



Twenty-fourth session

Nairobi, 15–19 April 2013

Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements
Programme, including coordination matters**

Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Addendum

**Coordinated implementation of the guidelines on access to basic
services for all and the guidelines on decentralization and
strengthening of local authorities**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report has been prepared to provide a brief overview of activities undertaken to support the coordinated implementation of the two sets of guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services for all, as requested by the Governing Council in its resolution 23/12.

After the background and introduction in section I, section II of the report highlights the activities that have been carried out by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to support interested countries to adapt the two sets of guidelines to their national context. The strengthening of the human and financial capacities of UN-Habitat is introduced in section III. Section IV presents the partnerships with local authorities and their international associations and section V introduces the rationale for developing a new set of international guidelines on urban and territorial planning as a complement to the existing guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services for all. Finally, section VI presents the conclusions and recommendations of the report, including for the preparation of a new set of guidelines on urban and territorial planning.

* HSP/GC/24/1.

I. Background and introduction

1. This report has been prepared in response to resolution 23/12, adopted by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat on 15 April 2011, in which it requested the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to report to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session on the progress made in the coordinated implementation of the two sets of guidelines and of resolution 23/12.
2. In resolution 22/8, the Governing Council approved the guidelines on access to basic services for all and acknowledged their coherence and complementarity with the international guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities adopted in resolution 21/3 of 20 April 2007. In resolution 22/8, the Governing Council also requested UN-Habitat to develop training instruments and assist interested Governments to adapt the guidelines to their national contexts. In resolution 23/12, the Governing Council called upon UN-Habitat to (a) lay special emphasis in all its programmes related to decentralization and access to basic services on enhancing national and regional-level exchanges on the implementation of the two sets of guidelines, (b) to develop enhanced partnerships with local authorities and their national associations for the implementation of the guidelines and exchange of best practices and (c) to strengthen the human and financial capacities dedicated to facilitating the development and testing of multisectoral and multi-stakeholder instruments for operationalizing the two sets of guidelines.

II. Implementation of the guidelines

3. At the global level, a manual to guide the adaptation/implementation process at national level was prepared through an extensive consultation process. The manual highlights the rationale for, and the consequences of, a coordinated adaptation of the two sets of guidelines, recalls the main principles included in the guidelines and finally recommends a methodological approach for conducting the process. A revised version of the manual was approved at the second meeting of the UN-Habitat international partners held on 4 September 2012 in Naples in conjunction with the sixth session of the World Urban Forum. The revised manual emphasizes the importance of reviewing and improving national frameworks on urban and territorial planning and multi-level coordination of services.
4. At the regional level, the theme of the fourth session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), held in Nairobi in 2012, was “Territorial planning and access to basic services for all”, with a sub-theme on the implications of climate change. A questionnaire inspired by the guidelines was completed by 13 countries. It was agreed that the cooperation between AMCHUD and the African Ministerial Conference on Decentralization should be fostered. The Bureau of AMCHUD also agreed to implement the two sets of international guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services for all in the run-up to the fourth session of the Conference and beyond. In Asia, a presentation of the implementation strategy for the guidelines was made in Vientiane at the subregional meeting on urban governance and in a dedicated side event of the Asia-Pacific Urban Forum in Bangkok in June 2011. Based on the Lao People’s Democratic Republic model and depending on funding opportunities, the Water and Sanitation Section II initiative in the Mekong region could be a good vehicle to support the adaptation process in participating countries, as it complements ongoing activities by offering a broader policy framework. In Latin America and the Caribbean, following the Ibero-American Conference on Decentralization and the Empowerment of Local Authorities held in Quito in 2008 and with the financial support of the Government of Spain, a series of projects was developed for the period from 2008 to 2013, with the aim of supporting ongoing decentralization processes, focusing on the impact on sustainable urbanization and the delivery of basic local public services, with a special focus on urban planning. Specifically and under the leadership of the Ibero-American General Secretariat, the series of projects entitled “Identification of best practices, policies and enabling legislation in the local delivery of basic urban services -phases I and II” (2010-2013) supported the creation of a permanent ministerial group in charge of local government at the Ibero-American level with the aim of including the importance of the empowerment of local governments for better basic services delivery and sustainable urban planning in the political agenda and disseminating the guidelines as reference documents for the discussions. The second meeting of the group took place in Madrid on 18 October 2012 in the framework of the Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments with the participation of representatives of Ecuador, Panama, Uruguay and Spain.
5. At the national level, the multi-donor support programme approved by the international partners of UN-Habitat, led by France, in Paris in October 2010 was successful in mobilizing resources for the adaptation process in 13 pilot countries with a package of 50,000 euros per country. As of today, resources have been mobilized by France for Benin, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Senegal and Togo. The third phase of the agreement between the

