

**Fourth meeting of the ad hoc working group on the
stakeholder engagement policy
Wednesday 21 September 2022**

**UN-Habitat Stakeholder Engagement Policy
Draft Zero**

1. Introduction

This stakeholder engagement policy only applies to stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes involving the UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs. The UN-Habitat partnership strategy, implementing partners policy and standard operating procedures, and other legal instruments provided for stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat programmes.

This stakeholder engagement policy responds to UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 26/7, UN-Habitat Assembly decision 1/3 as well as UN-Habitat Executive Board decision 2020/6.

UN-Habitat is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities and human settlements, and adequate shelter for all. It is the focal point and coordinating agency for sustainable urbanization, and custodial agency for the New Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat in fulfilling its functions, works with local and regional governments, major groups, and other stakeholders.

The subsidiary organs of the General Assembly including the UN-Habitat Assembly, the Executive Board, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Executive Director, who is elected by the General Assembly, are mandated to support the participation of stakeholders as they deliberate and make decisions regarding UN-Habitat policies and programmes¹. Stakeholder engagement includes expert advisory, sharing of lived experiences, and scientific contributions to discussions.

While inputs from stakeholders can provide valuable contributions to the intergovernmental process, decision-making within UN-Habitat remains the prerogative of member states. Intergovernmental decisions will have broader recognition and support by the public if stakeholders' views are taken into account in agenda setting, policy-making and decision-making processes, as well as implementation.

A Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism (SEM) with a structure and clear terms of reference will be developed as part of this policy. The SEM will focus on how meaningful stakeholder engagement, diversity and inclusion can be achieved including attraction of pertinent stakeholders. Due diligence and transparency measures are also necessary to ensure relevance and understanding of benefits and risks.

This policy will enable engagement, serve as an instrument to identify the risks and benefits, protect, and preserve UN-Habitat's reputation, and integrity as the lead agency for housing and sustainable urban development in the United Nations.

¹ Rules 10.5, 65-69 of the UN-Habitat Assembly, and Rule 17.3 of the UN-Habitat Executive Board.

This policy is aligned with relevant UN-Habitat and UN regulations and rules and builds on the experiences of the World Urban Forum, the New Urban Agenda and the UN Secretary General's report, Our Common Agenda.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The intention of the policy is to improve stakeholder engagement and participation in UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes, with emphasis on stakeholder contribution to policy and decision-shaping in an inclusive and continuous way.

Stronger stakeholder engagement contributes to building support for implementation of the decisions, recommendations, strategic plans, and work programmes approved by the UN-Habitat governing bodies. It also facilitates the implementation of the mandates coming from the United Nations General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council in relation to UN-Habitat's mandate and work.

3. Guiding Principles

Stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat intergovernmental processes is guided by the following overarching guiding principles:

- a. Illustrate benefits to housing and sustainable urban development and be relevant to UN-Habitat mandates.
- b. Abide by the Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs and respect the intergovernmental nature and decision-making authority of member states over policy and programmatic decisions.
- c. Actively contribute towards decision-shaping and agenda-setting in sessions and intersessional periods.
- d. Contribute to decision-shaping based on evidence, quantitative and qualitative data to back up UN-Habitat's policy work.
- e. Ensure stakeholder access to documentation and information on intergovernmental sessions and processes shared with member states in real time.
- f. Be undertaken in a fair, transparent, open, inclusive, accessible, and accountable manner.
- g. Respect for diversity of views, equality, non-discrimination, and self-organisation with adherence to the guiding principles in this policy.
- h. Commit to monitoring and reporting on the engagement.
- i. Protect UN-Habitat from any undue influence, especially the processes in setting and applying policies, norms, and standards.
- j. Never compromise UN-Habitat reputation, integrity, independence, and credibility.
- k. Be effectively and efficiently managed with a view to promoting improvements on current engagement practices including by exploring innovative tools and mechanisms.

4. Definition of Stakeholders

For purposes of this policy, stakeholders are all non-members of UN-Habitat Assembly provided they support or work in the field of housing and sustainable urban development and, also support the work and mandate of UN-Habitat. These include international, regional, and national organisations, local and regional governments through its organised constituency of networks and associations, particularly through the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, civil society

organisations², academia, the built environment professionals, private sector and philanthropic organisations as well as UN-Habitat established advisory boards and professional networks.

5. Accreditation, criteria, and process (*Placeholder*)

6. Benefits for accredited stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement in the work of UN-Habitat governing bodies can create essential benefits to housing and sustainable urban development and the quest for adequate shelter for all. It can also bring benefits to UN-Habitat itself in fulfilling its mandate and functions.

