUES ACROSS THE LIAISON OFFICES**

The efficiency and effectiveness of the liaison offices are, to a large extent, shaped by the strength and the dynamics of the parent organization in Nairobi, as well as the type of interaction between headquarters and the liaison offices. The findings below support this general argument as most of the issues pertain to ways in which the offices are linked to headquarters. The evaluation team identified a number of issues of systemic nature that affect the efficiency and effectiveness of all liaison offices.

***The problem of connectedness to substantive programmes at UN-Habitat's headquarters***

Liaison offices and UN-Habitat headquarters have a good understanding of the reporting lines and coordination between the Executive Director and the Office of the Executive Director. There are issues, however, about their relationships with the substantive programmes. A considerable number of staff in Nairobi assumed, as understood from the interviews, that the primary client



of the liaison offices is the Executive Director and the Office of the Executive Director. For that reason, headquarters staff may not be entitled to ask for assistance from the liaison offices. Shared perceptions (and the lack thereof) play a big role in shaping the current relationship between the offices and the substantive offices. One respondent from Nairobi expressed this as a “*far from the eye, far from the heart*” syndrome.

The liaison offices do play instrumental roles for the substantive programmes, but in those cases (they have been selective, and occasion-specific tied to intergovernmental or inter-agency meetings) headquarters and liaison offices have not been able to maintain a sustained collaboration afterwards.

### ***Mutual expectations between headquarters’ substantive staff and the liaison offices are poorly communicated***

Headquarters and liaison offices have a different understanding of what constitutes a “*sustained relationship*”. While the liaison offices believe they do their work by sending a plethora of communications to the headquarters, at headquarters this is received as one more “burden” that the originators of such communication could have easily handled. This sentiment is expressed below by one of the interviewees at headquarters.

*“I have for some years simply been forwarded emails, by the New York Office that I had already received, with no analysis, nor summaries of key issues, or recommendations for input. I generally prepare briefs for the Executive Director or his designate to attend New York-based meetings of the Executive*

*Committee on Humanitarian Affairs or other pertinent meetings.” (Staff at headquarters)*

Staff members in the New York office, however, believe that they ask their colleagues at headquarters for briefs, out of respect, to encourage teamwork. A staff member said:

*“We can prepare the briefs but the Nairobi folks are dealing with the substantive issues on a day-to-day basis, therefore they are more authoritative on the issue in question.” (Staff, New York office)*

With the recent increase in the professional capacity of the New York and Geneva offices, the expectations of the substantive staff at headquarters seem justified and colleagues at the liaison office should be more self-reliant.

### ***Lack of strategic guidance for liaison offices***

The liaison functions for offices have no terms of reference, policy or blueprint to guide their work. This is complicated further by the unique relationship that each office has with their partners and institutions. For instance, the New York office targets the United Nations Secretariat, intergovernmental processes, inter-agency matters and other outreach activities. The Geneva office focuses more on humanitarian aid and collaborates with partners and other United Nations agencies in this sector as well as in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. The Brussels office focuses on the institutions of the European Union to advance policy dialogue as well as resource mobilization. The Washington office deals with

inter-institutional affairs including fostering cooperation with the World Bank, the Organization of American States and others. Given the diverse functions and tasks of each office, there is a need to develop a coherent policy for all liaison offices, with clear definition of the roles and responsibilities and showing where each office can bring its comparative advantage to bear in representation, advocacy, information sharing, fundraising and programming. Aside from generic terms of reference, each office should formulate its unique contribution according to the resources and unique institutional opportunities offered in the particular city of their location.

***Less than optimal team spirit between the professionals at UN-Habitat headquarters and the liaison offices is a hindrance to the One UN-Habitat goal***

This manifests itself, especially, in the question of attribution. Put simply who gets the credit for the important accomplishments, fundraising and partnerships established becomes a bigger concern than the overall result. For instance, the Geneva office believes that it has improved the visibility and recognition of UN-Habitat's unique technical capacity in humanitarian issues. The office has increased funding for emergency projects and improved programme and project formulation in the risk reduction field. In contrast, the headquarters team, especially that of the Disaster Management Programme, is equally strong in attributing success to itself, because of the partnerships the Programme has forged from Nairobi, the technical work it has produced and the country networks it has already put in place. The evaluation

team concludes that credit belongs to both sides, with each distinct and complementary role they play. While substantive work is done by the core programme (at headquarters or by their staff at the particular liaison office), nurturing the necessary relationships with partners, following up with the political and administrative procedures of the last phases plays a very critical role. The solution is to raise the awareness of headquarters staff of the importance of the catalytic roles played at the last stages of an activity. In order to succeed at these stages, liaison offices go through a work-intensive and time-consuming process investing in relationships and speaking authoritatively at meetings while applying appropriate diplomatic behaviour and patience. Headquarters staff should also understand that colleagues at the liaison offices manage different types of challenges, one of which is UN-Habitat being a relatively small organization in the UN family of agencies.

