

Summary of the twenty-eighth meeting of the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board

Monday 12 September 2022 – 14:30 – 16:30 East Africa Time

Chair: H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah

Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to UN-Habitat

Agenda item 1 - Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board was called to order at 14:35 EAT and the working group adopted the provisional agenda for its twenty-eighth meeting as follows:

1. Adoption of the provisional Agenda
2. Annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023
3. Outcomes of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum
4. Any other matters

After the adoption of the agenda, the meeting considered Agenda item 2, namely discussions on the annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023.

Agenda item 2 - Discussion on the annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023

Under this item, the Chair first gave the following background:

1. The Chair recalled that during the 2022 first session of the Executive Board held in March 2022, the Executive Director presented to Member States the highlights of the outcomes of the implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan for the year 2021. The Chair noted that at that time, the annual report of the implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan for the year 2021 was under finalisation by the Secretariat. The Chair further informed that the full report has now been published and it is expected that a detailed and comprehensive presentation of results will be shared by the Executive Director with the Executive Board at its second session of the year 2022 under Agenda item 6 of that session.
2. Following the above background information, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020-2023. The full presentation can be accessed [here](#). The Secretariat further referred Member States to the Annual report for 2021 on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 which can be accessed [here](#).

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

3. The Secretariat recalled that the second year of the implementation of the 2020-2023 strategic plan ended on 31 December 2021. The Secretariat noted that the Strategic Plan has proven to be a robust framework for recovery and roadmap for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new organizational structure and choices made by UN-Habitat have strengthened integrated programming and increased synergies.
4. The Secretariat further noted that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of UN-Habitat's mandate, as cities and stakeholders asked to delay technical support

but appreciated online learning products such as the New Urban Agenda illustrated and related online crash courses.

5. The Secretariat recalled that cities provide opportunities to anchor COVID-19 pandemic recovery in social justice and climate action. The Secretariat highlighted important elements for the implementation of the 2020-2023 strategic plan, as follows:
 - a. Geography of vulnerability and risk: ensuring that all new programming responds higher risks in areas of inadequate housing, higher deprivation, and spatial inequalities
 - b. Crises responsive planning: reorienting current urban planning and principles and interventions to reshape the urban morphology and supporting innovation, technology and nature-based solutions for climate resilient cities
 - c. Long term planning strategies: refocus to increase the economic resilience of cities, prepare social and economic strategies for infrastructure development and supply chains.

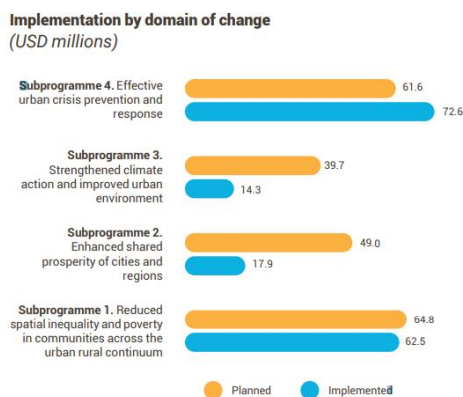
6. The 2021 annual report demonstrates that UN-Habitat is implementing initiatives that contribute to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandate through the four domains of changes of the 2020-2023 strategic plan, as follows:
 - i. Alleviating poverty and inequality
 - ii. Enhancing shared prosperity
 - iii. Strengthening climate action
 - iv. Preventing urban crises

7. The Secretariat also noted that in 2021, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat introduced a strengthened focus on three priorities. There are also in line with the Common Agenda of the Secretary-General of United Nations and are as follows:
 - a) **Housing:** the right to adequate housing can support the reduction of poverty, exclusion, and inequality, and strengthen inclusive, planned, and sustainable urbanization.
 - b) **Climate action:** urban and local climate action with an emphasis on Climate Resilient Informal Settlements, multi-level governance and climate change planning in support of the achievement of the Paris Agreement.
 - c) **Localizing the SDG's:** UN-Habitat's Executive Board mandated UN-Habitat to "actively advance SDG localization in support of the Decade of Action, through normative guidance, technical assistance and strategic partnerships".

8. The Secretariat presented a detailed assessment of the progress and results achieved in each of the four domains of change, including presenting transformative stories and demonstrating results. A detailed presentation of the key results in each of the four domains of change can be accessed on slides 5 to 9 of the presentation which can be accessed [here](#).

9. The Secretariat further presented four of the transformative stories detailed in the 2021 annual report as follows:
 - a. Strengthening the social and economic conditions of Palestinian families and enhancing Palestinian cultural and community identity in the Old City of Jerusalem
 - b. Attracting Foreign Direct Investment during for shared sustainable prosperity and investment in Mexico through a geographic atlas with strategic analysis of sectors with high growth potential.

