

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

68th REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS
PROGRAMME

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Agenda Item 13:

Report on the Work of the Subcommittees of the CPR (HSP/CPR/68/8)

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR).

The Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held two meetings as at 7 March 2018 for the biennium 2018-2019. These were:

1. First meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work on **the progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.**
2. Second meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work on **Best Practices including the Dubai International Awards.**

The briefing from the two subcommittee meetings is provided below.

1. First meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work on the progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. 23 February 2018

The 2018 - 2019 first meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), was held on 23 February 2018, which discussed the progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Specifically, the discussions focused on:

- i. Response to questions emanating from the CPR presentation on 'UN-Habitat's contribution to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus'
- ii. Update on the Quadrennial Report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda
- iii. Update on the further development of the Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA)

Following the presentation by the Secretariat to the CPR Regular meeting held on 14 December 2017 on 'UN-Habitat's contribution to the Humanitarian-Development Peace (HDP) Nexus', the questions emanating from the CPR highlighted the rapidly expanding humanitarian crisis and the need for UN-Habitat to respond. It was noted that the crisis and conflict confronting the United Nations was much more urban than ever before. Figures included 25 million refugees and 40 million internally displaced people, of which 60% were in urban areas. UN-Habitat therefore worked to sow the seeds of sustainability in the midst of such increasing urban conflicts and disaster situations in addition to addressing the root causes of conflict and on prevention as well as ensuring a continuum

between humanitarian to peace and development. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) had become a strategic tool for the Organization to utilize to prompt transformations in urbanization as well as a tool to contribute to the HDP nexus. In that respect, UN-Habitat has developed useful tools to enable it engage strongly in the HPD work based on its normative and operational work and experience and the through initiatives such as the “people’s process” of engaging communities, ensuring inclusivity and looking at especially the area of land as a source of conflict, enabling it to build on the emergency work done by humanitarian partners. As part of the presentation, a video of UN-Habitat’s immense work in Iraq was shared with Member States which clearly depicted the impactful and sustainable operational intervention by UN-Habitat in its recovery and resilience programs of over twenty years including Rwanda, Afghanistan, Congo DRC, Philippines and others. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjfilzLaDes>

Given the NUA, the UN-Habitat focal point role and the general elevation of urbanization in the global agenda, and also within the context of resolution 26 /2 of the Governing Council on urban crisis response, the secretariat appealed for Member States support to its capacity in delivering this important work to be able to respond to crisis situation and in a timely manner. The secretariat thanked partners such as Japan USA EU UK Sweden Norway Denmark Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany Spain India Saudi Arabia, Canada, South Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan for through support in its humanitarian work.

In follow-up discussion on this topic on HPD, Members appreciated the work of UN-Habitat especially as highlighted in the video on Iraq. There was concern over UN-Habitat absence in Geneva where Humanitarian coordination took place and also over the inadequate presence in New York and requested to be advised on what Member States can do in this regard to assist. Members noted the need for greater presence in those UN-Habitat liaison offices and the need for continued coordination between UN-Habitat, UN Agencies and Governments in various areas of engagement such as post-conflict and the issues of mobilizing resources projects. In response, the Secretariat emphasize that they were willing to engage at the Open-Ended Working Group to see how both Member States and the Organization could work together to improve administrative and governance structures that currently limit the work of UN-Habitat such as improved coordination between the CPR in Nairobi and New York, for instance. In addition, the Secretariat noted that there were still financial constrains that held down the Organization and appealed for support.

There was a specific acknowledgement of UN-Habitat's work in DRC by Member States but with a request for stronger engagement specially to strengthen the role of the UN Mission in that Country in collaboration with the Government of Congo DRC.

UN-Habitat assured Members of ongoing work with the UN Mission in DRC and that with better funding that work could expand into land administration governance and policy and support communities. It was suggested that UN-Habitat collaborate with UNHCR in its humanitarian work across the globe.

UN-Habitat also clarified that its work in Mozambique on flooding and on criteria used in working with different countries which it said was usually based on a combination of demand from governments, partners/donor interests and UN-Habitat's response. Any response was to also serve Member States through policy and research work.

The second update by the secretariat was on the quadrennial report. The first quadrennial report in 2018 would set the stage and present strategy for future reports. These reports, to be produced every four years will be based on comprehensive normative and operational work, based on inputs from regional commission and composed of both primary and secondary data contained after an in-depth analysis of issues.

