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Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions
adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session

Draft Capacity Building Strategy for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New urban Agenda**

Summary

The present Strategy is submitted in accordance with Resolution 1/3 of the UN-Habitat Assembly on “Enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, contained in document HSP/HA.1/Res.3. It requests the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to draft a Strategy for the coordination of capacity building as a cross-cutting function.

The purpose of the Strategy is two-fold. Firstly, it aims to fill the institutional and operational gap within UN-Habitat for greater coordination, coherence and monitoring of results. Secondly, it aims at improving the delivery of capacity building services to Member States and local governments and other key urban stakeholders for greater impact and resource efficiency.

The Strategy provides the Executive Director and the Executive Board of UN-Habitat with the elements and rationale to put in motion a road map to transform UN-Habitat into a knowledge-based organization which becomes the leading agency in capacity building for the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG11, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), that responds to demands from member states, cities and urban stakeholders, and offers solutions to problems inherently associated with urbanization.

Key strategic actions include institutional anchoring of capacity building as a cross-cutting function, developing a virtual center of excellence; a full integration into UN-Habitat’s normative and operational programming; and a clear stakeholders’ engagement and strategic partnerships. UN-Habitat will keep capacity needs under constant review to focus on where the greatest impact can be achieved. It requires a strong partnership approach, building strategic coalitions to leverage and sustain results, with a strong focus also on North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

The Strategy requires a prioritized implementation plan, in line with available resources. while exploring ways of increasing financing of capacity building activities at all levels

* HSP/EB.2020/1.

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

I. Introduction

1. The present Strategy is in response to Resolution 1/3 on “Enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly (27-31 May 2019) contained in document HSP/HA.1/Res.3. It requests the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to draft a Strategy for the coordination of capacity building as a cross-cutting function. It sets out a longer-term Strategy for the next 10 years.
2. The Strategy builds on the analysis of capacity building services delivered by UN-Habitat over the years, the capacity needs of urban stakeholders to deliver on the current global agendas, in particular Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda.
3. The Strategy has seven key components. Firstly, it frames how UN-Habitat defines capacity building within its work; secondly, it anchors the Strategy in the global agendas and the mandate of UN-Habitat. It then sets out the results of a problem analysis conducted to identify the breadth of needs and demand for capacity building, and the response given so far by UN-Habitat throughout its operations. It sets out key principles and values underpinning the Strategy, followed by a clear statement on expected outcomes, specific objectives and definition of target groups. It defines key strategic actions needed to achieve results and ensure capacity building is recognized and managed as a cross-cutting function throughout the work program of UN-Habitat. Finally, it points to the need for prioritized implementation plans.
4. The drafting process benefited from a desk review of existing studies and proposals that had been prepared with a view to enhancing and expanding the capacity building role of UN-Habitat and an analysis of the positioning of capacity building functions in the organization. Consultations that took place internally with multiple branches and units provided a broad understanding of opportunities and challenges for an improved delivery of capacity building. External consultations were also held to gather the opinion of key partners and specialized institutions.
5. The current draft is presented to the Executive Board for feedback. The final adopted Strategy will require an implementation plan, reflecting the available resources and identified priorities.

II. Approaches and methods for capacity building

6. Capacity building is recognized by the UN as a "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world."
7. In the context of its mandate and mission, UN-Habitat proposes a working definition of capacity building as “a change process through which individuals and institutions engage in a set of learning methods, whereby they develop and acquire knowledge, skills, know-how, and tools that strengthen their ability to effectively intervene, transform and improve themselves and the environment in which they operate. It entails a multiplicity of activities and processes ultimately aiming at the delivery of qualitative and effective policies, projects, programs, processes, decisions, and institutional responses”.
8. The Strategy is based on a virtuous cycle of learning, inspired by the Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning¹. The Strategy adopts a novel 3a-3i approach (Acquire, Absorb, Analyze, Implement, Investigate and Innovate) that depicts a dynamic cycle of knowledge and skills acquisition.
9. Capacity building targets the following objectives:
 - (a) Acquisition of knowledge, skills and know-how;
 - (b) Development and strengthening competencies;
 - (c) Development or strengthening of the ability to achieve one’s mission and aspirations;
 - (d) Improvement of individual and institutional performance;
 - (e) Institution building and improvement of governance systems;
 - (f) Strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.
10. It is important to understand that capacity building is a far more complex process than ‘training’, which is but one element of capacity building. Effective capacity building takes place in a

¹ <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>.

dynamic and interactive learning environment that should combine a variety of tools and methods, including specialized courses, policy seminars, expert group meetings, tailor-made training, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange workshops that support the learning cycle.

