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Committee of Permanent Representatives  
to the United Nations Human Settlements  
Programme  
Sixty-fifth meeting  
Nairobi, 29 June 2017

## **Draft minutes of the sixty-fourth meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 20 March 2017**

### **Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Monday, 20 March 2017, by Mr. James Kimonyo, Permanent Representative of Rwanda and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
2. The meeting was attended by 84 participants from 51 countries and 2 observer missions.
3. At the invitation of the Chair, the Committee observed a minute's silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Michal Vrabel, Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovakia to UN-Habitat.
4. The chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Ms. Luisa Fragoso (Portugal) and Mr. Abdulghani Khayat (Saudi Arabia).
5. He bade farewell to the following departing member, thanking him for his contribution to the work of the Committee: Mr. Konrad Paulsen (Chile).

### **Agenda item 1**

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

6. The Chair recalled that certain items on the agenda of the sixty-third meeting of the Committee, held on 1 December 2016, had not been covered owing to time constraints, and those had been included in the current agenda, with the exception of the country presentation on Ghana which had been discussed by the subcommittee on policy and programme of work on 30 November 2017 and was therefore included in the documentation for the current meeting under the agenda item on the work of the subcommittees (HSP/CPR/64/7/Add.1).
7. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (HSP/CPR/64/1/Rev.1).

### **Agenda item 2**

#### **Adoption of the draft minutes of the sixty-third meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

8. The Committee adopted the draft minutes of its sixty-third meeting on the basis of the draft minutes (HSP/CPR/64/L.1).

### **Agenda item 3**

#### **Executive Director's briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

9. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to a document entitled "Executive Director's briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (HSP/CPR/64/3), covering the main activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the Committee.

10. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director noted that preparations for the forthcoming twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, to be held in May 2017, had been the main focus of work in the period under consideration. All members of staff had been actively engaged in the preparation of the key documents to be considered by the Council, namely the work programme and budget for the period 2018–2019, and the mid-term revision of the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019, which would incorporate the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in October 2016. Intensive work on the theme of the Council session had produced agreement on the theme: "Opportunities for the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda", which would enable member States to discuss the follow-up to Habitat III.

11. The Executive Director also highlighted the report of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network's assessment of UN-Habitat for the period 2015–2016. The assessment was generally positive but focused on areas where UN-Habitat could improve delivery in the coming years; it was a timely intervention in the run-up to the two-day high-level meeting to be convened in New York in early September 2017 during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, at which the future strengthening of UN-Habitat would be considered.

12. Turning to other activities and missions undertaken in the period under review, he noted that these were described in his written report. However, he singled out the recent visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, to the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and his decision to visit a UN-Habitat field programme in the Mathare informal settlement. His visit had lent support to UN-Habitat activities in the field, highlighting programmes in the African region in particular.

13. On the financial situation of UN-Habitat, he noted that closing figures for 2016 recorded a gross revenue of some \$241 million, showing a very good result for the organization's portfolio and a considerable increase in the mobilization of resources over the previous year. Of this amount, core income accounted for some \$30 million and earmarked funding \$211 million. Further details were included in the quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat. As a consequence of Habitat III in 2016, UN-Habitat was already witnessing an increase in funding for field operations and special purpose contributions, and the Executive Director expressed the hope that an increase in voluntary non-earmarked contributions would be seen in the future.

14. Lastly, he thanked the Government of Malaysia for concluding the agreement on hosting the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018.

15. In the ensuing discussion, general appreciation was expressed to the Executive Director for his report and for his oral briefing.

16. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the inclusion in the report of the new section on key portfolio developments.

17. On post-Habitat III developments, he welcomed the endorsement of the New Urban Agenda by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/256 and the related resolutions adopted by the Second and Fifth Committees. The New Urban Agenda reaffirmed the role and expertise of UN-Habitat, within its mandate, as a focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. He also welcomed the role entrusted to UN-Habitat in coordinating the four-yearly reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in coordination with other United Nations entities. He called for the effectiveness, accountability and oversight of UN-Habitat to be enhanced to enable it to carry out that role. In that regard, he requested the secretariat to keep the Committee fully informed of the independent assessment of UN-Habitat and its recommendations.

