



Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme
Sixty-third meeting
Nairobi, 14 December 2016

Draft minutes of the sixty-second meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 14 September 2016

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 14 September 2016, by Mr. Dina Mufti Sid, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
2. The meeting was attended by 78 participants from 58 countries and 2 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Mr. Martin Gomez Bustillo (Argentina); Mr. Elman Abdullayev (Azerbaijan); Ms. Elizabeth Inés Taylor Jay (Colombia); and Mr. Chol Ajongo (South Sudan).
4. She bade farewell to the following departing members, thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Committee: Ms. Bibiana Jones (Argentina); Mr. David Angell (Canada); Mr. Raul Rodriguez Ramos (Cuba); Mr. Abdelilah Benryane (Morocco) and Mr. John Michael Haule (United Republic of Tanzania).
5. At the invitation of the Chair, the Committee observed a minute of silence for the victims of the recent earthquakes in Italy and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Agenda item 1

Adoption of the agenda

6. The agenda was adopted, as amended, on the basis of the provisional agenda (HSP/CPR/62/1/Rev.1).

Agenda item 2

Election to replace the departed members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the biennium 2016–2017

7. Following the departure of Ms. Maria Eugenia Correa Orlate, the members of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States nominated Ms. Elizabeth Inés Taylor Jay, Permanent Representative of Colombia to UN-Habitat, for the office of Vice-Chair of the Bureau.
8. Following the departure of Mr. Tobias Glucksman, the members of the group of Western European and other States nominated Ms. Lori Dando, incoming Permanent Representative of the United States of America, in absentia, for the office of Vice-Chair of the Bureau.

9. Ms. Taylor Jay and Ms. Dando were elected Vice-Chairs of the Bureau by acclamation.
10. Ms. Taylor Jay took the Chair on behalf of Mr. James Kimonyo, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to UN-Habitat and Chair of the Committee.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the sixty-first regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

11. The Committee adopted the minutes of its sixty-first regular meeting on the basis of the draft minutes (HSP/CPR/62/2).

Agenda item 4

Executive Director's briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives

12. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the document entitled "Executive Director's briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (HSP/CPR/62/4), outlining key activities undertaken by UN-Habitat since the previous meeting of the Committee as well as other developments of relevance to the Programme.
13. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director focused on one key element, namely the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III).
14. He reported that member States had reached agreement on the content of the draft outcome document of the Conference, entitled "New urban agenda", at informal meetings held in New York from 7 to 9 September 2016, and he commended the work of the member States in that regard.
15. Partial agreement on the outcome document had been reached previously at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, which was held from 25 to 27 July in Surabaya, Indonesia, and he thanked the Government of Indonesia for hosting the meeting. The last part of the document had been agreed upon during almost four days of informal meetings in New York, culminating in a continuous 38-hour session of negotiations. He congratulated the delegations that had participated in the meetings, the co-facilitators and the members of the Bureau for their tireless efforts. Having reached agreement on the outcome document, it would now be possible to concentrate on the content of the new urban agenda and strategies for its future development.
16. The new urban agenda, he said, provided a positive vision for the future in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul in May 2016. The text of the new urban agenda was the result of the in-depth discussions that had taken place across the United Nations as a whole during 2015 and 2016, and constituted a progressive strategy for addressing the challenges of urbanization and engaging local authorities in the process. In that sense, it represented the localization of the sustainable development and climate change agendas, and of the major conferences that had been taking place within the United Nations system.
17. The United Nations Summit on Refugees and Migrants would be held in New York in September 2016, and the draft new urban agenda would serve as a good platform for its work since it addressed the fundamental issues of urbanization and migration. Cities worldwide faced the major challenge of migration to urban areas which offered opportunities for jobs and livelihoods.
18. In conclusion, he noted that further details on the preparations for Habitat III would be provided under a separate agenda item.
19. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his written report and oral briefing.
20. With regard to the preparations for Habitat III, a number of representatives commended the work of the Habitat III secretariat, the Bureau and member States, including for achieving consensus on the draft outcome document. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed satisfaction that agreement had been reached in Surabaya and New York on the "zero draft" outcome document, including the process under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly to establish the role of UN-Habitat in the implementation of the new urban agenda.

