I. Strategic Analysis

A. Introduction

The Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), through its resolution 23/11 adopted at its twenty third session, requested “… the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to develop a strategic plan for 2014–2019, … taking into account the recommendations of the peer review and other reviews of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008–2013, for presentation to and approval by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session.”

B. Mandate of UN-Habitat

The mandate of UN-Habitat derives from the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. The goals of the Agenda are, firstly, adequate shelter for all, and, secondly, sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world.

The mandate of the programme is also derived from resolution 3327 (XXIX), by which the General Assembly established the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation; resolution 32/162, by which the General Assembly established the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat); and resolution 56/206, by which the General Assembly elevated the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

UN-Habitat’s mandate is further derived from other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), in particular the target on achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020, which has now been met; paragraph 77 (k) of the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, by which Heads of State and Government committed themselves to continue working towards cities without slums, beyond current targets, by reducing slum populations and improving the lives of slum-dwellers; and the target on water and sanitation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which seeks to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

1 UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution 23/11, 15 April, 2011.
C. Urban Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

While some elements of this strategic plan represent continuity from the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008-2013, others respond to emerging urban demographic, environmental, economic, spatial and social trends, as well as challenges and opportunities related to these trends.

Table 1 summarizes the main urban trends, challenges and opportunities that are shaping twenty-first century cities and that UN-Habitat must respond to through its strategic plan for 2014-2019.

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<tr>
<th>Table 1: Factors shaping 21st century cities and to which UN-Habitat’s should respond</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Demographic factors</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dominance of cities: more than 50% of world population now urban and expected to rise to 60% by 2030</td>
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<td>• Rapid urbanization in developing countries: 90% of world urban population growth between now and 2030 will be in developing countries, mostly Africa and Asia</td>
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<td>• Most urban growth will be in towns of between 100,000 and 250,000 people</td>
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<td>• Ageing of urban population in developed and transition countries</td>
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<td>• Decline of urban population (‘shrinking cities’) in developed and transition countries</td>
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<td>• Dominance of youth in urban population of developing countries</td>
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<td><strong>2. Environmental factors</strong></td>
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<td>• Climate change: cities contribute up to 70% of greenhouse gas emissions, mostly because of the concentration in them of industrial production and construction activities</td>
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<td>• Rising impacts of climate change and natural disasters (of increasing intensity) on cities: a fourfold increase in natural disasters since 1975, with cities and their inhabitants becoming more vulnerable to the effects of climate change</td>
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<td>• Affordable fossil fuel (oil) at stable prices during much of the twentieth century (up to the 1970s) encouraged car use and, alongside other socio-economic factors, urban sprawl</td>
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<td>• Poor access to clean water, sanitation and waste management in developing countries</td>
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<td><strong>3. Economic factors</strong></td>
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<td>• A relatively weakened global economy since beginning of financial crisis in 2008</td>
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<td>• But many developing countries are witnessing high economic growth (over 7%) since 2010, thus improving the ability of those countries to attract investment in adequate urban basic services and housing for the poor</td>
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<td>• Increasing unemployment all over the world (6.2% or 205 million people unemployed in 2010)</td>
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<td>• Youth unemployment is 2 to 3 times higher than adult unemployment globally</td>
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<td>• Increasing economic dominance of cities, which account for 70% of world GDP (55 per cent in low-income countries, 73% in middle-income countries, and 85% in high-income economies)</td>
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<td>• Energy price volatility and increasing demand for petroleum, posing challenges for</td>
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national and urban economies, especially in developing countries

- The informal economy has expanded in both developing and developed countries

4. Spatial factors

- Most urban dwellers (62%) live in small and medium-size urban settlements of less than 1 million people
- Rapid urbanization in developing countries has resulted in uncontrolled peri-urbanization, most of it informal and in the context of weak urban planning systems
- Rapid urbanization and urban sprawl have led to the emergence of large metropolitan regions in many parts of the world, for which an adequate governance model is required
- Urban densities are generally declining in developed countries, mainly as a result of affordable fossil fuel use and car dependency, as well as preference for suburban socio-economic lifestyles, often with negative impacts on urban-rural environments and disadvantaging those without both private vehicles and access to public transport
- Urban planning and design in both developed and developing countries has followed the modernistic model, producing sprawling cities that are resource (especially energy) inefficient, segregated, less inclusive, and economically less competitive