18. A number of representatives noted the importance of the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for the strengthening of UN-Habitat. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that it would be the first meeting of the Council following the adoption of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was important for the Council to consider these and other agreements, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on climate

change, and their implications for the work of UN-Habitat. He recalled that at its last meeting, the Committee had asked the secretariat to conduct its own analysis of these agreements, for distribution to member States; he called for the Committee to discuss that information at the earliest opportunity ahead of the Governing Council session. He also called for a meeting of the subcommittee to be held as soon as possible to discuss the draft resolutions for submission to the Governing Council.

19. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council would provide the opportunity to affirm the mandate of UN-Habitat and to commit to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. She urged the Executive Director to work with other United Nations entities on the implementation of the Agenda and to seek the necessary financial support to do so. She welcomed the adoption of the theme and subthemes for the Governing Council, which, she said, were the result of active and constructive work among the regions and joint efforts to reach consensus. She called for the background and working documents for the session to be provided in a timely manner in all the official languages of the United Nations, and to that end for interpretation and translation services to be properly utilized.

20. Endorsing the agreed theme for the Council session, another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the role and commitment of international organizations and the developed world were crucial in providing adequate and sustainable financing, technology transfer and capacity-building to support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. He called for the urbanization challenges facing developing countries to be addressed, in particular those facing the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, African countries, small island developing States, conflict and post-conflict countries and many middle-income countries that faced specific challenges. The different capacities and levels of development of such countries should be taken into account in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

21. A number of representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, commended the work of the working group on programme and budget and its efforts to improve the efficiency, transparency and accountability of UN-Habitat. Support was widely expressed for the renewal of the working group's mandate at the forthcoming Governing Council session. One representative encouraged member States to contribute to the report on the activities of the working group on programme and budget to be submitted to the Governing Council, which would decide on the group's future mandate. One representative said the group's work on the budget had shown the level of interest of member States in discussing new ways of increasing the efficiency and transparency of UN-Habitat and facilitating the organization's work on the New Urban Agenda. She called on the Executive Director to pursue the recommendations of the working group as they reflected the aim of all member States to improve the work of UN-Habitat.

22. One representative congratulated UN-Habitat on the findings of the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network assessment of UN-Habitat, which showed real improvement in the organization, but noted the challenges remaining, particularly with regard to core funding. She called on member States to provide core funding and commended the Executive Director for reaching out to non-traditional donors; such funding would be fundamental to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda.

23. On the World Urban Forum, one representative sought clarification regarding decisions on the organization of the ninth session which had apparently been taken without involvement of the Committee. He also noted a lack of information on the World Urban Forum website and of links to previous forums, which was hampering preparations for the event. Another recalled that concerns had been expressed at the previous meeting of the Committee that certain functions of UN-Habitat in Nairobi were being transferred to New York, in particular regarding the organization of the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, and the Committee had been excluded from effective participation. One representative called on the secretariat to keep the Committee informed of developments taking place in other capitals and especially in New York, to enable national and local Governments to design and manage sustainable urban and human settlement policies.

24. The representative of Malaysia expressed his Government's appreciation for the opportunity to host the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in 2018.

25. A number of representatives sought clarification of the situation regarding the General Assembly of Partners for Habitat III that had given rise to concern at the previous meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and recommended that the Committee should look into the matter with assistance from the secretariat.

26. On the UN-Habitat global staff survey that had been circulated to member States, a number of representatives expressed concern that UN-Habitat did not fare well in relation to most of the indicators and urged the management to address the issues raised by the survey. One representative asked whether there was a channel of communication whereby staff could voice their grievances, obviating the need for such surveys which could show the organization in an unfavourable light. As the UN-Habitat agenda was becoming increasingly ambitious it was important to retain a maximum number of staff and to ensure their satisfaction.

27. One representative sought further information on the status of the evidence-based and independent assessment of UN-Habitat that had been requested in the New Urban Agenda as endorsed by the General Assembly.

28. Responding to comments on the World Urban Forum, the Executive Director noted the significance of the ninth session of the Forum since UN-Habitat was due to report in the same year to the Economic and Social Council on the follow-up to Habitat III and progress on the New Urban Agenda; the Forum would therefore provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to make contributions on those issues. He anticipated that the Committee would discuss the outcome of the Forum session and provide its input on the same to the Economic and Social Council as part of the four-yearly report on the New Urban Agenda. The scheduling of those meetings was therefore fortuitous.