21. One representative noted that the emerging new urban agenda and other significant shifts in international forums meant that the foundation on which UN-Habitat was built was changing with new challenges emerging for the Programme. The importance was stressed of ongoing discussions to make UN-Habitat stronger and more relevant. Another representative called on the Executive Director to revisit the relevant strategic plans and related planning documents to open important conversations on refining and harmonizing UN-Habitat goals with those of the wider international agenda, of which the new urban agenda would be an important part.

22. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for a detailed account of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III, noting that as raised at previous meetings, the discussions would have been enriched by the presence of representatives of regional groups based in Nairobi if they had been afforded the opportunity to participate. He urged the secretariat to provide financial support for participants from regional groups based in Nairobi to take part in the Habitat III conference. Although consensus had been reached on the draft outcome document, he further urged that the outcome of the conference should uphold the agreed principles of Habitat II, including common but differentiated responsibilities and the twin goals of adequate shelter and sanitation for all and sustainable development in the urbanizing world. The new urban agenda should be concise, focused and forward-looking, with considerable emphasis on implementation, especially in developing countries. International cooperation was crucial in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation, including finance, technology and capacity-building, in support of national efforts and capacities. He stressed the important role of developed countries in assisting developing countries in that regard.

23. One representative said that the draft outcome document agreed in New York provided the UN-Habitat secretariat with a clear foundation for moving forward and a mandate to organize the effective assessment, efficiency and accountability of UN-Habitat in its normative and operational work; a governing structure for more effective, accountable and transparent decision-making; consideration of alternatives, including universalization of the membership of its Governing Council; and the opportunity to enhance its work with national and local governments and relevant stakeholders in order to tap the full potential of partnership and financial capability. The high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly to be held following Habitat III would give UN-Habitat political visibility and provide an opportunity for the Programme to showcase its activities and functions with regard to the new urban agenda. He called on the secretariat to keep member States fully informed about preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and for the Committee to be fully involved in matters related to the new urban agenda. He said that some members from Nairobi had missed out on negotiations in New York, and he expressed the hope that developing countries in particular would be enabled to take full charge of the new urban agenda and the human settlements aspect thereof. He also called for lobbying to be stepped up to gain increased funding for normative work and for the secretariat to take action in that regard.

24. With regard to the forthcoming twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, a number of representatives called upon all member States to actively participate in preparations for the session. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, stressed the importance of keeping all missions in Nairobi informed about the preparations. Since it would be the first Governing Council session to take place after Habitat III, the main theme of the session should focus on the outcomes of the Conference, she said.

25. A number of representatives raised the matter of the role of the working group on programme and budget. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled that the purpose of establishing the working group had been to allow member States to have overall supervision of the programme and finances of UN-Habitat, and she called for difficulties in coordination to be overcome and for greater clarity and efficiency in the use of UN-Habitat funds. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the African States as outgoing chair of the working group and welcomed the new chair from the Asia-Pacific States. He further stressed the great expectations that the working group would strengthen UN-Habitat governance and the oversight of the Governing Council and Committee of Permanent Representatives. Noting that the forthcoming Governing Council session was expected to review the work of the group, he called on the chair and members of the group to agree on a schedule of work that would include an increased number of formal meetings ahead of the Governing Council session and set focused agendas to include, among others, the alignment of country programme documents with annual implementation plans, a review of the implementation of recommendations by oversight bodies, and resource mobilization and communications strategies. Another representative noted that the new urban agenda would provide direction for the next 20 years and it was therefore important to ensure longevity through ambition, consensus and balance. Follow-up discussions in New York and Nairobi on agreements reached at Habitat III would be equally important.

26. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Executive Director for mentioning in his written report the United Nations Task Team on Habitat III expert group meetings on cross-cutting issues and their input into the drafting of the new urban agenda. He called on the Executive Director to brief the Committee and provide further information on the meetings.

27. The representative of Japan expressed appreciation for the attendance by African heads of State, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and others at the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in Nairobi on 27 and 28 August 2016, and welcomed the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration and implementation plan which, he said, would contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

28. The representative of Indonesia thanked the Executive Director for the support provided for the success of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III in Surabaya. He expressed the hope that the outcome document drafted at the session would pave the way for the finalization and adoption of the new urban agenda in Quito in 2016.