5. Social factors

- Urban poverty is increasing globally (urbanization of poverty) and inequality is rising
- In developing countries, urban poverty and inequality are manifested in slums, accommodating close to 1 billion people and where levels of vulnerability are increasing, especially among women and children
- Social exclusion, residential segregation and persistent pockets of poverty are now common in many developed countries
- Increasing urban crime rates in many parts of the world, which might be, amongst other factors, a manifestation of social inequalities that need to be dealt with through policies of inclusion
- Increasing numbers of refugees (11-12 million in 2011) and internally displaced persons (26 million in 2008) globally

D. Lessons from the MTSIP 2008-2013

Several reviews and evaluations, including the Peer Review of the implementation of the MTSIP 2008-2013 and six-monthly progress reports, have highlighted a number of problems regarding the formulation and implementation of the MTSIP 2008-2013. Some of these have a strong bearing on the present strategic plan for 2014-2019.

(a) Gender, youth and partnerships were not properly reflected in all focus areas as cross-cutting issues when the MTSIP was formulated. Gender was addressed only later, in 2009, during the elaboration of the results framework. The issue of partnerships was located in one of the focus areas rather than being reflected across all focus areas.
(b) The MTSIP 2008-2013 was developed separately from the biennial Work Programme and Budget. Its focus areas were different from the subprogrammes of the Work Programme and Budget. Although the two documents were progressively aligned, an impression that UN-Habitat was implementing two separate documents was initially created, with the MTSIP being sometimes seen as a burdensome add-on.

(c) Because of the initial lack of alignment between the MTSIP and the Work Programme and Budget, reporting was initially complex. The MTSIP started with a set of focus area objectives and indicators of achievement different from the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement in the Work Programme and Budget. The MTSIP results framework, developed later in 2009 rather than at the very beginning, came up with a different set of focus area strategic results, expected accomplishments, sub-expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. By that time, both the 2008-2009 and 2010-2011 Work Programme and Budget documents had already been approved.

(d) Some of the MTSIP’s expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement formulated in 2009 were not SMART\(^2\) enough. In particular, those on “Effective advocacy, monitoring and partnerships” (Focus Area 1), and a few in the areas of “Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services” (Focus Area 4) and “Strengthened human settlements finance systems” (Focus Area 5), were not realistic enough. A number of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement in focus areas 2 and 3, i.e. “Promoting participatory planning, management and governance” and “Promotion of pro-poor land and housing”, respectively, were not specific enough.

(e) A main challenge for UN-Habitat is and will be the need to document social and economic changes. This is also where the learning potential lies. UN-Habitat needs to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation work in a systematic manner that takes into account the guidance of the CPR and GC resolutions.

E. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In a participatory exercise led by the Executive Director, division directors carried out an analysis of UN-Habitat’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). The results of this analysis, and of the deliberations of the CPR Open-ended Contact Group on the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019, have informed this strategic plan by highlighting areas that could be built upon and those in need of management attention.

**Strengths**

\(^2\) SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.
The SWOT analysis identified a number of areas in which UN-Habitat has expertise and relative strength. These are:

- Very good progress in field operations in post-conflict and post-disaster countries, encompassing land conflict mediation, reconstruction of housing and infrastructure, and rehabilitation of local government, and mainstreaming in the UN’s humanitarian work of the continuum from relief to sustainable recovery in urban areas;
- Innovative water and sanitation approaches, including leveraging of funding from regional development banks;
- World Urban Forum, which is now the world’s premier periodic conference on urban issues;
- Global advocacy on urban issues and the Millennium Development Goals target on slums, with the latter having started with the publication, by UN-Habitat, of the first ever global assessment of slums and statistics on slum dwellers in 2003;
- Flagship publications, the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and *State of the World’s Cities*, some of whose issues have been award-winning;
- Regional ministerial platforms, i.e., the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) and the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities on Housing and Urbanization in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI);
- Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), whose services have been strongly supported by donors and welcomed by a number of countries and cities; and
- Global advancement of the issues of urban safety and security, forced evictions and alternatives, inclusive urban policies, and mainstreaming of gender and youth.

