



UN-HABITAT

Agenda item 12:

Actions to improve the internal management, policies and procedures of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Executive Board of UN-Habitat: First session for the year 2024
6 to 8 May 2024

- The Executive Director as the Head of Entity has implemented strategies across various domains to enhance UN-Habitat's effectiveness and efficiency. These areas include:
 - **Executive and Strategic Direction**
 - **Partnership Management**
 - **Management of Financial and Human Resources**
 - **Programme Management and Development**
 - **Regional Representation**
 - **Oversight Monitoring and Evaluation**
 - **Ethics**
 - **Staff Relations Management**
 - **Resource Mobilization**

I. Executive and Strategic Direction

- **Compliance with Compact for the year 2022-2023.** The Executive Director successfully complied with the terms of her compact for the year 2022-2023 by:
 - Enhancing recruitment practices to ensure gender parity and geographical diversity to improve diversity.
 - Implementing the recommendations from internal control bodies to ensure internal oversight compliance.
 - Ensuring effective assignment of her sub-delegated authority in accordance with the Secretary General's Bulletin **ST/SGB/2019/2**

Executive and Strategic Direction

- **Digital Transformation Strategy:** The Digital Transformation Strategy of 2024 focuses on enhancing digital tools for governments to support their digital transformation and people-centred smart cities.
- **Digital Transformation Workforce:** The taskforce established by the Acting Executive Director is mandated to guide and implement UN-Habitat's digital transformation, ensuring representation from all agency levels.
- The members of the Task Force are expected to actively participate in consultative workshops and serve as change agents facilitating the smooth transition to digital workflows.

Executive and Strategic Direction

- **Activation of the Budget Steering Committee**: The committee is directed by the Executive Director to:
 - Oversee budget allocations and performance
 - Ensure efficient and transparent financial management
- **The UN-Habitat Accountability Framework**: UN-Habitat adheres to the UN Secretariat accountability framework, organized around five main pillars: UN Charter, strategic framework, internal controls, ethical standards and independent oversight functions.
- UN-Habitat maintains its specific **Accountability Framework** designed to ensure good governance, transparency and integrity in its operations. This framework is guided by seven core principles of accountability.

Executive and Strategic Direction

- These principles include; clarity of responsibility, alignment with organizational goals, formal delegation of authority, risk assessment in decision-making, regular reporting, self-attestation and transparency.
- Continuous monitoring mechanisms include oversight by the Executive Board, annual reviews, management reviews by the Joint Inspection Unit, external audits by the Board of Auditors, internal audits, evaluations and risk management processes.
- UN-Habitat has established a **risk oversight and accountability committee**, an **independent evaluation unit** and a focal point for conduct and discipline to enhance oversight and accountability.

II. Partnership Management

- A partnership strategy 2020-2023 was approved by the Executive Board in 2020 to guide partner relation within the context of the **Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (extended to 2025)**.
- As at December 2022, templates for all Agreements were revised and uploaded in the UN-Habitat website to conform with the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) and audit recommendations.
- **Implementing Partner Policy and Procedures:** UN-Habitat adopted implementing partner policies and procedures in 2017, with updates to the policy currently ongoing.
- The Policy aims to improve partner selection and management responding to recommendations from key bodies like the Joint Inspection Unit, Board of Auditors and OIOS.

Partnership Management

- **Private Sector Strategy Guidelines:** UN-Habitat has revised its private sector strategy and guidelines to enhance collaboration effectiveness.
- This effort addresses emerging partnership forms and funding sources, ensuring UN-Habitat maximizes private sector engagements.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Policy:** UN-Habitat is reviewing and revising its Stakeholder Engagement Policy to streamline processes and enhance stakeholder support for its governing bodies.
- Anticipated approval by member states will establish clear implementation procedures, reinforcing UN-Habitat's commitment to robust partnerships.

III. Management of Human and Financial Resources

- During the reporting period, in order to ensure efficient management and use of financial, human and other resources, certain measures have been taken in the following areas:
- **Financial Resource Management**
 - **Adoption of Cost Recovery Policy and Voluntary Contribution Guidelines**
 - **Refinement of Operating Procedures:** Collaborated with the United Nations office in Nairobi to refine procedures related to petty cash and voluntary contributions.
- **Human Resource Management**
 - **Establishment of Standard Operating Procedures:** These guidelines facilitate efficient human resource management, expedite recruitment processes, enhance performance evaluation and talent acquisition.

