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Executive Board of the United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme  
Second session of 2021

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat,  
including reporting on the programmatic activities of the  
Programme in 2021 and the implementation of  
subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical  
cooperation activities, and an update on the response of  
the Programme to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)  
pandemic**

**Terms of reference for the Mechanism for the Review of the  
Implementation of the United Nations System-wide Guidelines  
on Safer Cities and Human Settlements**

**Report of the Executive Director**

**I. Introduction**

1. Pursuant to paragraph 32 of the United Nations System-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, which states that the implementation of the Guidelines will require a review mechanism to assess progress and propose amendments to the Guidelines, where necessary, to ensure effective implementation; and in line with resolution HSP/HA.1/Res.2 on the Guidelines, adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its first session, which directed the Executive Director, taking into account the Guidelines, to provide the Executive Board with a concept note, including financial costing, on the implementation of a review process for the Guidelines in a manner that would enable Member States to share their experiences and best practices, the Executive Board hereby establishes the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations System-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements (hereinafter “the Mechanism”).

2. The Mechanism includes a review process that will be guided by the principles contained in sections II and III of the present document and will be carried out in accordance with the provisions contained in section IV. The Mechanism will be supported by a secretariat as set out in sections V and VI and financed in accordance with section VII.

**II. Guiding principles and characteristics of the Mechanism**

3. The Mechanism shall:

- (a) Be transparent, efficient, non-intrusive, inclusive and impartial;
- (b) Not produce any form of ranking;
- (c) Provide opportunities to share good practices and challenges;

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\* HSP/EB.2021/12.

- (d) Assist Member States in the effective implementation of the Guidelines;
  - (e) Take into account a balanced geographical approach;
  - (f) Promote universal adherence to the Guidelines;
  - (g) Identify, at the earliest stage possible, difficulties encountered in efforts by Member States to implement the Guidelines;
  - (h) Be of a technical nature and promote constructive collaboration and international cooperation among cities and countries;
  - (i) Complement existing relevant international regional and international review mechanisms in order that UN-Habitat may, as appropriate, cooperate with those mechanisms and avoid duplication of effort.
4. The Mechanism shall be an intergovernmental process.
5. In conformity with paragraph 32 of the Guidelines, the Mechanism shall assess progress and propose amendments to the Guidelines where necessary to ensure effective implementation.
6. The Mechanism shall promote the implementation of the Guidelines by Member States, as well as cooperation among Member States with partners in the Global Network on Safer Cities.
7. The Mechanism shall provide opportunities to exchange views, ideas and good practices on safer cities, thus contributing to strengthening cooperation among Member States in preventing urban crime and violence and promoting the enhancement of urban safety.
8. The Mechanism shall take into account the levels of development of Member States and the diversity of judicial, legal, political, economic and social systems and differences in legal traditions.
9. The review of implementation of the Guidelines is an ongoing and gradual process. Consequently, the Mechanism shall endeavour to adopt a progressive and comprehensive approach.

### **III. Relationship of the Mechanism with the Executive Board of UN-Habitat**

10. The implementation of resolutions of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, including resolution HSP/HA.1/Res.2 on the Guidelines, is fully vested in the Executive Board. Consequently, the Mechanism shall be under the authority of the Executive Board, in accordance with the mandate of the Board to regularly assess progress in UN-Habitat's work programme.

### **IV. Review process**

#### **A. Goals**

11. Consistent with the Guidelines, in particular paragraph 32, the purpose of the review process shall be to assist Member States in the implementation of the Guidelines at the national level. In that regard, the review process shall include the following:
- (a) Promoting the purposes of the Guidelines as set out in part 1 thereof;
  - (b) Providing the Executive Board with information on the measures taken by Member States in implementing the Guidelines and the difficulties encountered by them in doing so;
  - (c) Helping Member States to identify and substantiate specific needs for technical assistance, and promoting and facilitating the provision of technical assistance to them;
  - (d) Promoting and facilitating international cooperation in the prevention of urban crime and violence and the enhancement of urban safety;
  - (e) Providing the Executive Board with information on the successes of, good practices by and challenges for Member States in implementing and using the Guidelines and the opportunities for Member States in doing so;
  - (f) Promoting and facilitating the exchange of information, good practices and experiences gained in the implementation of the Guidelines.

