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Human Settlements Programme
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Status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions
adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session

Progress in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its first session

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an overview of the status of implementation of four of the five resolutions and the decision adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly) at its first session, held in Nairobi from 27 to 31 May 2019, namely:

(a) Resolution 1/2 on the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements;

(b) Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(c) Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements;

(d) Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements;

(e) Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

II. Resolution 1/2 on United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements

2. At its first session of 2020, held in Nairobi on 29 June 2020, the Executive Board took note of the presentation by the Executive Director on the concept note on the implementation of a review process of the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.2).

3. In view of the scope of the review process for the period 2021–2023 at the global level with country implementation, the process set out in the concept note will require additional resources to support normative work at the global level and country activities. Such resources would include a

* HSP/EB.2020/19.

human resources component and a country activities budget for at least 10 countries engaged in the peer review process. Secured resources for that process currently allow for one staff member until the end of 2020.

4. As part of country activity preparations for the peer review process, draft terms of reference for a country peer review mechanism are being prepared, as set out in the concept note, for consideration at the next meeting of the Executive Board. The draft terms of reference of the review process mechanism will build on similar review mechanisms in the United Nations system, including, for example, the terms of reference of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, while also being adapted to the precedents set by UN-Habitat in similar processes, such as that used in the *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning*. An online survey of Member States will also be undertaken as part of the preparatory process for the peer review exercise.

5. UN-Habitat has also initiated preparations for an expert group meeting to be held in Madrid on 29 and 30 October 2020 to develop safety indicators that will feed into a benchmarking urban safety monitoring framework to support the country activity process. Mexico and South Africa have initiated engagement with UN-Habitat on the review of current municipal policies in pilot cities with a view to extending such policies elsewhere within the country. As part of the efforts to raise awareness at the country level of innovative practices and case studies that contribute to safety indicators, the Global Network on Safer Cities will run a “40 Days Safer Cities Challenge” for the Urban October period of activities, events and discussions on urban sustainability, running from the International Day of Peace on 21 September to World Cities Day on 31 October.

6. A joint programming framework has been developed with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to support the implementation of the *United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements*, and in particular the inter-agency framework proposed in resolution 1/2. UN-Habitat is working on a funding proposal for extrabudgetary support from the United Nations trust fund for human security to support the process.

III. Resolution 1/3 on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

7. The draft capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (HSP/EB.2020/13/Add.1) was finalized and presented to the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters of the Executive Board on 4 March 2020 in preparation for the forthcoming session of the Board.

8. The Capacity Development and Training Unit (CDTU) is currently working on a draft action plan for the implementation of the strategy. The action plan is based on the key strategic objectives set out in the draft strategy and highlights both activities to be delivered against each objective and the means of implementation. The activities will integrate initiatives which have been developed by UN-Habitat and are already under way and providing solutions, while also highlighting other actions, resources and related programmes which will be recommended in the short, medium and long term to deliver the strategy.

9. To develop further strategic partnerships with renowned learning institutions, UN-Habitat is collaborating with organizations such as the United Nations System Staff College to identify and develop training which would benefit Member States, UN-Habitat staff and country representatives. Such partnerships would support progress on the United Nations reform agenda in particular and related mechanisms, such as common country analyses and frameworks of cooperation at the country level, to assist with acceleration towards and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. Under the new structure of UN-Habitat, CDTU is located within the Programme Development Branch. To strengthen the UN-Habitat corporate approach to capacity-building, the unit is collaborating closely with the flagship programme leads to bring coherence to capacity development components and tailor the Programme’s response to the needs expressed at the country and regional levels.

11. In response to changes related to the global crisis engendered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and to support a strengthened and integrated capacity-building approach, CDTU is prioritizing digital capacity-building, focusing on UN-Habitat digital platforms and exploring optimal approaches for the strengthened development of e-learning within the Programme and with its key partners, including universities. In that context, CDTU is currently working on an

internal strategy for the development of digital learning at UN-Habitat, taking stock of existing products and looking at potential solutions for the development of a broad and integrated selection of digital learning products. The strategy forms part of the implementation of the Programme's broader capacity-building strategy and the resulting analysis will highlight potential strategic partnerships and opportunities for programmes which will enhance UN-Habitat capacity-building products and optimize their impact on beneficiaries.