29. He drew attention to the appointment of Ms. Amina Mohammed of Nigeria as Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in that capacity, to the role assigned to her as coordinator of the reform of the United Nations development system, of which UN-Habitat was a member. The Deputy Secretary-General had already set up a coordination group with the aim of increasing the efficiency of United Nations development programmes, representing a significant development for UN-Habitat in the light of the assessment aimed at strengthening the Programme.

30. Regarding the assessment of UN-Habitat, he said that the high-level panel on the evidence-based and independent assessment of UN-Habitat, constituted at the initiative of the Secretary-General, represented a separate process from that proposed by the Deputy Secretary-General to better coordinate the work of the Development Group, although there would likely be consultations between the two if required.

31. Taking note of the other comments from the representatives, he undertook to provide further information on the issues raised. He suggested that a separate session of interested members of the Committee could be devoted to an explanation of the role of the General Assembly of Partners, noting that the concept of a self-organizing association of partners aimed to improve efficiency in the dialogue with member States and to increase the representation of major groups and stakeholders. The participation of the General Assembly of Partners in the preparations for Habitat III had been welcomed by member States and he suggested that the Governing Council should continue the process of making stakeholder participation more substantive.

32. The Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, reported to the Committee on her visit in the previous week to New York, where she had attended the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. She had used that opportunity to showcase the work of UN-Habitat on participatory slum upgrading and the empowerment of women in a side-event organized by UN-Habitat. She thanked the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries, as well as the European Union, for their support to the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. In another side-event in New York organized by UN-Habitat and hosted at the Ford Foundation, with partners from the Government of Canada and civil society, UN-Habitat had showcased best practices and highlighted the need for the collection and analysis of disaggregated data as a basis for inclusive planning and management of cities, and for ensuring that women and youth issues were addressed in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

33. In response to the comments on the UN-Habitat staff survey, a member of the secretariat said that it had been very detailed and still required some analysis. He acknowledged that there had been some concerns regarding the methodology and size of the sample, but certain trends were emerging which would be considered seriously and in collaboration with the UN-Habitat staff. Challenges that had been singled out included internal communications, career development and how to manage in a situation of declining resources. UN-Habitat would be working closely with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi on constructive collaboration and steps to address the priority areas and make the organization stronger. UN-Habitat already had two formal mechanisms to manage the relationship between staff and management, namely the staff union and the staff management committee. The latter was chaired by the Deputy Executive Director and

benefitted from equal representation of staff and management; it was a useful forum to deal with issues that were unique to UN-Habitat.

#### **Agenda item 4**

##### **Report on the status of preparations for the Governing Council session, including draft resolutions for recommendation by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the Governing Council**

34. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the statement by the Executive Director (HSP/CPR/64/4) and other draft documents related to the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, including the report on the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period (HSP/GC/26/3), the work programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (HSP/GC/26/6), and the draft revised strategic plan for the period 2014–2019 (HSP/GC/26/6/Add.3).

35. In his remarks, the Executive Director highlighted the main tasks in the preparations currently under way for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council. The primary concern for the secretariat was the preparation of the documentation, notably the draft work programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019, which had already been sent to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in New York for approval. Secondly, the draft revised strategic plan had been approved by the member States and was available on the UN-Habitat website. Thirdly, the theme of the Governing Council had been agreed and it was now up to the Committee, with the help of the secretariat as required, to proceed with the consideration of the draft resolution on the theme together with other draft resolutions. He cautioned that member States should consider carefully the financial aspect of draft resolutions with financial implications; the secretariat stood ready to assist member States in that regard.

36. The representative of Kenya said that his Government was ready to assist with logistical support for the Governing Council session and urged member States to seek assistance as soon as possible with issues such as visas for visiting officials.

37. The Committee approved the pre-session documentation for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, including the note by the secretariat on the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period (HSP/GC/26/3), the report of the Executive Director on the proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2018–2019 (HSP/GC/26/6), and the report of the Executive Director on the draft revised strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2014–2019 (HSP/GC/26/6/Add.3).

38. The Committee agreed to mandate its subcommittee on policy and programme of work to consider draft resolutions for onward transmission to the Governing Council at its twenty-sixth session for its consideration.

#### **Agenda item 5**

##### **Quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat**

39. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report on the financial status of UN-Habitat covering the quarter ended 31 December 2016 (HSP/CPR/64/5).

