

# UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**68<sup>th</sup> REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS  
PROGRAMME**

**21 MARCH 2018**

**Agenda Item 5 of the Revised Provisional Agenda**

**Executive Director's Briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives  
(HSP/CPR/68/5)**

## **1. Introduction**

Since the last meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on 14 December 2018, UN-Habitat has undergone a change of leadership, namely, with the arrival of myself as the new Executive Director. In addition to this change, and further to UN-Habitat's regular programmatic work and key portfolio developments, activities since the last CPR have focused on preparing and holding the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum and supporting as requested by the Chair, the Open-Ended Work Group as mandated by General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/226. This statement will cover the following:

- Update on my first two months in Office as UN-Habitat Executive Director
- Update on the outcome of the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum
- Update on the Quadrennial Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda
- Key portfolio developments
- Recent missions undertaken by myself and the Deputy Executive Director

## **2. Update on my first two months in Office as UN-Habitat Executive Director**

The date of today's CPR, 21 March 2018, marks exactly two months since I first sat foot on these premises, as UN-Habitat's new Executive Director. In these two months, I have already had the privilege to hold extensive consultations, meetings and discussions with UN-Habitat personnel, United Nations counterparts and colleagues, Member States and partners, in Nairobi, in New York and during WUF9 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In New York, I also met with my leadership, the Secretary-General and the Deputy-Secretary-General as well as the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC. In the past few weeks I have had the opportunity to meet with officials from the Government of Kenya, Her Excellency, Ambassador Monica Juma, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and His Excellency, Mr James Wainaina Macharia, Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development. These encounters have been extremely meaningful. I also had the honour to visit Mathare here in Nairobi, this was a humbling and very informative experience, where I saw first-hand UN-Habitat's work in action and saw the importance of localizing our work by involving every stakeholder, including youth, women and civil society at every stage. I have appreciated the openness and frankness of the conversations I have had and am encouraged by the support shown for UN-Habitat and me personally, in my new role. The challenges are clear, and I thank you all for sharing these with me. It is also clear, that UN-Habitat can and should, through the urban agenda, play a key catalytic role in the implementation of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

I have heard your concerns that there is an urgency to ensure that UN-Habitat can deliver on its mandate, add its value to the efforts of the broader UN system and continue to make a difference at country-level. As we work towards an agreement on how UN-Habitat should be governed, how the rules and regulations can better serve UN-Habitat, enabling us to respond to the needs of our Programme, to the needs and requests of your countries, I would like to reiterate that I am fully committed to:

- a. Building mutual trust within UN-Habitat, with the wider UN family, Member States and partners.
- b. Improving governance, particularly our competencies, accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.
- c. Breaking down the silos and work towards more integrated approaches, strengthening collaboration, partnerships and teamwork within UN-Habitat, across the UN system and beyond.

Many of you have asked about my vision for UN-Habitat. From the very first meeting on 22 January, I have taken note of the constructive internal and external feedback received. Based on this feedback, I have made certain observations such as the need:

- a. For governance reform within UN-Habitat, including streamlining the system and process of decision-making.
- b. Strengthen the lines of communication among personnel, evaluation, accounting and feedback mechanisms within our Programme.
- c. Strengthen each division, the seven branches and regional offices to work as one team and to reduce working in isolation.
- d. To examine and strengthen the role of research and development as a focal point to balance our normative and operational work.
- e. To establish my priorities for UN-Habitat for the immediate term, short term, medium term, long term and sustainable term.

I have discussed these at length through consultative meetings with my Senior Management Committee, with my Senior Management Board, and with each of the seven UN-Habitat Branches.

Inclusivity has been a key element in the collection of inputs for my vision, framed around a number of key principles: (i) trust, (ii) good governance, (iii) enhancing confidence, (iv) rules and regulations/finance, (v) balancing normative and operational work, (vi) UN-Habitat's mandate, (vii) communication, and, (viii) systems: feedback mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, I have designated a Task Force, representing each of UN-Habitat's three divisions to support me in formulating and capturing my vision. Through this consultative process, I wish to formulate five to six priorities which will provide the core of a strategic paper encapsulating my vision, where the underlying element of the strengthening of UN-Habitat is a binding factor. I expect this action-oriented process of participation among UN-Habitat personnel, to be finalized and to be shared with you by early April. I hope this vision will be a collective vision, owned by all of us, and not a document which will simply gather dust on our book shelves.