12. In line with those efforts, the UN-Habitat External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division and its Global Solutions Division are working together closely to build a strong "Learning Page", which will be a key feature of the Urban Agenda Platform. On the Learning Page, UN-Habitat will provide access not only to its own products, but will also highlight and recommend major capacity-building initiatives and products from its partners, thus offering an online "one-stop shop" for learning and capacity-building services, focusing particular attention on local government and national government partners and other stakeholders.

13. In addition to the internal consultations undertaken in the second half of 2019 to build the draft capacity-building strategy, an internal survey was launched in early July 2020 to map existing e-learning products and forthcoming digital learning initiatives, with a view to harmonizing and promoting existing work, thus building a strengthened and integrated capacity-building approach through the optimum use of digital technologies.

14. The New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook (the launch of which is planned in October 2020) reflects the work towards a more deliberate, integrated approach to the development and outreach of capacity-building products. Benefiting from an inclusive consultative process and substantive contributions from across the Programme, the Handbook is part of UN-Habitat efforts to accelerate action for the implementation, review and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda and its synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals. Through analyses, case studies, infographics, illustrative actions and an integrated training companion, the New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook aims to strengthen the capacity of urban stakeholders at the national and regional levels, including in United Nations country and regional offices. Once published, it will be featured on the Urban Agenda Platform to facilitate broader dissemination. In a related activity, CDTU is currently piloting the in-house production of an online "crash course" on the New Urban Agenda, which will pave the way for the production of new types of digital learning products.

15. During June, July and August 2020, the sixth season of the Global Urban Lectures was launched, featuring 10 professional lecturers from a variety of regions. The season, produced in collaboration with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, had a particular focus on climate change, and featured lectures on digital innovation for cities, spatial justice, gated community development, public space and urban density.

16. The 2020 UN-Habitat Catalogue of Services provides a basis for a focused corporate narrative on and approach to capacity-building, with a view to strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new ones. The catalogue provides an overview of the Programme's expertise and services, and includes a dedicated section on capacity-building services and tools for local government, national government and other stakeholders. All services and tools are tagged for their capacity-building dimension, further underscoring the cross-cutting function of capacity-building. The further development of prioritized digital learning tools to supplement the services and tools from the catalogue will enhance urban capacity development initiatives by Member States.

17. Consultations will be undertaken following the approval of the capacity-building strategy by Member States. Those consultations with Member States will aim to capture specific needs for support and opportunities for the mobilization of human and financial resources to develop and implement capacity-building programmes.

18. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the requirement for capacity development to be delivered innovatively, utilizing digital e-learning approaches. The need to redevelop existing tools and services and to develop new ones has placed increased pressure on UN-Habitat to deliver on the capacity development expectations of Member States, other partners and from within the Programme.

IV. Resolution 1/4 on achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements

19. In keeping with the requirement under resolution 1/4 to mainstream gender equality and set up policies for mainstreaming, continuous project reviews were undertaken through project review committees to ensure that gender and other social inclusion considerations were addressed in all UN-Habitat projects and programmes using relevant markers. Between January and August 2020, 34 project documents and 11 concept notes were reviewed, leading to notable improvements in social inclusion matters.

20. At the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Abu Dhabi from 8 to 13 February 2020, two major events focused on gender equality and the empowerment of women. They were held in collaboration with several new partners, including mayors, other local authority leaders and civil society representatives. Members of the UN-Habitat Advisory Group on Gender Issues also participated in the events and reviewed the progress of gender mainstreaming within the Programme.

21. In May 2020, a series of expert group meetings was organised on inclusive cities, with a particular focus on human rights, persons with disabilities, and gender equality and the empowerment of women. The meetings were held in partnership with the Geneva Human Rights Platform and brought together a variety of experts in the sector to define the gaps and solutions that could guide future UN-Habitat programming. The “Inclusive Cities” series will be finalized with an expert group meeting on older persons, in partnership with the UN-Habitat Madrid office, in October 2020.