**Weaknesses**

The SWOT analysis revealed that UN-Habitat needed to address the following main weaknesses:

- Improve effectiveness of management systems, including accountability and transparency, and minimize bureaucratic load;
- Improve core productivity at headquarters and delivery efficiency in the initial phases of field projects, especially in emergencies;
- Systematically harvest core knowledge and lessons learnt, internally and externally;
- Improve internal strategic planning in order to enhance policy and programme implementation coherence;
- Improve external communication and image of UN-Habitat, including the ability of UN-Habitat to tell its success stories more effectively;
• Address the problems of small and overlapping organizational units and further address the agency’s silo mentality, so as to sustain and advance the progress achieved in this area through implementation of the MTSIP 2008-2013;
• Make better use of existing human resources and minimize use of external consultants;
• Improve funding predictability and resource mobilization;
• Pay more attention to urban planning and design, urban legislation, local economic development and municipal and urban finance, which are the key levers of progress toward sustainable urban development, and encourage national governments and local authorities to do the same; and
• Improve effectiveness at the country level, where most donor funding has shifted.
• Improve the current lengthy and burdensome procurement and recruitment procedures that pose challenges to UN-Habitat activities, especially with respect to the post-disaster/conflict reconstruction area.

Opportunities

Most of the opportunities identified through the SWOT analysis relate to the main global factors that are currently shaping cities and towns. These include:
• Increasing global importance of the urban agenda, in light of the fact that, since 2008, the majority of humanity is now urban;
• Recognition of the leading role of cities in national economic growth and globalization;
• Rapid economic growth in some developing countries, which improves the ability of those countries to attract investment in adequate urban basic services and housing for the poor;
• Global movement to revive urban planning, which began at the third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, 2006, and has been dubbed “reinventing urban planning”;
• Increasing demand for assistance in planning for small and medium-sized urban settlements of less than one million people in developing countries, which currently accommodate most of the world’s urban population and will absorb most of the predicted urban growth in the next few decades, but are institutionally weak;
• Increasing global importance of cities in addressing climate change and energy efficiency, including in the areas of mobility and transport, space heating and cooling of residential and commercial buildings, construction, industrial activities and waste, in light of their potential to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to innovatively adapt to climate change;
• Increasing recognition of UN-Habitat’s role in the UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Cluster
Working Groups, through which it provides inputs and support to an urban focus on relief, recovery and reconstruction;

- Normative and operational mandate of UN-Habitat, which enables it to conceive innovative solutions and test them in the field, but also provide technical assistance to scaled-up country programmes and projects;
- Importance of slum prevention and upgrading, as well as of drinking water and sanitation, in the Millennium Development Goals; and
- New Executive Director, offering an opportunity to review both the substantive work and management of UN-Habitat;
- The ‘Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)’, to be held in 2016, and the on-going governance review process, through which both the mandate of UN-Habitat and the rules and regulations hindering its operations will be reviewed.

Threats

The main threats facing UN-Habitat are mostly from the external environment. These include the following:

- Declining donor contributions to non-earmarked income of UN-Habitat in recent years, partly due to the current global financial crisis;
- Possible divergence between UN-Habitat’s official work programme and donor interests, reflected in increasing ear-marked income from donors;
- Rising interest in the urban agenda among other multilateral agencies, which, in one sense, is a positive development reflecting a global increase in the importance of the urban agenda, but, in another sense, could mark the beginning of unnecessary duplication and turf conflicts among international agencies, if not handled properly; and
- Inability of UN-Habitat to fully respond in a timely manner to increasing demand for its services at the national and local levels if the current lengthy recruitment and procurement processes are not improved.