29. The Executive Director thanked members for their comments and said that the secretariat would respond to specific requests made. He assured the Committee that the secretariat would endeavour to provide clear and transparent information and keep member States fully informed regarding preparations for Habitat III and the outcomes of the Conference. With regard to funding difficulties, he reiterated his commitment to ensuring the most efficient use of financial resources and urged member States to give consideration to their contributions in order to make possible the achievement of the long list of activities they had assigned to the Programme.

30. He endorsed the view that a better understanding was emerging of the work and capabilities of UN-Habitat and of the opportunities presented by the new urban agenda. Urbanization was presenting major challenges for development and for peace and security in many parts of the world, and had become a strategic issue in international debate. It was therefore necessary that resources be allocated at the international level to address the challenges of urbanization worldwide, and there was an important need for good information. UN-Habitat had made advances in studies undertaken in preparation for Habitat III, providing objective data to explain the major challenges. Some of the studies had already been published and would be distributed at Habitat III side events. Such analysis of urbanization over the past 20 years showed that major challenges needed to be addressed, including migration, resilience, demographic change, ageing in the developed world and the predominance of young people in developing countries, in addition to the fundamental challenge of climate change. He stressed the need for Habitat III to be extremely focused and action-oriented. There was a common understanding in the United Nations system that urban policies were national policies and that it was the responsibility of individual States to establish their own national policies; there were no binding commitments in the new urban agenda. The role of UN-Habitat was therefore to support member States in making the best decisions with regard to their policies.

Agenda item 5

Quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat

31. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to the written quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat (HSP/CPR/62/5), which outlined the financial situation of UN-Habitat for the quarter ending 30 June 2016. He recalled that the information provided had been produced at a time of transformation in the financial statements of the United Nations with the introduction firstly of the International Public Service Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2014 and then the enterprise resource planning system, Umoja, in 2015, which was the reason for some delays in the process. However, in the future the new systems would accelerate the provision of financial data by the United Nations and facilitate UN-Habitat reporting to member States. He emphasized that the present quarterly report had already been audited and passed without notes from the auditors.

32. The report showed that UN-Habitat revenue for the quarter had totalled \$128.9 million, of which \$9.5 million related to core funds and \$119.4 million to earmarked funds. The Executive Director drew attention to the huge discrepancy between the two. Total expenditure during the same period amounted to \$72.2 million, comprising \$16.2 million for core expenses and \$56 million for earmarked expenses.

33. The United Nations Board of Auditors had now completed the draft audit report on UN-Habitat financial statements for 2015, albeit with some delay, and UN-Habitat had again received an unqualified audit opinion on its second year of implementation of IPSAS. The final audit report was expected to be made available in October 2016 and would be circulated to members as soon as possible. While UN-Habitat net assets remained steady, there were some notable shifts in the financial situation, in particular the rate of expenditure against income in the core budget, with a deficit of

\$5.6 million in the core budget in 2015. The deficit was attributable to a number of factors, including the impact of Umoja, changes resulting from the introduction of IPSAS, a reduction in contributions to the foundation general purpose fund, and the general effects of the migration crisis and shifting patterns of official development assistance globally.

34. With regard to the continuing deficit in core funding, he emphasized a number of steps being taken to reduce the deficit to a manageable level, including a review of UN-Habitat cost recovery policy and discussions with member States on the way core financing was managed for the Programme. Discussions on the outcome of Habitat III and the future role of UN-Habitat were particularly important in that respect. He urged member States to consider the possibility of bridging funding to support the core capacity of the organization pending final decisions on the status of UN-Habitat in 2018.

35. He expressed deep appreciation to the Governments of Argentina, Chile, Israel, Norway, Republic of Korea, United States of America and Zimbabwe for their contributions to the core fund since the previous meeting of the Committee. He also thanked the Governments of Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and Zambia for contribution agreements they had signed in the second quarter of 2016 for earmarked activities amounting to \$80.5 million.

