



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

**Address to the Second Committee: 67th Session of the General
Assembly of the United Nations**

Agenda Item 21

**Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations
Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and
strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

By

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New York – 1st November 2012

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am delighted and honoured to appear before you today in my capacity as the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

You have before you two reports by the Secretary-General. The first report, A/67/263, is entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme”, prepared pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 66/207.

The second report, E/2012/65, is on the “Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda”. This was presented to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2012 and transmitted to this Committee pursuant to ECOSOC resolution E/RES/2012/27.

In this introductory statement, I would like to start by highlighting the recommendations on Habitat III contained in the Secretary-General’s Report. I will then update you on UN-Habitat’s progress in its governance review and organizational reform processes. Finally, I will very briefly highlight UN-Habitat’s progress in its substantive work since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 66/207.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

The preparatory process for Habitat III will place significant demands on Member States, UN-Habitat, and the UN system as a whole. As you may know already, in late August this year, the Secretary-General designated me as the Secretary-General for Habitat III. I am confident that I can count on the support of all Member States and UN agencies in this exciting but demanding journey towards Habitat III.

As emphasized in the Secretary-General’s Report, it is important for the preparatory process to be inclusive of all relevant stakeholders, especially local authorities and other Habitat Agenda Partners. In deciding on the scope, modalities, format and organization of Habitat III, the Committee might want to take into account a number of recommendations presented in the Secretary-General’s Report.

It is recommended that Habitat III be organized at the highest possible level, which would include the participation of Heads of State and Government. The Conference could therefore be called the “World Summit on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)”. It is further proposed that the theme of the Conference be “Sustainable Urban Development: The Future of Urbanization”.

On the basis of lessons learnt from Habitat II, and also from other recent international UN conferences, it will be important for the Preparatory Committee of Habitat III to be open to all Member States of the United Nations. It is expected that observers, Habitat Agenda partners, including local authorities, and all agencies of the United Nations system will participate at all stages of the preparatory process.

We believe Habitat III should focus on the identification of accomplishments, new challenges, opportunities and areas where further efforts are needed through the implementation of a new urban agenda for the twenty-first century.

The Conference should result in renewed political commitment and support for sustainable urban development and housing. We believe its outcome should be a focused political document with clear, measurable and time-bound goals and targets, which should themselves be aligned to the sustainable development goals based on the outcome document of Rio + 20 and also aligned to the post-2015 UN development agenda.

It is proposed that, in addition to organising its own meetings, the Preparatory Committee be responsible for organizing regional and sub-regional preparatory meetings as well. In this context, it is recommended that the Preparatory Committee hold an organizational meeting and three substantive sessions.

It is recommended that the organizational meeting of the Preparatory Committee be held in 2013. In addition to electing its Bureau, the Preparatory Committee could at this meeting also consider progress in preparatory activities at all levels. It could further decide the conference's sub-themes, and the specific modalities of its future sessions.

The first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee could be held in 2014, before and possibly back-to-back with the 7th session of the World Urban Forum, or in New York, provided this minimises the expenses of both Member States and the UN Secretariat. It is recommended that, at this first session, the Preparatory Committee undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and other international commitments and goals relevant to the sustainable development of urban and other human settlements. The session could also identify key elements for inclusion in the draft outcome document of the Conference.

The second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee could be held in 2015, before and possibly back-to-back with the 25th session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, or in New York. It is recommended that, at this session, the Preparatory Committee start negotiating on the text of a draft outcome document containing a proposed new Urban Agenda for the Twenty-first Century, among other things.

Following the example of Rio + 20, it is recommended that the third and final substantive session of the Preparatory Committee be held in 2016 immediately prior to the Habitat III Conference, and at the same venue as the Conference itself. At this third session, the Committee could finalise a draft outcome document for consideration and adoption by the Habitat III Conference.

The Secretariat believes that the Conference's outcome document should reinvigorate, at the highest political level, global commitment to sustainable urban development through the accelerated implementation of a new 'Urban Agenda for the Twenty-first Century'. It should also reinvigorate commitment to a higher level of partnership and international solidarity.

The Secretary-General's Report before you also recommends that a Trust Fund for the Habitat III Conference be established, and urges international and bilateral donors and other countries to financially support the preparatory process and the participation of representatives of developing countries.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

Permit me to turn now to the progress achieved by UN-Habitat in its governance review and organizational reform processes.

As you may recall, UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 23/13 adopted in April 2011 requested the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the Secretariat of UN-Habitat to continue engaging in their joint governance review process in order to further examine the options for reform and develop a preferred option; seek consensus on the identified option; and develop an action plan and present it to the General Assembly at its 67th Session.

Subsequent to this resolution, a joint CPR-Secretariat Open Ended Consultative Group on Governance Review was established in December 2011 to oversee Phase III of the governance review process.

During the first quarter of 2012, four Task Force Teams were set up to analyze each of the four governance challenges identified by the Consultative Group. The Task Teams completed their work and submitted their findings and proposals to the CPR in March 2012.

Following this, the Consultative Group carried out a comparative analysis with governance models of six other Programmes and Agencies in the UN family. All six organizations were invited to make presentations.

Following the presentations, the Consultative Group recruited a consultant to assist in the completion of Phase III of the governance review process. A team, including the consultant, visited New York in mid-October this year to collect further information on the governance models of other UN agencies.