11. Capacity building activities, processes and strategies must address both the learning and institutional components of individuals and organizations, as its catalytic impact critically depends on the strength of the enabling environment, i.e. the structures of power and influence within the organizations. Capacity building therefore goes beyond the acquisition and application of skills, knowledge and methods, as it also concerns incentives, governance and institutional mechanisms.

12. When focusing on one single institution, capacity building entails a combination of learning and solutions to impulse positive institutional and organizational changes. In view of these changes, the selection and design of specific forms of capacity building interventions should be tailored to the specific needs and context of each target group. It should respond to well-defined and contextualized urban challenges and institutional and organizational requirements. Comprehensive initial assessments shall include Training Needs Assessments based first on the analysis of the capacities of individuals, but also on an analysis of the environment in which they operate (policies, governance mechanisms, legislations in place) in order to map out institutional needs for capacity building. This should also include, where appropriate, accompanying measures of institutional development to create a more enabling environment.

13. The different forms of capacity building processes shall inform, support and lead to innovations and urban solutions, by increasing the capabilities of target groups to implement them. Therefore, capacity building is fundamental for creating a generation of well-informed and well-trained urban professionals, who are empowered with skills and capable to plan and manage sustainable urbanization, as well as achieving transformative leadership that drives policy changes and institutional development.

III. Capacity building in global agendas and role for the UN and UN-Habitat

A. Capacity building as a key component of global agendas

14. The international development community and Member States have recognized capacity building as one of the critical pillars of sustainable development for over five decades. The international agendas embrace multiple forms of capacity building including city-to-city cooperation, north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation, training, e-learning. These approaches have proved effective for target groups ranging from policy and decision makers and urban practitioners to various stakeholders of the public, private, academic and community sectors.

15. Sustainable Development Goal Target 17.9 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the dedicated target to capacity- building and aims to "Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation". Member States also commit respectively in paragraph 109 b and 109 c "to strengthen their national institutions to complement capacity-building".

16. The New Urban Agenda underscores the need for capacity building throughout its propositions and recommended implementation mechanisms. It calls for the deployment of strong capacity building interventions: " NUA paragraph 81: We recognize that the realization of the transformative commitments set out in the New Urban Agenda will require enabling policy frameworks at the national, subnational and local levels, integrated by participatory planning and management of urban spatial development and effective means of implementation, complemented by international cooperation as well as efforts in capacity development, including the sharing of best practices, policies and programs.....[and] "support strengthening the capacity of subnational and local governments to implement effective local and metropolitan multilevel governance, across administrative borders, and based on functional territories, ensuring the involvement of subnational and local governments in decision-making and working to provide them with the necessary authority and resources to manage critical urban, metropolitan and territorial concerns (NUA paragraph 90)"; NUA paragraph 102: We will strive to improve capacity for urban planning and design and the provision of training".

B. United Nations and UN-Habitat mandate towards capacity building

17. Capacity building is seen as a key function of the United Nations that needs strengthening. The United Nations System- Wide Strategic Document, drawn up to support the implementation of the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognized the UN's comparative advantage as custodian and provider of support for the implementation of global and regional norms, and internationally agreed standards and frameworks, which are essential in ensuring that SDG achievements are sustainable and equitable. The sustainability and impact of its services requires clear capacity building strategies and knowledge transfer.

18. The UN system-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development recognized the need for capacity building as a cross-cutting function in its proposed collaborative implementation framework: focusing on capacity building requirements related to urban data to provide a strong evidence base and understand the interrelations among global agendas, goals and targets; to support integrated policy formulation; to strengthen the domestic resource mobilization potential, the fiscal capacity and the development of strong and accountable institutions and mechanisms for participatory governance and finally to support the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

19. Capacity building is part and parcel of the DNA of UN-Habitat. It was consistently highlighted throughout the three United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements (Habitat I, II and III). Nevertheless, the position of the capacity building function has not been stable during the agency's lifespan and witnessed considerable changes in its role, means of implementation, and scope.

