



**Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme**

First session of 2020

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

**Implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the
development system and management of the
United Nations.**

**Alignment of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
process with UN-Habitat Planning Cycles****

Report of the Executive Director

I. Background

1. The United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) in its decision 1/3 on “Arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme” recognized the importance of aligning the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process especially in the light of the new governance structure of UN-Habitat, and decided that it will further consider how to best achieve such an alignment.
2. At its resumed session in November 2019, the Executive Board through its decision 2019/1 contained in document HSP/EB.1/11 reiterated the importance of aligning the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process and requested the Executive Director to brief the Executive Board on alternatives for achieving such an alignment.
3. The General Assembly at its 75th session is expected to adopt the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) 2021-2024 in December 2020, an action that follows four years after the QCPR 2016-2020, also known as A/RES/71/243, adopted on 21 December 2016. The governing bodies of UN entities in 2021 will adopt their respective strategic plans for the period 2022-2025.
4. The QCPR is the mechanism through which the General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development and establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN-system in response to the evolving international development and cooperation environment. As such, the QCPR is the primary policy instrument of the General Assembly to define the way the UN development system operations to support program countries in their development efforts. Immediately following the General Assembly resolution of the QCPR, the Secretary-General promulgates a series of internal documents to guide the Secretariat to implement the operational paragraphs of the QCPR. These inform efforts by the Secretariat and UN entities to develop their respective strategic plans such that these are in line with and help to ensure effective implementation of the QCPR.

* HSP/EB.2020/1.

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

II. Options for aligning the UN-Habitat Strategic Planning cycles with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Instrument

5. To align the UN-Habitat strategic planning process to the QCPR instrument and to the strategic plans of other UN entities, the Executive Board may wish to consider the three scenarios described below.

A. Scenario One: Shorten the approved UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and develop a Strategic Plan for 2022-2025

6. In this scenario the UN-Habitat Assembly would shorten the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023, reducing it by two years, and adopt a new UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2022-2025. This would enable UN-Habitat to align strategic planning with the QCPR 2021-2024 and be consistent with the strategic plans of other UN entities planned the four-year period, 2022-2025. To affect this scenario the UN-Habitat Secretariat would commence preparation for the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 during the third quarter of 2020 (Q3 2020), and the UN-Habitat Assembly would hold its Second Session in the second quarter of 2021 (Q2 2021), rather than in the second quarter of 2023 (Q2 2023) to adopt the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. A similar sequence would unfold four years later with the General Assembly adopting the QCPR 2025-2029 in the fourth quarter of 2024 (Q4 2024), the Secretariat commencing planning for the new strategic plan in the third quarter of 2024 (Q3 2024), and UN-Habitat Assembly adopting the Strategic Plan 2026-2029 at its third Session in the second quarter of 2025 (Q2 2025). The sequence of events would unfold as follows:

- (a) Q3 2020 – UN-Habitat initiatives preparation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- (b) Q4 2020 – General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2021-2024
- (c) Q1 2021 – Secretary-General puts forth plan to implement the General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2021-2024
- (d) Q2 2021 – UN-Habitat Assembly, convenes for the second Session and adopts a Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2025**
- (e) Q2 2023 – UN-Habitat Assembly tasks the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to conduct the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025
- (f) Q3 2024 – UN-Habitat initiates preparation of a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029
- (g) Q4 2024 – The General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2025-2028
- (h) Q1 2025 – Secretary-General puts forth plan to implement a General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2025-2028
- (i) Q2 2025 – UN-Habitat Assembly convenes for the third Session, and adopts a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029**

B. Scenario Two: Retain the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for the full term, develop an Interim two-year Strategic plan for the period 2024-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029

7. In this scenario, the UN-Habitat Assembly would retain the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023, as is, adopt an interim two-year UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2025, and then adopt a full, four-year UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029. This would enable UN-Habitat to align with the QCPR mechanism but not until the QCPR 2025-2028. As part of this scenario, however, the UN-Habitat Assembly would take note of the QCPR instrument. Through the Committee of Permanent Representatives, it would incorporate the QCPR 2021-2024 in the mid-term review, in Q2 2021, of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The UN-Habitat Assembly would incorporate the recommendations of the mid-term review when it adopts in Q2 2023, the UN-Habitat Interim Strategic Plan 2024-2025. The scenario would proceed as follows:

- (a) Q4 2020 – General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2021-2024
- (b) Q1 2021 – Secretary-General puts forth plan to implement General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2021-2024
- (c) Q2 2021 – UN-Habitat Assembly tasks the CPR to consider the QCPR 2021-2023 as part of its mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023, advising on appropriate course corrections

(d) Q3 2022 – UN-Habitat initiates preparation of an interim Strategic Plan 2024-2025, taking note of the QCPR 2021- 2023 and the course corrections recommended by CPR in its mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023

(e) **Q2 2023 – UN-Habitat Assembly, convenes for the second Session, adopts interim Strategic Plan 2024-2025**

(f) Q3 2024 – UN-Habitat initiates preparation of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029

(g) Q4 2024 – General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2025-2028

(h) Q1 2025 – The UN Secretary General puts forth plan to implement General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2025-2028

(i) **Q2 2025 – UN-Habitat Assembly convenes for the third Session, adopts a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029**

C. Scenario Three: Extend the current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 by another two years to the period 2020-2025, and develop a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029

8. In this scenario, the UN-Habitat Assembly would extend the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023, to a period of six years, 2020-2025. For this to take effect, the UN-Habitat Assembly may meet as scheduled in 2023 and effect the extension. The Assembly would meet in 2025 for a third session to adopt the next four-year UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029. This would enable UN-Habitat to align with the QCPR mechanism but not until the QCPR 2025-2028. As part of this scenario, however, the UN-Habitat Assembly would also take note of the QCPR instrument. Through the Committee of Permanent Representatives, it would incorporate the QCPR 2021-2024 in the mid-term review, in Q2 2021, of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023. The UN-Habitat Assembly would incorporate the recommendations of the mid-term review when it extends in Q2 2023, the extension of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to 2020-2025. The scenario would proceed as follows:

(a) Q4 2020 - General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2021-2024

(b) Q1 2021 – Secretary-General puts forth plan to implement the General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2021-2024

(c) Q2 2021 – UN-Habitat Assembly tasks the CPR to consider the QCPR 2021-2023 as part of its mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023, advising on appropriate course corrections and bearing in mind the possibility to extend the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to the period 2020-2025,

(d) Q3 2022 – UN-Habitat initiates the updating of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for a possible extension to 2020-2025 incorporating elements of the QCPR 2021-2024.

(e) **Q2 2023 – UN-Habitat Assembly, convenes for the second Session, adopts the extension of current Strategic Plan 2020-2023 to the period 2020-2026**

(f) Q3 2024 – UN-Habitat initiates preparation of the Strategic Plan 2026-2029

(g) Q4 2024 – General Assembly adopts resolution on QCPR 2025-2028

(h) Q1 2025 – The UN Secretary General puts forth plan to implement General Assembly resolution on QCPR 2025-2028

(i) **Q2 2025 – UN-Habitat Assembly convenes for the third Session, adopts a Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2029**

III. Factors for Consideration in the Alignment Process

9. The table below provides an analysis comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the current status quo, scenario one and scenario two. These include consideration of how quickly each scenario will bring about alignment of the strategic plan to the QCPR, the implications for the frequency and timing of the sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly, the relative cost implications, and other factors.

<i>Factors for Consideration</i>	<i>Status Quo</i>	<i>Scenario One</i>	<i>Scenario Two</i>	<i>Scenario Three</i>
Speed of alignment	No alignment	Quick alignment: 2022	Slow alignment: 2026	Slow Alignment: 2026
		Reflecting QCPR 2021-2024	Mid-term 2021 and interim Strategic 2024-2025 can reflect QCPR 2021-2024	Mid-term 2021 can reflect QCPR 2021-2024 in the extended Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Implication for timing of Habitat Assemblies	2019 First Session 2023 Second Session 2027 Third Session	2019 First Session 2021 Second Session 2025 Third Session	2019 First Session 2023 Second Session 2025 Third Session	2019 First Session 2023 Second Session 2025 Third Session
Cost implications	Cost of one session every four-year period	Cost of two sessions in first four-year period, cost of one session in second four-year period	Cost of one session in first four-year period, cost of two sessions in second four-year period	Cost of one session in first four-year period, cost of two sessions in second four-year period
Other implications	Failure to align Strategic Plan to QCPR and ensure Strategic Plan reflects UN reforms, Strategic Plan of other UN orgs.	Second Session in 2021 will prevent full implementation of Strategic Plan 2020-2023.	Second Session in 2023 will enable full implementation of Strategic Plan 2020-2023	Second Session in 2023 will enable full and extended implementation of Strategic Plan 2020-2023 until 2025