- c. Improve flood resilience and sanitation for 1 million vulnerable groups in Ulaanbaatar through a community-based gender-responsive approach supported by the Adaptation Fund
 - d. Integrating refugees into host communities in Kenya through numerous initiatives, tools and intensive workshops that have informed implementation.
10. The Secretariat noted that important achievements in 2021 also included :
- i. **The New Urban Agenda Illustrated:** outreach and awareness around the transformative potential of sustainable urbanization were increased through close collaboration with regional United Nations entities. Over 2,000 participants have accessed the online course in English and Spanish, and 387 certificates of completion were awarded by the end of the year.
 - ii. **UN-Habitat Learn:** UN-Habitat’s first online learning platform and learning management system, in which the New Urban Agenda crash course was first developed. By December 2021, the UN-Habitat Learn page had been viewed by users from 181 countries, demonstrating the potential for multiplying outreach and dissemination of learning products. These include a series on monitoring urban Sustainable Development Goal indicators.
11. The Secretariat noted that the 2021 annual report also provides information on the outcomes of the UN-Habitat flagship programmes, which were launched in 2020 to strengthen the delivery capacity and efficiency of the strategic plan by consolidating initiatives to engage with Governments and UN-Habitat partners. The flagship programmes serve as vehicles to reinforce integration of UN-Habitat normative and operational work for greater efficiency and impact in the four domains of change of the strategic plan.
12. The Secretariat further mentioned key achievements supporting cities through normative work as follows:
- 1. The Cities and Pandemics Report which provides cities with pathways towards accomplishing a sustainable and just recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic.
 - 2. UN-Habitat–CITIIQ
 - 3. COVID-19 tracker for cities
 - 4. Launch of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework
 - 5. Coordinating the UNSG Quadrennial Report
13. The Secretariat detailed the status of implementation in 2021 of the domains of changes within the 2020-2023 strategic plan as follows:



Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

14. One Member State welcomed the three priorities of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat (Housing, Climate action and localizing the SDG's) and sought clarification on how these three priorities were linked to the five UN-Habitat flagship programmes. The Member State further inquired about the timeline of their implementation.
15. One Member State expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2021 in the State of Palestine, particularly in the areas related to strengthening the social and economic conditions of Palestinian families, enhancing Palestinian cultural and community identity in the Old City of Jerusalem, urban farming as well as Covid-19 response.
16. One Member State noted with appreciation the priorities on housing and SDGs localization. The Member State also welcomed the work of UN-Habitat on slum upgrading. The Member State requested more details on Waste Wise Cities activities in 2021 and currently, going beyond the brief description in the Annual Report 2021.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

17. The Secretariat noted that the flagship programmes are able to integrate the three priorities set by the Executive Director on housing, climate and localizing SDGs. There is a flagship programme on SDGs Cities, which operationalizes the localization of the SDG's. Once the status of the SDGs is identified at the local level, UN-Habitat can plan the way forward through the SDGs Cities flagship program. The Secretariat also highlighted that housing priority is at the centre of the flagship 1 on Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities. The Secretariat noted that the flagship programmes have continued to fast-track integration between the normative and operational work of UN-Habitat, scaling and accelerating the impact of the organization. As a way forward, the Secretariat confirmed it will work on further articulating the linkages between the flagships and the three priorities.
18. The Secretariat indicated that the priority on housing needed more thinking and resources for a meaningful impact.
19. With respect to the Waste Wise Cities programme, the Secretariat noted that the focus in 2021 was put on marine pollution, with an emphasis on coastal area cities. Within the framework of the Waste Wise Cities programme, UN-Habitat is working very closely with UNEP and WWF on marine pollution.

Agenda item 3. Outcomes of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum

Under this item, the Secretariat provided a briefing on the outcomes of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. **The full presentation can be accessed [here](#).**

The briefing by the Secretariat highlighted the following:

20. The Secretariat recalled that the World Urban Forum (WUF) was established by United Nations resolution 18/5 paragraph 10 of February 2001 and has progressively strengthened its authority as a key coordination, advocacy, partnership, and knowledge platform on sustainable urbanization. The eleventh session was held from 26 to 30 June

2022 in Katowice, Poland under the theme [*Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future*](#). The theme sought to strengthen relationships and create linkages to promote accelerated implementation of global urban commitments, grounded in the achievement of SDG11: to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The Secretariat noted that the WUF11 theme was aligned with the World Cities Report 2022 *Envisaging the Future of Cities*.