F. Guiding Principles of the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019

In light of the current mandate of UN-Habitat, the global urban challenges and opportunities, the lessons learnt from the MTSIP 2008-2013, and the results of the SWOT analysis presented above, this strategic plan is guided by the following basic principles:

- The plan reflects the official mandates of UN-Habitat, i.e. the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, and key General Assembly and Governing Council resolutions;
- While the plan reflects some continuity from the MTSIP 2008-2013, in terms of focus areas and implementation approaches, it also responds to emerging urban
trends, challenges and opportunities, as elaborated in the Executive Director’s policy statement at the twenty-third session of the Governing Council;

- Gender, youth, partnerships, outreach and communication, capacity development, climate change and best practices are systematically reflected in all substantive focus areas as cross-cutting issues;
- The strategic plan’s focus areas are also the subprogrammes in the biennial strategic framework and work programme and budget, thus ensuring complete alignment among the three documents;
- The strategic plan contains a results framework, prepared at the very beginning, thus ensuring that reporting on the six-year strategic plan and the biennial work programme and budget are unified into a single process;
- The strategic plan is an outcome of both top-down and bottom-up preparation processes, i.e., combining the Executive Director’s new vision and strategic direction, on one hand, with focus areas, a results framework and other components of the plan elaborated through a participatory process, on the other hand;
- The strategic plan will be implemented in line with the urgent need for closer cooperation and coordination with other UN agencies and with a view to avoiding overlapping and duplicating programmes and activities.

II. Strategic Choice

UN-Habitat works with partners to address the main challenges and opportunities affecting the sustainable development of cities and other human settlements, among them rapid urban demographic growth in developing countries, increasing spatial extension of cities, and increasing responsibility of urban local authorities to take local action on both local needs and global challenges. UN-Habitat’s work, which is both normative and operational, seeks to assist local, regional and national authorities responsible for urban and human settlements issues to improve the standard of living of their citizens through improved urban development, planning, management, governance and basic service delivery policies that are in conformity with the guiding principles of sustainable urban development and subsidiarity.

A. Vision

UN-Habitat promotes the stronger commitment of national and local governments as well as other relevant stakeholders to work towards the realization of a world with

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3‘Guiding principles of sustainable urban development’ refer to the basic actions necessary for achieving socio-spatial equity, environmental safety and economic productivity in urban areas – see UN-Habitat (2009), Planning Sustainable Cities: Global Report on Human Settlements 2009, Earthscan, London, Table 1, p.4, for a summary of these principles.
economically productive, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable cities and other human settlements.

B. Mission

UN-Habitat, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and other United Nations entities, supports governments and local authorities, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of urbanization by providing normative or policy advice and technical assistance on transforming cities and other human settlements into inclusive centres of vibrant economic growth, social progress and environmental safety.

C. Goal

Well-planned, well-governed and efficient cities and other human settlements with adequate infrastructure and universal access to employment, land and basic services, including housing, water, sanitation, energy and transport.

D. Strategic Result

Environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, gender-sensitive, and inclusive urban development policies implemented by national, regional and local authorities have improved the standard of living of the urban poor and enhanced their participation in the socio-economic life of the city.

E. Focus Areas, their Strategic Results and Scope

In light of the factors shaping twenty-first century cities, and of UN-Habitat’s current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats presented above, three programme areas will be prioritized during 2014 to 2019, namely: (i) Urban Legislation, Land and Governance; (ii) Urban Planning and Design; and (iii) Urban Economy. Work in these focus areas will enable UN-Habitat to respond to the challenges and opportunities shaping twenty-first century cities in a more holistic way. They may be seen as the levers for the transformation of cities towards greater environmental, economic and social sustainability, yet UN-Habitat has in the past not paid sufficient attention to them. UN-Habitat will also undertake strategically chosen efforts in four other important areas, building on its past success: (iv) Urban Basic Services; (v) Housing and Slum Upgrading; (vi) Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation; and (vii) Research and Capacity Development. A number of cross-cutting issues relevant to all seven focus areas will be prioritized, including outreach and communication, gender, youth, partnerships, capacity development, climate change and best practices.
In all seven focus areas, UN-Habitat will focus its work on clearly defined strategic issues and actions that have a potential for triggering or catalyzing change at the urban level. Its main emphasis will be to assist city, regional and national authorities responsible for urban issues to carry out their governance, planning, management and service delivery responsibilities more effectively. This will be achieved through the implementation of clearly defined projects that combine both normative and operational work. As part of this, UN-Habitat’s catalogue of model projects (developed at the end of 2011) will be continually updated during the life of the present strategic plan. In addition, UN-Habitat’s organizational structure will be fully aligned to its seven focus areas and a project-based management approach will be pursued, thus ensuring greater effectiveness in strategic plan implementation.