36. Thanking the Executive Director for his report and candid remarks, one representative congratulated UN-Habitat on the successful transition to IPSAS and the unqualified audit of the financial statements which he said was a remarkable achievement. He welcomed the strategy being put in place to deal with the shortfalls and the internal reviews that were under way. He noted that Habitat III agreements might have implications for UN-Habitat finances in Nairobi and called for further discussion among member States and detailed briefings from the Executive Director on developments. He requested details and a timeline of briefings and meetings that would be held in the run-up to the twenty-sixth Governing Council session.

37. In his response the Executive Director assured the Committee that information would be provided in a clear, transparent and timely manner and that greater use would be made of the working group on programme and budget for more detailed discussion on the issues raised and possible solutions.

Agenda item 6

Briefing to the Committee on the status of preparations for Habitat III

38. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the background document HSP/CPR/62/6 on the item.

39. Mr. Kumaresh Misra, Deputy Secretary-General of Habitat III, gave a presentation entitled "Technical briefing on Quito 2016", providing an update on the preparations for the Conference. Letters of invitation to Heads of States had been sent out in April 2016, and letters of convocation had been sent out in early September. Permanent representatives had been invited to confirm the participation of their Governments; support would be provided for the participation of least developed countries by the Habitat III secretariat.

40. The provisional agenda was available on the dedicated website for Habitat III. Side events and networking events had been selected and approved and confirmation of exhibition participants was under way. Practical information on getting to Quito would be sent to all delegations.

41. Outlining in more detail the steps to be taken by participating delegations, he said that confirmation of participation and the composition of delegations should be sent by note verbale by no later than 20 September, and credentials should be sent to the Office of Legal Affairs. Online registration was ongoing and would close on 1 October. He drew attention to a number of countries whose participants would require visas to enter Ecuador. Accommodation was the responsibility of each participant; further information on this, transportation and other practical matters was available on the Habitat III website.

42. With regard to the Conference itself, a number of documents had been approved at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III and were already available. The Conference officers would be elected according to the rules of procedure and the regional groups would be requested to provide their nominations in due course. The list of speakers for plenary meetings would be opened shortly and high-level round tables had been approved by the Preparatory Committee. Further clarifications would be provided by the secretariat as required.

43. In response to two representatives who drew attention to the difficulty in obtaining visas given that the Government of Ecuador had no embassy in Nairobi, the Executive Director undertook to pursue the matter further.
44. One representative proposed that in the light of the forthcoming Habitat III conference, some subcommittee meetings be deferred until after the Conference to allow members and the secretariat to focus on preparations for Habitat III. The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Agenda item 7

