Proposals for a new Template for
Habitat Country Programme Documents

Main objectives of HCPDs:

Basically, the HCPDs were meant to: (i) articulate the key challenges in urban development in countries where UN-HABITAT is present, and allow for exchange of experiences at the regional level (advocacy); (ii) provide an overview of national urban policies and governance challenges (planning and management); (iii) highlight the needs and priorities in the housing sector (pro-poor land and housing, and Finance); (iv) promote basic service delivery and urban environmental improvements (environmentally sound basic infrastructure and services); (v) mobilize public, private and non-governmental partners and feed into “Delivering as ONE”

In this connection, the necessary work to be done building on the momentum created by the previous generation of the HCPDs should aim at achieving a better coordination in the preparation of these strategic documents as they provide: (i) useful tools for strategy identification, planning, coordination and monitoring at the national and local levels; (ii) a coherent mechanism for review and strategy development for future human settlements activities at the country level; (iii) a framework for involvement with and ownership by governments and other partners; (iv) a window for alignment of country-level activities with the new thematic areas; (v) links with national development plans, UNDAF/One UN strategies, and Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAP); and enhance (iv) the visibility of UN-Habitat in-country activities and a basis for advocacy work.

Within the framework of the on-going restructuring exercise of the Agency and the new thematic areas as defined by the Executive Director, the Regional Offices, as the direct agents in charge of the Agency’s work at the national and local levels, will place a key role to ensure the successful development and implementation of HCPDs.

Methodology of production

Beyond the internal coordination required in the inception phase of the HCPDs bringing together key divisions and programmes of UN-Habitat on issues of their
respective interest, the template of HCPDs requires key steps to be made including: (i) increased consultations at the country level to take advantage of the momentum created, and maximize networking with Government agencies; (ii) strengthened linkage between HCPDs and new thematic areas; (iii) new priorities identified taking into account the national needs assessments; (iv) increased collaboration with local authorities and other key stakeholders such as the private sector; (v) alignment with the “ONE UN” priorities within the UNDAF frameworks.

In light of the above, there is need to generate a new template in order to give direction, a uniform outlook and substance to the preparation of the next round of HCPDs in the participating countries. The new template should be based on a few principles emanating from the lessons learned from the previous generations:

a. The next generation will have to take into account the following new thematic areas and policy areas as directed by the Executive Director: (i) urban land, legislation and governance, (ii) urban planning and design, (iii) urban economy, (iv) urban basic services, (v) housing and slum upgrading, (vi) risk reduction and rehabilitation, (vii) research and capacity development;

b. Different from the first round, the new HCPDs should continue to be understood as essential tools (“quick wins”) of the new strategic vision and Action Plan 2014-2019, for the purpose of “promoting the alignment of normative and operational activities at the country level (ENOF)”; as such, they should be products of UN-Habitat as a whole, with inputs from branches and even other regions;

c. The text requires inputs from and clear references to a number of key policy documents on normative issues and on global and regional reports produced in recent years by UN-Habitat or partners Agencies;

d. The new HCPDs require a uniform structure and layout which, at the same time, must allow for flexibility of priorities and strategies, in order to reflect the specific country issues and concerns, so that the final product is also “owned” by the country authorities concerned;

e. The new template should focus on making improvements on the already existing one, rather than discarding or disrupting an already accepted general pattern;
f. The list of ongoing and future projects in a given country should not be limited to operational projects, but include all UN-Habitat supported activities under advocacy and information, data collection, capacity building, global programmes, as well as operational projects;

g. The document must reflect the country priorities after discussion with the relevant partners at the national level, including national Government, local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners;

h. In any case, the next HCPD must be DaO compliant taking into account the planning and implementation of the UNDAF in the participating country;

i. The linkage between UN-Habitat’s strategic vision, national priorities and the post-2015 development agenda in line with the sustainable development goals – in particular SDG 11 must be tangible in the planning and means of implementation.

