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**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

**First open-ended meeting/  
High-level midterm review**

Nairobi, 29 June–1 July 2021

Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

**Progress in the implementation of the decisions and  
resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat  
Assembly at its first session**

**Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions  
adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its  
first session**

**Report of the Executive Director**

**Introduction**

1. At its first session, held in Nairobi from 27 to 31 May 2019, the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) adopted three decisions and five resolutions. In decisions 1/1 and 1/2, the Assembly adopted its rules of procedure and endorsed the rules of procedure of its Executive Board. In resolution 1/1, the Assembly approved the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023; the midterm review of the implementation of the strategic plan is covered in document HSP/OECPR.2021/2. The present report provides an overview of the status of implementation of the remaining decision and four resolutions, namely:

- (a) Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements;
- (b) 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;
- (c) Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements;
- (d) Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements;
- (e) Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

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\* HSP/OECPR.2021/1.

## **I. Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements**

2. After the adoption of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, Mexico and South Africa requested technical assistance from UN-Habitat for the implementation of a municipal safety policy following the principles and approaches articulated in the guidelines. In that respect, the cities of Guadalajara, Mexico, and Durban, South Africa, which were the chosen pilot cities, conducted city-wide safety profiling that has informed the adoption of city-wide safety policies now being implemented with locally available resources. The two pilot countries are studying the results of the pilot projects with a view to scaling up and replicating them in at least 10 other cities in each country, using an intra-country peer review process. The intention is to scale up these start-up mechanisms to 10 to 15 countries by the time of the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, to be held in 2023.

3. UN-Habitat, in collaboration with the city of Madrid, held a global expert meeting on the development of the Urban Safety Monitor on 29 and 30 October 2020. At the meeting, participants reviewed existing safety indicators applied by local governments, in preparation for the development of the Urban Safety Monitor prototype to support country activities and the peer review process.

4. UN-Habitat will circulate an online survey among Member States to collect further information on the situation regarding municipal safety policies in their countries. In addition, UN-Habitat is finalizing a funding proposal for extrabudgetary support from the United Nations trust fund for human security to further support the pilot countries in implementing a framework for measurement and monitoring of their municipal safety policies.

5. As part of efforts to raise country awareness of innovative practices and case studies that contribute to the safety indicators, the first annual 40 Days Safer Cities Challenge was held from the International Day of Peace, 21 September 2020, through 31 October 2020. The challenge brought together more than 40 partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities through online webinar events at the country, regional and global levels. The annual event is expected to raise awareness of the implementation of innovative practices as part of the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements.

6. The draft terms of reference for a country peer review mechanism will be shared with the Executive Board for consideration and decision-making. The terms of reference for the mechanism build on the experience of UN-Habitat with respect to the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, as well as similar review mechanisms in the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental processes. A background paper on these mechanisms and processes will be shared at the same time as the draft terms of reference. Member States are encouraged to provide financial support for the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, for which the concept note for the period 2020–2023, for both global and in-country activities, was submitted to the Executive Board (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.2).

## **II. 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**

7. The capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.1) was approved by the Executive Board at its second session of 2020. A draft implementation plan was communicated to Member States for information purposes.

8. In terms of capacity development for the monitoring of progress towards the global goals, *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated* handbook was finalized and released in January 2021. The handbook is a global capacity-building tool prepared by the Capacity Development and Training Unit of UN-Habitat for urban stakeholders worldwide. The handbook analyses the contents and propositions of the New Urban Agenda and their synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, enriches them with concrete references, visual illustrations and examples from all over the world and includes practical proposals for action.

9. To improve implementation, monitoring and reporting on the New Urban Agenda, a series of consultations were undertaken with Regional Economic Commissions through the “Interregional cooperation for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda” project, funded through the

United Nations Development Account, to assess capacity-building needs at the national and regional levels.

10. To support the UN-Habitat Catalogue of Services, the Capacity Development and Training Unit has developed a handbook to support cities wishing to build participatory accountability systems for their policies. The handbook describes methodologies in a stepwise and pedagogical way and refers to good practices developed by the cities participating in the “Accountability systems for measuring, monitoring and reporting on sustainable city policies in Latin America” project in Brazil, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

11. In terms of digital innovation for capacity development, UN-Habitat has developed an internal digital-learning strategy document that takes stock of current approaches and products developed throughout UN-Habitat, identifies potential partners and solutions and provides a road map for accelerating the digital transformation of UN-Habitat capacity-building and learning activities.

12. The first part of the pilot online “crash course”, based on chapter 1 of *The New Urban Agenda Illustrated* handbook, “Core dimensions”, was released on 5 October 2020. The second part of the course, based on chapter 2, “Means of implementation”, is to be released in April 2021. The course is free of charge and accessible to all. Each part is three hours long and offers a certificate of completion. The self-paced interactive course, developed internally, paves the way for production of new types of digital learning services on a dedicated learning management system.

13. In terms of support for regional centres of excellence, a project to establish a centre of excellence on housing for West African Economic and Monetary Union countries was approved and implementation started in the second half of 2020. The centre supports the eight countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. Through the project, UN-Habitat supports the universities of Ouagadougou and Dakar, which are mandated by the West African Economic and Monetary Union, with funding from the World Bank, to develop a robust and aligned system of data collection and indicators, prepare national reports on housing, and deliver training sessions for urban professionals.