Thematic or country activities presentation

45. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Briefing note on UN-Habitat’s work in the Union of Myanmar” (HSP/CPR/62/8) and to two information documents, entitled “Bi-annual Programme Activity Report: June 2016” (HSP/CPR/62/INF.1) and “UN-Habitat Country Programme Document: 2014–2016” (HSP/CPR/62/INF.2). She said that the subcommittee on policy and programme of work had discussed in detail the bi-annual activity report as well as the activities of UN-Habitat in Myanmar at a meeting held on 9 September 2016.
46. The representative of the secretariat outlined the content of the biannual programme activity report, which, he said, was a special edition of the biannual report following a new, more readable format that the secretariat had developed and used in the previous biannual report to showcase the work and impact of UN-Habitat activities at the country level. Given the significance of 2016, the June 2016 edition included a section on the history of UN-Habitat; showcased examples of the consolidated impacts of the Programme’s work, including its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines and Saudi Arabia; and provided highlights of the UN-Habitat contribution to the creation and sharing of knowledge in the areas of human settlements, sustainable urbanization and sustainable development. The report called for a new urban agenda that would enable countries to better respond to challenges such as inequality, migration, climate change, informality, insecurity and unsustainable urban expansion.
47. Mr. Yoshinobu Fukasawa, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, delivered a brief presentation, via videolink, on the operations and activities of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, noting that it had expanded in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Since then, its work had been focused on facilitating a smooth transition from emergency response to post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation. With 22 staff members, including nine international professionals, and representatives deployed in 16 countries, the regional office was strongly committed to project implementation and resource mobilization and, despite its relatively small size, it had a portfolio of \$323 million. On average, the office managed 80 projects each year and generated \$4 million in overheads, with annual expenditures of \$70 million–\$80 million. Afghanistan was the largest beneficiary of the office’s work, followed by Myanmar and Sri Lanka, while Japan was its largest contributor, followed by the European Union and a multi-donor trust fund. In closing, he said that the regional office was creating a bridge between the normative work of UN-Habitat and the realities of the ground in five main areas, namely, land, urban planning, people-driven settlement development, urban resilience, and crisis response, in line with the UN-Habitat strategic plan and the Sustainable Development Goals framework.
48. Subsequently, Mr. Bruno Dercon, Senior Human Settlements Officer for Asia and the Pacific, made a presentation via video link on the work of UN-Habitat in Myanmar, which had started in 1994 and, after being interrupted in 2004 owing to the country’s political crisis, had resumed in 2008. Since reopening its country office, UN-Habitat had worked with four Government ministries and had implemented 31 projects in Myanmar, 12 of which were ongoing, in collaboration with partners and with the support of multi-donor trust funds and individual donors such as Japan, Norway, the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
49. Activities undertaken on each of the aforementioned five main areas of focus included the mapping of slums in the city of Yangon and the provision of advice to the Yangon government on evictions prevention and migration; the co-publishing, with the government of Yangon, of Myanmar’s first urban planning guidelines, and the provision of assistance to Yangon, including through capacity-building of city officials, in its efforts to develop pilot development and city extension plans; the provision, in collaboration with local authorities and with the support of USAID and a multi-donor trust fund, of water and sanitation services to communities in human settlements. UN-Habitat had worked, in collaboration with local and international partners, on the development of Myanmar’s first building code as well as activities aimed at helping the country to become resilient in the face of both disasters and climate change, including through earthquake preparedness, the development of resilience strategies, disaster risk reduction training and adaptation to climate extremes and disasters,

as well as the establishment of a Myanmar climate programme with European Union support. Lastly, with the support of the Government of Japan, UN-Habitat had conducted interventions in two large ethnic minority areas to help vulnerable communities in responding to crises such as floods and landslides, benefitting more than 400,000 people.

50. In closing, he said that UN-Habitat would continue to work in Myanmar and engage with its people and Government, in particular the Ministry of Construction, which would be represented in Habitat III, stressing that this work would not be possible without the support of member States, donors and partners.

51. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Japan said that, as one of the top donor countries of UN-Habitat and as the host of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, his Government was pleased that the office had implemented so many meaningful projects in the region, including in Myanmar. In 2016 his Government had contributed \$25 million to projects in the Asia-Pacific region and an additional \$6 million to help those affected by the recent earthquake in Myanmar. He said that his Government would continue to support UN-Habitat in the future. The Executive Director expressed his deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for its continuous support to the field operations of UN-Habitat, which he said were not limited to the Asia-Pacific region but extended to Africa and the Middle East and had enabled the Programme to expand its presence in many countries, including Myanmar.

Agenda item 8

Preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

52. Introducing the item, the chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat on preparations for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat (HSP/CPR/62/6), noting that it had six annexes.

53. The representative of the secretariat, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, said that at its twenty-fifth session the Governing Council had decided to convene its twenty-sixth session from 3 to 7 April 2017 and, as required by the rules of procedure, had approved the provisional agenda for the session. One of the issues that remained to be resolved was the selection of the theme of the session, which was a priority because in its resolution 20/21, the Governing Council had decided that the special theme of each Governing Council session would be selected at least six months prior to the start of the session, on the basis of advice from the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, taking into account, among other things, the outcome of the sessions of the World Urban Forum. Given that no World Urban Forum session would be held in 2016, the outcome of Habitat III could be used as guidance when selecting a theme for the twenty-sixth session. At a meeting held the previous day, the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives had agreed that further discussion on the theme of the twenty-sixth session should be postponed until Habitat III had concluded.

54. With regard to resolutions to be considered at the session, he asked member States to submit all the resolutions they wished to propose well before the commencement of the session in order to give sufficient time to all member States to review them, in line with the deadlines for the submission of pre-session documents set by the General Assembly of the United Nations. He further noted that, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, the Executive Director was obliged to prepare a statement on the financial implications of every proposed resolution involving the expenditure of United Nations funds before the Council could approve any such resolution. Meetings of the subcommittee would be scheduled soon to discuss the proposed resolutions, as well as to review progress in the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session.