Management of Human and Financial Resources

- **Promotion of Gender Parity and Geographical Balance.**
- **Flexible Working Arrangements:** UN-Habitat's internal policy on flexible working arrangements aligns with the Secretary General's Bulletin [\(ST/SGB/2019/3\)](#) and the information circular [\(ST/IC/2019/15\)](#) which emphasize flexible arrangements as a beneficial accommodation and not an entitlement.
- **Procurement Practices Improvement**
 - **Reconstitution of the Nairobi Local Contracts Committee:** UN-Habitat appointed an alternate chair and five additional members to support the contract review process before the Local Contracts Committee

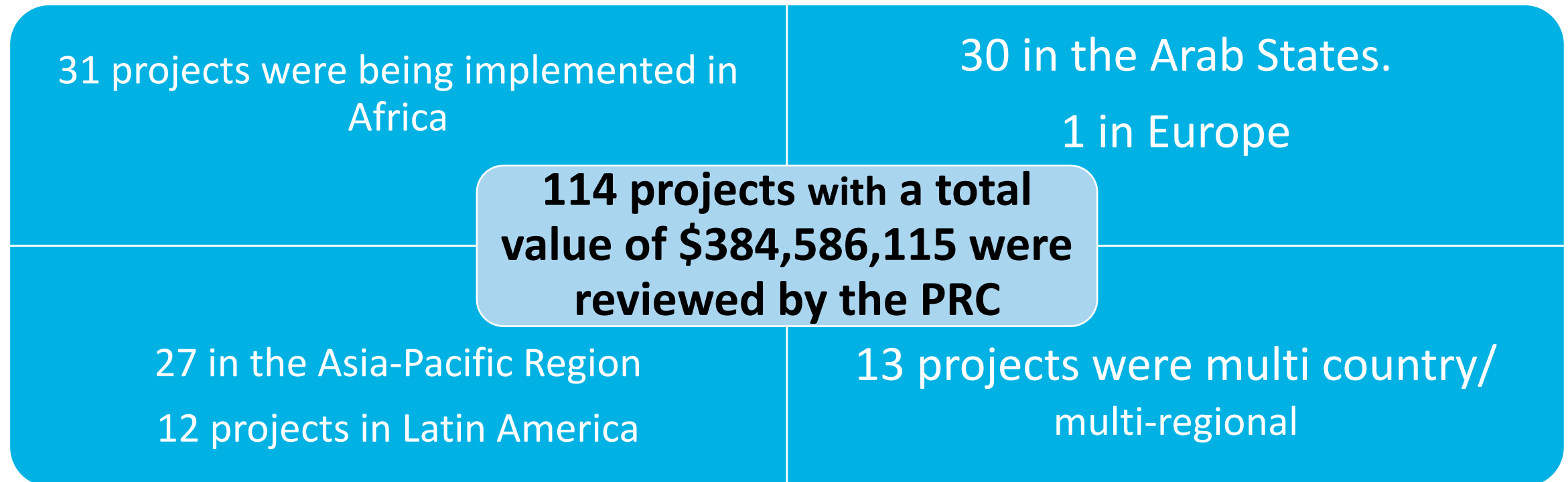


IV. Programme Management and Development

- To ensure accountability and transparency in the delivery of projects and programmes in the mandated areas; the Executive Director has set up the **Project Review Committee** to serve as an advisory body to the Executive Director.
- UN-Habitat aligned itself with the Secretary General's efforts aimed at strengthening the implementation of **Result-Based Management (RBM)**, programme monitoring intended to shift towards a culture of results in the Secretariat.
- In April 2021, UN-Habitat adopted the Umoja, Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR), to manage the lifecycle of its projects and programmes from the beginning to the end.

IV. Programme Management and Development

- The Executive Office is committed and seeks to obtain all possible benefits from the effective use of IPMR. The Project Review Committee, effective 1 March 2023 utilizes the IPMR as part of its workflow to approve projects.





V. Regional Architecture

- Reaffirming the **General Assembly Resolution 72/279**. ‘III. Revamping the regional approach’ and ‘VI. Following up on the repositioning efforts of the United Nations development system at the global, regional and country levels.’
- The Executive Committee on the 9 of January 2024 endorsed the **Regional Architecture** developed by the taskforce established by the Executive Director.
- **Rationale:**
 - To ensure alignment with the Reform of UNDS & Collaboration with DCO.
 - To ensure alignment with the UN-Habitat Corporate RACI
 - To establish new field presence and to effectively deal with the emerging needs from regions and countries.
 - To ensure alignment with the UN-System-wide coordination on sustainable urbanization.

Regional Architecture

- **Key recommendations for Reinvigorating UN-Habitat's Regional Architecture.**
 - **Strategic Planning:**
 - Ensuring clear accountability by separating DOCs and subprogramme.
 - Vesting sub-programme delivery responsibility to higher level officials
 - **Results Based Management:**
 - Improve knowledge management and dissemination and enhance result monitoring across the field.
 - **Communications and Collaboration:**
 - Enhance websites for coherent dissemination and reporting on results across field offices.
 - **Financial:**
 - Review the lengthy procurement processes affecting delivery and explore alternate funding mechanisms.

