

2024 first Bureau Meeting of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat

Hybrid format – Friday, 2 February 2024

10:00-12:00 hrs. East Africa Time (EAT)

Statement by the Acting Executive Director

(Draft of 1 February 2024)

SLIDE 1: Title slide

(NOTE FOR Acting Executive Director: Dear AED, this agenda will just be projected and you don't have to react upon it.)

Slide 2: Provisional Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda to be led by the Chair.

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda.
2. Review of the conduct of the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.
3. Preparations for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board:
 - a. Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session.
 - b. Proposed organization of work during the session.
4. Roadmap towards the 2024 first session of the Executive Board including informal consultations on possible outcomes and required briefing by the Executive Director to Member States on status of preparations for the Executive Board.
5. Update on the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Governing Bodies in Mexico.
6. Any other matters.
 - a. Proposed field visit to Mozambique.
 - b. Update on the preparations of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF).

Slide 3: AGENDA ITEM 2 - Review of the conduct of the 2023 third session of the Executive Board

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

Good morning and a warm welcome to you all. It is good to see all of you including the Members of the other Bureaux of the Governing Bodies. Even though this is an Executive Board Bureau meeting, we thought it is important to have Members of the CPR and Assembly Bureaux together as we start the year, and in particular, to discuss the expected Joint Bureaux Meeting in Mexico in March 2024, which is an agenda item of this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Bureau of the Executive Board for the very successful 2023 third session. In my view, in addition to the general organization and delivery of the session, the outcomes of that session were of great significance to our work. Here I have in mind:

1. The endorsement of the scalability model for the non-earmarked Foundation budget for future guidance on related budgetary decisions, until the end of the period covered by the current strategic plan.
2. The approval of the work programme and budget for 2024 with a Foundation non-earmarked budget of USD four (4) million.
3. The authorization given to the Executive Director by the Executive Board to enter into a contribution agreement with the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation for an initial duration of ten years, subject to an annual review by the Executive Board.
4. The focus on clear follow up to all resolutions of the UN-Habitat Assembly which also saw the Executive Board endorse the draft terms of reference of the urban action funding window towards achieving the implementation of UN-Habitat Assembly resolutions in a balanced manner.

I want to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to H.E Mr. Silvio Albuquerque for his excellent stewardship of the Executive Board in 2022 and 2023,

supported by the Bureau and for being instrumental in the work of Member States in guiding and increasingly strengthening our Organization. Thank you, Ambassador.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Africa group takes over the leadership of the Executive Board, we confirm our commitment to continue being available to the Chair and to the Bureau in supporting your functions.

Overall, my humble view is that the last meeting of the Executive Board in 2023 went very well with your support, and I must add that the session, being fully in person as recommended by the Bureau, was not only good as a cost saving measure, but more importantly, this allowed for robust interactions amongst Member States. As you may have observed, the room was always full and quite lively with debates on each item. I trust that the Bureau will continue to recommend in person meetings of the Governing Bodies as we move further away from the pandemic season.

I wish to express my gratitude to all Member States for the cooperation during the last session and throughout 2023 which as you know was quite a packed year with sessions of the Executive Board, the CPR and the Assembly.

I thank you Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

Slide 4: AGENDA ITEM 3: Preparations for Preparations for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board:

a. Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session.

b. Proposed organization of work during the session.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

On agenda item 3 allow me to start with sub item (a) on Confirmation of the dates and Provisional Agenda for the session then I will proceed to 3b.

Slide 5: Item 3a: Confirmation of the dates for the session.

Regarding the dates for the session, you would recall that the Executive Board in its Decision 2023/7, paragraph 10, decided that subject to review by the Bureau, the first session of 2024 will be held for a duration of three days from **6 to 8 May 2024**.

In this regard we wish to encourage the Bureau to confirm the dates as already decided by the Executive Board, especially given the very busy global calendar in 2024 including for Nairobi related meetings.

In addition, and by way of information, in light of the busy calendar this year and in consultation with the Division of Conference Services we have already reserved the possible dates for the 2024 **second session** of the Executive Board subject to the recommendation by the Bureau and decision of the Executive Board at its first session. The dates available are:

1. 26-28 November 2024
2. 03-05 December 2024

Slide 6: item 3(a). Confirmation of the Provisional Agenda for the session:

With respect to the provisional Agenda for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board, you would recall that the Executive Board in its Decision 2023/7, specifically in paragraph 11, adopted the agenda for the upcoming session which you can see on the screen.

Excellencies,

We have reviewed that Agenda and have no key changes to make to it. We, however, wish to state that under agenda item 7 on implementation of the normative and operational activities of the UN-Habitat, we are preparing to share with the Executive Board on the following subtopics:

1. An update on UN-Habitat activities related to Urban Regeneration.
2. The options and recommendations for the operationalization the SURGe initiative as requested by the Executive Board at its last session in Decision 2023/5 paragraph 5.
3. A Report on UN-Habitat's response to urban crisis, including in Gaza Strip as requested by the Executive Board, and
4. UN-Habitat activities for the period of July to December 2023.