14. Continuous support is provided to the International Urban Training Center in Gangwon Province, Korea. During the reporting period, the centre and UN-Habitat held three international capacity-building workshops on various themes related to sustainable urban development and delivered an international online course on integrated urban water management, including management of water and sanitation for effective prevention of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The workshops were attended by approximately 120 academics and senior urban professionals from 12 countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. The post-training evaluation by participants indicated a level of satisfaction and perceived relevance of 90 per cent.

15. In terms of enhanced partnerships, collaboration with universities and training institutions continued through specific projects, as well as through the coordination of the University Network Initiative, within which high-level events, such as a dedicated Urban Thinkers Campus held in July 2020, were organized for academia during the World Urban Forum and online. Of particular importance are the launch of the sixth season of the Global Urban Lectures in 2020 and the launch of the United Nations Innovation and Technology Centre in partnership with HafenCity University in Hamburg, Germany.

16. In response to the restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat adapted the format of the tenth edition of the Shelter Academy, supported by Arcadis, making it a virtual one-week training session held from 19 to 22 October 2020. Senior representatives of 11 cities in nine countries participated in the programme.

17. A partnership with the United Nations System Staff College is being established to deliver a course to UN-Habitat staff and partners on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the common country analysis mechanism.

### **III. Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements**

18. Gender mainstreaming remains a priority in the strategic plan for 2020–2023. This is clearly demonstrated in the adoption in 2019 of the resolution on achieving gender equality. Implementation highlights include gender equality events at the World Urban Forum in February 2020, with a well-attended Women’s Assembly and Roundtable, and a series of expert group meetings in May 2020 on inclusive cities from a gender perspective and from the perspective of older people and people with disabilities, as well as the infusion of gender equality perspectives into various events concerning social inclusion leading up to the development of social inclusion guidelines for project design.

19. In keeping with the requirement under the resolution to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment and to set up policies and programmes supporting efforts to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment, continuous project reviews were undertaken by project review committees to ensure that gender and other social inclusion considerations were addressed in all UN-Habitat projects and programmes using relevant markers. Between August 2020 and January 2021, a total of 20 project documents and 10 concept notes were reviewed, leading to notable improvements on gender and other social inclusion issues. In addition, there has been a sizable increase in internal requests for collaboration and engagement to make projects and programmes more gender-inclusive and gender-responsive.

20. Gender and inclusion issues are being incorporated into the UN-Habitat environmental and social safeguards system to be used by project managers involved in the design and formulation of projects throughout UN-Habitat. This environmental and social safeguards system, which has incorporated the gender marker and other markers, will be applied to ensure compliance with the basic requirements in the analysis of each cross-cutting issue. The next steps will include developing a monitoring framework during the lifecycle of each project and any associated training. In terms of advocacy and increased visibility of gender equality issues, in December 2020, UN-Habitat organized a virtual event as part of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” campaign. In attendance were UN-Habitat partners, including local government leaders and representatives of grass-roots women’s organizations and civil society. The outcome of that meeting included the drafting of guidelines for making cities safer and more inclusive for women and girls. Members of the UN-Habitat Advisory Group on Gender Issues participated in the event and reviewed the progress of gender mainstreaming within the Programme.

21. UN-Habitat revamped its gender focal point system in November 2020. The new system now includes the four leads of the domains of change of the strategic plan for 2020–2023. These focal points will be in charge of monitoring and reporting on progress in gender mainstreaming within UN-Habitat programmes and activities.

22. The review and updating of the UN-Habitat Policy and Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Urban Development and Human Settlements (2014–2019), together with the Gender Equality Action Plan (2014–2019), is nearing completion. The revised policy and plan will guide UN-Habitat engagement on gender issues, in line with the strategic plan for 2020–2023, and will ensure that all the activities of the strategic plan reflect and advance the global consensus on inclusion, non-discrimination and equality. An evaluation of the work of UN-Habitat on gender equality and the empowerment of women during the period 2014–2019 was commissioned in July 2020 and is also nearing completion.

23. Under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN-Habitat submitted its progress report on gender mainstreaming for 2020 in February 2021. The report highlights the progress achieved in the work of UN-Habitat on gender equality and the empowerment of women in 2020 and proposed remedial actions.

### **IV. Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements**

24. Highlights of the implementation of the resolution following its adoption in May 2019 include the first international forum on urban-rural linkages, co-hosted by UN-Habitat and Songyang County in China, in November 2019. The forum brought together over 200 participants from 18 countries to deliberate on urban-rural linkages. Another highlight occurred in February 2021, when the Development Working Group, at its first meeting, under the G20 Italian Presidency, supported the

establishment of a time-bound thematic group on connectivity and territorial development: strengthening the role of intermediary cities as drivers of a sustainable recovery and means of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. UN-Habitat is contributing through the lens of urban-rural linkages. A third highlight is a webinar series that was launched in 2020, with up to nine webinar sessions hosted by UN-Habitat and partners on the relevance of urban-rural linkages to pandemics such as COVID-19 through various sectors. Finally, normative work included various tools and guides developed and piloted in five countries in Africa.