Focus Area 1: Urban Legislation, Land and Governance

**Strategic Result:** City, regional and national authorities have established systems for improved access to land, adopted enabling legislation, and put in place effective decentralized governance that fosters equitable sustainable urban development, including urban safety.

Many developing countries lack effective urban land development mechanisms, legislative frameworks and governance institutions and systems. Without these, there can be no effective urban planning, economic growth and development. In addition, urban legislation in many developing countries is out-dated and is not responsive to current urban issues, and laws affecting urban development either conflict or overlap with each other or, worse still, are not enforceable. Besides, in many developing and developed countries, existing urban governance models are inappropriate for urban centres that have grown beyond their boundaries and coalesced into large metropolitan regions.

To address these deficiencies, UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, provide policy and operational support to governments and cities with respect to urban land, legislation and governance. Building on the experience of the Global Land Tool Network, and in partnership with local government organizations, UN-Habitat will address existing urban land problems and opportunities, utilizing a wide range of tools, including land readjustment. Inadequacies in legislation and institutions (regulatory frameworks) affecting urban development will be addressed, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, including regulatory frameworks for urban land development, urban planning, urban management and governance, and local economic investment. UN-Habitat will also support the development of adequate legislation and governance models for inter-municipal cooperation, as a contribution to sustainable urban development at the regional scale. In addition, it will promote the international guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services for all, as well as social inclusion and participation. Through this, it will
enhance the capacity of local authorities to fund, develop and maintain infrastructure and urban basic services, as well as to improve urban safety.

**Focus Area 2: Urban Planning and Design**

**Strategic Result:** City, regional and national authorities have implemented policies, plans and designs through a participatory process including all different actors, such as civil society and poor people, for more compact, better integrated and connected cities that foster equitable sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

Many cities are currently facing serious challenges of ineffective development control systems, informal and often chaotic peri-urban expansion, proliferation of informal housing and livelihood activities, poor connectivity, traffic congestion and energy inefficiency, among others. Cities are increasingly facing environmental challenges, including how to curb rising greenhouse gas emissions and the increasing impacts of anthropogenic climate change.

To address these challenges, UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, provide city and national governments with a set of tested approaches, guidelines, and tools to support the management of growth and improved sustainability, efficiency and equity of cities through planning and design at different scales, i.e. the slum and neighbourhood, city, regional, national and supra-national scales. This will be achieved through: (a) Improved policies and legislation regarding urban planning and sustainability, based on the principle of subsidiarity; (b) Increased capacities of institutions and stakeholders to undertake and effectively implement, in participatory and inclusive ways, urban planning processes at the most appropriate and adequate scale; and (c) New urban planning and design initiatives in selected cities.

The focus area will contribute towards urban planning and design reform in order to make it a more effective tool for governments and local authorities to achieve sustainable urban development. The overall approach will focus on the creation of a spatial structure in cities and larger territories to facilitate sustainable urbanization. Special attention will be paid to promoting, within the context of decentralization and multi-level governance, a number of critical principles, such as optimizing the population and economic density of urban settlements, where appropriate, mixed land-use, diversity and better connectivity in order to take advantage of agglomeration economies and to minimize mobility demand. In particular, the new approach will emphasize the need to plan in advance of urban population growth; the need to plan at the scale of the challenges; the need to plan in phases; and the need to plan for job creation, while respecting locally and regionally defined urban planning and design traditions.

**Focus Area 3: Urban Economy**
**Strategic Result:** City, regional and national authorities have adopted or implemented improved urban strategies and policies supportive of local economic development, inclusive economic participation, creation of decent jobs and livelihoods, and enhanced municipal finance.

