



Twenty-fourth session
Nairobi, 15–19 April 2013

Draft report of the Committee of the Whole

Introduction

1. At its 1st plenary meeting, on Monday, 15 April 2013, the Governing Council agreed to establish a committee of the whole to consider agenda items 5, 7 and 8.
2. The Committee of the Whole was chaired by Mr. Abdul Mannan Khan (Bangladesh), one of the three vice-presidents of the Governing Council and, in his absence, Mr. Sergey Trepelkov (Russian Federation), a fellow vice-president.

I. Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including coordination matters (agenda item 5)

3. The Committee took up the agenda item at its 1st meeting, on the afternoon of Monday, 15 April 2013. In organizing its work it agreed to entrust consideration of the draft resolutions set out in document HSP/GC/24/3/Add.1 to the drafting committee that had been established by the Governing Council.
4. It also agreed to take up the issues arising under agenda item 5 in the following order: activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme: report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/24/2); Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on its work during the Intersessional period (HSP/GC/24/3); draft resolutions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (HSP/GC/24/3/Add.1); coordinated implementation of guidelines on access to basic services for all and guidelines on decentralization (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.8); joint progress report of the Executive Directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.4); cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations System, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations System, non-governmental organizations (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.5); global housing strategy to the year 2025 (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.6); report of the Executive Director on the sixth session of the World Urban Forum (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.2); third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3); review of the governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.1); UN-Habitat's commitment to human rights-based approach (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.7).

A. Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

5. Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, presented the report of the Executive Director on the activities of UN-Habitat, which was set out in document HSP/GC/24/2 and seven addendums to that document. She explained that the base document summarized activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in response to the resolutions adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-third session, while the addendums provided more detailed information on activities undertaken in response to specific resolutions. She also highlighted the subjects covered by the addendums and the documents in which they were discussed.
6. The Committee took note of the report.

7. [To be completed]

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

8. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to the document on the coordinated implementation of the guidelines on access to basic services for all and the guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.8). He drew attention to key events at the global, regional and national levels that had been held over the reporting period, at which it had been clearly demonstrated how support for the technical dimensions of multi-level governance had enhanced strategic capacity across different levels of government, both local and national, and had enhanced decentralization processes. He described recent institutional reforms at UN-Habitat, in response to the request to UN-Habitat in resolution 23/12 that it strengthen its related human and financial capacities.

9. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of France expressed strong support for UN-Habitat activities in that area, recalling that her country had financed the implementation of a pilot programme in six countries. She noted with appreciation the coordination work with local authorities conducted by UN-Habitat. In response, the representative of the Secretariat expressed satisfaction at the cooperative relationship with France and all other partners in the framework of the implementation of resolution 22/8, saying that UN-Habitat looked forward to extending that partnership further. Accordingly, he urged member States to support the related resolution, since many countries, in particular the least developed among them, stood to benefit from the process.

10. [To be completed]

C. Report of the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period

11. Mr. Trepelkov drew attention to the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (HSP/GC/24/3), which summarized the Committee's meetings in 2011 and 2012, together with the one meeting that had already taken place in 2013 in preparation for the current session of the Governing Council. He outlined the work of the various working groups established by the bureau of the Committee and noted that the draft resolutions reviewed by the Committee had been presented to the Committee of the Whole at its 1st meeting and transmitted to the drafting committee for its consideration. He thanked the members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for their hard work during the intersessional period and in preparing for the twenty-fourth session.

12. The Committee took note of the report.

13. [To be completed]

D. Cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations

14. The representative of the secretariat, drawing attention to the report on cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.5), observed that such cooperation continued to play a strategic role in UN-Habitat. He drew attention, in particular, to the strengthened cooperation with the World Bank in the development of sustainable funding modalities to support city development and to organizational reforms, including the establishment of the Partners and Inter-Agency Coordination Branch. The Secretariat invited guidance on how UN-Habitat could take advantage of such partnerships to maximize delivery on its commitments.