***Capacity of technical contribution is limited in liaison offices***

The capacity problem manifests itself in different ways in the offices. The Washington, D.C., and Brussels offices lack sufficient staff; each operates as a single-staff office, which limits their contribution. However, the capacity issues in the New York and the Geneva offices are more qualitative. A Director at D-1 level manages the office and is supported by four or five professional staff. However, the skills composition of the office may not necessarily be optimal or there may be an inappropriate division of labour among staff. Key UN-Habitat partners in Geneva (such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of



the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Geneva) emphasized having UN-Habitat's technical expertise in the specialized themes of the organization (housing and land) was important for the overall impact of the humanitarian aid programme. An effective Liaison Office requires a certain degree of technical knowledge in a relevant field of expertise that can be applied appropriately in relevant task forces and working groups. The Geneva team did not have enough capacity to cover disasters, risk management or rehabilitation. Of the five professional staff, only one has a background in disaster and risk management or rehabilitation work. This limits the Geneva office in representing UN-Habitat adequately in technical meetings and committees.

### ***Clarity on fundraising expectations is needed***

All liaison offices indicated that the budget allocations to their offices were inadequate. This is particularly a concern of the Brussels and Washington, D.C., offices where each has one professional staff member. The Washington, D.C., office indicated that due

to its limited budget official missions could only be undertaken if a third party paid for travel and other expenses. Staff at the Brussels, Geneva and New York offices expressed concern about the mobilization of resources without a (seed) budget to support the activities. However, when funds are secured, the offices have no control over their use. The funds are directed to regional offices and country teams for implementation of projects.

### ***Reporting relations between headquarters and the liaison offices are less than optimal***

Although the location of the offices is structurally within the Office of the Executive Director and report to it, this clearly separates them from other substantive offices. Reporting to the Office of the Executive Director for all matters is not the optimal situation because it does not deal with administrative matters on a daily basis and is not a substantive office. For purposes of effectiveness, liaison offices could report to the Office of Management for administrative matters and to the individual project directors on substantive issues.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS, SCENARIOS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The liaison offices have demonstrated that it is possible to provide representation and advocacy, forge partnerships, share information and carry out fundraising in a way that effectively and efficiently helps raising UN-Habitat's visibility.

The achievements of the liaison offices are highly dependent on the location and context in which they are working and the context determines to a large extent the prioritization of functions. The assessment found that staff levels varied significantly between the liaison office from relying on one professional staff in the Brussels and Washington, D.C., offices to fully-fledged offices with representational and substantive staff in the New York and Geneva offices. In 2011, the offices' budget ranged from as low as USD 6 800 (Washington, D.C.) to USD 177 755 (Geneva). Over the period from 2008 to 2011, the budget of the liaison offices has decreased overall, in particular that of the Washington, D.C. and Brussels offices.

While the liaison offices have many achievements, the assessment also identified challenges facing the individual office and of systemic nature that, if overcome, could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the offices.

### 4.2 SCENARIOS

This evaluation has identified three scenarios for the future of liaison offices. Each scenario has its advantages and disadvantages and builds on the individual office situation reviewed. Regardless of which option is preferred, there is a need for policy guidelines on the liaison offices. Their roles have to be redefined and aligned with the new project-based management approach; priorities and clear expectations have to be articulated for each office; reporting lines have to be clarified to improve efficiency and internal collaboration; and minimum resources have to be set aside for offices to fulfil their responsibilities. Communication between liaison offices and UN-Habitat headquarters must improve.

#### *Scenario 1: Maintain the status quo*

In the view of the limited resources available, the offices are maintained under the same arrangements but each would need to be redefined in terms of priorities, terms of references established and reporting lines aligned with the new project based structure. This could improve and strengthen the relationship between the offices and headquarters, but the offices' effectiveness in the delivery of results would only improve negligibly, at best. One disadvantage of maintaining the *status quo* is the lack of adequate presence and regular substantive inputs to technical representation, which UN-Habitat partners view as a lack of the agency's commitment.