21. The Secretariat noted that WUF11's theme of transformation of cities for a better urban future was supported by **six dialogue spaces**, each of which explores a different dimension of transformation. Dialogue spaces were curated by UN-Habitat and facilitated by thought leaders and high-profile experts.
22. The Secretariat noted that WUF 11 attracted a total of 17,003 attendees, with 10,799 participants from 158 countries attending in person. Approximately three-quarters of the gender-balanced participants came from Europe, while participants for Africa and Asia accounted for 7.5% and 8.7% respectively. 64% of the participants attended in-person. The Secretariat noted that there was more female representation at WUF11 than previous WUF10 at a margin of 10% (male representation dropped from 64% in WUF10 to 54% in WUF11).
23. The Secretariat indicated that the in-person participants were from Poland as the Host Country, Germany, Malaysia, France, USA, Ukraine, Kenya, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Spain.
24. The Secretariat noted that WUF11 managed to draw high-level representation, including Polish Prime Minister, Prime Minister from Guinea-Bissau, President of ECOSOC, and President of the UN-Habitat Assembly.
25. The Secretariat indicated that with more than 52% of female speakers in the main sessions, WUF11 was successful in achieving panel-parity:

535 confirmed speakers for all sessions

*Female:	275 (51%)
Male	260 (49%)

All Sessions excluding Ministerial Roundtable:
504 Confirmed Speakers

26. The Secretariat informed that a total of 451 events were held. An important track incorporated into the WUF11 programme was the Urban Crisis track. In response to the recent urban crises such as COVID-19 pandemic, climate disasters, and emerging conflicts, WUF11 presented an opportunity to strengthen UN-Habitat's Domain of Change 4 - Effective urban crisis prevention and response with an extraordinary dialogue on urban crisis response and recovery.
27. The Secretariat also shared that WUF 11 established a new benchmark for accessibility, with full interpretation in all 6 UN languages as well as in Polish and Ukrainian (6 events). Both the International and Polish sign languages were also provided. CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) and numerous improvements for the visually and physically impaired demonstrated that transformative action to ensure accessibility for all through universal design is possible in our built environment. Overall, gender parity was achieved in terms of the participants with 47% women and 53% men. Since panel parity was achieved at WUF10, the Executive Director and the

Government of Poland have ensured that 52% of speakers in the main sessions of WUF11 comprised of women among more than 630 session speakers.

28. The Secretariat indicated that UN-Habitat will be partnering with key stakeholders such as the World Blind Union amongst others, in developing a practical guide on accessibility, incorporating lessons learned from WUF11, and patching a vision for the future on accessibility and inclusivity as a building block towards sustainable urban future.
29. The Secretariat highlighted that the Declared Actions of the Eleventh Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11) were announced at the event's closing ceremony on 30 June 2022 by H.E Madama Martha Delgado, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly. The Declared Actions will carry the sustainable development Agenda forward to the next World Urban Forum in Cairo, Egypt in 2024, and beyond.
30. The Secretariat informed that approximately 100 of commitments have already been received from city planners, mayors, governments, civil society, and community groups as of 31 July 2022 on the Urban Agenda Platform www.urbanagendaplatform.org on the WUF11 theme of 'Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future'. The Secretariat encouraged all stakeholders to join the Urban Agenda Platform with committed actions, and update and monitor in the lead up to the WUF12.
31. The Secretariat noted that in the "Katowice Declared Actions: Transforming our Cities for a Better Urban Future," WUF11 participants declared their voluntary actions and commitments for the next two years and beyond, including:
 1. *Move from incrementalism towards fundamental shifts in urban environments, systems of governance and forms of habitation, in line with human rights treaties;*
 2. *Focus on imminent urban crises such as climate and biodiversity emergencies, pandemics, violence and conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters, that all converge in cities and surrounding territories;*
 3. *Reconfirm culture as a core component of local identity;*
 4. *Reconfirm that accessibility and universal design are an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanization; and*
 5. *Encourage all development actors to mobilize their capacities in the UN Decade of Action, and appeal to governments to better fund UN-Habitat.*
32. The Secretariat also expanded that the Declared Actions emanate from the Advisory Group established by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to guide her during WUF. The Secretariat also noted that at the end of every day, the Advisory Group extracts the main outcomes and concerns emanating from the Roundtables and Dialogues held during WUF. Based on the outcome and concerns in terms of required areas of intervention arising from the Roundtables and Dialogues, at the end of WUF, the Advisory Group prepares the Declared Actions which are not legally negotiated commitments but rather a recognition of the areas that have been identified as requiring attention and commitment in addressing. The Secretariat further noted the areas identified in the Declared Actions as well as the outcomes of other meetings are taken into consideration by the Secretariat when preparing for a session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, to form a proposed strategic plan as the areas Member State and partners have identified as significant for UN-Habitat to focus on.
33. The Secretariat further expanded on the Ministerial Roundtable held during WUF 11 and which was attended by 22 Ministers and 12 Vice-Ministers. The Secretariat noted

that it was a success and that there was a high demand for speaking slots during the Ministerial Roundtable. In two and a half hours, 25 Ministers and Deputy Ministers were accommodated but some were not able to speak due to time-constraint. The Secretariat indicated it would welcome any guidance on how to accommodate the high demand for speaking slot.