20. Capacity building has frequently featured in UN-Habitat related resolutions. The last General Assembly Resolution A71/239 para 9 *“urges UN-Habitat to further support increased participation of governments at all levels and regional organizations in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to cities and other human settlements, in particular by providing technical assistance aimed at developing the capacity of all levels of governments, especially in developing countries, to plan and implement sustainable urbanization and human settlements programs and projects”*.

21. The capacity building Strategy stretches beyond the timeline of the Strategic Plan as its long-term goal is set to 2030. The Strategic Plan 2020-2023 labels capacity building as an institutional performance enabler. In its paragraph 170, it acknowledges that *“capacity building [...] creates and strengthens the ability of UN-Habitat, governments at different levels, particularly regional and local governments, and partner organizations to plan, manage, execute and monitor policies, programs and projects at all levels. Capacity building (including training) is the means to ground the agency's normative products, assess and respond to the needs of governments and partners, trigger innovations and support long-term institutional transformation at country level. [...] It is therefore an enabler of organizations and individuals alike, but it is also the enabler of policy implementation, organizational and institutional change and transformative actions on the ground”*.

22. Resolution 1/3 of the UN-Habitat Assembly (HSP/HA.1/Res.3) establishes capacity building as cross-cutting function to be implemented in a coordinated, integrated and coherent manner. It requests the Executive Director to develop, in accordance with the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023 and within the scope of available resources, a strengthened and integrated capacity-building approach to support the achievement of sustainable urban development, with inclusive consultations that consider the needs of Member States. It requests the Executive Director, within the scope of available resources, to support Member States in their efforts to mobilize human and financial resources to develop and implement capacity-building programs. Finally, it reiterates its invitation to all Member States to support the mobilization of human and financial resources through voluntary contributions to sustain the UN-Habitat training and capacity-building Strategy.

IV. Problem analysis and opportunities for action

A. Capacity gaps to ensure sustainable urbanization

23. Capacity building is considered essential to accelerate progress towards the urban dimensions of the SDGs and enable the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. If properly planned and managed, urbanization can become a transformative engine of economic growth that produces equal opportunities for wealth generation, prosperity and quality of life for all. This is inexorably associated with the capacities of government institutions to steer this process in a sustainable and inclusive manner. This puts capacity building in the forefront of the developmental efforts.

24. It is worth noting that while many cities have undergone substantial social, economic, spatial and physical transformation, the human and administrative capacities of municipal/local governments have failed to keep pace. This is particularly true in fragile settings and for intermediate cities and towns, often characterized by high urbanization rates. Surveys of the Commonwealth Association of Planners have pointed out for instance that Commonwealth countries, with the highest urbanization

rates and which are among the most vulnerable, have the lowest number of planning professionals per capita, compared to the most urbanized developed countries. This points to a longer-term strategic need of expanding the professional pool of planners through educational programs, while ensuring in the intermediate term that those local governments have improved access to planning knowledge and practices. In addition, in often cases, an analysis of the profiles of city managers demonstrate inadequacy between their postgraduate education and the functions that they perform.

25. Externally, one identifies serious capacity gaps that affect the ability of local and national governments to cope with the demographic pressure and the ever-increasing demand for land, housing, infrastructure and basic urban services. Many local and national government institutions are inadequately equipped to manage cities and rapid urbanization. There is a lack of adequate policies and systems on one side and well-trained personnel on the other, coupled with poor capability of public administration that impede effective progress towards well governed urbanization.

26. According to study of OECD², “the lack of sufficient administrative, technical or strategic capacities is one of the biggest challenges in the field of decentralization.” Therefore, building capacities, including “learning-by-doing”, should be a priority. This takes time and therefore needs a long-term commitment from central and subnational government levels. The OECD advocates for governments to reinforce the capacities of public officials and institutions in a systemic approach, rather than adopting a narrow focus on technical assistance.