### *Scenario II: Concentrate on liaison functions*

The offices would not be much involved in technical representation and headquarters would be sending substantive inputs and staff to them to participate in technical meetings and working groups. Under this option the liaison offices would, at a minimum, consist of the head of office, one professional staff, one information officer and administrative staff. The offices should add stronger information and communication function to their work portfolio as well as a well-structured resource mobilization function. Although this option may lead to cost savings overall, one of the disadvantages of this option is that opportunities may be missed because Nairobi is located geographically far from global policymakers, nodes of resource allocation and distribution, and centres of excellence.

### *Scenario III: Strengthen liaison offices*

The technical strengthening of the liaison offices could be achieved by creating fully fledged substantive liaison offices in a substantive area (for example humanitarian aid), transforming the office teams to match skills relevant to the substantive areas in question, or increasing staff capacity. To this aim, the offices should be integrated into the agency's skills inventory, so that staff reassignments and rotation between liaison offices and headquarters could be made. At the same time, job descriptions of liaison office staff should be reviewed and additional officers assigned to liaison offices to cover those areas of highest priority to UN-Habitat. This option could involve systematic integration of the office staff in the

project teams at headquarters. The scenario would come with incremental costs but would, effectively, strengthen the presence and effectiveness of the offices. The New York and Geneva offices could thrive as the strong outposts of the UN-Habitat's advocacy, outreach and communications functions and could improve their effectiveness in humanitarian affairs. The Washington and Brussels offices could be strengthened and tap into donor opportunities that exist in the United States and the European Union.

## 4.3 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this evaluation should be considered within the corporate policy on organizational expansion and geographical proliferation as well as budget the resources. In view of the contribution of the liaison offices to the overall programme, the evaluation team recommends that liaison offices should be kept and, preferably, strengthened, by tackling managerial issues within, and between the offices; and issues between UN-Habitat headquarters and the liaison offices.

Not wanting to lose the momentum gained in advocacy, resource mobilization, partnerships that the liaison offices have brought to UN-Habitat, the corporate policy could be directed towards supporting a more radical strengthening that would involve capacity or thematic expansion, or both. Additionally, information sharing should be enhanced by strengthening the offices and increasing collaboration between them and headquarters teams.

**Recommendation 1:**

Enhance the contribution of the liaison offices in the new project-based management approach. Changes should be considered in view of three scenarios, (*maintain status quo, concentrate on liaison functions, or strengthening of the offices*) for long-term decision-making on the future of the liaison office. This will require redefining the roles and responsibilities of the offices as well as expectations. Strategic guidelines should be developed based on the roles and tasks of each office with key priorities, contribution to the project-based approach, and expectations of UN-Habitat headquarters as well as contribution to partnerships.

**Recommendation 2:**

Develop terms of reference to spell out the priorities and tasks of each liaison office. Heads of offices would then be held accountable for the delivery of the tasks. Job descriptions of office staff also need to be reviewed to ensure their alignment with the new project-based structure. Staff at the New York and the Geneva offices should be included in the skill's inventory that headquarters has developed. Similarly, professional staff at the liaison offices should be part of an overall UN-Habitat rotation plan.

**Recommendation 3:**

Establish new reporting and communication lines in alignment with the project-based structure. Liaison offices could report on the administrative and management matters to the Office of Executive Direction and the Office of Management, and provide substantive reports to the Project Office. The reporting lines should also take into consideration the extent to which technical contribution

to relevant stakeholders and partners is expected from liaison office staff and ensuring that substantive offices at headquarters are supporting the offices.

**Recommendation 4:**

Establish, as a *modus operandi*, that technical advice should be the domain of UN-Habitat headquarters and provided to the liaison offices, coupled with a more technically engaged involvement of the liaison offices' professional staff. Substantive capacity issues within the liaison offices should be tackled by orienting the offices' professional staff to be better generalists in order to represent the substantive programmes with reasonable amount of inputs from UN-Habitat headquarters. A minimal increase of liaison office staff members specialized in the technical competencies relevant to the office in question could support this process.

**Recommendation 5:**

Clarify fundraising expectations for offices and develop appropriate fundraising strategies. The strategy and activities should be linked (horizontally or vertically) to the resource mobilization structures at UN-Habitat headquarters. The liaison offices should be provided seed funding for resource mobilization activities and continue the channelling of funds raised for their original purposes.

## ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Introduction

UN-Habitat is undertaking an evaluation of its liaison offices in New York, Geneva, Brussels and Washington, D.C., within the context of its current reform, with the overall objective of rationalizing the organizational structure to optimize efficient and effective delivery of its mandates and priorities at the country, regional and global levels. UN-Habitat's Evaluation Unit will undertake the review with an external evaluator to assess implications for the liaison offices, supporting the effort.

### 2. Background and Context

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the agency for human settlements. It has the mandate from the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It has a normative and an operational mandate.

The UN-Habitat was initially established as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in 1977 through General Assembly Resolution 32/162. In 1996, during the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, a new normative mandate for the Centre was added: to support and monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda which the General Assembly subsequently approved.

The Istanbul+5 Conference in 2001, was a special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The session recommended strengthening the Centre. This led to the decision of the regular session of the General Assembly to elevate the Centre to a fully-fledged "Programme" now known as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), through Resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001. Other important decisions in Resolution 56/206 include strengthening the normative role of UN-Habitat, designating the agency as the focal point within the United Nations System for human settlements and establishing the World Urban Forum to foster debate on human settlements. Adoption of Resolution 56/206 also showed the commitment of Member States to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goal target of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. The outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 further gave UN-Habitat the responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.

Commensurate with its status and substantive focus, UN-Habitat's work programme for 2004-2005 was structured around four sub-programmes, unlike the two sub-programmes in 2002-2003. The four sub-programmes that the General Assembly approved are: shelter and sustainable human settlements development; monitoring the Habitat Agenda; regional and technical cooperation; and the human settlement financing. In addition to the four sub-programmes, the Executive Direction and Management and the Programme Support Division have become part of programmatic framework structures for implementation of the UN-Habitat objectives. The UN-Habitat liaison offices in New York, Geneva, Brussels and Washington are structurally in the Executive Direction and Management.

### 3. Role and Function of Liaison Offices

The liaison offices perform functions of coordination and representation of UN-Habitat. The offices participate in the work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies, and in interdepartmental and inter-agency meetings. The offices provide substantive support in meetings and policy dialogues on human settlements. They also carry out advocacy and outreach activities. The roles of the offices can be summarized as follows:

- **Organizational representational:** Act as representatives of UN-Habitat at the political level and working group level within the United Nations and the relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations

- **Advocacy:** Advocate for UN-Habitat areas of concern across the five sectors of the agency, including intersectoral and humanitarian issues
- **Information broker:** Channel information between the various parts of UN-Habitat and with other United Nations agencies and relevant governmental and regional organizations
- **Partnership mobilizer:** Forge partnerships with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, donors and civil society

### 4. Purpose and Objectives

UN-Habitat is undertaking new organizational reform where it is to be a project-based organization, and brings together normative and operational work under each project. This process will be managed through a project-based accountability approach. This project approach necessitates assessment of the reform and its implication to liaison offices. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the roles, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness and implications of the new reform on liaison offices.

4a. Specifically, the evaluation will:

- Assess the effectiveness of offices in representing UN-Habitat, particularly in inter-agency setting
- Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the offices channelling information between UN-Habitat, other United Nations agencies and intergovernmental institutions

- Assess efficiency and effectiveness of the offices in their advocacy, particularly with permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva and New York
- Assess efficiency and effectiveness of the offices in promoting information on UN-Habitat's mission, work programmes and activities
- Assess the effectiveness of the relationships of the offices with relevant partners
- Assess the productivity, transparency and accountability of the offices
- Assess how the new reform could impact the liaison offices
- Assess the resource mobilization of liaison offices
- Suggest how the strategic roles of liaison offices could be enhanced in the new reform

#### 4b. Use of Evaluation Results

The evaluation findings and lessons learnt will help determine the decisions of the senior management for future operations of the liaison offices.

### 5. Evaluation Methodology

The Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, with the support of the external consultant, will undertake the evaluation. It will involve the following methodology.

- Desk review of relevant documents
- Field missions to liaison offices and interviews with the heads and staff of New York, Washington, Geneva and Brussels offices
- Meetings with selected representatives of United Nations agencies, permanent missions and other partners relevant of each field location. For example, the International Labour Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization in Geneva; UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Children's Fund in New York.
- A questionnaire seeking views on the scope and quality of work of the liaison offices on issues related to the UN-Habitat's mandate, with a view to enhance policy coherence
- Interview with Executive and Direction Management staff and other relevant staff members in UN-Habitat, Nairobi.