15. In the ensuing discussion, one representative commended UN-Habitat on its efforts to work in a coordinated fashion with other secretariats, in line with the "Delivering as one" initiative, identifying in particular its exemplary work on gender mainstreaming in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). Urging that it continue those efforts, she encouraged UN-Habitat to extend its cooperation to other areas, such as disaster response, noting that its role as second responder was very helpful in recovery processes.

16. The Committee took note of the report.

17. [To be completed]

E. Joint progress report of the executive directors of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme on activities in the field of the urban environment over the reporting period 2011–2012

18. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to the joint progress report of the executive directors of UN-Habitat and UNEP (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.4), which in particular reviewed progress under the partnership framework for 2008–2013. Highlighting the need to consider the partnership plan for 2014–2019 and, to that end, to identify lessons learned, he said that the Secretariat would appreciate guidance from the Governing Council on how further to strengthen its cooperation with UNEP.

19. In the ensuing discussion, one representative expressed appreciation for the close partnership between the two programmes, observing that their co-location yielded significant benefits, facilitating constructive joint activities along with positive informal interactions. His delegation looked forward to the process of self-evaluation at the end of the current partnership framework and to still broader consultation and partnership between UN-Habitat and UNEP over the coming years, in particular in such areas as efforts to ensure cleaner air in cities, disaster mitigation and joint work by the two organizations to build the resilience of urban communities.

20. The Committee took note of the report.

21. *[To be completed]*

F. Global housing strategy

22. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to the global housing strategy framework document (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.6) and expressed the hope that the outcome of the strategy would reposition the issue of housing within the contemporary global debate on economically viable, environmentally and culturally sustainable and socially inclusive cities and lead to a paradigm shift in thinking and practice relating to housing policy. Conveying gratitude to the Committee of Permanent Representatives for its support on the matter, he urged the Council to endorse the strategy through the adoption of the relevant resolution.

23. In the ensuing discussion, one representative pledged his delegation's support for the strategy, which laid the foundation for a positive new approach to the housing sector, and requested the Secretariat to keep member States duly informed of its implementation.

24. *[To be completed]*

G. Sixth session of the World Urban Forum

25. The representative of the secretariat, drawing attention to the report of the Executive Director on the sixth session of the World Urban Forum (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.2), enumerated highlights of the session. For the first time, the Forum had attracted greater international than local participation, with extensive representation by the least developed countries. There had also been a high level of media interest in the event and social media had been used and integrated into the Forum's communication process: for the first time, the session had been streamed on line. The Secretariat would appreciate guidance from the Governing Council on steps that could be taken to strengthen the Forum as a key platform for advancing the agenda on sustainable urban development.

26. In the ensuing discussion, one representative recalled the request in resolution 23/5 that the outcomes of the Forum should be more distinctly incorporated into the UN-Habitat work programme and UN-Habitat governing body. Both her delegation and the countries of her region felt that a more effective mechanism was needed to ensure that the Forum's conclusions were properly reflected and, to that end, they requested the Secretariat to revisit the request in resolution 23/5 and to ensure a stronger link between the Forum and the governing bodies of UN-Habitat.

27. *[To be completed]*

H. Third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development

28. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on the third United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development (Habitat III) (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3). He said that the report responded to General Assembly resolution 67/216, by which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General of the conference to prepare, using the expertise of the United Nations system, a proposal for consideration by the Governing Council at its

twenty-fourth session on how best to provide inputs and support for the preparatory process of the conference in the most inclusive, efficient, effective and improved manner and to proceed accordingly. He highlighted salient aspects of the report, including the issues set out in part VI for decision by the Governing Council.

29. Another representative of the secretariat drew attention to the relevant resolution submitted to the drafting committee for its consideration and provided an overview of its provisions.