27. Another study³ on urban governance in the developing world carried out by the University of Birmingham highlights that managing cities and urban growth is one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century and that many municipalities lack the skills, capacity and resources to meet obligations. It argues that expanding capacity to plan, manage and finance urban growth is a fundamental component of effective urban governance. Furthermore, cities that are poorly planned, managed and governed can become centers of poverty, inequality and conflict.

Capacity-related challenges preventing efficient urban governance⁴

- Complex and unclear organizational structures
- Unclear delegation of tasks between managing authorities and intermediate bodies;
- Insufficient capacity and power within coordinating bodies to fulfil their role;
- Weak governance arrangements for holding managers accountable for performance, controlling corruption and avoiding undue political influence over project selection and staff appointments;
- High staff turnover rates and lack of appropriately qualified and experienced staff;
- Poor administrative capacity of municipal governments, especially smaller local authorities;
- Lack of expertise leading to issues of compliance with complex national and international regulations e.g. public procurement, aid and environmental legislation;
- Limited analytical and programming capacity, including insufficient capacity (and political backing) to deliver result-oriented strategies;
- Weak capacity to coordinate spatial/physical, socio-economic and urban environmental planning and their legal enforcement;
- Inadequate capacity to plan for economic growth and revenue generation;
- Poor coordination and policy alignment at local/national levels;
- Weak capacity in planning, regulatory control, finance and service delivery;
- Lack of a governance system that is accountable and promote multi-stakeholder involvement.

B. Increasing demand for capacity building support by the United Nations

28. The UN System Staff Council Report (UNSSC) report from 2018 confirms that the supply and demand for training activities related to the implementation of SDGs have increased. It reinforces the arguments that there is a growing interest in learning and training around the 2030 Agenda among representatives from governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and international organizations.

29. Different centers of excellence have emerged, supported by UN agencies since 2010, related to different SDGs, suggesting also that this development goes hand in hand with the localization of the

² OECD (2019). Making Decentralization work. A handbook for policy-makers. https://www.oecd.org/cfe/Policy%20highlights_decentralisation-Final.pdf.

³ Avis, W. R. (2016). Urban Governance (Topic Guide). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham. https://gsdrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UrbanGov_GSDRC.pdf.

⁴ Ibid Avis, W.R., 2016. [pages 14-15].

2030 Agenda and the rising demand for support. For instance, the Global Center for Public Service Excellence associates its work to SDG16; The UNSSC Knowledge Center responds to SDG13, 14, 15 and 16; and UNECE International Public Private Partnerships Center operates to further SDG17. Currently, there is no center of excellence to further the implementation of the urban dimensions of the SDGs, including SDG11.

C. UN-Habitat’s internal capacity building challenges

30. The current Strategy responds also to the Audit Report 2018/077, conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The audit focused on the Research and Capacity Development sub-program, covering the period from January 2016 to December 2017 and called for the development of an organization-wide Strategy for capacity development.

31. The MOPAN 3.0 report⁵ highlights the growth and increasing demand for UN-Habitat’s advisory services and for capacity-building and operational support activities at the regional and country level. However, it recognizes the difficulties to determine the impact of capacity building on policy change because of lack of evidence. The report also acknowledges the lack of a comprehensive performance tracking system which makes it difficult for UN-Habitat to fully substantiate results.

32. Recent internal analysis in 2019 highlighted the following:

(a) All branches engage in some form of capacity building, but with varied uncoordinated methodological approaches and collaborative engagements;

(b) There is a lack of a unified definition of capacity building across branches, in some cases units equate capacity building only to training or use different terms – (“learning events” or “knowledge sharing”), showing a lack of a coherent corporate messaging;

(c) The 2018 Progress Report shows that UN-Habitat conducted, on average, 50 training days per month in 2018, but that a majority (47%) of the capacity building activities lasted between 1 to 2 days, and less than 40% of them were part of a continuous capacity building or training program, suggesting a piece-meal and short-lived approach to capacity building;

(d) Knowledge management is underdeveloped and decentralized, preventing the agency from effective knowledge sharing and dissemination of good practices;

(e) Comprehensive capacity development, including coaching, mentoring, training, should also be part of personal development programs for UN-Habitat staff to enable them to better support and address member state needs.