In preparation for this, UN-Habitat developed strong training and capacity especially for national statistical offices to respond to new spatial demand through the use of both conventional and non-conventional collective tools. Furthermore, the quadrennial report would follow a system-based approach looking into i) the process of collecting and balancing both qualitative and quantitative data that show how cities are transforming people's lives, ii) strengthening of platforms such as the Quito Online platform and mechanisms of participation of different partners and stakeholders and iii) the general strengthening of UN-Habitat in reporting in terms of collecting, analyzing and dispersing data.

It was stated that the report would: i) reflect the universal nature of the NUA reflecting both challenges and opportunities from both the global north and south ii) will need to be transparent, inclusive, consultative and a participatory process, and iii) would be prepared in a voluntary basis by countries, led by countries, with partners enriching the process

It was also noted that the report would create condition towards the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) reporting on SDG goal 11.

Certain UN-Habitat activities were stated to greatly advance the work related to the quadrennial report. These included the development of Flagship reports such as the world cities report, the ninth World Urban Forum; the Quito online Platform for government and partners and its related guidelines; the Global Urban Observatory work on sample of cities programme, and the UN-Habitat's best Practices Unit work on qualitative information and policy issues. That was in addition to the regional reports and the work of the regional commissions.

The secretariat emphasized that the annual report on Human Settlements now referred to as the annual report of the Secretary General on implementation of the new urban agenda and strengthening UN-Habitat would greatly compliment the work on coordinating the quadrennial report. The 2018 quadrennial report of the Secretary General would be ready in April and would be different from subsequent reports which would be comprehensive reports from 2022. The 2018 report would set the stage, present strategy and system-based approach. UN-Habitat explained that expert groups meetings were being organized to define the structures of the first report including write shops for content of the report.

In the discussion that ensued on the quadrennial report, Member States appreciated the work done but stated the following concerns:

- i) **The linkage with the high level political forum (HLPF) in its yearly meetings:** Members had questions on linkages with the HLPF, especially the 2018 meeting which had an agenda item on SDG 11 report. They expressed the need for adequate linkage and reporting of SDG 11 and other SDGs with urban components and the NUA by UN-Habitat for 2018 HLPF. A subcommittee briefing in this regard was requested before the July 2018 HLPF meeting.
- ii) **Benefit of normative work of UN-Habitat to the NUA and the Agenda 2030.** Members sought clarification and a conceptual document on how the NUA and Agenda 2030 would benefit from the normative work of UN-Habitat.
- iii) **Coordination of different reports:** A third concern was on coordination between the different reports, such as the world cities report and the quadrennial report and if other would reports would continue to be produced yearly.
- iv) **Involvement of Members States in the Quadrennial report:** Members asked for clarification on when UN-Habitat would involve Member States in the quadrennial report given that implementation of the NUA was primarily a

- Member States activity, stating that Members States involvement in the report was paramount.
- v) **Peer review of the Quadrennial report:** Members asked to know if the report would be peer reviewed and by who?
 - vi) **Coordination of Data collection:** Member wished to know how spatial data collection would be coordinated given that different government agencies manage different set of data at the national level.

The secretariat responded that reporting to the HLPF was advanced and that it would map reporting alignments with other inter-governmental bodies and share with CPR Members. The secretariat also said it was aware of the mismatch in terms of alignments of different reports and that for that purpose the focus was on a system-based approach to a data collection, focusing on same platform, same system of collecting information for all reports.

In addition to indicator-based work, policy-based work had also intensified and would support the reporting. Moreover, UN-Habitat was working with all UN agencies in coordinating the quadrennial report including on indicators and how they are implementing the NUA in their own work. The World Cities report would continue and would complement the work on quadrennial report.

On engagement of Member States, it was stated that once the guidelines on reporting were finalized Member States including the CPR would be engaged. The secretariat requested Members States to help mobilize a sense of ownership in the process of developing the quadrennial report. The secretariat emphasized the importance of peer review as useful for accuracy of information, among others. With regard to the normative work, the secretariat stated that there was quite a good alignment with the SDGs and the NUA captured in the strategic framework with examples in planning, slim guarding, basic services, land and access to tenure. More work was however needed for full alignment and the secretariat would put together the conceptual document on normative work of UN-Habitat and how it aligned to the NUA and SDGs.

