Proposed Working Methods of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

1. The Objective of the Proposed Working methods for the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) contained herein is to strengthen the UN-Habitat engagement with the CPR, including optimizing the secretariat’s coordination between the two in carrying out the tasks entrusted by the Governing Council. The idea of the proposal is a follow-up on a commitment by the Executive Director subsequent to the Governing Council to take measures to continue to enhance the efficiency and accountability of the Organization, and to benefit from greater strategic engagement with the CPR. UN-Habitat’s intention is to work with the CPR to achieve these objectives.

2. The secretariat proposes, inter-alia, that (a) the current “working groups of the CPR” be replaced with “subcommittees of the CPR”; (b) the Agenda for the CPR regular meetings be designed with a view to introducing thematic and country focused presentations (c) the Provisional Agenda for the CPR regular meetings allow for subsequent incorporation of new agenda items by both member states and UN-Habitat. (d) Consideration be given to the establishment of an open ended consultative group, or other appropriate mechanism, to discuss issues of sustainable development.

7. Following its creation, the CPR made recommendations to the Governing Council on the organization of its work and of the working groups albeit within the context of the preparations for future sessions of the Governing Council. Specifically, Governing Council resolution 20/21 of 2005, states that:

   a. The organization of the meetings of Committee of Permanent Representatives working groups should be improved by preparing a schedule of meetings in advance, distributing clear agendas which identify the documents to be discussed under each item and ensuring that all relevant documentation is circulated two weeks in advance in both hard-copy and electronic form.

   b. The agendas of the meetings of the working groups should be short and streamlined.
8. In reality, organization of the CPR working revolves around the following:
   a. Two working groups of the CPR namely, the working group for Monitoring and the working group for Planning. The working group for Monitoring monitors the implementation of the resolutions and other activities required of the CPR by the Governing Council. The working group on Planning devotes its time to reviewing preparations towards the Governing Council, including the Strategic Plan, the Strategic Framework, the work programme and budget and the resolutions.
   b. the preparation in advance of six monthly schedule of meetings;
   c. announcing and submitting documentations one week in advance of the meeting.
   d. preparing informal notes reflecting the meetings as appropriate.

A. Proposal to replace the “Working Groups of the CPR” with “Subcommittees of the CPR”

9. Based upon a preliminary proposal by the secretariat, the 49th session of the CPR had an initial discussion around possible options to strengthen the engagement between the CPR and the secretariat and also recommended further discussions on the matter including through the CPR working group.

10. The proposal is to replace the current working groups with subcommittees of the CPR. There would be two subcommittees (as per the existing working groups). The first subcommittee, to be known as the “CPR subcommittee on budgetary and financial matters”, would:
   a. deal with and advise the CPR on budgetary and financial matters,
   b. engage Member States in meeting the challenges of building a financially secured and operationally effective Organization,
   c. any other matters referred to it by the CPR, including guidance and support from the latter in resource mobilization.
11. The second subcommittee to be known as CPR subcommittee on the status of implementation of Governing Council resolutions and on the preparation for Governing Council, would deal with:

   a. the review and implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2019,

   b. the status of implementation of resolutions emanating from the Governing Council.

   c. Preparations for the Governing Council

   d. any other matters referred to it by the CPR,

12. The two subcommittees would have a standing agenda item during CPR Meetings to report on what was discussed during its meetings. Each subcommittee will be assigned to one Vice-Chair of the CPR Bureau plus an alternate, in the event of unavailability, to lead the discussions within the subcommittee. That same person will be reporting on the subcommittees work to the CPR during its meetings. This is to ensure consistency in the leadership of the discussions within the subcommittees. All meetings of the subcommittees will be reflected by notes with action points which will be distributed after the meetings but prior to next meeting for reference. It is understood that final decision on any discussions if required will be taken by the CPR.

13. A subcommittee is a subdivision of a larger committee which is organized for a specific purpose or to consider some issues assigned to it and having powers given to it by a larger committee. The life span of a subcommittee is not necessary linked to the conclusion of the matter assigned to it but exists until the larger committees decides otherwise. A working group, on the other hand, is an *ad hoc* group of subject-matter experts working together to achieve specified goals. The life span of a working group can be several weeks or several years or when the matter assigned to it is concluded.

14. The secretariat does not envision any legal impediments to the changing of the terminology to “subcommittees of the CPR” and at this junction it is informal in nature and nothing in the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council precludes the CPR from establishing informal subsidiary groups to deal with matters before it. Although not a determining factor, UN-Habitat’s sister organization, UNEP uses the same terminology. Finally, the change in name removes the perception of an ad-hoc nature of working groups and confirms the existence of the subcommittees until the CPR decides otherwise. The subcommittees will also have the added advantage of prior
assigned topical areas for discussions including reporting on their discussions to the CPR.

**B. The Agenda for the CPR Regular meetings be designed with a view to introducing thematic and country focused presentations**

15. It is also proposed that the Agenda for the CPR regular meetings be designed with a view to introducing thematic and country focused presentations. This will mean that during each meeting of the CPR, in addition to the Country Activities Report, the Organization will make a presentation on its activities in a particular country based on a particular theme or subject.

16. Specifically, UN-Habitat may make a presentation during a CPR meeting on its activities in country X or region X and this will be on an identified theme such as disaster response, youth and employment, and within the context of the Strategic Plan, existing resolutions, and other mandates. The methodology of picking a country or region could be based upon suggestions from the CPR but would be alternated on regional basis. In the case of presentations on individual countries or cities, to the extent possible and based on their representation in Nairobi, UN-Habitat would make such presentations in coordination with the countries concerned.

**C. The Provisional Agenda for the CPR Regular meetings should allow for the subsequent incorporation of new agenda items by both member states and UN-Habitat**

17. In line with the above, it is further proposed that the current system of approving the Agenda for the CPR one year in advance be more flexible, with a view to enabling the incorporation of new agenda items by both member states and UN-Habitat.

18. In that respect, it is further proposed that the CPR Bureau meet at least one week before CPR meetings to review and or amend as required, the Provisional Agenda. The Bureau will inform the Members of the CPR one week before the Regular meeting of any changes in the Provisional Agenda.

**D. Considerations for the development of a possible “Open-ended consultative group on sustainable development”**
19. This idea is linked to the critical debate focused largely in New York about the Sustainable Development Agenda. Nairobi is the third largest UN station, with a concentration of important development actors, including two development agencies headquartered here, whose contribution into this debate is vital. The development issues in Nairobi have a unique focus, driven both by actors based here, and because of its location in a developing country.

20. It is proposed that consideration be given to the following:

   i. How might a structured debate be developed in Nairobi on sustainable development issues?
   ii. How the issues raised in such a debate might be reflected in the sustainable development debate in New York, including in the future sustainable development agenda.

21. UN-Habitat would have a particular interest in the link between issues of sustainable urbanization and human settlements, and the sustainable development agenda. This is intrinsically linked to the preparations for Habitat III, which stands to be the first implementing conference of the sustainable development agenda. This is notwithstanding the interests of members states in a wider connection of Nairobi focused development issues into the sustainable development debate.

22. If such an approach was found to be useful, consideration would need to be given to creating an open-ended consultative group, level of the participation, the setting of agenda, and how it links with New York will have to be deliberated upon by the CPR. An organized form of discussion on sustainable development in Nairobi has the advantage of informing and enhancing effectively, the advocacy of the Organization both to UN institutions in NY and at member state level.