V. Principles and Values

A. Principles

33. **Capacity building needs to be prioritized to accelerate achievement of the SDGs and implementation the New Urban Agenda:** The Strategy should entail a constant review of capacity building needs in view of prioritizing those that can have the most impact and scale. The Strategy promotes the design of consistent, integrated and long-term capacity building programs that can be monitored on its results over time.

34. **Capacity building needs to be contextualized:** There is a great variety of countries, with different degrees of development and urbanization and different levels of systems, institutions and capacities to manage sustainable urbanization. Capacity building efforts always need to be adapted to the local contexts, including translation into local languages, requiring close collaboration with local learning institutions and ensuring knowledge transfer. This is critical to increase the accessibility, knowledge transfer and impact.

35. **Capacity building requires strategic coalitions, building on the comparative advantage of different actors:** This calls for an alignment and coordination with other UN agencies, North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation to maximize impact, leverage action, go to scale and sustain results.

36. **Capacity building as a cross-cutting function:** Capacity building has to be seen as integral part of and key connection between UN-Habitat’s normative and operational work. It implies the need

⁵ MOPAN 3.0 – Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (2017) Institutional Assessment Report. <https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Mopan-UN-HABITAT-report-interactive-FINAL.pdf>.

for vertical coordination and horizontal collaboration throughout the design, planning and implementation phases of capacity building services.

37. **Corporate standards and quality assurance:** Clear accountability and responsibilities need to be assigned to hold all units and branches to agreed corporate standards and commitments of capacity building.

38. **Innovations for efficient and effective capacity building:** Capacity building efforts need to draw on the latest innovations (ex. e-learning) to help scale capacity building efforts, making maximum use of the available resources.

B. Values

39. The implementation of this Strategy is grounded on three core values:

(a) *Respect for human rights* without distinction of any kind, such as to race, color, sex, language, religion or other status, allows capacity building to be people-centered and human-rights based;

(b) *Inclusiveness* for all genders and people with different abilities enables universal access to knowledge and development of capacities across different target groups, empowering individuals to take decisions and strengthening institutions and organizations so that no one and no institution is left behind;

(c) *Sustainability:* Capacity building activities must be designed, planned and executed with sustainable practices at the center to ensure their lasting impact, preserve resources, and to meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of the future ones.

VI. Expected outcomes and specific objectives

A. Expected outcomes

40. People and their organizations will be empowered with knowledge and skills to achieve the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 11, and implement the New Urban Agenda, in line also with UN-Habitat's vision and mission outlined in its Strategic Plans.

41. UN-Habitat becomes, by 2030, the leading global capacity building agency that provides cutting-edge services and knowledge products that effectively strengthens capacities of national and local governments, empowering institutions and individuals with knowledge, skills and methods, in its areas of expertise.

42. An institutional environment is established, conducive to improved horizontal and vertical coordination, integrating and connecting UN-Habitat's operational and normative work, ensuring resource efficiency and accountability in capacity building programs and activities in all areas of work of UN-Habitat. It aspires to deliver capacity building with unified and consistent methodologies in all stages of the project cycle (design, planning, implementation and monitoring), to ensure coherent quality and generate long-term impacts.

B. Specific Objectives

43. Adopt an agency-wide approach to capacity building as a cross-cutting issue, with actions to collate and manage the knowledge, expertise and technical tools generated in the different thematic areas of UN-Habitat's work, connecting and leveraging UN-Habitat's normative work at country level, while ensuring continuous learning from its operational work;

44. Establish a harmonized approach to assessing the specific capacity building needs and demands of target groups, considering the institutional context and in view of maximizing the impact and sustainability of capacity building efforts;

45. Enable more coordinated capacity building and institutional development efforts within the UN-system, in support of the UN system-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development;

46. Build broad coalitions to mobilize the necessary capacities and resources to maximize impact, leverage and scale the capacity building efforts in line with the capacity needs to ensure sustainable urbanization and the achievement of the urban dimension of the SDGs;

47. Build the in-house capacity to integrate capacity building and institutional development in UN-Habitat's operational and normative work;

48. Develop UN-Habitat learning and capacity building corporate methods and branding.

C. Target groups

49. This Strategy serves as internal guidance for the provision of capacity building services by UN-Habitat, across its Divisions, both at headquarters and through its outposted offices.