The comparative analysis of governance models and preparation of an action plan on how to move ahead with the agreed governance model is expected to be completed by the end of December 2012. It is envisaged that the Governing Council of UN-Habitat will consider the proposals on governance reform at its twenty-fourth session in April 2013, after which the proposals will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

UN-Habitat has made significant progress with the organizational reform, which was formally launched in February 2011. Consultations with staff as well as UNON and other pertinent stakeholders have taken place throughout the process. We have established a UN-Habitat Staff-Management Consultative Committee as a forum for addressing reform specific issues. Close coordination with the Department of Management was also established and has continued up to now.

The new programme and organizational structure of UN-Habitat consists of seven thematic

areas and corresponding Branches. Each Branch has 3 to 4 units. A new Management Office has been established, with a strong management mandate.

A new Project Office has also been created. Its role is to coordinate normative and operational field work, lead the identification and formulation of new projects, and coordinate monitoring of project implementation.

The Regional Offices have been strengthened and a new Regional Office for the Arab States, located in Cairo, has been created. The revitalized functions of the regional offices include preparation of regional strategies, contribution to project identification and formulation, and identification of regional resources and funding opportunities. They will continue implementing operational projects at the regional, country and local levels.

The Office of External Relations will continue to exist, but located outside the Office of the Executive Director. It will be responsible for advocacy, outreach and communication, as well as collaboration with partners and inter-agency affairs.

The Management Office, Project Office, External Relations and thematic Branches are now all fully functional. The seven thematic or substantive areas will also become the Focus Areas in the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019, a draft of which was endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives in August this year, pending approval by the Governing Council in April 2013.

The seven thematic areas will also become the Subprogrammes in the Work Programme and Budget, thus ensuring complete alignment between the six-year strategic plan, the two-year strategic framework, the two-year Work Programme and Budget, and the organizational structure of the agency. This will simplify accounting and reporting, and enhance accountability and transparency.

As you will recall, the strategic framework for 2014-2015, which is based on this new structure of the Human Settlements Programme, was endorsed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination earlier this year in June.

UN-Habitat's work will continue to be guided by the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan 2008-2013 (MTSIP) until the end of 2013, after which the new Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 will take effect.

An interim version of the UN-Habitat Project Accrual and Accountability System (PAAS) is now functional and has significantly improved decision making in all key management areas, including finance, human resources, project formulation and implementation, as well as project monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

The organizational reform process will culminate in the issuance of a new Secretary-General's Bulletin (ST/SGB) on the organization of UN-Habitat, which is almost ready for submission to the Department of Management.

Unfortunately, the financial situation of UN-Habitat has continued to be affected negatively by the extended downturn in the global economic climate. However, effective cost control measures have continued and the situation is firmly under control. The total income received during the first eight months of 2012 amounted to US\$103 million. Of this amount, US\$10.7 million was the Regular Budget allotment, US\$6.6 million was for the Foundation

general purpose, and US\$85.7 million was for Foundation and Technical Cooperation earmarked project activities. This total income was 45 per cent below the level of resources received during the first eight months of 2011. However, it is still projected that the general purpose income for 2012 will reach US\$11.6 million by the end of the year.

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During the reporting period, UN-Habitat continued to make good progress with the implementation of all six focus areas of the MTSIP 2008-2013. A self-assessment carried out at the end of June 2012 showed that out of the total of 19 expected accomplishments of the MTSIP, 10 had a delivery rate of more than 75 per cent; 7 had a delivery rate of between 50 and 75 per cent; and only 2 had a delivery rate of below 25 per cent.

The progress we have made is fully described in the report before you, and, in the interest of time, I will not go into the details now. However, I would like to make a few remarks on the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 6), which was held in Naples, Italy, from 1 to 7 September this year.

In this connection, UN-Habitat is grateful to the Italian Government, the City of Naples and the Region of Campania, for hosting the Forum successfully. UN-Habitat's gratitude also goes to the European Commission and the Governments of France, Norway and the United States of America for their financial contributions towards increasing the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and vulnerable groups.

A total of 440 different meetings were held during the Forum, almost one hundred more than in the previous session. Overall attendance at the Forum was 8,209 people from a record high of 151 countries.

The Sixth Session of the Forum was highly inclusive, with 39 of the 48 LDCs, or 80 per cent of them, being represented by 500 participants.

The exhibition was visited by over 25,000 people, who viewed more than 80 displays from all corners of the globe, within an area of more than 7,000 square meters.

The percentage of media attending WUF 6 was also the highest ever, with nearly five per cent of the participants being from the media. Social media was for the first time fully integrated in all WUF communications. Through Facebook, for instance, we reached almost 80,000 people during the WUF 6 week, and we recorded a total of 1,820 new followers on Twitter.

Also, for the first time, WUF sessions were on live stream, allowing people from around the world to follow the discussions, thus significantly increasing the total audience. We were also able to create an on-line TV channel, on which you can still watch the recorded sessions of WUF 6.

I am pleased to let you know that the City of Medellin, Colombia, has offered to host the Seventh Session of the World Urban Forum in 2014, and UN-Habitat is very grateful for this.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

In concluding my introductory statement, I strongly urge this Committee to expedite discussion and adoption of a resolution on the scope, modalities, format and organization of Habitat III to enable the preparatory process for the Conference to start soon.

I also urge all Member States to initiate inclusive processes of country level preparations for Habitat III, including through National Habitat Committees or National Urban Forums.

In addition, I urge Member States to support the establishment of a Trust Fund for Habitat III, and to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund. On my part as Secretary-General of Habitat III, I will endeavour to play my role in making the preparatory process as innovative as possible, building on lessons from recent experiences.

I thank you for your kind attention.