40. In his statement, Mr. Andrew Cox, Director of the Management and Operations Division, presented the key points of the report, illustrated with a visual presentation. The financial statements for the year 2016 were currently under production and would be submitted for external audit by the Board of Auditors in April 2017. The interim financial report for the last quarter of 2016 had been largely produced manually due to the deficiencies of reporting under the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and would be reviewed by the auditors in May 2017. The interim figures were likely to change up to the completion of the report, and were net of revenue adjustments so that the effect might be to increase expenditure. A conservative fiscal position would therefore be maintained, continuing to target resource mobilization of around \$5 million in 2017.

41. He pointed out that total gross revenue for the period in question had totalled \$241.2 million, of which \$29.9 million related to core funds and \$211.3 million was earmarked revenue. Total expenditure had amounted to \$199.7 million, comprising \$31.7 million for core expenses and \$168 million for earmarked expenses. At the beginning of 2016, the total core fund balance, including reserves, had stood at \$23.8 million, comprising \$10.1 million in United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation general purpose funds and \$13.7 million in programme support funds. The closing core fund balance, excluding reserves, had amounted to \$14.4 million, of which \$1.6 million was in Foundation general purpose funds and \$12.8 million in programme support funds.

42. For 2016, a deficit in the core budget of \$4.9 million had been anticipated; in reality a deficit across the core, comprising the regular budget, overheads account and Foundation general purpose funds, was expected to be around \$2 million, which was better than anticipated. That result was partly attributed to difficulties in implementing Umoja. However, the delivery of the UN-Habitat portfolio had been better than expected for the year and the problems related to Umoja had been largely addressed and staff had become more familiar with the system. The result had been an increase in overhead income and a reduction in costs with underspending on non-staff costs in particular. UN-Habitat had also seen better revenue acquisition on the portfolio than expected; the demand for UN-Habitat services was increasing and continuing higher delivery was expected in 2017.
43. Efforts continued to ensure that UN-Habitat was living within its means. That issue had been raised many times by the Committee in connection with the decline in non-earmarked contributions from member States. UN-Habitat was pursuing a cautious and conservative stewardship of core resources with, for example, staff costs being reduced by 35 per cent after inflation. Non-staff costs had also been reduced by 45 per cent since 2012. At the same time, UN-Habitat had seen increased income and delivery over time, indicating the organization's increased productivity.
44. Looking forward to 2017–2018, he said a conservative scenario would be necessary if there was no improvement in the situation, entailing increased pressure on staffing costs. An expansion of core income and successful mobilization of new resources in the current year would be necessary for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and for investment in the core capacity of UN-Habitat.
45. He expressed his deep appreciation to the Governments of Algeria, Argentina, Chile, China, Eritrea, France, India, Israel, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, United States and Zimbabwe for their contributions to core funds received as at the end of 2016, and he urged other member States to volunteer non-earmarked contributions in 2017.
46. He further thanked the Governments of Brazil, Cameroun, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Eritrea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States as well as the European Union for the new contribution agreements they had signed with UN-Habitat since the publication of the previous report, which amounted to \$53.4 million in earmarked funding.
47. He encouraged member States to submit their contributions for 2017, in particular those for the Foundation general purpose account to allow UN-Habitat to carry out planned activities in the programme of work and also to advance the intensive work on the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11.

## **Agenda item 6**

### **Country activities report, including thematic/country presentation**

48. Introducing the item, a representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the context of UN-Habitat work in the Syrian Arab Republic, as contained in document HSP/CPR/64/6. Describing the enormity of the humanitarian crisis in the country, he pointed out that there was a clear urban dimension to the situation. Prior to the crisis, 53 per cent of the population had been urban, while the figure was now close to 70 per cent, making the Syrian Arab Republic one of the most significant examples of crisis-induced urbanization in the world. Responding to urban humanitarian crises presented very different challenges to working in rural areas, calling for involvement of local authorities, rehabilitation of urban infrastructure and services, and specialist spatial planning capacity. UN-Habitat had been working in Syria since 2013 with an approach based on a rapid urban planning process developed specifically for crisis situations and involving cooperation with local authorities, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.
49. Mr. Szilard Fricska, chief technical adviser to the UN-Habitat programme in the Syrian Arab Republic, gave an illustrated update on UN-Habitat work in the country and emerging priorities for the future, focusing on the cities of Homs and Aleppo, where there were UN-Habitat field offices, and specific examples of other areas covered by the UN-Habitat portfolio. He introduced members of the UN-Habitat team based in Damascus, who were currently in Nairobi for meetings.
50. The UN-Habitat portfolio in the Syrian Arab Republic was growing, affirming a clear role for the organization, and in that context he thanked the Governments of Germany, Japan, Norway and Switzerland, and also the European Union, for their support in starting up the programmes in the country in 2014 and for continuing to increase that support. In the 2017–2018 biennium it was expected that the portfolio would amount to at least \$25 million.