30. In the ensuing discussion one representative commended the work undertaken by UN-Habitat on preparations for Habitat III. He stressed, however, that the preparatory process for the conference had been launched by the General Assembly and the Governing Council should therefore focus on furthering the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolution. Habitat III would be fundamental to revitalizing and possibly redirecting the activities of UN-Habitat, providing a forum for a rigorous discussion on key issues relevant to its mandate. He said that the Governing Council should call on the Executive Director to begin work on preparations for Habitat III with immediate effect and on member States to support the trust fund for Habitat III in a robust manner. He highlighted the intention to limit the cost of the conference to less than the total expenditure for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

31. Another representative said that there was a need for an appropriate mechanism to ensure that Habitat III was financed in an efficient and participatory way. He said that the relevant draft resolution should be closely aligned with General Assembly resolutions 66/207 and 67/216 in order to strengthen the participatory approach and strive for the revision of the Habitat Agenda to bring it in line with the post-2015 development agenda. He called for the preparatory process for the conference to be more participatory and decentralized, enabling the participation of local government, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders.

32. Another representative expressed concern regarding the proposed cost of the preparatory process and what was described as cumbersome bottom-up approach to information gathering.

33. Responding to the comments, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to additional information on Habitat III available on the UN-Habitat website, including a visual roadmap, a comprehensive budget and a roadmap and financial information on the cost of Habitat II for comparison purposes. Among measures aimed at reducing costs, preparatory meetings would be “virtual” or held back-to-back with other relevant intergovernmental meetings. The conference would be significantly less expensive than its predecessor; nevertheless, the secretariat would need to undertake vigorous fundraising and would require the strong support of member States. The secretariat had proposed the convening of a virtual meeting in June 2013 to enable Habitat Agenda partners to discuss and agree upon an assessment methodology for proposed national reporting on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

34. The Committee took note of the report.

35. *[To be completed]*

I. Review of the governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

36. The representative of the secretariat introduced the report of the Executive Director on the review of the governance structure of UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.1). He said that the governance review was intended to respond to the need for a more focused UN-Habitat that was better equipped to respond to the challenges of urbanization and human settlements. In its resolution 23/13, the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director, jointly with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to examine governance reform options, to aim to reach consensus thereon and to develop a related action plan for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, if possible. Accordingly, an open-ended consultative group on the governance review process had been established, terms of reference for the group approved and four task force teams set up to further analyse governance reform options, with particular focus on a managerial and structural analysis and a comparative analysis with other United Nations entities. A consultant’s report highlighted the main options for governance reform.

37. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern that no specific proposal for the reform of the governance structure of UN-Habitat had been elaborated since the beginning of the review process two years earlier. He suggested a number of elements for inclusion in the relevant draft resolution, namely, specific steps to advance the reform and guide the way forward; functions such as regular strategic oversight of UN-Habitat activities and resources in order to attain the overall objective of enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency of

the decision-making processes of UN-Habitat; a leaner, sharper and more efficient structure based on the principle of representativeness, including regional groups and all relevant stakeholders; the convening of annual meetings to ensure continuity of work, which should include participants with the requisite technical expertise, including from capitals; the convening of meetings at the political level to provide high-level policy guidance, with particular emphasis on the UN-Habitat's normative work and including overall policy guidance on its operational activities.

38. Another representative urged member States to continue to support the governance reform process. She expressed the hope that a specific outcome on the issue would be forthcoming at the current session.

39. One representative commended efforts to increase transparency in and reform the governance, efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat; he nevertheless said that those efforts had yielded little progress and he called for strenuous effort to remedy that fact. While favouring the involvement in the governance reform process of a broad range of stakeholders, including representatives of regions and civil society, he expressed caution regarding the convening of annual meetings to that end.

40. A representative of the secretariat said that a document was available on the UN-Habitat website summarizing progress to date in response to the requests of Governments relating to the governance review process.

41. The Committee took note of the report.

42. *[To be completed]*

J. Commitment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to the human-rights based approach to development

43. The representative of the secretariat introduced a report on UN-Habitat's commitment to the human rights-based approach to development (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.7), saying that human rights were central to the mandate and mission of the United Nations as a whole, as reaffirmed on several occasions by the General Assembly. UN-Habitat had long advocated respect for human rights, as reflected in the Habitat Agenda and the global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, among other things.