Some engagements are long-term, medium-term, and short-term depending on areas of work and specialisation. Key benefits from such engagements include:

- a. Contribution of stakeholders to the policy work of UN-Habitat.
- b. Participation in public meetings of UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs in person or online.
- c. Availability of designated seats in public meetings of UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs.
- d. Invitation to make statements during public meetings of UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs. The Presidents or Chairpersons are encouraged to provide opportunities to speak under the relevant agenda items.
- e. Publication of written statements made by accredited stakeholders during intergovernmental meetings.
- f. Access to public information and documents of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs. The UN-Habitat Secretariat to make every effort to provide access to these documents in a timely manner.
- g. Contribution to agenda setting by written submissions to the Bureaus of the relevant governing bodies through the UN-Habitat Secretariat.
- h. Structural and inclusive dialogue with the leadership of UN-Habitat governing bodies.
- i. Creation of cross-linkages with stakeholders working on other global commitments and in areas relevant to UN-Habitat work, for example climate change, disaster risk reduction and resilience, financing urban infrastructure, housing, and localization of Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.
- j. The influence stakeholders can play on enhancing UN-Habitat policy and decision-making on housing and sustainable urban development.
- k. The additional resources stakeholders can contribute to UN-Habitat work.
- l. The wider dissemination of and adherence by stakeholders to UN-Habitat's policies, norms, and standards.
- m. Support for implementation, monitoring and accountability for norms and standards.

7. The role of UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat will mobilise and facilitate all relevant stakeholder organisations to engage in intergovernmental processes individually and collectively. UN-Habitat contribution will include but not be limited to:

- a. Regular consultations and liaison with the stakeholder engagement mechanism on matters of governing bodies including information sharing and dissemination, development of policies, strategic plans, annual work programmes and analytical reports.

² All not for profit organizations including professional organizations are under civil society organizations.

- b. Facilitate stakeholders' accreditation and participation in the public meetings of the UN-Habitat Assembly, Executive Board, Committee of Permanent Representatives, and related working groups include the Working Group on Programmes and Budget.
- c. Mobilisation and facilitation of stakeholder engagement and participation through:
 - (i) Special dialogues,
 - (ii) Expert Group Meetings,
 - (iii) Surveys,
 - (iv) Advocacy platforms and events – the World Urban Forum, Urban October especially World Habitat Day and World Cities Day, the World Urban Campaign, and other relevant global and regional events.
- e. Support the convening of the global stakeholder forum prior to the UN-Habitat Assembly, regional stakeholder forums, and annual global stakeholder consultations organized just before UN-Habitat Assembly and subsidiary organs and relevant regional meetings, where appropriate.
- f. Promote monitoring, accountability, reporting, harnessing and dissemination of lessons learned on stakeholder engagement and participation in UN-Habitat policy related work.
- g. Facilitate a review and update of stakeholder engagement policies as requested from time to time and as appropriate.
- h. Dedicate a Unit/Section which also serves as the Secretariat and internal focal point for stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes.
- i. Engage accredited stakeholders during intersessional periods through stakeholder representatives and other designated advisory groups and committees within the context of this policy and related stakeholder engagement mechanism.

8. Responsibilities and obligations of accredited stakeholders

Effective stakeholder engagement comes with responsibility and obligations of accredited organisations. These include:

- a. Respect for the Rules of Procedures of the UN-Habitat Assembly and its subsidiary organs, and to the guiding principles laid out in this policy.
- b. Compliance with registration requirements and seating arrangements for each meeting.
- c. Regular communication with UN-Habitat and exchange of information including reporting on activities relevant to UN-Habitat mandate and programme of work every four years.
- d. Support a Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism and its operationalization while adhering to the guiding principles, especially self-organisation, transparency, responsibility and accountability without exclusion of some groups.
- e. Commitment to cooperation, collaboration, and coordination while respecting the need for individualism and collectivism.
- f. Provision of feedback on stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes through stakeholder satisfaction surveys, focused group discussions, consultations, and other means as necessary.

9. Funding

The work of a stakeholder engagement mechanisms needs support in terms of finance and human resources.

UN-Habitat with the support of stakeholders, member states and others interested in enhancing stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes and policy work will make concerted efforts to raise adequate funds through budgetary and extra-budgetary resources.

Member states are invited to provide financial resources or take initiatives to support participation of stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries, in relevant processes.