50. UN-Habitat capacity building focuses primarily on the strengthening of the capacity of national and local governments, taking into account the variety, complexity and multiple layers of territorial and urban governance. It targets institutions and their cadre, senior managers, decision makers, policy makers and overall personnel in charge of planning, designing, managing and implementing housing and urban development policies, programs and projects that address a wide range of urban issues and disciplines.

51. Learning for better cities and sustainable urban development requires the integration and cross-sector collaboration involving all stakeholders in a city. It is important that capacity building activities benefit multiple stakeholder groups and encourages inter-sector and inter-institutional collaboration. UN-Habitat's will consider the needs of the private, academic, community and civil society sectors, in particular in view of their critical contribution to sustainable urbanization.

52. Intermediate cities and towns experience amongst the highest rates of urbanization and biggest challenges related to scarcity of financial and human resources. Capacity needs are often the highest in fragile settings, which have particularly high rates of urbanization fueled by displacement, without the necessary systems, strong institutions and specialized human resources. They require specific attention.

VII. Key Strategic Actions

53. The following strategic actions are considered key to be able to deliver on the expected outcomes and specific objectives.

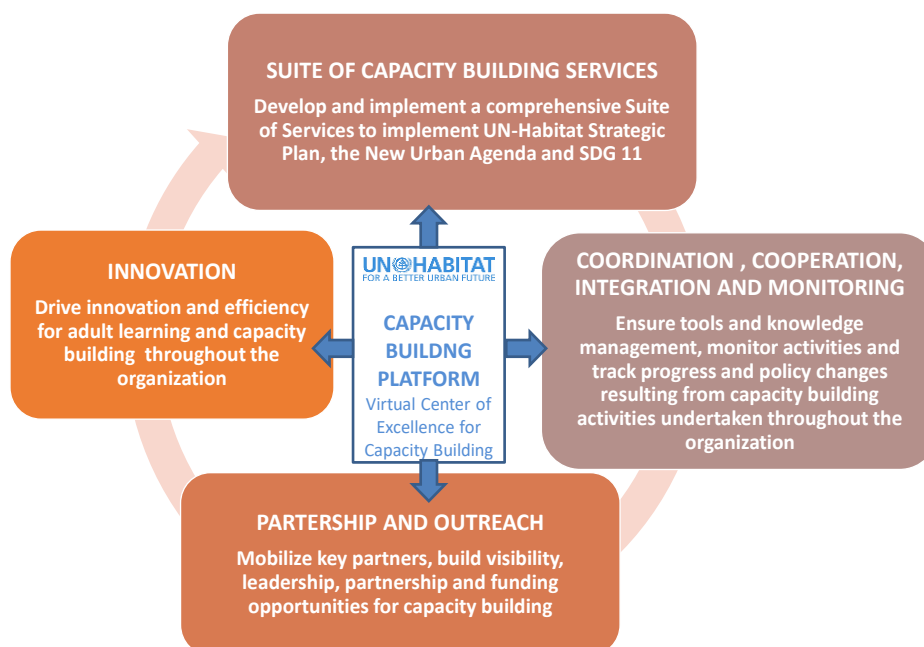
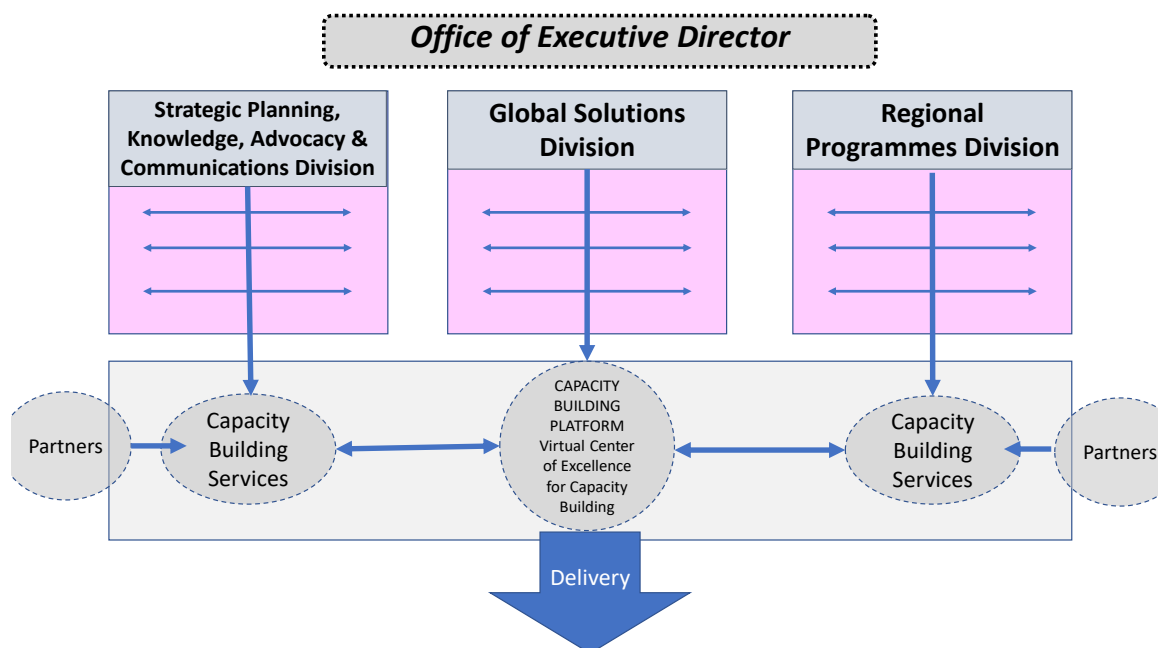
A. Institutional anchoring of the capacity building as a cross-cutting function