44. Another representative of the secretariat said that the guidance of member States was required on how to proceed on human rights and whether work on the subject should be included under the draft resolution on the medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

45. The Committee took note of the report.

46. *[To be completed]*

K. Draft resolutions introduced by member States

47. The Committee took up for consideration at its second meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 16 April 2013, and its third meeting, on the morning of Thursday, 18 April, seven draft resolutions that had been submitted by member States after the Committee of Permanent Representatives had concluded its work in preparation for the current session.

1. International guidelines on urban and territorial planning (submitted by France)

48. Introducing the resolution, the representative of France noted that urban planning was a priority in the UN-Habitat strategic plan due to rapidly increasing global urbanization. The resolution sought to give UN-Habitat the mandate to elaborate international guidelines on urban and territorial planning and to present them to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session for consideration. In drafting the guidelines UN-Habitat was to engage in an inclusive consultative process with national Governments, local authorities, relevant United Nations organizations, financial and development partners, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders and to incorporate best practices and lessons learned in various contexts.

49. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee for further consideration.

50. *[To be completed]*

2. Promoting inclusive and sustainable urban planning (submitted by India)

51. Introducing the resolution, the representative of India stated that it was closely linked to the special theme of the current session and could provide useful guidance on tackling unplanned urbanization and the rapid growth in the number of urban poor in developing countries. Current

models of urban planning had been put in place decades earlier and were no longer adequate to meet the needs of the urban poor. The resolution aimed to recognize the urban poor as stakeholders and to include them in sustainable urban planning.

52. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee.

3. Draft resolution on gender equality and women's empowerment to contribute to sustainable urban development (submitted by the United Republic of Tanzania)

53. Introducing the item, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania recalled the request of the Executive Director to establish a gender advisory board to advise the Executive Director on gender issues and promote the empowerment of women. In response, the Advisory Group on Gender Issues was established at the sixth World Urban Forum, in September 2012. The group had already met twice in 2012 and had submitted a 2013 work plan to the Executive Director. Suggesting that gender programmes at UN-Habitat appeared to be slowing, she said that the objective of the resolution was to strengthen UN-Habitat and send a clear signal that it was committed to gender mainstreaming in its policies and programmes. The resolution was co-sponsored by Norway, Spain and South Africa.

54. One representative requested that the drafting committee seek clarification on the budgetary implications of the resolution and the impact it would have on other programmes of UN-Habitat.

55. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee.

4. Youth and sustainable urban development (submitted by Jordan and India)

56. Introducing the resolution, the representative of Jordan said that it was in line with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", which noted the high levels of unemployment and under-employment among young people and called for sustainable development strategies to proactively address youth employment at all levels, and with the five-year strategy of the Secretary-General, which recognized youth as a top priority for the United Nations. The resolution sought, inter alia, to harness the potential and abilities of youth and to promote youth participation in decision-making.

57. One representative drew attention to another resolution on youth that was before the Governing Council and noted that there were some overlapping paragraphs. He called on the drafting committee to compare the two resolutions and ensure that the language was coherent.

58. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee.

5. Making slums history – a worldwide challenge for 2020 (submitted by Morocco)

59. Introducing the resolution, which was co-sponsored by South Africa, the representative of Morocco said that it was in line with the international conference "Making Slums History", which had been held in Rabat, Morocco, in November 2012, to review global progress in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010 and progress with the millennium development goal on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. It sought to clearly define the understanding of slums and invited member States to implement universal principles for slum upgrading, including the prohibition of illegal eviction, empowerment of women and youth and promotion of accountability and transparency in all programmes.

60. One representative called for the inclusion of access to energy, as an important element of security, in the resolution's definition of slum. Another cautioned against expanding a definition already accepted by the United Nations and suggested including the element of access to energy in another part of the resolution.

61. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee.

6. Urbanization and sustainable urban development in the post-2015 agenda (submitted by Germany)

62. Introducing the resolution, the representative of Germany (speaking on behalf of the European Union) said that the resolution brought together references to sustainable urban development in other draft resolutions with the aim of focusing on the relationship between UN-Habitat and sustainable urbanization in the post-2015 development agenda and making the issue more visible. The draft resolution required the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to ensure the organization's involvement in the formulation of the post-2015 agenda, to encourage Governments and partners to consider and contribute to sustainable urbanization, and to report on the implementation of the resolution.

63. The Committee agreed to transmit the resolution to the drafting committee.

64. [To be completed]

7. Strengthening UN-Habitat (submitted by Brazil)

65. At the Committee's fourth meeting its Chair noted that a contact group had been established to consider a draft resolution submitted by Brazil on strengthening UN-Habitat. The Committee agreed that the contact group, upon concluding its work on the draft resolution, should report directly to the Committee of the Whole on the results of that work.

66. [To be completed]

II. Work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 2014–2015 (agenda item 7)

67. The Committee took up the agenda item at its 3rd meeting, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 16 April 2013.

A. Proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2014–2015

68. The Deputy Executive Director introduced the proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2014–2015, as set out in document HSP/GC/24/5. She recalled that by its resolution 23/11 the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director to develop a strategic plan for 2014–2019 and to prepare a work programme and budget for the biennium 2014–2015, ensuring that it was aligned with the strategic plan. The work programme and budget had been prepared in close collaboration with, and endorsed by, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and had been recommended for Governing Council approval by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in New York. The work programme reflected the new organizational structure of UN-Habitat, which aimed to achieve greater efficiency, productivity, accountability and transparency. The resource estimates for the biennium were aligned with the seven strategic priorities highlighted by the UN-Habitat organizational review. In implementing the programme of work, UN-Habitat aimed to ensure that all cross-cutting issues were mainstreamed and would continue to ensure the strategic application of results-based management throughout the project cycle.

69. Regarding the budget, she said that a realistic proposal had been developed to meet the requirements of the work programme while enhancing efficiency and productivity and ensuring that the reduced level of resources available did not impede delivery of the normative and operational programmes of UN-Habitat. The overall budget for the biennium 2014–2015 was \$392.4 million, a reduction of 8 per cent compared to 2012–2013. Of that amount, \$21.1 million was allocated from the United Nations regular budget, approved by the General Assembly; \$168.8 million was funded by the UN-Habitat Foundation (\$45.6 million from the general purpose fund and \$123.2 million from the special purpose fund); and \$202.5 million was from technical cooperation contributions. UN-Habitat continued to review its resource mobilization efforts to achieve sustainable income and more predictable funding and the organization's resource mobilization strategy aimed to enhance contributions to both core and earmarked funds.

70. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the strategic plan and the work programme and budget and praised the efforts to align the work programme with the restructuring of UN-Habitat. The 2014–2015 biennium was of particular significance given the role that UN-Habitat would play in the post-2015 development agenda and in the preparations for Habitat III. With regard to the resources available through the UN-Habitat Foundation, she said that the Executive Director should take measures to broaden the donor base and ensure more balanced contributions from all member States. Finally, she commended the progress that had been made in developing a comprehensive monitoring system and in adopting a results-based management approach.

71. [To be completed]

B. Report on progress in the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for the period 2008–2013

72. The representative of the secretariat introduced the report on progress in the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for the period 2008–2013 (HSP/GC/24/5/Add.1), which had been prepared pursuant to resolution 23/11. The plan, he recalled, had six mutually reinforcing focus areas: advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; participatory urban planning,

management and governance; pro-poor land and housing; environmentally sound and affordable infrastructure and services; strengthening human settlement finance systems; and excellence in management. Achievements in the first four focus areas had been consistently satisfactory, but adverse factors had impeded progress against certain indicators in the fifth and sixth focus areas.