Other than that, Excellencies, we have included, as you can see on the screen in Blue a standard procedural item on “Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the second session of 2024” as agenda item 13.

NOTE for Acting Executive Director: The proposed provisional agenda for the 2024 first session of the Executive Board is on the screen, you may choose not to read it. It is as follows:

<i>Agenda no</i>	<i>Agenda title</i>
Agenda item 1	Opening of the session
Agenda item 2	Organizational matters: (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the first session of 2024; (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its third session of 2023.
Agenda item 3	Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups
Agenda item 4	Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan and actions by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff.
Agenda item 5	Update on the Draft work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025.
Agenda item 6	Update on the preparation of the next Strategic Plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the Period 2026 to 2029.
Agenda item 7	Implementation of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including reporting on its programmatic activities in 2023 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities.
Agenda item 8	Preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum.
Agenda item 9	Update on the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
Agenda item 10	Update on the implementation of the United Nations development system reform.
Agenda item 11	Action by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment in the workplace.
Agenda item 12	Report by the Executive Director on actions to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
Agenda item 13	Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the second session of 2024.
Agenda item 14	Other matters.
Agenda item 15	Closure of the session.

Slide 7: item 3(c): Proposed organization of work during the session.

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Let me move now to subitem 3b on the proposed organization of work during the session.

Our proposal for the organization of work for each day during the session is on the screen.

(NOTE the for Acting Executive Director: here you may opt to simply mention the agenda items by number instead of reading them out fully. They will be on the screen)

On Day 1 of the session, we propose that the following items be considered by the Executive Board:

<i>Agenda no</i>	<i>Agenda title</i>
Agenda item 1	Opening of the session
Agenda item 2	Organizational matters: (a) Adoption of the agenda and the workplan for the first session of 2024; (b) Adoption of the report of the Executive Board on the work of its third session of 2023.
Agenda item 3	Reports by the chairs of the ad hoc working groups
Agenda item 4	Financial, budgetary and administrative matters, including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy in accordance with the strategic plan and actions by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to address geographical and gender imbalances in the composition of its staff.
Agenda item 5	Update on the Draft work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and draft budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for 2025.

On Day 2 of the session, we propose that the Board considers the following items:

<i>Agenda no</i>	<i>Agenda title</i>
Agenda item 6	Update on the preparation of the next Strategic Plan of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the Period 2026 to 2029.
Agenda item 7	Implementation of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including reporting on its programmatic activities in 2023 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities.
Agenda item 8	Preparations for the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum.
Agenda item 9	Update on the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

On Day 3 of the session, we propose that the following items be considered:

<i>Agenda no</i>	<i>Agenda title</i>
Agenda item 10	Update on the implementation of the United Nations development system reform.
Agenda item 11	Action by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to strengthen protection against sexual and any other type of exploitation and abuse and against sexual harassment in the workplace.
Agenda item 12	Report by the Executive Director on actions to update and improve the internal management, policies and procedures of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
Agenda item 13	Consideration and adoption of the outcomes of the session, including the provisional agenda for the second session of 2024.
Agenda item 14	Other matters.
Agenda item 15	Closure of the session.

As we continue with the preparations for the session, we will prepare a draft program accordingly for each day of the session.

As established practice, in addition to consideration by **ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters** prior to the session, consultations on draft outcomes during the session will be held every lunchtime break and in the evening of each day, except for the final day when we hope to have concluded all consultations during the lunch break period.

The above therefore, is the preliminary organization of work which may be further revisited at upcoming Bureau meetings.

Slide 8: Format of the session

Mr. Chairman,

Before I handover back to you, let me bring two additional points.

First, as stated earlier, the in-person format of the 2023 third session was quite beneficial for the productivity of the session in our view and also helped with cost savings. I therefore urge the Bureau to once again **recommend an in-person session of the 2024 first session** of the Executive Board given that COVID-19 is no longer a global pandemic and there are no restrictions at the UNON Complex.

Secondly, as many of you are aware, there is a **rather persistent UN Regular budget crisis**. In this regard we recently received a cautionary email from the Division of Conference Services which in part read that: *“At this moment, we have not received “non-post” resources for UNEA 6. Barely enough funds to cover salaries till mid-March. We remain hopeful. If the situation does not improve, we may have to drastically reduce the number of words that we translate for the EB in May.”*

This is not necessarily to alarm you but to share this information early enough. For now, we are working on the documentation for the Executive Board as normal with the full hope that Regular Budget Funds will be released in time. We will also shortly by next week send out appeal letters for contributions to the UN-Habitat Assembly Trust fund which may enable us to somewhat bridge any gaps in the efficient preparation and delivery of the upcoming session of the Executive Board. We will certainly keep you updated on this matter including at the next meeting of the Bureau in March.

Let me seize this opportunity to graciously thank China, Germany, Kenya and Slovakia who have contributed to the Trust fund in the past.

Thank you, Excellencies, for your patience and kind attention.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, back to you.