54. The internal institutional architecture needs to enable effective horizontal and vertical coordination and collaboration amongst the different units, branches and divisions across UN-Habitat, including with the (sub-)regional and country offices.

55. The implementation of capacity building, as a cross-cutting function, requires clearly assigned functions, staffing, resources and protocols across the agency in order to ensure cross-sector and cross-branch collaboration while maximizing the utilization of in-house capacities and resources.

56. UN-Habitat created, as of 1 January 2020, a 'Capacity Development and Training Platform' within the Program Development Branch of the Global Solutions Division to be the custodian of the implementation of this Strategy. The Platform will, amongst others:

- (a) Monitor the implementation of the Strategy, identify gaps and corporate priorities;
- (b) Support capacity building activities of UN-Habitat to ensure a consistent and coherent approach in line with this Strategy;
- (c) Provide support to UN-Habitat's operations, programs and initiatives with the provision of tools and methods throughout the capacity building cycle, including the monitoring of target groups and impacts, while ensuring continuous learning from programming at country level;
- (d) Develop a suite of capacity building services drawn from the normative and operational work of the different branches of the agency to serve the implementation of the Strategic Plans. This includes different forms of capacity building, training companions, e-learning modules, and Training of Trainers;
- (e) Establish mechanisms to foster collaboration and cooperation with internal as well as external parties; including through the building of capacity of UN-Habitat staff so that more staff is conversant with the methods, pedagogic tools and the entire capacity building cycle, from Training Needs Assessment and Institutional Capacity Gap Analysis to post-training monitoring and follow-up;
- (f) Establish partnerships with cutting edge institutions and coordination of framework agreements, agreement of cooperation and/or commissioned consultancy contracts.



57. A feasibility study is needed to explore how the Capacity Building and Training Platform can further develop into a virtual center of excellence, known and recognized both internally as externally, scaled in line with the capacity building needs. The virtual center should act as a focal point, a one-window shop virtual solution, mandated as coordinator and articulator of the capacity building services, programs and activities. A consolidated online portal for the repository and storage of all capacity building resources, knowledge, training companions, reports, rosters of tools, etc. should provide the foundation of knowledge and materials to support its work. This should enable UN-Habitat to incrementally establish a knowledge management foundation, build its capacity building branding, and create a culture of collaborative programming and implementation. It should allow to incrementally broaden the scope, outreach and quality of the capacity building services delivered by UN-Habitat.

58. The institutional anchoring will need to be kept under periodic review to ensure the most effective and efficient implementation of this Strategy, considering the available resources.