73. In the ensuing discussion, one representative commended the secretariat on the improvements that had been made in implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan during the reporting period, including the introduction of results-based management and improved evaluation and reporting. Another representative said that the reforms had strengthened the strategic thrust of the plan but greater efforts should be made to align budgetary allocations with strategic areas of work. In addition, there was value to be gained, in accordance with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations General Assembly, in ensuring that core and non-core budgetary activities were reconciled with each other and that full cost recovery was implemented. In response the Deputy Executive Director said that progress was being made, through the resource mobilization strategy, in demonstrating how the budget was allocated across thematic areas and regions. Another representative of the secretariat said that UN-Habitat had participated in the session of the High-Level Committee on Management that had considered the quadrennial comprehensive policy review negotiations; UN-Habitat's cost recovery policy was based on current policy within the United Nations system, including with regard to harmonization of cost recovery policies across United Nations agencies, and the principle of full cost recovery, proportionally from core and non-core budgetary sources. The representative who had raised the issue said that it was important that the Committee of Permanent Representatives be fully apprised of the non-core activities being undertaken so that it was aware of the potential impact of funding those activities on the ability of UN-Habitat to undertake its core activities and focus on its core mandate.

74. The Committee took note of the report.

C. Report on the draft strategic plan 2014–2019 of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

75. The representative of the secretariat, introducing the report on the draft strategic plan 2014–2019 (HSP/GC/24/5/Add.2), recalled that by resolution 23/11 the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to develop a strategic plan for 2014–2019, including a road map for preparatory work, for consideration by the Governing Council at the current session. The draft strategic plan comprised three parts: strategic analysis, strategic choice and strategy implementation. Development of the plan had been informed by the new organizational structure of UN-Habitat and an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Four areas would be prioritized during 2014–2019, namely, urban legislation, land and governance, urban planning and design, urban economy, and urban basic services. In addition, four key cross-cutting issues would be mainstreamed: gender, youth, climate change and human rights.

76. The Committee took note of the report.

D. Report on gender equality and empowerment of women in sustainable urban development

77. The representative of the secretariat introduced the report on gender equality and empowerment of women in sustainable urban development (HSP/GC/24/5/Add.3). He recalled that by its resolution 23/1 the Governing Council had encouraged UN-Habitat to incorporate a gender perspective into its work and had requested the Executive Director to undertake a range of actions in support of that objective, including strengthening the Gender Mainstreaming Unit, establishing a mechanism for consulting other gender units within and outside the United Nations system and establishing an advisory group on gender issues. The Gender Coordination and Support Unit, located within the Project Office, had accordingly conducted a gender audit of UN-Habitat; on the basis of that audit a gender equality action plan had been developed to complement the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, the advisory group on gender issues had been set up and had been active in advancing gender issues within UN-Habitat.

78. Several representatives welcomed the progress that had been made in mainstreaming the issue of gender in UN-Habitat. One representative said that women were particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation, especially in urban and peri-urban poor areas, where pollutants, including phosphorus, could prove harmful to their reproductive systems. Another representative said that the tendency to group gender and youth matters together was insufficiently nuanced and that the present focus on vulnerability should give way to a more rights-based, participatory approach.

79. The Committee took note of the report.

80. [*To be completed*]

E. Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

81. The representative of the secretariat introduced the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (HSP/GC/24/5/Add.4). The Advisory Committee had agreed with the conservative approach adopted by UN-Habitat in projecting future income and had encouraged the organization to continue its prudent approach to the management of its resources. The Advisory Committee had recommended approval of the work programme and budget for the biennium 2014–2015 proposed by the Executive Director.

82. The Committee took note of the report.

83. [*To be completed*]

III. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 8)

84. The Committee took up the item at its third meeting, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 16 April 2013. The representative of the secretariat outlined the proposed agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, to be held in 2015, as set out in document HSP/GC/24/6.

85. The Committee endorsed the provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session for consideration and possible adoption by the Governing Council.