These two months have been a steep learning curve for me, I have learned immensely and thank you for your patience and for allowing me to listen to you. I recognize the tremendously hard work and dedication that you are availing the Open-Ended Working Group and would like to encourage you to continue to do so until the end, until you have reached a consensus on UN-Habitat's future governance system, to enable UN-Habitat to reach its full potential. By giving us

the tools to do exactly that, I pledge to you, that I and all UN-Habitat will do our very best, to do the same and cooperate and be your partner.

### **3. Update on the outcome of the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum**

From 7 to 13 February 2017, the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF9) took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was an immense pleasure to be part of this World Premier Conference on Cities and Sustainable Urbanization in my home country. Over 23,000 participants joined us at WUF9 from 164 countries, it was the most attended and most diverse WUF ever. More than 75% of the participants were stakeholders, nearly 45% were women and around 40% were under the age of 32 years old.

This WUF served as a key platform to gather inputs on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, exemplifying and providing the forum to discuss how it is and can be used as an accelerator for the achievement of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal eleven. It also served to highlight UN-Habitat's unique role as a lead and focal point for sustainable urban development, in coordination with all levels of government, stakeholders and the United Nations system.

There are several key and instrumental outcomes of WUF9, which will be elaborated in more detail under the relevant Agenda item today.

On a more personal UN-Habitat note, WUF9 provided a unique opportunity for me to embark on my journey as UN-Habitat's Executive Director. It afforded me the occasion to have over 60 bilateral meetings over the course of a single week in one place with Heads of Member States' Delegations and key partners, including the opportunity to participate in over 26 events. This early engagement provided fundamentally important input, an opportunity to listen to you, to hear your concerns, your support and dedication, to ensure that UN-Habitat emerges from its governance reform, as an agency fully fit for purpose. WUF9 also formulated the Kuala Lumpur Declaration.

My Deputy Executive Director engaged in bilateral meetings with eight Member States and the European Union, discussing key strategic issues pertinent to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. She also engaged with UN Regional Commissions, as well as with Resident Coordinators to further strengthen strategic and took part in events on key issues, such as gender, environment and climate change, disaster risk reduction, land tenure, participatory slum upgrading, urban crisis, and National Urban Policies. In her interactions with civil society, she highlighted the importance of women and youth as major stakeholders in cities and the need for their voices to be heard in governance, to define strategic policy and programme priorities, entry points and partnerships to ensure the inclusive implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

I look forward to the follow-up to those meetings, to enhancing UN-Habitat's collaboration with you, in ensuring that we provide you with the support necessary, in enabling the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as a key pillar in achieving the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **4. Update on the Quadrennial Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

The New Urban Agenda requests the Secretary-General to submit a first Quadrennial Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda to the General Assembly through ECOSOC in 2018. In preparation for this, a Committee of Permanent Representatives' Subcommittee meeting was held on 23 February where UN-Habitat's strategy for this report was discussed. The strategy proposes a system-based approach to the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative information through a consultative open process, with an incremental perspective. The strategy also emphasizes the strong linkages between the New Urban Agenda reporting and the reporting on the urban dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant recent global agreements. The 2018 report will outline the reporting system and provide illustrations of early implementation of the New Urban Agenda at various levels.

The consultative process regarding the scope, structure and content of the report started during the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum and will continue on the occasion of an Expert Group Meeting and 'Write Shop' to be conducted from 20-23 March in Granada, Spain, with generous support from the Regional Government of Andalusia. Another Committee of Permanent Representatives' subcommittee meeting is planned for 28 March where a detailed annotated outline of the report will be presented along with the results of the Granada meeting. It is hoped that this first report will help to further enhance the engagement of all relevant actors in the implementation and reporting on the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **5. Key portfolio developments**

From 17 December 2017 up to 22 February 2018, grants amounting to USD 79.5 million have been opened (this includes Junior Professional Officer projects). In addition, a selection of new projects in all regions that were approved by the Project Advisory Group (PAG) during the reporting period and contributing to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals are listed below.

