

Second Meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement Policy
UN Complex, Gigiri, Conference Room,
Wednesday 15 June 2022, 10.00am – 1.00pm

Background paper on
Modalities for stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes
UN-Habitat current practice

Stakeholders are impacted on and can influence the work of UN-Habitat governing bodies based on their knowledge, expertise, good practices, innovation and solutions to housing, sustainable urbanization, and human settlements challenges. The UN-Habitat Assembly rules (65-71) and Executive Board rule (17.3) of the rules of procedure provide for participation of stakeholders accredited to the Assembly or in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to attend the sessions as observers, and to make oral and/or written statements. More and more stakeholders are taking advantage of these provisions to attend sessions of the Executive Board, the Committee of Permanent Representative and the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The current practice is to give stakeholders an opportunity to make oral statements at the end of every Session of the Executive Board, and not during discussions on relevant agenda items. The written statements are posted on the UN-Habitat website as public information. Stakeholders have access to public information shared with members states, which is also posted on the website. This information is also sent to stakeholders.

To a certain extent, stakeholders contribute to development of UN-Habitat policies, strategic plan, and programmes through consultations, surveys, and as members of Expert Group Meetings, thematic networks, Advisory Boards and Committees. They organize either specific or joint side events with UN-Habitat and other partners and participate in exhibitions during the UN-Habitat Assembly and the World Urban Forum (WUF). Stakeholders are represented on the WUF Advisory Board which is responsible for preparing the WUF declared actions. They lobby member states to sponsor decisions, and resolutions; participate in dialogues organized during the Assembly as panelists and discussants; and hold caucus meetings during the Assembly, especially the women and youth constituencies.

Stakeholders drive the World Urban Campaign (WUC). They are *inter alia* actively engaged in the *City we need campaign* and organization of general and thematic urban thinkers' campuses around the world. WUC is an advocacy platform led by the Steering Committee and working with 16 stakeholder constituencies. Urban October, which starts with World Habitat Day and ends with World Cities Day every year also provides an opportunity for stakeholders to organize and host events, and to promote and engage in local, subnational, national, and global debates on sustainable urban development.

UN-Habitat established a Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) to advise the Executive Director on stakeholder engagement, participation and valuable consultations between UN-Habitat and stakeholders on advocacy, intergovernmental processes, programme design and implementation, monitoring SDGs and the new urban agenda, resource mobilization and increased action on sustainable urban development at all levels. SAGE recently led the organization of a Global Stakeholder Consultation on implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDGs within the context of the High-Level Meeting on implementations of the New Urban Agenda.

SAGE coordinates with internal and external networks and advisory Boards on a range of issues including participation as members of WUF Advisory Board, participation in Expert Group Meetings on specific themes and engagement in Urban October celebrations. The establishment of SAGE draws a lot from UN women global Advisory Board. SAGE was launched at the Global Stakeholder Forum and led the development of the stakeholder declaration.

The Global Stakeholders Forum was organized before the First Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly to *inter-alia* allow stakeholders to organize and consolidate their positions around issues under discussion by the Assembly. Stakeholders agreed a declaration as a social contract with member states committing to cooperate and to collaborate in implementation of UN-Habitat Strategic Plan, the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. Also organized in the margins of the First Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly were a Business Assembly and a Youth Forum. The Global Stakeholders Forum will be held again in June 2023 just before the Second Session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The current stakeholder engagement arrangements can be strengthened to ensure all year around engagement and consultations even during the intersessional period considering the functions of the UN-Habitat governing bodies, and lessons learned from other UN agencies, funds and programmes. Stakeholder engagement can be made systematic, regular, and more substantive including stakeholder briefings, contribution to deliberations of Ad hoc working groups, and submission of position papers on key policy decisions and agenda items before the governing bodies. Stakeholders can contribute to agenda and priority setting, through consultations within and across the 16 constituency groups and at regional levels.

It is expected that the stakeholder engagement policy will lead to systematization of stakeholder engagement and participation in the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, anchor and/or reconfigure existing stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and align with good practices within the UN system, where appropriate. The stakeholder engagement mechanism would allow voices of stakeholders to be heard at national, regional, and global levels.

Annual stakeholders' consultations during Urban October or at the start of the last Session of the Executive Board could be considered. At the annual consultation dialogues between stakeholders, the Bureau of the Executive Board, the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and UN-Habitat staff on policy and programme matters could be organised. Monitoring of stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes is necessary to identify gaps and opportunities for enhanced stakeholder participation. The role of the Secretariat and the process of stakeholder engagement including communication between the Stakeholders and the Secretariat should be streamlined.