An immense challenge facing cities all over the world today is how to create decent jobs and livelihoods for their people, including the increasing numbers of urban youth. Interest in cities is increasing around the world, in part, because more people are living in cities than ever before and, in part, because recent trends towards fiscal decentralization and globalization have highlighted the importance of cities as economic agents. In order to address these issues, UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, promote urban strategies and policies that strengthen the capacity of cities to act as engines of economic development and to enhance their contribution to value creation and the building of wealth and assets. It will, in particular, contribute towards the formulation and implementation of effective urban strategies and policies supportive of local economic development, creation of decent urban jobs, especially for the youth, and enhanced municipal finance. Special emphasis will be placed on some of the key conditions necessary for increasing productive investment, including in green infrastructure and urban basic services, and for the generation of decent jobs and livelihoods. Attention will also be paid to local investment incentives and regulatory frameworks. It is envisaged that the creation of decent urban jobs and livelihoods will contribute to reducing social inequalities, and also to improving urban safety through its social impact.

**Focus Area 4: Urban Basic Services**

**Strategic Result:** City, regional and national authorities have implemented policies for increasing equitable access to urban basic services and improving the standard of living of the urban poor.

Despite efforts being made by many governments and local authorities to provide urban basic services, the numbers of people in urban areas without proper access to the basic services of water supply and sanitation as well as safe domestic energy and public transport is increasing, partly as a result of rapid urban population growth and partly as a result of increasing urban poverty and growing financial resource constraints. The problem is complicated by dilapidated infrastructure, weak governance and overlapping responsibilities between different levels of government, lack of clearly defined urban development policies and legislation, weak institutional capacity, inadequate resources available at the local level, low investments and lack of pro-poor financing mechanisms. In order to address these challenges, UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, place emphasis on strengthening policies and institutional frameworks for expanding access to urban basic services, specifically targeted at the urban poor. Policy and technical assistance will be provided to partner countries and local authorities to: (i) rehabilitate and expand urban infrastructure and services to keep pace
with growing demand and to address climate change and risk prevention concerns, including both mitigation and adaptation; (ii) ensure institutional efficiency and effectiveness in service provision, in order to foster cross-sectoral planning at different territorial levels, facilitate partnership among various stakeholders and improve articulation between different administrative levels and partners, including for resource mobilization, and through promotion of the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services; and (iii) provide adequate levels of service for the urban poor. The focus area will have four programmatic clusters: (a) water and sanitation; (b) urban waste management; (c) urban mobility; and (d) urban energy.

Focus Area 5: Housing and Slum Upgrading

Strategic Result: City, regional and national authorities have implemented policies for increasing access to adequate housing and improving the standard of living in existing slums.

Close to one billion urban dwellers in developing countries currently live in slums, partly due to the ineffectiveness of land and housing policies and poverty, among other factors. In responding to this huge challenge, UN-Habitat advocates a twin-track approach that focuses on improving the supply and affordability of new housing through the supply of serviced land and housing opportunities at scale, which can curb the growth of new slums, alongside implementing citywide and national slum upgrading programmes that can improve housing conditions and quality of life in existing slums. By widening housing choices and enabling the provision of housing opportunities at appropriate scale, affordable price, with sufficient diversity of size, price, and typology, and at suitable locations vis-à-vis access to employment and income generation, housing will directly impact the future of cities and its ecological and economic footprint. Enabling the housing sector to work is thus critical, if not a sine-qua-non condition, to prevent the multiplication of slum and promote sustainable urban development. Better housing and slum upgrading will contribute to reducing social inequalities and also improving urban safety through their social and spatial impacts. UN-Habitat will provide technical assistance to city, regional and national authorities to design and implement programmes to increase the supply of affordable housing and to prevent the formation of new slums, as a viable alternative to informality, and to upgrade existing slums through a citywide slum upgrading approach. In this work, UN-Habitat will promote the active participation of residents and their grassroots organizations in the formulation, prioritization, implementation and post-implementation phases of both formal housing development and slum upgrading. It will also promote energy efficiency and renewable energy use in the urban housing sector.