European Commission/African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States (EC/ACP) and UN-Habitat on the participatory slum upgrading programme also allows for support to be provided to six countries which have completed the second phase of the programme. Veolia Environnement has committed resources for one country yet to be determined. A review of the ongoing process was presented by UN-Habitat and pilot countries at the second meeting of the international partners held on 4 September 2012 in Naples.

6. In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Security held extensive consultations with the national Association of Local Authorities and other stakeholders and led the preparation of the national guidelines with an action plan to implement it through policy reforms, capacity-building and resource mobilization strategies. In Senegal, the adaptation process was conducted under the leadership of the Ministry of Territorial Development and Local Authorities, with the full involvement of the associations of local authorities and other stakeholders, and the action plan for the implementation of the guidelines is expected to feed into the third step of the decentralization process launched by the Government. ENDA Tiers Monde supported the processes in Burkina Faso and Senegal. In both countries where the adaptation process of the guidelines has been completed, improving multi-level territorial planning and governance was identified as an important issue for addressing the interrelated nature of basic services but, despite the amendment made to the manual for guiding the adaptation process, the guidelines are not sufficiently explicit on this subject for developing clear recommendations for the improvement of the urban and territorial multi-level planning system. In both countries an extended policy and operational review with clear recommendations was made to improve the institutional and operational framework for decentralization and to develop the capacities of local authorities to lead and manage the development of basic services.

7. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport initiated national and regional dialogues to review the situation and identify appropriate elements of the international guidelines with a view to drafting national guidelines and a related action plan. In Comoros, the Ministry for Territorial Management, Infrastructure, Urban Planning and Housing has launched the adaptation process and sees it as an opportunity to further operationalize the early steps of the decentralization process with the support of the French Institut de la Gestion Délégée. Under the "quadrilogue" label, Togo has developed a national and local framework to foster territorial dialogues among concerned stakeholders for the delivery of basic services and, with the support of the Institute, is using the adaptation process of the guidelines to improve the related regulatory framework in the context of ongoing political decentralization. The process will be conducted in Benin in 2013 under the leadership of the Ministry for Decentralization, Local Governance and Territorial Management and Administration.

8. For countries to be financed through the EC/ACP agreement with UN-Habitat on the participatory slum upgrading programme, Malawi has already initiated activities for the adaptation process, while Cape Verde and Uganda have confirmed their interest in implementing the initiative in 2013. Support is available for three additional ACP countries yet to be identified among those countries which have completed the second phase of the programme.

9. The dissemination of the content of the guidelines has been part of most of the activities developed under the framework of the regional projects on decentralization and best practices in Latin America financed by the Government of Spain. These activities, initiated in 2009, took place in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Ecuador in 2011 and in Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico in 2012.

III. Strengthening of the human and financial capacities of UN-Habitat

10. Following the recently concluded organizational reforms at UN-Habitat, which resulted in the conversion of the Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch into an Urban Basic Services Branch, the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund is being expanded into an Urban Basic Services Trust Fund to secure and pool funding from multiple donors and in turn support the implementation of sustainable urban basic services. By including elements of urban mobility, energy and waste management alongside water and sanitation, the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund will enable an integrated focus on urban basic services and ensure a balanced portfolio of activities in urban mobility and energy alongside water, sanitation and urban waste management. Under subprogramme 4 (urban basic services) of the 2014-2015 biennial work programme, UN-Habitat has integrated the international guidelines on access to basic services for all into its programme of work and is currently supporting

over 200 local authorities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to adopt and implement the guidelines.