51. He highlighted the relevance of the New Urban Agenda in the context of the Syrian Arab Republic. Despite the current humanitarian crisis it was necessary to focus on preparing for the future, namely on municipal capacity-building, planning, and strategic issues such as land administration, to facilitate the return of displaced Syrian citizens.
52. With regard to planning, UN-Habitat was adopting a “neighbourhood approach” to urban planning, adapting activities to a context where there was little time and needs were urgent, thus prioritization was necessary. Implementation was based on area rather than sectoral plans. UN-Habitat was working with the Syrian Ministry of Local Administration and Environment on the basis of a memorandum of understanding and was seeking to cooperate also with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, as well as having operational relationships with municipalities in many cities. The aim of UN-Habitat was to identify the neighbourhoods that were strategic in terms of economic recovery, returning populations and from a social cohesion perspective, and to concentrate resources in those areas.
53. Looking specifically at the cities of Homs and Aleppo, he said that the priority was to build confidence with “quick impact” projects, to be followed up by more strategic investments in larger-scale rehabilitation efforts. The mainstreaming of the approach used in the United Nations system was considered a major achievement of UN-Habitat, enabling the mobilization of some \$28 million for the urban area-based approach and engaging a number of other United Nations entities, local non-governmental organizations and technical institutions in areas beyond UN-Habitat expertise to catalyse recovery in specific cities. It was essential, for example, to invest strategically within the cities, but also to ensure that agricultural production and food supply chains were linked to urban areas.
54. Looking to the future, he said that it was necessary to prepare for increased donor support in an evolving political context. Expectations would be high among the country’s population and donors. It was critical to begin preparatory work for a city-wide approach to rehabilitation and recovery, for example in the case of Aleppo. Major capacity investment would be required at the municipal level and in specific neighbourhoods. UN-Habitat had been working on more detailed damage assessment with local authorities and technical departments (for example in Al Qaryatain), and was using the urban planning capacity within the Syrian Arab Republic and in the UN-Habitat country team to determine priorities. International support at the municipal level was lacking, yet it would be critical for the future; UN-Habitat was pleased to play a role in that regard in the transition from purely humanitarian delivery to a wise use of available resources.
55. There were a number of challenges, notably the insecure environment; the occasional delays in securing government approval, for example for field missions; a sometimes challenging relationship between the United Nations and certain member States; the loss of the capacity that the Syrian Arab Republic had previously enjoyed in urban development and planning; and the coordination and monitoring challenges, among others. Nevertheless, looking ahead to the period 2017–2018, UN-Habitat hoped to be able to tackle the coordination challenge by bringing together humanitarian and recovery investment in area planning; UN-Habitat was planning a country programme document to translate the New Urban Agenda into practical outputs appropriate for the Syrian Arab Republic; it was to be hoped that national-level conversations would soon begin on urban recovery; the Sustainable Development Goals would become a priority, as would the housing sector recovery.
56. In the ensuing discussion, one representative applauded the UN-Habitat team for working in difficult circumstances in the Syrian Arab Republic and said that they deserved recognition. She questioned how UN-Habitat was able to carry out activities in the continuing conflict situation when even humanitarian assistance was sometimes unable to enter the country and the lives of United Nations personnel were at risk. Another raised the question of subcontracting certain activities to other United Nations entities and intermediaries and asked whether efficiency could be increased by, for example, amending rules and regulations to make the work of UN-Habitat more effective. One representative expressed concern that the process seemed to be focused more on consultation than on implementation, and also raised the difficulty of addressing the concerns of the host country with regard to activities considered incompatible with humanitarian roles, which eroded the credibility of work being done.
57. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed the appreciation of his Government for the work of UN-Habitat in his country. He welcomed the presentation for highlighting that the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic was primarily based in the cities, creating enormous pressures on basic services and humanitarian efforts. In addition, civilians were fleeing from combat zones to the cities where the infrastructure was inadequate to cope with the high number of displaced people. With regard to delays in obtaining Government approval for humanitarian activities, he observed that this