55. Lastly, he said that there might be a need to revise the strategic plan for 2018–2019 during the twenty-sixth session in the light of the Habitat III outcome, and encouraged member States, as well as regional groups, to fill any vacant positions left in the membership of the Governing Council prior to the start of the session to enable a more robust discussion to take place during the session.

56. In the ensuing discussion, one representative expressed support for deferring further discussion by the Committee of Permanent Representatives on the selection of the theme of the twenty-sixth session until the Habitat III outcome had been formally adopted, asking if a mechanism had been put in place to enable a discussion between the bureau of the Governing Council, the bureau of the Committee and members of the Committee on the selection of the theme.

57. The representative of the secretariat responded that, following the conclusion of Habitat III, the Executive Director, in consultation with his staff, would review the outcome of the Conference and propose a theme for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council to the Bureau of the Committee, which would then present the proposal to the Committee for its consideration, and make a recommendation to the Bureau of the Governing Council as had been the practice in the past. Should it be deemed necessary, and if time allowed, the proposal could also be discussed by the Committee at its last regular meeting of 2016.

Agenda item 9

Report on work of the subcommittees

58. The Committee took note of the report on the work of the subcommittees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (HSP/CPR/62/9).

Agenda item 10

Report on the work of the working group on programme and budget

59. At the invitation of the Chair, the representative of South Africa, in his capacity as outgoing chair of the working group on programme and budget, briefed the Committee on the work of the group. Noting that the working group had not held any formal meeting since the last meeting of the Committee, he said that it had held a technical planning meeting on 24 August 2016 to discuss the way forward and examine its mandate and responsibilities as defined in Governing Council resolution 25/7 on United Nations Human Settlements Programme reform. At that meeting, the group had concluded that at least two formal working group meetings should be held before the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, and had discussed the agenda and modalities for its next meeting, the preparations for which were under way and would be communicated to the Committee in due course by the new chair of the working group. The remarks of representatives of the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean States regarding the mandate and work of the working group had been noted and would be considered during the formal sessions of the working group.

60. In the following discussion, one representative said that the Governing Council had established the working group on programme and budget in order to improve the governance, transparency, accountability and effectiveness of UN-Habitat, so it was important that the group have full oversight of the Programme's economic situation, including its budget, finances and audits. Stressing that the secretariat was responsible for providing information on economic matters to the working group and for calling meetings of the subcommittee on finance and administration, he noted no subcommittee meetings had been held in 2016 and that, in his view, there had been no adequate economic oversight of UN-Habitat. He suggested that, unless the subcommittee on finance and administration was given the opportunity to fulfil its mandate, the working group should monitor economic matters at UN-Habitat. In closing, he said that the working group must focus on its mandate and work efficiently in the lead up to the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council. The Executive Director thanked the representative for his remarks, saying that 2016 had been a challenging year for UN-Habitat and other entities of the United Nations system, which, due to the implementation of the Umoja enterprise resource planning system, had not been able to access financial data without significant delays, which in turn had led to delays in reporting and had made it difficult to convene finance-related meetings. Noting that United Nations Headquarters in New York was taking steps to address the situation, which was beyond the control of UN-Habitat, he expressed the hope that the issue would soon be resolved. In closing, he said that the secretariat fully concurred that there was a need to strengthen the work of UN-Habitat and that the working group on programme and budget should hold meetings more frequently. It was to be hoped that at least one more formal meeting of the working group would be held in 2016 and that members would be able to agree on a calendar of meetings that would enable the secretariat to do its part to fulfil the spirit and letter of resolution 25/7.

Agenda item 11

Any other matters

61. The Chair noted that the Bureau of the Committee, at a meeting held the previous day, had recommended that the sixty-third regular meeting of the Committee be brought forward from 14 December 2016 to a day in the first week of December.

62. The Committee requested the secretariat to make the necessary enquiries and advise its members about a suitable date on which the sixty-third meeting could be convened in the first week of December 2016.

Closure of the meeting

63. The meeting was declared closed at 12.50 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 September 2016.