As stated above, during the subcommittee meeting, the secretariat briefed Member States on the Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (AFINUA). The subcommittee was informed that AFINUA was a guidance document created to assist countries in the implementation of the NUA. The five main categories of AFINUA

look at National Urban Policies, Urban Legislation, Urban Planning, Urban Economy and Local Implementation. Its inputs into the AFINUA document were based on engagement at different platforms such as the General Assembly High Level Meeting, the World Urban Forum and regional meetings of line ministers. The AFINUA was an approach explaining where UN-Habitat has focused its expertise and its relation to the Strategic Plan and as a tool that engaged Member States to debate between national and local governments on issues of policies, financing and monitoring of the different areas of the NUA.

In the discussion that ensued on the AFINUA, Member States expressed concern that great strides had been taken on AFINUA without Member State input and stated it was their expectation that AFINUA be discussed with Member States including at the CPR in line with GC resolution 26/3. The Secretariat emphasized that AFINUA was a non-binding document that acted as a technical advisory document for countries to use as an entry point to tackling the NUA.

The meeting also welcomed new members from Indonesia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Brazil (Chair of the CPR).

2. Report of the Second meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work on Best Practices including the Dubai International Awards. 5 March 2018

The 2018 second meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Programme of Work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), was held on 5 March 2018 and discussed the Best Practices including the Dubai International Awards

The meeting highlighted the history and current context of work on best practices and policies; 11th Round of the Dubai International Award; the Strengths, opportunities and challenges in advancing UN-Habitat's work on best practices and; policies, Proposed priority areas of work on best practices and policies for 2018-2019

The Secretariat in its briefing to the Subcommittee extended its appreciation to the United Arab Emirates for the long-standing relationship as the host of the Dubai International Awards (DIA). The Best Practices approach was stated as a process of availing cross learning both within the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the Agenda 2030 and in line with GC resolution 26/8 on the New Urban Agenda. It served as a tool for gaining and

sharing practices and guidance to Member States with the objective of improving people's lives in various areas. Best practices were defined as a cross-cutting modality used at all organizational levels with a goal of engaging local governments and partners. The criteria used by the DIA best practices included impact, partnership, sustainability, leadership and community empowerment, gender equality and social inclusion, innovation and transferability.

Members were informed that the Best Practices Database provided key qualitative information for flagship reports including the forthcoming quadrennial report. In order to ensure that Best Practices was sustainable, it was stated that there was progress in the application of advance Big Data and Artificial Intelligence technologies to discover patterns behind planned and consequential outcome from successful sustainable urban development strategies. Nonetheless, some advantages to the Best Practices included its mandate, experience, demand and recognition. The challenges were the need to systematize the management of practices and heavy reliance on the DIA platform among others.

In the follow up discussion, Members emphasized the need for further engagement of underrepresented regional groups in the DIA such as the Eastern European region which are also havens of knowledge and urban expertise attained from rebuilding of cities and towns after conflict. Such countries in transition were also said to suffer the consequence of dying towns which revolved around one major source of income. Member States encouraged the innovative jump to venture into the use of Artificial Intelligence in sharing the practices across regions through the use of participatory models. This jump was seen as supportive as a monitoring tool during the implementation phase of ideas from the best practices. It was noted that language barriers may pose a challenge in engaging with best practices projects that have been recognized and awarded. Members sought to know how national government and local authorities were engaged in the best practice program

The Secretariat responded by stating that there was much to be learned from all regional groups in the north and the south and agreed on the need for further engagement with the Eastern European Group. With regard to the urban expert system, there was an existing prototype and the pilot project was focused on the Latin American region. Upscaling the project would, however, have financial repercussions. The secretariat said it recognized the need to invest in all UN languages in the future but within the pilot phase, the projects would be carried out in a local language befitting the country level.

In addition, the Secretariat emphasized that while the DIA was a key platform for best practices, it was not the only arena for acquiring information. UN-Habitat was looking at other platforms both in the public and private sector to expand the sources for promoting good practices. The Secretariat emphasized that it viewed the Best Practices as a holistic approach that involved all parties from the national government to the local authorities working together where the national government supported with adequate policies and resources and engaged with private sector to support the implementation and monitoring of projects.