22. The review and update of the UN-Habitat Policy and Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Urban Development and Human Settlements 2014–2019 (GPP), together with the Gender Equality Action Plan 2014–2019, is progressing well, with a first draft currently under discussion. The revised GPP will guide UN-Habitat engagement on gender issues in line with the new strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 and will ensure that all its activities reflect and advance the global consensus on inclusion, non-discrimination and equality.

23. The evaluation of work in UN-Habitat on gender equality and the empowerment of women during the period 2014–2019 has been commissioned and should be completed by September 2020.

24. On 26 June 2020, the Nairobi Hub of the International Gender Champions leadership network was launched. The network brings together female and male decision makers who are determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence. The Executive Director of UN-Habitat is a board member of the network.

V. Resolution 1/5 on enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements

25. Work on urban-rural linkages has gained momentum in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exposed not only the importance, but also the fragility of the urban-rural connection. A highly successful webinar series focusing on COVID-19 in the context of urban-rural linkages served as a platform to share response and recovery measures initiated by various local and national governments and other stakeholders. UN-Habitat has also developed a position paper linking the COVID-19 context with the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development.

26. UN-Habitat is strengthening its partnerships on urban-rural linkage through the development of joint workplans with other organizations, including United Cities and Local Governments, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Market Cities Initiative, Groots Kenya and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In collaboration with partners, UN-Habitat is contributing to the Urban-Rural Assembly, an urban-rural linkages event to be held in Berlin and Apolda, Germany, and online on 23 and 24 September 2020 with the Technical University of Berlin. UN-Habitat is also preparing for the Sustainable and Resilient Urban-Rural Partnerships Conference, to be held in Leipzig, Germany, from 25 to 27 November 2020, by co-organizing three sessions on urban-rural linkages work.

27. As part of the implementation of United Nations Development Account projects, on 3 September 2020 UN-Habitat will organize a virtual regional workshop for four project areas – Cameroon; Guinea; the State of Niger, Nigeria; and Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania. Other interested partners will also attend the workshop, which aims to track the progress of the projects and identify alternative ways to advance project activities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of Niger, Nigeria, and Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, have both successfully conducted workshops on urban-rural linkage tools, while Cameroon is planning a national workshop in August 2020 on urban-rural linkages to establish national committees and conduct training on urban-rural linkage tools, although its virtual training course on urban-rural linkages is still under development.

VI. Decision 1/3 on arrangements for the transition towards the new governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

28. At the resumed first session of the Executive Board, held on 19 and 20 November 2019, the Board decided, in its decision 2019/3, to establish an ad hoc working group on the development of a draft stakeholder engagement policy. At the Executive Board meeting on 29 June 2020, the Chair of the Board presented an update on the work of the ad hoc working group. The working group had met on 11 March 2020, when Member States were briefed by the secretariat on the status of the draft stakeholder engagement policy as at 7 May 2019 and on the draft UN-Habitat procedure for accreditation of non-governmental organizations as at 8 May 2019. At that meeting, the working group determined the matters relating to the draft stakeholder engagement policy and accreditation procedure to be as follows:

- (a) The need to prioritize whether the draft stakeholder engagement policy or the draft accreditation procedure should be produced first;
- (b) The contentious issue under the accreditation procedure that governs what happens if a Member State objects to the application by a non-governmental organization for accreditation and whether the decision to exclude a non-governmental organization belongs to the Committee of Member States or the Member State that raises the objection;
- (c) The ambiguity in the process for approval of accreditation, namely at what stage an organization can be informed of the approval of accreditation: once the secretariat has established that the organization meets the accreditation criteria or after review by Member States of the secretariat's recommended list on a "no objection" basis.

29. Given the nature of the matters under discussion by the group, it was noted that they would require face-to-face negotiations, which were not yet feasible owing to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there was no further progress to report.

30. However, at the meeting of the newly elected Executive Bureau of the Executive Board held on 10 August 2020, it was noted that a new Chair and Co-Chair would be sought at the end of the term of service of the previous Chair, and that the Bureau would further discuss the possibility of continuing the work of the working group in view of the ongoing situation with regard to COVID-19.