Slide 9: AGENDA ITEM 4 - Roadmap towards the 2024 first session of the Executive Board including informal consultations on possible outcomes and required briefing by the Executive Director to Member States on status of preparations for the Executive Board.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

We have shared with Member States and the Bureau the tentative roadmap for the first half of 2024 which also includes this particular Bureau meeting.

The roadmap has taken into account the various meetings necessary for the preparation of the 2024 first session of the Executive Board and it includes:

- i. Bureau meetings,
- ii. meetings of the ad hoc working groups of the Executive Board,
- iii. consultations on draft outcomes of the 2024 first session of the Executive Board
- iv. consultations between Executive Director and regional groups, just prior to the session and
- v. briefing on the preparations for the session.

The roadmap has also been prepared in a manner that meeting dates do not coincide with the planned meetings of UNEP, especially in light of the OECPR and UNEA and in that respect.

In the updated Roadmap we have excluded any meetings in February at the request of the Chair of the ad hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy given the busy schedule at UNEP.

The most current version of the roadmap is therefore before you for any recommendations.

Slide 10: item 4: Some key dates in the roadmap to the 2023 third session of the Executive Board.

With the understanding that the roadmap is a living document, allow me to highlight the dates of the monthly **Bureau meetings** which are planned as follows:

- 2 February 2024 (today)
- 15 March 2024
- 22 April 2024
- 3 May 2024

Informal consultations are scheduled to be held on 8, 17 and 29 April 2024 depending on the schedule of the co-Chairs of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters, namely; Colombia and Nigeria.

In addition, and in line with rule 6.10 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, we have scheduled the **Executive Director's briefing** to Members States on the preparations for the session and in particular, matters to be covered under each agenda item, on 22 April 2024.

With respect to the meetings of **the ad-hoc working group on programmatic budgetary and administrative matters**, we have provided for a number of meetings to allow for preliminary discussions by Member States on the various items before the session.

Finally, we have also scheduled **two meetings of the ad-hoc working group on the development of a stakeholder engagement policy** before the next session under leadership of Portugal.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to you.

Slide 11: AGENDA ITEM 5 - Update on the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN-Habitat Governing Bodies in Mexico.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,

As you are aware, at the invitation of the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly Honourable Román Meyer Falcón, Minister for Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development of the United Mexican States, an in-person joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Governing Bodies of UN-Habitat is scheduled to take place in Mexico City, United Mexican States from 21 to 23 March 2024. This is not an isolated activity to UN-Habitat. This is done by many governing bodies such as UNDP, I believe UNEP, UNFPA and UNOPS, to name just a few.

We have since sent out an invitation from the President of the Assembly as well as the Programme for the Bureau meeting. As stated by the President, the visit to Mexico will also include visits to UN-Habitat projects in Mexico and projects being implemented by the Government of Mexico towards the achievement of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and field visit while in Mexico.

We are still working on the logistics, such as flights and hotels. Although we are busy looking for funding sources elsewhere to assist in the travel, including asking for support from Mexico, we are yet to get any definite commitment. So, in the time, and as is the usual practice, each member will be responsible for their cost until otherwise.

We welcome any contributions on this subject and suggestions to the program. I wish to take this opportunity to encourage you all to save the dates and participate in person in the Joint Bureau meeting in Mexico.

The Secreeriat is available for any clarifications and to work closely with the office of the President, the Permanent Mission of Mexico in Nairobi and yourselves to make the meeting a success as we begin to prepare for the upcoming resumed second session of the Assembly in 2024.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Back to you,

Slide 12: AGENDA ITEM 7. Any other matters.

a. Proposed field visit to Mozambique.

b. Update on the preparations of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF).

(to be led by the Chair)

(AED to take up these two AOBs and any others)

a. Proposed field visit of UN-Habitat Projects in Mozambique.

There is a proposal for a field visit by Members of the Governing Bodies sometime in May or June 2024:

- i. This will showcase an integrated normative and operational example of UN-Habitat's work in the field, that is concretely linked to UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan. This will also give you Member States the opportunity see how we use the funds you give us and how it has impacted the people on the ground. Again, this is an activity carried out by many Organizations with their member States. How else can we convey our value and our impact on the people we serve to you.
- ii. We are in discussion with the Government Mozambique and further details including exact dates and logistical arrangements will be communicated at the earliest opportunity.
- iii. It is also a revival of a practice that had been in place for some time, where we take the Member States to visit some of our impactful projects. We have to places such as Kisumu, Rwanda, to name just a few.

b. Update on the preparations of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF).

With regard to the upcoming WUF 12 to be held in Cairo in November 2024, let me call on Ms Edlam Yemeru, the Acting Director of ERSKI or the Office under which

WUF preparation falls, to quickly share some updates with the Bureau. Mr. Chairman, with your permission Edlam you have the floor. Let me note that the WUF Coordinator, Mr. Jesus Salcedo Villanueva is also present here.

This is for your information as we prepare for the formal arrangements with the office of the President.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.