### 6. Roles and Responsibilities

In implementing the new organization reform, UN-Habitat has identified 128 tasks in the One UN-Habitat Action Plan of 19 October 2011. Task 118 of assessing implications of the reform on liaison offices was assigned to the Chief, Evaluation Unit, to be managed by the director, Monitoring and Research Division. They will use the consultant to support this evaluation.

### 7. Consultant's Responsibilities

- Takes the lead in developing data collection instruments such as surveys and interviews, guides and focus group discussions for the different stakeholders, in consultation with the Chief, Evaluation Unit, UN-Habitat

- Supports the evaluation process in administering and analysing the survey findings, and conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders and UN-Habitat staff
- Conducts assessment and analyse data that will support, findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Organizes and participate in meetings of relevant stakeholders in liaison offices locations
- Leads the report drafting process
- Finalizes the report based on feedback and comments provided on the draft report
- Prepares a debriefing presentation on key findings of the evaluation and leads the presentation to UN-Habitat senior management

## 8. Consultant's Qualifications and Expertise

- Advanced degree in social and economic development, evaluation or other related fields
- At least 10 years of relevant experience in social and economic development of which at least five should be in research and evaluation
- Familiarity with the United Nations System and preferably with knowledge and familiarity with UN-Habitat's work
- Demonstrated experience in team leadership
- Proven knowledge and experience in working with international organizations is required, as is the ability to write clearly and effectively

- Must possess very good interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a multicultural environment, with a commitment to timeliness and quality
- Fluency as well as excellent writing skills in English and French is essential as most data collection will be in English

## 9. Timeframe and Remuneration

The assignment will take two months (40 days), from 15 November through 26 December 2011. The activity, timeframe and consultancy fee are broken down as follows. The remuneration for the support consultant will be at a rate of P-5/D-1.

## 10. Deliverable and Reporting

- A draft evaluation report, prepared by the consultant, will be circulated by UN-Habitat for comments
- The final evaluation report will prepared and presented in English. The report will be presented in a logic manner following the UN-Habitat's standard format of evaluation report. It should be a concise report presenting evidenced findings, lessons learned and actionable recommendations
- The final report must meet the UN-Habitat quality criteria in line with the terms of reference. Payment may be withheld until the evaluation report meets the assessment criteria of the evaluation report



## ANNEX II: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND RESPONDENTS TO EMAIL SURVEY

No.	Name	Title, Department	Email address	Telephone number
<b>UN-Habitat, NAIROBI HEADQUARTERS</b>				
1	Raf Tuts	Chief, Urban Environmental Planning Branch	raf.tuts@unhabitat.org	+254 20 7623726
2	Bert Diphoorn	Head, Water and Sanitation	albert.diphoorn@unhabitat.org	+254 20 7625420
3	Susanne Bech	Programme Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	Susanne.Bech@unhabitat.org	+254 20 76223236
4	Paul Taylor	Chief, Office of the Executive Director	paul.taylor@unhabitat.org	+254 20 76223218
5	Mariam Yunusa	Coordinator World Urban Forum	mariam.yunusa@unhabitat.org	+254 20 76223067
6	Axumite Gebre-Egziabher	Director, Shelter and Sustainable Human Settlements Division	Axumite.Gebre-Egziabher@unhabitat.org	+254 20 76226748
7	Lucia Kiwala	Human Settlements Officer Partners & Youth Branch, Monitoring and Research Division	lucia.kiwala@unhabitat.org	+254 20 76223025
8	Eduardo Moreno	Head, City Monitoring Branch	eduardo.moreno@unhabitat.org	+254 020 762 32149
9	Martinez Nayoka	Networking Officer Urban Development Branch	Nayoka.Martinez-Backstrom@unhabitat.org	+254 20 762 5013
10	Jaana Mioch	Special Adviser, Office of the Deputy Executive Director	jaana.mioch@unhabitat.org	+254 20 762324062
11	Daniel Biau	Consultant - (former Director of Regional and Technical Co-operation Division)	biau.daniel@gmail.com	
12	Ana Moreno	Chief, Information Services Section	anna.moreno@unhabitat.org	+254 20 762 23065
13	Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza	Senior Adviser, Office of the Executive Director	naison.mutizwa-mangiza@unhabitat.org	+254 20 762 23045
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