25. As part of the implementation of the United Nations Development Account project “Leaving no place behind: strengthening urban-rural linkages in Africa”, UN-Habitat has enhanced the knowledge of more than 150 experts through four workshops: in Cameroon on 28 August 2020; online for the State of Niger in Nigeria and for Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, on 3 October 2020; online for Cameroon and Guinea on 16 December 2020; and in Zanzibar on 29 December 2020. The workshops supported participating countries in integrating relevant COVID-19 measures into the implementation of the urban-rural linkages project. The “Strengthening integrated territorial development for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Mozambique” project was also completed successfully on 31 October 2020.

26. In collaboration with partners, UN-Habitat organized two events: the Urban-Rural Assembly, with the Technical University of Berlin, on 25 and 26 September 2020; and the Sustainable and Resilient Urban-Rural Partnerships 2020 conference, organized with the Germany Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Stadt-Land Plus and partners and held on 26 and 27 November 2020. UN-Habitat also participated in the launch of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Green Cities Initiative on 18 September 2020, during the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

27. On partnerships and advocacy, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations also initiated collaboration with UN-Habitat for the implementation of the Green Cities Action Programme. UN-Habitat has been engaged in discussions to stimulate the exchange of experience and knowledge-sharing and to amplify the voices of city governments in international forums such as the Food Systems Summit.

28. Technical materials and publications released and disseminated include the “Compendium of Inspiring Practices on Urban-Rural Linkages”, which is the second such compendium on urban-rural linkages; the second issue of the Urban-Rural Linkages Newsletter; materials for the urban-rural linkages events at the tenth session of the World Urban Forum; and reports for the first International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages. Forthcoming publications include a working paper on strengthening urban-rural linkages based on “smart” approaches (smart villages); the third issue of the Urban-Rural Linkages Newsletter; a thematic guide on sustainable food systems and nutrition in the urban-rural continuum; a synthesis report from the webinar series; and a second issue brief on urban-rural linkages, this one on guiding principles and COVID-19. The thematic national urban policy guide on “Mainstreaming urban-rural linkages in national urban policies” is now available in Arabic and French. With respect to capacity development, online platforms for the e-learning course on urban-rural linkages and the toolkit repository will soon be released.

29. Looking ahead to 2023, more knowledge, tools and outreach and advocacy activities are planned to increase urban-rural linkages in countries, including webinars; the second International forum on Urban-Rural Linkages, in 2021; collection and dissemination of more inspiring cases of urban-rural linkages in a third compendium; and advisory services and technical assistance to assist more countries in integrating urban-rural linkages in their policies, plans and strategies as a way of localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

## **V. Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

30. At its second session of 2020, held from 27 to 29 October 2020, the Executive Board, in its decision 2020/6, recommended that the ad hoc working group on the development of a draft stakeholder engagement policy resume its work once in-person meetings were possible. Pursuant to that recommendation, the Bureau of the Executive Board, at its meeting of 11 January 2021, supported the organization of an online meeting by the co-chairs of the ad hoc working group to discuss organizational matters.

31. An online meeting held on 24 February 2021 to endorse the co-chairs of the ad-hoc working group and discuss organizational matters, as recommended by the Bureau, failed to produce agreement on procedural matters. Five member states expressed concerns relating to paragraph 5 of decision 2020/6, which recommended that the ad hoc working group resume its work once in-person meetings were possible.

32. In preparation for discussions with Member States, UN-Habitat carried out a staff survey on stakeholder engagement in September and October 2020 to gather information on the status of UN-Habitat engagement with partners and identify areas for improvement. The results of the survey highlighted the close collaboration between UN-Habitat and other United Nations entities, in line with the United Nations reforms, including the “Delivering as one” approach, and the strong partnerships with local, national and regional governments for delivery of the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In terms of identifying new partners, survey respondents underscored the importance of desirable partner attributes, namely mandate alignment, good governance and expertise and influence in the urban development arena. Partners, on the other hand, engage with UN-Habitat mainly because it is a United Nations organization and because of its urban knowledge and expertise and its wide network of partners. The main recommendations for enhancing stakeholder engagement included improved systems and processes for more efficient partner engagement and joint resource mobilization with partners. The findings of the survey will be discussed at internal and external workshops on stakeholder engagement and will inform the stakeholder handbook to be finalized in 2021. The recommendations will also help improve the standard operating procedures contained in the UN-Habitat operations manual, among other tools and systems that support effective partnerships and stakeholder engagement.

33. In 2020, the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise contributed to expert group consultations for the report *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future* (2021) and to discussions within the Executive Board in its capacity as observer. Through the World Urban Campaign, UN-Habitat continued to mobilize stakeholders to organize Urban Thinkers Campuses on pertinent sustainable urban development issues, especially the impact of COVID-19 on cities and communities.

34. Initiatives in progress include the development of an online portal showcasing UN-Habitat engagement with partners in various regions and thematic areas. The goals are transparency and the recognition of partners’ contributions to achieving the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda.