Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 9.15 a.m. on Friday, 12 June 2015, by Mr. Michal Mlynár, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

2. The meeting was attended by 70 participants from 52 countries and 3 observer missions.

3. The Chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Mr. John Feakes (Australia); Mr. Pavel Řezáč (Czech Republic); Mr. Perks Ligoya (Malawi) and Ms. Koleka Anita Mqulwana (South Africa). He bade farewell to the following departing representatives, thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Committee: Mr. Shemsudin Ahmed Roble (Ethiopia); Mr. Mohamed Ali Nur (Somalia); and Ms. Batilda S. Burian (United Republic of Tanzania).

Agenda item 1
Adoption of the agenda

4. The agenda was adopted, as amended, on the basis of the provisional agenda (HSP/CPR/57/1/Rev.1).

Agenda item 2
Adoption of the draft minutes of the fifty-sixth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 8 April 2015

5. The minutes of the fifty-sixth meeting of the Committee were adopted on the basis of the draft minutes (HSP/CPR/57/L.1).

Agenda item 3
Informational briefing by the Executive Director

6. In his statement, the Executive Director briefed the Committee on key activities and missions undertaken since its previous meeting (HSP/CPR/57/3).

7. With regard to the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, he expressed his gratitude to member States for its successful outcome, noting that seven significant resolutions had been adopted. He thanked the Chair and the representatives of Nigeria and the United States of America for their work in the weeks leading up to the Council session. He also thanked the Government of Kenya for its support and for its generous non-earmarked contribution of $1 million to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) Trust Fund, and the President of Kenya, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, for his...
presence at the twenty-fifth session. Extending his thanks to all the representatives who had played an active role in the drafting of resolutions, he singled out the representatives of Argentina, Brazil and Egypt for particular recognition.

8. He provided an update on the Umoja enterprise resource planning system. In recent weeks, a considerable amount of staff time had been dedicated to its implementation and, on 2 June, cluster 3, which included the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat, had “gone live”. The process of implementation had had an impact on other UN-Habitat activities and he apologized for possible delays to some programmes. Stressing the significance of the transition to Umoja, he said that its successful implementation in Nairobi had been commended by the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

9. Turning to other activities and missions, he said that he had visited Ecuador in connection with preparations for Habitat III and he noted the committed approach of its Government to the Conference. In New York, he had participated in a meeting of the Economic and Social Council and presented the 22 issue papers for Habitat III together with summary documents on topics related to housing and sustainable development. The 22 papers were available from the Habitat III website and he encouraged member States to contribute to them. In Brussels, he had attended the European Development Days organized by the European Commission. He noted that the European Union was in the process of developing a European Union urban agenda, a positive demonstration of its strengthened commitment to urban issues. With regard to future activities, he said that a European regional preparatory meeting for Habitat III was to be held in Prague in March 2016. In June 2016, Slovakia would assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and would therefore act as its official representative at Habitat III. The new awareness in Europe of the importance of urbanization would contribute to enhancing the quality of the debate at Habitat III in Ecuador. Lastly, UN-Habitat and the Economic Commission for Europe were in the process of preparing a regional report that would include information related to all member States represented in the Commission.

10. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the Executive Director for his briefing. There was widespread agreement that the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council and the second session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III had been successful, with one representative saying that its favourable outcomes were of particular importance in view of the high-level meetings taking place in 2015. Noting that intergovernmental processes in negotiating the outcome documents of the high-level meetings would have a direct bearing on Habitat III, one representative advised that they were followed closely. Many representatives commended the cooperative spirit of compromise and the perseverance that had characterized the work of the drafting committee.

11. Several representatives expressed their appreciation for the work of the secretariat in the Council session. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, praised the selection of themes and the format of interactive dialogue. The timely provision of draft resolutions by the secretariat had also been valuable; in the future, draft resolutions should be submitted even earlier and legal advice provided to member States on the submission of resolutions. One representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the importance of clear procedures to ensure the full and effective participation of all member States in the work of the Governing Council. Another representative expressed the hope that the secretariat would continue to improve the preparatory process for sessions of the Governing Council, including the twenty-sixth session.

12. Many representatives stressed the importance of the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Governing Council at the session. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the implementation charts presented in the subcommittee meeting on 10 June 2015 and recommended increased reference therein to the programme of work and budget. Several representatives highlighted the significance of resolution 25/7 to reforming and strengthening the governance of UN-Habitat. Referring to the establishment of the working group on programme and budget with the aim of improving transparency and accountability, a number of representatives expressed appreciation for the constructive consultations on the work of the group, and looked forward to future engagement in that regard.

13. Welcoming resolution 25/5 on support by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) and the role of national Habitat committees in its preparation and implementation, a number of representatives said that several outstanding issues had not been resolved in the second session of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat III and that all member States should therefore take part in the third session, to be held in Jakarta, in order to achieve consensus in an inclusive and comprehensive manner. It was important to provide avenues for the involvement of
stakeholders before and during Habitat III. The outcome document of the Conference should address the challenges that accompanied the sustainable development of human settlements and explore new and innovative methods of coping with rapid rates of urbanization and population growth, especially in developing countries, and should be drafted by the Bureau as soon as possible. One representative said that he looked forward to the finalization of the 22 issue papers and the 10 policy units that would provide concrete recommendations for the new urban agenda. Another representative expressed the hope that member States would be given the opportunity to provide input to the issue papers and focus groups so that the documents reflected the views of the Council’s membership. A number of representatives asked for regular updates on the preparatory work for Habitat III.

14. The contribution of UN-Habitat to the post-2015 development agenda was welcomed by a number of representatives. They expressed the view that proposed goal 11 of the sustainable development goals would contribute significantly to the effective management of the challenges of urbanization and requested the secretariat to contribute to the formulation of the indicators under the proposed goal so as to facilitate its implementation. The inadequate provision of financing in developing countries was a critical constraint and developed countries were urged to fulfil their commitments in that regard. One representative said that UN-Habitat would play a fundamental role in implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

15. A number of representatives expressed concern about the low level of core contributions to UN-Habitat for 2015; they called on member States to make their contributions and to do so in a timely manner. They requested the secretariat to step up its efforts with regard to resource mobilization and to provide timely updates and information on contingency actions. One representative noted that the Head of the Resource Mobilization Unit was retiring at a crucial time and two representatives sought clarification on activities to strengthen resource mobilization.

16. One representative thanked the Executive Director for his briefing on Umoja and for the hard work involved in its implementation, noting that the introduction of the system had been a priority for his Government. He requested regular briefings on Umoja, in particular in terms of how it had changed the business practices of UN-Habitat and provided new opportunities for the delivery of its mandate.

17. One representative, referring to UN-Habitat activities in Rwanda, urged the replication of such activities in countries that required them. He highlighted the imminent retirement, on 30 June 2015, of the Director of the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States. Noting that the post had yet to be advertised, he stressed the importance of filling the position, especially as Africa was experiencing the highest rate of urbanization in the world.

18. The Executive Director, in his response, said that all the issues raised by representatives would be addressed. It was important to establish mechanisms for the follow-up of processes and resolutions so as not to lose momentum; the work of the subcommittees and the working group on programme and budget would be key in that regard.

19. With regard to recruitment issues, the senior management team was working hard to achieve the best possible outcome. He said that a new Director of the Regional Office for Africa and Arab States would be chosen before the current Director retired.

20. Turning to resource mobilization, he said that a dedicated team was working under the guidance of the Deputy Executive Director to elaborate a draft strategy to cement resource mobilization efforts at different levels. As soon as the draft strategy was finalized, it would be shared with the Committee.

21. A zero-based budgeting exercise was being undertaken to align the expenditure of UN-Habitat with its income so as to reduce the current deficit; this was a key priority for the secretariat. The implementation of Umoja had diverted resources from other work, delaying the zero-based budgeting exercise; nevertheless, UN-Habitat remained committed to the process.

22. The issue of communication with member States was also being addressed; new practices were being developed and would be implemented in the near future.
**Agenda item 4**

**Update on the status of the recently concluded twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat**

23. Introducing the item, the Chair commended representatives for their dedication during the preparations for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council and for their active participation during the session. He drew attention to the draft proceedings of the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session (HSP/GC/25/6), the proposed list of regional representatives to the working group on programme and budget (HSP/CPR/57/4) and the revised rules of procedure of the Governing Council (HSP/CPR/57/INF.1).

24. The Executive Director noted that the level of participation in the twenty-fifth session had been high, with a total of 100 member States taking part in the deliberations.

25. In the ensuing discussion on the draft proceedings of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, one representative emphasized the importance of governance reform in improving transparency and accountability of activities undertaken by UN-Habitat. He also expressed the hope that the new international guidelines on urban and territorial planning, approved by the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session in its decision 25/6, would be widely distributed.

26. Responding to the comment, the Executive Director said that the guidelines would indeed be widely distributed to member States and local governments. The guidelines were considered a significant outcome of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council and were relevant to the current discussions on the contribution of urbanization to development and to rural-urban linkages.

27. With regard to the proposed list of regional representatives to the working group on programme and budget (HSP/CPR/57/4), the Chair noted that resolution 25/7, on the United Nations Human Settlements Programme governance review, was considered a milestone in the history of the Governing Council as it strengthened the oversight role of member States and provided a stronger collaborative platform between the secretariat and the member States. He emphasized the importance of moving forward to the full implementation of the resolution.

28. In the ensuing discussion, one representative called for the relevant countries, rather than the names of representatives, to be included on the list of regional representatives nominated to the working group on programme and budget so as to enable member States to send alternate representatives if necessary. He also called for the working group to be formally established during the fifty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as requested by the Governing Council, and for the group to hold a meeting by the end of July 2015 to discuss its working methods. Several representatives expressed their support for the proposals.

29. The Committee approved the list of regional representatives to the working group on programme and budget, as amended.

30. The Chair said that the revised rules of procedure of the Governing Council (HSP/CPR/57/INF.1) would be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations.

**Agenda item 5**

**Report on the work of the subcommittees**

31. The Chair introduced a report on the work of the subcommittees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (HSP/CPR/57/5/Rev.1).

32. The Committee took note of the information provided in the report.

**Agenda item 6**

**Any other matters**

33. The Chair said that his term of office as permanent representative of Slovakia to UN-Habitat would come to an end in July 2015. The Eastern European Group had proposed that he nevertheless continue in his role as Chair of the Committee until the end of 2015. He would therefore tentatively take part in the meetings of the Committee to be held on 16 September and 2 December 2015.

34. The meeting was declared closed at 11.15 a.m. on Friday, 12 June 2015.