Focus Area 6: Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation
Strategic Result: Cities have increased their resilience to the impacts of natural and human-made crises, in an equitable manner, and undertaken rehabilitation in ways that advance sustainable urban development.

Many developing country cities are unable to retrofit their infrastructure as part of preparedness and risk reduction programmes. It is often only through reconstruction and recovery programming (after a crisis) that opportunities arise to ‘plan out’ vulnerabilities and ‘build in resilience’. To address this challenge, UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, draw upon agency-wide expertise to engage in both reducing urban risk and responding to urban crises through its ‘Resilient Cities’ Programme’ and ‘Settlements Recovery Programme’, respectively, in partnership with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the ‘Making Resilient Cities Campaign’. The focus area will address crisis affected cities in terms of both disaster prevention and disaster response. The ‘Resilient Cities Programme’ will be implemented wherever possible before disasters occur, and will be a critical driver for ‘building back better’ in post-disaster interventions. The ‘Settlements Recovery Programme’ will operate in the early days following crisis and is intended to add value to the humanitarian community and, together with national and local stakeholders, will seek the earliest possible means to reduce the period of crisis and introduce elements of sustainable recovery and sustainability. There will be five key entry points for urban risk reduction and post-crisis reconstruction: shelter and housing; basic infrastructure and services; land use and tenure; climate change and urban environment; and economic recovery and livelihoods.

Focus Area 7: Research and Capacity Development

Strategic Result: Knowledge of sustainable urbanization issues disseminated and capacity enhanced at international, national and local levels in order to improve formulation and implementation of evidence based policies and programmes and to improve public awareness of the benefits of and conditions necessary for sustainable urbanization.

While the role of cities and local authorities is becoming increasingly important in the global sustainable development debate, awareness of and the importance attached to urban challenges and opportunities remain low in many developing countries. As a result, not many governments integrate specific urban issues in their national development plans. UN-Habitat will, through this focus area, address these concerns at the global and country levels (both national and sub-national). At the global level, UN-Habitat will monitor the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals and, in general, the Habitat Agenda, as part of its assigned responsibilities in the United Nations system. The flagship publications, i.e. the Global Report on Human Settlements and the State of the World’s Cities, will be the means by which UN-Habitat reports the results of its global monitoring and assessment work to Governments and Habitat Agenda Partners. Also at the global level, UN-Habitat will publish official statistics
through the ‘Urban Indicators Programme’. Using its neutral convening role, and through the Habitat Partner University Initiative and other means such as the World Urban Forum, the focus area will drive the global urban research agenda in a coordinated manner. The country and local level services of the focus area will include supporting the production of local urban knowledge and the establishment of urban platforms, i.e. local urban observatories, to collect and analyze data and indicators. This will include the capacity development of the local platforms themselves. Information and knowledge on best practices and lessons learned in terms of policies, programmes, and institutional arrangements that are fit-for-purpose for different urban contexts and urban services delivery systems will also be collected, as part of an agency-wide cross-cutting activity. Also at the country level, the focus area will be UN-Habitat’s hub of expertise in developing institutional and individual capacities to ensure that the delivery of evidence-based policies and programmes benefit urban stakeholders.

Cross-cutting Issues

The following cross-cutting issues will be prioritized: (i) outreach and communication; (ii) gender; (iii) youth; (iv) partnerships; (v) capacity development; (vi) climate change; and (vii) best practices.

Among the most important mechanisms for outreach and communication will be the World Urban Campaign, the World Urban Forum, and flagship publications. Outreach and communication work will seek to raise global awareness of the urban agenda (including current urbanization challenges, solutions and opportunities) among national governments, local authorities and other partners, as well as among the public.

Work on cross-cutting issues will follow a two-track approach consisting of mainstreaming and issue-specific projects. Mainstreaming will seek to ensure that cross-cutting issues are integrated in the work of all focus areas, both conceptually and in all operational projects. Issue-specific projects will seek to fill identified gaps in the field and will be located in the most appropriate focus area.

F. Results Framework: Focus Area Results and Indicators of Achievement


III. Strategy Implementation [To be developed between March and early June, 2012]