## **B. Country review**

12. The Mechanism shall be applicable to Member States on a voluntary basis.
13. In the initial review cycle, the number of Member States participating in the review process should be, but shall not be limited to, between 10 and 15 countries, endeavouring to achieve a balance between the regional groups to the extent possible.
14. Each participating Member State shall provide to the secretariat a national peer review proposal, using the standard UN-Habitat proposal template that will form the basis for follow-up on the national state of implementation of the Guidelines and using a comprehensive self-assessment checklist as an initial step for that purpose. Participating Member States shall provide complete, up-to-date, accurate and timely responses.
15. Assistance in the preparation of the responses to the checklist shall be provided by the secretariat to any Member State requesting such assistance.
16. Each Member State shall appoint a focal point to coordinate its participation in the review. Member States shall endeavour to appoint as a focal point a person or persons with substantive expertise on the implementation of the Guidelines.

## **C. Implementation Review Group**

17. The Implementation Review Group shall be an ad hoc, open-ended intergovernmental group of participating Member States. It shall operate under the authority of and report to the Executive Board.
18. The Implementation Review Group shall hold expert meetings at least once a year in Nairobi or online.
19. The functions of the Implementation Review Group shall be to take an overview of the review process at the national level to identify challenges and good practices and to consider technical assistance requirements to ensure the effective implementation of the Guidelines.
20. The secretariat shall prepare a template thematic implementation report which shall serve as the basis for the analytical work of the Implementation Review Group.
21. On the basis of its deliberations, the Implementation Review Group shall submit recommendations and conclusions to the Executive Board for its consideration and approval in the review of the implementation of the Guidelines.

## **D. Executive Board**

22. The Executive Board shall be responsible for approving the present terms of reference and associated priorities related to the review process.
23. The Executive Board shall consider the recommendations and conclusions of the Implementation Review Group.
24. The Executive Board shall review and approve the cycle of the review process, as defined in the approved concept note on the implementation of the Guidelines, and the scope and details of the review. The review phase shall be finalized when the implementation of all parts of the Guidelines in all participating Member States has been completed. In line with the concept note, the Executive Board shall determine the duration of each review cycle and decide on the number of Member States to participate in each cycle, taking into account the need for regional diversity and voluntary contributions for in-country technical support.
25. The Executive Board shall endorse any future amendments to the terms of reference of the Mechanism. Following the completion of each review cycle, the Executive Board shall assess the performance of the Mechanism and its terms of reference.

## **V. Secretariat**

26. UN-Habitat Safer Cities Programme shall act as the secretariat of the Mechanism and shall perform all tasks required for the efficient functioning of the Mechanism, including providing technical and substantive support, upon request, to participating Member States in the course of the functioning of the Mechanism.

## **VI. Languages**

27. Subject to the provisions of the present section, the working languages of the Mechanism shall be Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
28. The national review process may be conducted in any of the working languages of the Mechanism. The secretariat shall be responsible for providing the required translation and interpretation into any of the working languages of the Mechanism, as necessary for its efficient functioning.
29. The secretariat shall, if requested by a participating Member State, endeavour to seek voluntary contributions to provide for translation and interpretation into languages other than the six working languages of the Mechanism.
30. The executive summaries of the national review reports and the thematic implementation report shall, as documents of the UN-Habitat Assembly and the Executive Board, be published in the six working languages of the Mechanism.

## **VII. Funding**

31. The requirements of the Mechanism and its secretariat in providing activities and technical support to Member States shall be funded from voluntary contributions from participating Member States.
32. The requirements of hosting two intergovernmental expert group meetings within a review cycle between sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly, as stipulated in the concept note on the implementation of the Guidelines, shall be funded through voluntary contributions, which shall be free of conditions and influence.
33. The secretariat shall be responsible for preparing a proposed biennial budget for the activities of the Mechanism.
34. The Executive Board shall consider the budget for the Mechanism biennially. The budget shall ensure the efficient, continued and impartial functioning of the Mechanism.
35. Adequate financial and human resources must be provided to the secretariat to enable it to perform the functions assigned to it in the present terms of reference.

## **VIII. Participation**

36. A Member State may participate in the Mechanism and in the national review process on a voluntary basis. The costs associated with such participation shall be paid from voluntary contributions made available for that purpose.

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