##### **Asia-Pacific region:**

- Philippines – a 18-month project entitled “Rebuilding Marawi Republic of Philippines through community driven shelter livelihood support” with a value of USD 11,831,963.00 supported by the Government of Japan and the Government of the Philippines. The proposed project aims to assist Internally Displaced Persons in the recent internal conflict affected areas in Mindanao, specifically Marawi, through post-conflict recovery of shelter and community infrastructure. The conflict displaced almost 360,000 people.

##### **Arab States region:**

- Palestine – a 3-year project entitled “Rehabilitation of Dar Al Consul into a Residential and Civic Complex-Phases II and II” with a value of USD 2,057,898 funded by the European Commission. The proposed project aims at contributing to the huge demand for redevelopment in the Old City. The project addresses several development aspects

inside the Old City, including: houses and open space, rehabilitation, historic and Palestinian cultural identity preservation.

#### **Africa region:**

- Nigeria – two projects supported by Katsina State, Nigeria:
  - A one-year project “Preparation of City Profiles and Improving Urban Planning and Management” worth USD 900,000 funded by Katsina State, which will provide an avenue to remedy the current shortcomings in the planning, governance and management of urban settlements.
  - A 14-month project with a value of USD 3,000,000 entitled “Integrated rehabilitation, relocation and resettlement interventions in north east Nigeria” aimed at facilitating the return of Internally Displaced Persons.
- Ethiopia – a 3-year project entitled “Support to the Implementation of the UN-Habitat Country Programme for Ethiopia” with a value of USD 2,009,700 funded by the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa and aims at supporting government’s effort in managing the rapid urbanization. This project will be specifically supporting the implementation of the Country Programme (2016-2020) that was developed with technical support from UN-Habitat. This is in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

#### **Latin American and the Caribbean region:**

- Colombia – a 2-year project “Strengthening of urban control as a tool to prevent and mitigate emerging conflicts in cities and human settlements of Colombia” with a value of USD 450,000 supported by the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory of Colombia for a diagnosis and analysis of technical, financial and administrative capacities to implement the New Urban Agenda by National Government and Municipalities of Colombia.

#### **Global:**

- A 2017/2018 project “the World Urban Forum” (which took place in Kuala Lumpur from 7-13 February) with a budget of USD 4,000,000. This is part of a larger strategy consolidating the Urban Forum as a permanent advocacy, partnership and knowledge platform contributing to the implementation, monitoring and review of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the work of UN-Habitat in its role as a United Nations system focal point.

### **6. Recent missions by the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director**

#### Missions by the Executive Director:

From 29 January to 2 February, I travelled to New York where the Secretary-General swore me in as UN-Habitat Executive Director. I met with the Secretary-General, the Deputy-Secretary General, the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, Member States in a variety of forums, UN counterparts, members of civil society and youth representatives. This week was of crucial importance as it provided significant context for me to grasp UN-Habitat’s situation from multiple sources and prepared me for the many interactions and meetings I had

with Member States and partners during WUF9. My direct UN leadership provided frank guidance and clarity on challenges UN-Habitat has experienced and direction on how to address these. UN-Habitat's mandate and the ever-growing relevance of sustainable urbanisation was a resounding message from these meetings, and that UN-Habitat needs to firmly position itself to clearly be the focal point and go to expert in this field.

From 7 to 13 February, I travelled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum. Details of this mission are noted in Section 3 of this document.

Missions by the Deputy Executive Director:

The Deputy Executive Director visited Kuala Lumpur from 4 to 11 February to attend the Ninth session of the World Urban Forum. Details of this mission are noted in Section 3 of this document.

The Deputy Executive Director represented UN-Habitat at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York from 12 to 16 March 2017. She took part in a Ministerial Roundtable to discuss good practices in the empowerment of rural women and girls, including through prevention of gender-based violence and through access to justice, social services and health care. She provided remarks at a side-event held to highlight the activities of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), showcasing practical tools for securing and monitoring rural women and girls' tenure in the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of rural-urban linkages. She further met with a number of Member States, UN agencies and the World Bank in New York and Washington D.C. to discuss UN-Habitat's reform process and strategic partnerships.