11. In addition, the reforms have led to the creation of a specific unit for local government and decentralization within the Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Branch. This unit began engaging new partners to support the implementation of the guidelines on decentralization through a special session at the sixth session of the World Urban Forum in 2012. In addition, through the creation of the new unit and branch, the guidelines are increasingly being used to inform initiatives in the area of land (through the land and Global Land Tool Network unit) and are also being more closely integrated with the emerging work of UN-Habitat in the area of urban legislation. Under subprogramme 1 (urban legislation, land and governance) of the 2014-2015 work programme, support for the adaptation of the guidelines has been integrated into the programme of work and envisaged activities.

IV. Partnership with local authorities and their international associations

12. The national associations of local authorities were fully involved in the adaptation process of the international guidelines in Burkina Faso and Senegal. While the ministries responsible for decentralization conducted the consultative process and produced the adapted guidelines and action plan, the associations of local authorities received a separate grant to facilitate their participation in the process and provide inputs on local situations regarding effective decentralization and the role of local authorities in the provision of basic services. Furthermore, a partnership was developed with the global network of cities and local and regional governments, United Cities and Local Governments, to support the participation of national associations of local authorities in national adaptation processes and take stock of the results of the implementation of the international guidelines, in order to inform the African regional chapter of the third report of the Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralization on the role of local authorities in the delivery of services. UN-Habitat also participated in the meetings of the multi-partner steering committee established to guide the preparation process of the third Global Observatory report due to be issued for the fourth United Cities and Local Governments world congress in October 2013 in Rabat.

13. In Latin America, collaboration has been established with all national associations of municipalities in countries where dissemination activities have been developed (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and Mexico). This process received the support of the Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations of Local Governments and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces as key partners to guarantee technical and political support. In association with these partners, UN-Habitat also supported the Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments that took place in Madrid from 18 to 20 October 2012, where the guidelines were used as a reference document for the discussions of the Forum. Additionally, and following the partnership established with United Cities and Local Governments, the results obtained from activities in relation to the process of decentralization in the Latin America and Caribbean region are serving as a contribution to the Latin-American chapter of the third Global Observatory report.

V. Rationale for developing a new set of international guidelines on urban planning

14. The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements of 2006 has led to a new charter for urban planning based on the following principles: (a) promote sustainable development; (b) achieve integrated planning; (c) integrate plans with budgets; (d) plan with partners and stakeholders; (e) meet the subsidiarity principle; (f) promote market responsiveness; (g) ensure access to land; (h) develop appropriate planning tools; (i) be pro-poor and inclusive; and (j) recognize cultural diversity. The Global Report on Human Settlements (2009), *Planning Sustainable Cities*, further identified new practical approaches to urban planning and design with the following common characteristics: strategic, flexible, action-oriented and stakeholder-driven. However, these innovations often tend to exist outside institutional planning systems and such new methodologies must be better integrated within legal urban frameworks.

15. Additionally, the social, economic and ecological challenges of the current process of urbanization call for renewed global efforts to provide city, regional and national governments with a set of tested approaches, guidelines and tools to support the management of growth and improved equity and efficiency of cities and regions through planning at different scales.

16. At a contact group meeting organized by UN-Habitat on 5 September 2012 in Naples in conjunction with the sixth session of the World Urban Forum, more than 60 representatives of national and local governments, associations of local authorities, United Nations agencies, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and universities discussed the possible objectives, rationale, approach, format and preparatory process for a new set of guidelines on urban and territorial planning. The participants welcomed the idea of preparing a new set of international guidelines to complement existing guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services, stressing the importance of launching the process under UN-Habitat leadership in close consultation with all stakeholders and committing to support the initiative.