VI. Oversight, Monitoring and Evaluation

- **UN-Habitat Enterprise Risk Management Guidelines** : UN-Habitat updated its Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) guidelines in July 2020. These revisions aimed to strengthen risk management practices, ensuring that the organization can navigate its risk landscape and achieve its strategic goals.
- **Risk Oversight and Advisory Committee (ROAC)**. The Committee was reconstituted in May 2023 and is now operational and has held meetings since its reactivation.
- **The UN-Habitat Risk Catalogue and Corporate Risk Register**: The Register was approved by the Executive Director in May 2023. The Corporate Risk Register contains risks categorized as ‘very high’ and ‘high’ requiring the attention of senior management.

Oversight Monitoring and Evaluation

- In its **Resolution 48/216, Section A** the General Assembly endorsed the single audit principle aimed at encouraging member states and donors to rely on assurances provided by the audits conducted by the Board of Auditors and OIOS.
- **Audits:** From the **BOA audit recommendations** reported in the audit report of financial year 2020, 67% have been implemented and closed. Of the 83% audit recommendations issued during the audit of financial years 2020, 2021 and 2022, 39% have been implemented and closed.
- More audit recommendations continue to be closed and will be reflected in the audit report of the financial year 2023.
- Implementation of **OIOS recommendations** has also improved significantly. From the 25 OIOS audit recommendation issued during the years 2021 and 2022, 32% have been implemented and closed. There was no OIOS audit in 2023.

- To ensure compliance with the ***United Nations Ethics Framework***, UN-Habitat in collaboration with UN ethics office has undertaken the following functions:
 - Revised and updated its Ethics Framework with the support of the UN Ethics Office.
 - Appointed a focal point for Ethics, Conduct and Discipline and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).
 - Conducted ethics training sessions on '***Living the UN Values***', '***Accountability in the UN Secretariat***', and '***Personal Social Media Use***', and presented the ethics report during the final session of the Executive Board.
 - Increased staff participation and membership of the ***UN Financial Disclosure Programme*** by adding 5 additional staff members performing key fiduciary duties.

VIII. Staff Relations Management

- UN-Habitat has developed a robust staff management consultative mechanism to address issues relating to staff welfare concerns. The **Staff Management Consultative Committee (SMCC)** was reconstituted in 2021 and has so far had 3 meetings where such issues were discussed.
- With regards to complaints regarding harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination pursuant to **ST/SGB/2019/8**, the office of the Executive Director has taken appropriate steps to comply with relevant processes including referring cases to OIOS and setting up investigative panels.
- In the period 2022-2023, two cases were brought before the UN dispute tribunal (**UNDT**) and one before the UN Appeals Tribunal (**UNAT**), all of which were successfully defended.

Staff Relations Management

- **Anti-Racism Mechanisms:** The Anti Racism Strategy and a comprehensive series of online anti-racism training modules have been developed, to address racism, micro aggression and other forms of discrimination.
- All UN-Habitat personnel are required to complete an online self-training as well as participate in a specified number of facilitated anti-racism workshop annually.
- A pilot training module has been developed and implemented with the personnel from the Office of the Executive Director participating.



IX. Resource Mobilization

- With the promulgation of the **Resource Mobilization Strategy** Financing the Strategic Plan 2020-2023, in the First Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019, UN-Habitat has put in place the following internal management processes for its effective implementation.
- **Resource Mobilization Steering Committee:** The Committee is chaired by the Acting Executive Director, and it is responsible for ensuring that the donor relations and resource mobilization functions of the organization are met.
- The Committee coordinates closely with senior managers and project managers within the organization to identify funding needs and to share information on opportunities for support of the organization's work.
- **Donor Focal Points System:** One of the key priorities of the donor focal points is to increase the contributions to core non-earmarked funds so that the core activities of the annual programmes of work are fully in line with the approved budget.

Resource Mobilization

- **Monthly updates on the acquisition status:** The monthly updates provide information on new grants signed between UN-Habitat and donors with breakdowns by fund type, donor region and implementing region.
- **Project pipeline monitoring:** This is conducted every month by the Donor Relations and Strategic Resource Partnerships Unit, to consolidate information on projects and proposals developed with potential donors.
- **Donor reporting compliance:** This is being monitored by a tool known as the Donor Reporting Calendar. The Donor Relations and Strategic Resource Partnerships Unit follows up with responsible offices to ensure that donor reporting requirements are completed in a timely manner.

Thank you!

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