

**Second Bureau meeting of the Executive Board for the year 2021
Monday 1 March 2021 from 10:00 am - 12:00 noon EAT**

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat and Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters Agenda item 3 a) on “Update on the work of the Ad- Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary an administrative matters”

Statement based on Provisional Agenda shared with Member States on 22 February 2021

Agenda item 3: Update on the work of the Ad- Hoc working groups:

- a) Ad- hoc working group on Programmatic, Budgetary and Administrative matters;**

[After the Chair of the Executive Board gives you the floor]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to brief the Bureau at this meeting on the work of the working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

I will first update you on the discussions held by the Ad-Hoc working group on the draft programme and budget for the year 2022. I will then brief you on the upcoming meetings to be held by the working group towards the first 2021 session of the Executive Board.

Excellencies,

As may be recalled, the Executive Board through its its Decision 2020/6 adopted in October 2020, approved the work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2021 . Based on the briefing of the Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters at that session, the Executive Board also took note of the need to align the sessions of the Board in 2021 with the preparatory and approval process for the draft 2022 work programme and budget of UN-Habitat.

On that occasion, the Executive Board made some recommendations related to the draft work programme and budget for the year 2022 requiring action by the the Ad-Hoc working group on

programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters. Specifically, in Decision 2020/6, the Executive Board requested the working group:

- (i) To discuss a draft work programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2022 in readiness for submission to the Controller of the United Nations in New York by 15 January 2021 and;
- (ii) To discuss a draft budget for UN-Habitat for 2022 in line with the recommended budget range for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation non-earmarked budget of UN-Habitat for 2022 of between \$10 million and \$12 million and other extra budgetary resources, for submission to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions by 15 February 2021.

Excellencies,

I wish to first note that in December 2020 the Secretariat brought to our attention that it had received since the 2020 second session of the Executive Board a new guidance from the UNSG and the UN-Controller with respect to the timeline for preparations of the work programme and budget, which as a result impacted the schedule of meetings of the Ad-Hoc working group.

I wish to report that the Ad Hoc working group did follow-up on the recommendation of the Executive Board in decision 2020/6 and met on **18 January 2021 and 11 February 2021** to discuss the draft work programme and draft budget of UN-Habitat for 2022, including the Foundation Non-Earmarked Budget of UN-Habitat for 2022.

At the meeting held on 18 January 2021, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the priorities of the Organization towards the development of the Work Programme of UN-Habitat for the year 2022. The document was shared by the Secretariat on 22 December 2020, with the objective to hold a preliminary discussion and provide guidance to the Secretariat on the areas of focus and potential catalytic actions for the development for the work programme for the year 2022.

At that meeting, the Secretariat:

- i. Reiterated that its areas of focus and related work programme for 2022 is guided by the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and presented the four Sub-Programmes of the

- programme of work for the year 2022 with their expected results;
- ii. Emphasized that due to the reduction of core resources, certain expected outcomes of the Strategic Plan have been deprioritized, while other outcomes have become more important due to the current existing urban challenges;
 - iii. Recalled the impact of COVID-19 on the planned deliverables and activities for the year 2020, which involved seeking alternative forms of gatherings and consultations using virtual meeting platforms, advisory services, and remote technical support. However, the Secretariat acknowledged that there are valuable lessons learned and best practices related to adjustments and adaption of programme due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Member States raised no comment on the presentation by the Secretariat.

At the meeting on 11 February 2021, Member States further discussed a recommended work programme and budget for the year 2022. The document was shared with Member States prior to the meeting on 4 February 2021.

Some of recommendations to UN-Habitat underscored by the Ad-hoc working group during the meeting on 11 February included the following:

- i. In relation to the difficult current financial situation faced by UN-Habitat, the 2022 work programme should be ambitious yet not overachieving;
- ii. Tentative support by the working group for the proposed budget for the year 2022 with a cap on USD 10 Million, taking into consideration the ongoing tense financial situation. Should core contributions from Member States exceed the USD 10 Million budget, preparation of a case scenario on how to allocate the additional resources received should be made and the working group be updated accordingly. One Member State stated that it does not support the proposed budget increase;
- iii. An increase of 60% on the Foundation's earmarked budget in 2022 in comparison to 2021 should not be held at the expense of UN-Habitat core budget;
- iv. Geographical and gender balance of the proposed foundational professional posts should be taken into account and professional posts at headquarters in Nairobi should be prioritized;

- v. Increased resource mobilization efforts with traditional donors, non-traditional donors, the private sector and philanthropies.
- iv. Timely preparation of documentation including the work programme and budget to enable robust discussions by the working group and subsequent timely consideration of the work programme and budget by the Executive Board. On that note, some concerns were shared on the persistent lateness in the submission of the budget document to the Working Group, time enough to allow Member States to review the document in a substantive manner and to share the draft budget with their capitals.

I believe that the recommendations from the Ad Hoc working group will enable the Executive Director to update the Executive Board at its upcoming first session in April 2021 on the status of the draft work programme and budget for 2022. The Ad-hoc working group will continue with constructive discussions to recommend to the Executive Board at its second session of 2021 a budget for the draft work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for 2022 in line with the decision 2020/6.

Excellencies,

In addition to what I have just presented on the Budget for 2022, the working group will also meet for its twelfth and thirteenth meetings on 3 and 17 March 2021 during which it will discuss the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, the alignment of UN-Habitat planning cycles with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review process (QCPR) as well as the financial status of UN-Habitat and the restructuring process. In this regard, it is expected that the working group having had the chance to review and make input into these documents, the Executive Board will further review the documents at the upcoming first session in April 2021.

The meeting scheduled on 17 March 2021 may also be an opportunity for Member States to provide additional constructive comments on the proposed draft work Programme and budget for the year 2022.

Finally, as recommended by the Bureau on 11 January 2021 and reiterated at the meeting today, the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters will be instrumental in the prior informal consideration of any draft decisions before they are formally

discussed and adopted by the Board at its first session. It is my understanding that these informal consultations are tentatively scheduled for 17 and 29 March 2021. You can count on my support as Chair of the working group to implement the recommendation from the Bureau.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

In conclusion, as the Chairman is aware, H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki Permanent Representative of Romania has, since the meeting on 11 February 2021, resigned as Chair of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Programme Budget and Administration, and I wish to thank her for her tremendous leadership support to the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters during her tenure as Chair of the Ad-Hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I now give the floor back to you.