17. The general objective of a new set of international guidelines on urban and territorial planning would be to recommend a set of national, regional and city policies for more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities and territories fostering sustainable urban development and resilient to climate change. The international guidelines would aim to: (a) capture universal principles from national and local practices to support a diversity of tools and approaches adapted to different contexts and scales; (b) develop a universally applicable reference framework for national urban policy guidelines; (c) complement the existing guidelines on decentralization and strengthening local authorities and on access to basic services for all with articulated cross-sector and multi-level approaches; (d) raise urban and territorial planning issues in the priority agenda of central and local governments; (e) build capacities at global, national and local levels; and finally (f) assume a catalytic role for reinforcing existing partnerships and establishing new strategic ones within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations, educational establishments, scientific institutions and financial institutions that have the mandate, resources, capacities and expertise to work under the umbrella of the international guidelines.

18. The preparatory process will be important in order to build consensus and the political will of Governments and various stakeholders for future implementation of the guidelines at national and local levels through adequate adaptation processes. The future guidelines should build on the new vision for the urban development agenda approved by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. The Governing Council would be the appropriate forum to give the mandate to UN-Habitat to elaborate the United Nations guidelines on urban and territorial planning, approve the principles to be followed for the preparatory process and validate the guidelines.

19. The process should be as inclusive as possible and mobilize strong expertise from member States, with an appropriate regional balance, and from representatives of all categories of stakeholders, including associations of local governments and regions, as well as professional associations which will be invited to play a key role. The meetings which are already part of the UN-Habitat work programme will be part of a set of regional and global meetings where the guidelines will be discussed. Special and formal consultations with relevant United Nations bodies will also be organized. Finally, the preparatory process should be closely coordinated with the preparation of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization (Habitat III).

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

20. The coordinated adaptation of the two sets of guidelines to national contexts is an important instrument for :

(a) Effective decentralization and multi-level governance instruments for each sector policy related to basic services through an assessment of gaps between national situation and the guidelines;

(b) Initiating the review of articulated cross-sector instruments related to multi-level urban and territorial planning, financing systems for local projects, territorial governance, technical support to local authorities and monitoring/evaluation and control systems;

(c) Specific policies and instruments for territories with lower access to basic services than the average national situation, specifically peri-urban extensions, slums and isolated rural communities.

21. The formulation process and the initial results of the implementation of the two sets of guidelines on decentralization and access to basic services could provide key methodological, political, substantive and operational elements for the development of a new set of international guidelines focusing on urban and territorial planning that would complement the recommendations on decentralization and organizing access to basic services for all.

22. Accordingly, the Governing Council may wish to recommend to all Governments that they continue intensifying efforts for the coordinated implementation of the two sets of guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services for all, including the implementation of multi-sector and multi-stakeholder strategic development planning instruments at different territorial levels, with an emphasis on poor and marginalized settlements; and that they review inter-level administrative frameworks to avoid overlapping mandates and improve financial mechanisms for ensuring access to basic services for all.

23. Furthermore, the Governing Council may request UN-Habitat to further intensify its advocacy, support and monitoring activities for the implementation of the two sets of guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities and on access to basic services for all.

24. One specific area of consideration for future support for implementation will be to focus more extensively on the technical dimensions of multi-level governance. Strengthening the coordination and allocation of resources and capacities across the different levels of governance, from regional authorities to local municipalities and vice versa, is critical to supporting decentralization processes and service delivery. The lower levels of government cannot efficiently provide for local needs without proper and balanced allocation and distribution of funds and capacities. The multi-level governance approach also involves influence coming the other way from local governments, which can provide substantial knowledge to higher levels of government through their proximity to local challenges and feedback. Collaboration between higher and lower levels of governments in both directions becomes vital to avoid knowledge gaps and overlapping. The Governing Council may therefore request UN-Habitat to further intensify its support to the variety of instruments that can support effective multi-level governance coordination in support of decentralization and service delivery, including but not limited to joint power agreements, separate commissions, regional councils or boards, annexation, tax-base sharing, metropolitan governments, redistributive grants and informal cooperative mechanisms.

25. Finally, the Governing Council may wish to request UN-Habitat, within its approved medium-term strategic and institutional plan and in close coordination with national Governments, international associations of local authorities, including United Cities and Local Governments, all relevant United Nations organizations, international financial institutions, development agencies and other international stakeholders, to draft a complementary set of international guidelines on urban and territorial planning, based on the already agreed perspective of urban planning included by member States in the approved strategic plan for 2014-2019, and to present it to the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council.