B. Integration into programming and quality assurance

59. Capacity Building requires that during the conceptual phase prior to write-up of the project document, project developers consider identified capacity building requirements to facilitate project assessment and approval. This can be facilitated by the application of a “Capacity building marker” to program and project preparation and review processes. This consists of a practical checklist for project developers and managers but also serve as a guide for project review at the Program Review Committee.

60. Normative products, for example tools and guidance notes, developed within and outside UN-Habitat, need to be constantly reviewed and assessed on their potential to support the needed capacity building activities.

61. UN-Habitat flagship and other global programs need to integrate capacity building components to leverage and sustain its activities.

62. As a core UN function, capacity building needs to be further prioritized as part of (sub-) regional and country level programs and designed as sustained systemic efforts that accompany work in key thematic areas. The roll out of the UN system-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development, Common Country Analysis and the elaboration of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks offer concrete opportunities to ensure integration of capacity building in a coordinated manner with other UN agencies.

63. Processes for quality assurance and monitoring need to be set-up. These should enable UN-Habitat to ensure high quality of delivery throughout the capacity building process, with the most optimal use of its in-house expertise, human and financial resources. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms should lead to periodic reviews.

C. Promote innovation and new technologies for capacity building

64. An in-depth study is needed on the use of technology and innovation in the planning, design and implementation of online capacity building activities, e-learning modules, Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and other types of products in order to assess and map experiences, learn from their results, unfold technical viability, and ensure articulation with existing related initiatives at UN-Habitat, such as the New Urban Agenda monitoring Platform.

65. There is a need for a more structured offer of e-learning and distance-learning products. By adopting an e-learning Strategy, UN-Habitat should enlarge its menu of services to build individual and institutional capacity via online courses, (MOOCs), webinars, podcasts and other forms of distance-learning. Innovation needs to be consistently pursued in the development and delivery of capacity building.

D. Stakeholders’ engagement and partnerships

66. UN-Habitat needs to tap on the knowledge, expertise and experience of well-established international, national and regional training centers of excellence to set in motion a global partnership for training and capacity building.

67. UN-Habitat should keep an inventory of current and potential stakeholders that can help implement the Strategy, at global, regional and country level. This should serve as a basis for building strategic partnerships, with other UN Agencies, universities, training institutes and centers of excellence at all levels.

68. UN-Habitat already engages with universities and specialized training institutions in different ways. However, there is a need for an expanded, closer and coordinated collaboration with universities worldwide. This will serve a dual objective of (1) multiplying the dissemination and utilization of UN-Habitat’s normative and operational tools and instruments in curricular activities; and to (2) utilize the existing knowledge, research and human capital vested at the various departments and thinktanks of universities for the purpose of increasing the quality, quantity and outreach of the capacity building activities of UN-Habitat. Advanced engagement with universities creates innovative capacity building that mixes formal academic education with problem-solving pragmatic and skill-building oriented training and other forms of learning, which engage students, young professionals and scholars. Universities are also well-placed in their cities, where they often establish bridges and create collaborative projects that directly impact on various aspects of city life and local development. A strengthened engagement includes but isn’t limited to collaboration with research hubs, joint research ventures, technology and innovation for capacity building, e-learning, webinars as well as UN-Habitat certified pedagogical products including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

69. UN-Habitat needs to prioritize and leverage partnerships with global, regional and national city networks and institutions engaged in urban-related issues and capacity building.

70. UN-Habitat should seek increase private sector participation, mobilize their expertise, knowledge, human capital and additional funding for capacity building.

71. NGOs, people-centered institutions for capacity building, and community professional groups with experience in providing technical assistance represent also natural choices for symbiotic partnerships in the agency's capacity building programs, given their technical expertise, language knowledge and established relationship with communities on the ground.

E. Financing of capacity building

72. More work is needed, in collaboration with other partners, on how to scale the financing of capacity building, in particular in developing countries and fragile settings, reviewing different sources to finance and leverage capacity building efforts.

VIII. Implementation

73. UN-Habitat must develop a yearly implementation plan, prioritizing activities, and including the necessary budget and staffing allocations, to be integrated into the Agency's workplans and budgets.