34. The Secretariat indicated that at the end of the official closing ceremony of WUF11, H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Shaarawy, Minister of Local Development, Egypt, and the UN-Habitat Executive Director signed the WUF12 Host Country Agreement. Details of logistical arrangements on the Agreement of Logistical Arrangements will be discussed and finalized with the Government of Egypt in coming next months.
35. The Secretariat noted that the World Urban Forum Alumni Network also convened for a working meeting on 28 June 2022 during the Forum to agree on activities and forward planning of the network's activities. The Alumni members agreed on activities within five broad workstreams with members agreeing to be the focal points for each of the work streams. These broad work streams presented at the open session included participation of UN-Habitat's Executive Director and Ministers from the Host Country (Poland), Egypt (host of WUF12), Kenya (first host of WUF) and a high-level representative from United Arab Emirates (host of WUF10). The agreed broad workstreams are: (i) global think tank; (ii) technical advisory; (iii) knowledge management; (iv) voluntary local reviews; and (v) global projects. The outcomes resulting from the activities will be geared towards the evaluation of the WUF and development of the next WUF programme cycle.
36. The Secretariat noted that the success of WUF 11 generated a lot of traction of interest from partners who expressed interest in hosting the WUF13. The WUF13 Expression of Interest for hosting of WUF13 in 2026, opened from Friday, 1 July 2022 and shall run till Tuesday, 15 November 2022. The evaluation of WUG11 will start then soon and UN-Habitat will provide potential hosts, who have expressed interest with bidding package and guidelines, from 15 December 2022.

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the discussions highlighted the following:

37. One Member State suggested that the detailed programme of WUF as well as a detailed programme of the Dialogues and Roundtables could be circulated more in advance to encourage in-person participation.
38. Another Member State suggested that the format of the future Ministerial Roundtables could be adjusted to allow all Ministers and Vice-Ministers to speak, *i.e* that the duration of the Roundtable could be extended by one hour or two to accommodate all requests for speaking.
39. One Member State requested the Secretariat to continue to be seized with the themes and topics which emerged during WUF 11, *i.e* inequalities and urban crisis in preparations for future WUF as well as other events of t UN-Habitat. The Member State emphasized the need for improved equitable geographical representation in some events, for instance at the opening ceremony. The Member State also encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that WUF remains a thematic forum and not a political forum. The Member State suggested that Nairobi-based Permanent Representatives be more involved in the planning and preparations of future WUFs sessions.

40. Another Member State suggested that the Declared Actions should be kept more general and should not become a negotiated document. The Member State also suggested to extend the duration of the Ministerial Roundtable by one hour during future sessions of WUF so as to accommodate the high-level participation to the Roundtable. The Member State also suggested that UN-Habitat could consider two Ministerial segments, not necessarily concurrently, to accommodate the number of high-level participants.
41. One Member State encouraged the Secretariat to explore innovative for balancing regional diversity of in-person participants from different regions. It was noted for example that, at WUF11 most of the in-person participants were from Europe.

In light of the views expressed by Member States, the Secretariat responded as follows:

42. The Secretariat took note of the comments and observations proposed by the working group including specifically on diversity and geographical representation.
43. The Secretariat reiterated that WUFs are not legislative and diplomatic conferences within the legal context, but rather a marketplace of ideas for non-legislative forums.
44. The Secretariat also noted that UN-Habitat has the obligation to work with Nairobi-based Permanent Representatives during the preparations of WUFs. For example, the should Secretariat consulted, as it usually does, the Nairobi-based Permanent Representatives on the theme and the concept note of WUF11.
45. The Secretariat requested Member States to provide guidance to the Executive Director on the expected content and format of the Declared Actions.
46. The Secretariat took note of the concern with respect to geographical representation of in-person attendance to WUF11. Noting that for logistical reasons, the in-person attendance is always higher in the region hosting the WUF, the Secretariat confirmed it will explore ways to reach a more balanced in-person participation. The Secretariat also highlighted that the geographical rotation of the countries hosting WUF allows for geographical diversity.
47. The Secretariat also indicated it will look into the statistics on on-line participation and geographical representation of on-line attendance. The Secretariat recalled that there were live streaming of the sessions and that the recordings are available on [UN Web TV](#).

4. Any other matters

48. Under this item, the ad hoc working group recommended its schedule of upcoming meetings which can be accessed [here](#)

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 16:00 East Africa Time.