Model of a New HCPD
Table of contents

1. General trends

1.1. Urban opportunities and challenges (Reflecting the Situation Analysis)

1.2. General Context: Key National Urban Policies

- Outlining the main issues which determine human settlements conditions and trends, focusing on summarizing key parameters,
- Explaining the institutional responsibilities for the human settlements sector at national and local level.

1.3. Boxes:
- Basic human settlements data
- Statistics
- Indicators
► Shared responsibilities and sources: national consultations, HPM assessments, regional reports, national institutes of statistics, local authorities data etc.

Chap 2: urban land, legislation and governance

- Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
- 2/3 subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
  - advocacy for and public awareness of human settlements issues
  - monitoring of trends and data collection analysis
  - partnerships with civil society
  - other aspects (as identified by HPMs and national consultations)
► Shared responsibilities and sources: UN-Habitat policy papers, National policy papers, HPM assessments, GUO/LUO data, national consultations feedback, local authorities data, regional offices verification etc.

Chap. 2: urban planning and design

- Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
- 2/3 subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
  - urban planning and management
  - national and regional urban development policies
  - climate change
  - other aspects as identified by HPM and national consultations
► Shared responsibilities and sources: UN-Habitat policy papers, National policy papers, HPM assessments, WUC/WUF data, GUO/LUO data, national consultations feedback, local authorities data, regional offices verification etc.
Chap 3: Urban economy,

- Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
- 2/3 subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
  - urban economy and employment
  - role of the youth and women in urban development
  - financing urban infrastructure and services
- other aspects as identified by HPM and national consultations, e.g. post disaster/conflict reconstruction and recovery.

Sources and responsibilities: policy paper on focus area 3, Global Land Tool Network, Regional offices, relevant global programmes, HPM assessment, national consultations

Chap 4: urban basic services,

-2 paras on documented UN-Habitat policies to introduce the subject in global terms;
-several subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on components of the focus area, like water and sanitation, access to basic services, urban transport, solid waste management, local agenda 21, effects of climate change on urban areas, post disaster reconstruction. Given the wide scope of this focus area, the setting of priorities depends largely on the result of national consultations.

► Sources and responsibilities: policy paper on focus area 4, Guidelines on Access to Basic Services for All, Water and Sanitation Branch, UN-Habitat publications and strategy papers on water and sanitation, solid waste management, climate change, urban transport and sustainable cities/local agenda 21, relevant global programmes, Regional offices, HPM assessments, national consultations

Chap 5: housing and slum upgrading,

- Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
- 2/3 subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
  - land for housing
  - social housing programmes
  - informal settlements and slum upgrading
- other aspects as identified by HPM and national consultations, e.g post disaster/conflict reconstruction and recovery.

► Shared responsibilities and sources: UN-Hab. policy papers, National policies, Global Land Tool Network, Slum Upgrading Facility, Regional offices, relevant global programmes, HPM assessment, national consultations

Chap 6: Risk reduction and rehabilitation

- Documenting UN-Habitat policies to outline the subject in global terms;
- 2/3 subchapters with subheadings on national aspects of the focus area, including problem statements and national strategy on:
  - disaster prevention
  - disaster emergency response
  - post-disaster reconstruction

*(Depending on the country situation and needs)*

Chap. 7: Research and capacity development
*(Depending on the country situation and needs)*

**General Conclusion**

**Way forward**

When preparing the next generation of HCPDs, the Programme Division providing a coordination mechanism for clear guidance, harmony and cohesion, shall also ensure that the next HCPDs shall address the challenge of being comprehensive documents on the full scale of UN-Habitat country activities, involving all new virtual branches around the new thematic and policy areas, as well as regional offices and partners at national and local level. In policy terms, the HCPD production process shall become an essential part of the implementation of the UN-HABITAT reform process, demonstrating the required alignment of normative and operational activities at country level and increasing UN-Habitat’s visibility within the DaO and UNDAF processes.

While these requirements appear to be plausible, their application will depend on a clear set of responsibilities to be taken by different actors/work units involved in this process. In light of the above, the need for strengthening the coordination mechanism at HQ with financial and human resources becomes self-evident.