was linked to the general crisis in the country which made it difficult, for example, for officials even to reach their workplace. There had also been cases of practices among certain United Nations employees that were incompatible with their positions, which hampered Government responses and also posed a threat to security. He also noted the issue of high administrative costs of United Nations staff and said that in humanitarian crises those costs should be limited. He reiterated his Government's readiness to work with UN-Habitat in a constructive manner in the interests of the country. The Syrian Arab Republic would need a range of assistance and the Government was committed to enabling humanitarian assistance to continue.

58. Responding to the points raised, a member of the UN-Habitat country team said that the rehabilitation of urban systems was urgently required. In that respect, although not operating on the scale of other United Nations entities, UN-Habitat fulfilled a niche role at city level. The normative approach of UN-Habitat, building on the New Urban Agenda and the policy on humanitarian response in crisis contexts, enabled it to work with larger agencies and help them to make the most efficient use of their resources. With its planning approach, UN-Habitat was endeavouring to provide a bridge between humanitarian and recovery actors. The stabilization of the Umoja system was facilitating United Nations system-wide collaboration, more efficient recruitment and forward planning for international posts. He stressed the technical approach of UN-Habitat to ensure that investments would not be made in locations still in conflict.

### **Agenda item 7**

#### **Report on the work of the subcommittees**

59. The Committee took note of the report on the work of the subcommittees (HSP/CPR/64/7 and Add.1).

### **Agenda item 8**

#### **Report of the working group on programme and budget**

60. Introducing the item, Ms. Julia Pataki, Permanent Representative of Romania and Chair of the working group on programme and budget, outlined the key points dealt with at the fourth formal meeting of the working group, held on 22 and 23 February 2017, as contained in the report of the meeting (HSP/CPR/64/8).

61. The working group had focused mainly on the follow-up to the recommendations emanating from the previous formal meeting and had received updates from the Executive Director on the implementation of the programme of work, the financial status of UN-Habitat for 2016, analysis of the budget for the biennium 2016–2017, presentation of the draft budget for 2018–2019, updates on the human resources status and UN-Habitat cost recovery policy, and the assessment process of UN-Habitat.

62. The working group had noted with concern that previous recommendations made by the group had not been fully responded to and reiterated to the secretariat requests concerning the revised business model and an action plan for improving gender balance across all staff levels. The Executive Director was urged to implement all actionable recommendations made by the working group and to provide written status reports at least one month in advance of the next working group meeting.

63. The working group had recommended the extension of its mandate by the Governing Council at its forthcoming session and proposed the preparation of a draft resolution to that effect.

### **Agenda item 9**

#### **Report on the implementation of the outcome of Habitat III**

64. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to the UN-Habitat website, which provided analysis of the New Urban Agenda and the role of UN-Habitat in its implementation. He recalled that the New Urban Agenda, which had been adopted at Habitat III, was intended to guide all United Nations programmes. UN-Habitat had analysed the contents of the Agenda under 11 pillars to facilitate their incorporation into its programme and activities, as had many of other United Nations entities. He highlighted the first three pillars, under the headings: principles and values; urbanization and sustainable development; and national urban policies, and their relevance to the work of UN-Habitat. The strategic aspects of urbanization had only been elevated to a principle of development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and urbanization was only fully recognized as a tool for development for the first time at Habitat III. The role of national Governments in urbanization had also been recognized at Habitat III and was established in the New Urban Agenda,



which set out the need for a new alliance between central Government and local governments in delivering good urbanization.

65. The Executive Director expressed the hope that the analysis set out on the UN-Habitat website would assist member States in completing the programme of work and budget and the revised strategic plan for the period 2014–2019, and would also be useful in developing the theme of the Governing Council session and the resolutions to be submitted.

66. Owing to time constraints, the members of the Committee were invited to submit comments on the matter to the secretariat.

### **Agenda item 10**

#### **Any other matters**

67. The Executive Director announced the appointment of Mr. Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza as Director of the Regional Office for Africa of UN-Habitat.

#### **Closure of the meeting**

68. The meeting was declared closed at 1 p.m. on Monday, 20 March 2017.

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