UPDATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2016

“Communicate and engage, for a better urban future”
## INTRODUCTION

## OBJECTIVE

### THE FOUR SUB-OBJECTIVES OF THIS STRATEGY ARE TO:

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- **Objective two**
- **Objective three**

Communicate and engage for a better urban future, demonstrating UN-Habitat’s results, expertise, and leadership in sustainable urbanization as a tool for development across our programmatic areas and themes. As such we will:

- **Objective four**

## THE 2016 STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

For the first time in history, more than half the world’s population lives in cities. Standing at 54 percent in 2014, the proportion of the world population living in urban areas is expected to increase to 66 percent by 2050. An additional 2.5 billion people will live in urban areas by that year.¹

The exponential rise of urbanization in the 21st century will continue, and represents as great a challenge to human society as climate change. Rapid urbanization and the burgeoning of slums over the past two decades are harbingers of cities where, conceivably, provision of basic services such as water, sanitation, waste management, public transport, housing, public spaces and other amenities that enhance ‘quality of life’ will no longer be feasible.

Over 90 percent of urban growth is occurring in the developing world and an estimated 70 million new residents are being added to urban populations of developing countries each year. Over the next two decades, the urban population of the world’s two poorest regions - South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa - is expected to double ² suggesting that the absolute numbers of informal settlement and slum dwellers in these regions will grow dramatically.³

UN-Habitat’s institutional view is that this inevitable urbanization must be harnessed for human development, as well-organized and scientifically-managed urbanization can be the principle strategic tool to guide the growth of cities and human settlements, in any part of the world.

Since human development will largely evolve in cities and other urbanized human settlements, sustainable urban development will be central to the quality of human life. Over many decades UN-Habitat has developed strategic programmes and specialized expertise that make it the only UN agency fully equipped to provide the expert leadership needed to leverage the participation of all actors who must be enlisted in this unprecedented human enterprise.

UN-Habitat’s institutional focus is now the outcome of the October 2016 United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development at Quito (Habitat III). The summit is expected to deliver outcomes around the New Urban Agenda that will directly impact the mandate, operations, and strategic direction of UN-Habitat, and the agency has a stake in promoting the best possible outcome in order to be able to deliver on the New Urban Agenda. As such, this strategy, whilst forward looking into 2017, is calculated principally to support those immediate outcomes.

¹ UNDESA (2014), World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision Population Division
² World Bank (2008), Urban Poverty World Bank Urban Papers
³ UN-Habitat (2014), Slums and Cities Prosperity Index (CPI)
OBJECTIVE

This strategy will seek to advance the understanding of urbanization, and of sustainable urban development as a tool for sustainable development that must be prioritized in global, regional and national strategies. It will also advance the positioning of UN-Habitat as the partner of choice on urban issues and as a recognized and valued partner for implementation and monitoring of the urban-related SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, which will be endorsed at the Habitat III conference in October 2016.

THE FOUR SUB-OBJECTIVES OF THIS STRATEGY ARE TO:

1. Meet the pressing strategic deadlines of 2016.
2. Meet our normative communications obligations.
3. Demonstrate UN-Habitat’s results, expertise, and leadership in sustainable urbanization as a tool for development.
4. Develop the cost-recovery business model in order to establish a predictable, skilled, and flexible communications workforce.

Objective one

Two principal fixed strategic deadlines confront UN-Habitat’s communications for the remainder of 2016. These are:

- **25 July 2016** - The Preparatory Committee meeting for Habitat III, to be held in Surubaya.
- **17 October 2016** - The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), to be held at Quito.

In addition:

- **10 July 2016** has been selected by AOC as a first strategic deadline by which it considers a minimum number of communication products must be ready for circulation internally and externally as a precursor to Surabaya.

Objective two

Concurrent with these immediate strategic deadlines, this strategy supports the normative communications work of UN-Habitat, which includes:

1. Supporting Programme Division with AOC’s full suite of service products in order to maximize the value of UN-Habitat’s research and programmes, and to provide appropriate visibility for partners.
2. Develop strategic protocols in order to guide UN-Habitat’s standard and extraordinary communications work.
3. Use communications as a tool for influencing policies and practices, to build knowledge, and to build UN-Habitat’s reputation as a locus of expert knowledge around sustainable urban development.
4. Sustain our daily communications functions in support of the Office of the Executive Director, the Division of External Relations, Programme Division, regions, country offices, and liaison offices.
5. Contribute where possible to policy papers.

**Objective three**

**Communicate and engage for a better urban future**, demonstrating UN-Habitat’s results, expertise, and leadership in sustainable urbanization as a tool for development across our programmatic areas and themes. As such we will:

**Promote:**
1. Exponential urbanization as one of the great epochal issues of our time.
2. The New Urban Agenda as a tool for sustainable urban development.
3. Use the two key issues of points 1 & 2 above to effectively brand and market UN-Habitat’s purpose by linking issues with UN-Habitat (rather than just ‘promoting’ UN-Habitat).
4. Internal corporate communication and coherence of vision in order to equip staff as knowledgeable advocates for UN-Habitat and our policies.
5. Improve donor and member state relations by promoting transparency, by and by reporting the impact of UN-Habitat’s programmatic work.
6. Support the position of Habitat within the UN system as fit-for-purpose, and uniquely expert in sustainable urban development with unique capacity.

**Objective four**

Under current Office of Management strictures, AOC is obliged to operate on a cost-recovery model, with its staff and menu of services geared towards a stable of clients. However at present, as it develops its cost-recovery practices, pays down debt obligations, and boosts the stability of its team, AOC has significant skills shortages in basic areas such as rigorous editorial capacity, and in more complex and evolving areas such as modern communications products like Mobile Application development and the emerging area of Virtual Reality. By the conclusion of 2016 AOC intends to:

1. Develop a stable core production and service team with the requisite skills for UN-Habitat’s normative requirements, with the capacity to up-skill on a per-project basis and provide a one-stop-shop service from product concept to production and distribution.
2. Develop a cost-recovery client base from both internal and external clients.
3. Boost its reputation for reliable, high-quality, and punctually delivered products and services, in order to acquire repeat business.
4. Independently raise funds for key gaps in UN-Habitat’s communications knowledge, such as a baseline quantitative and qualitative audience survey so that
communication products can be devised and disseminated according to informed and quantifiable need.

5. Upskill staff in the areas of project management, costing, pitching, “One Brain Thinking,” social media dissemination, data visualization techniques, audio-visual practices, the use of animation, mobile application development, and the seminal use of virtual reality.

As a matter of **excellence in communications**, in both our 2016 and longer-term normative objectives, AOC will support UN-Habitat programme activities and experts to formulate and disseminate targeted and compelling high-impact cases for UN-Habitat’s leadership in Sustainable Urban Development. Communications products will draw on programmatic outcomes that are:

*Evidence-based.* Demonstrable programme outcomes are a critical prerequisite for development of credible communication products.

*Relevant.* Programmes must be cognizant of priorities articulated by the global sustainable urban development agenda.

*Cost effective.* Donors, partners, communities and other stakeholders must see tangible value addition accruing from investment in partnerships with UN-Habitat programmes.

*Scalable.* Programme scalability and long-term sustainability are integral to the success of programmes.

*High impact.* Materials must reflect the impact of UN-Habitat’s work on people, and must be outcome-focused rather than activity-focused.

*Global.* The communications strategy will demonstrate that UN-Habitat principles underpinning urbanization as articulated in the New Urban Agenda and the Three-Pronged Approach are applicable to urban agglomerations of all sizes.

*Reputation-enhancing* as UN-Habitat seeks to confirm its place in the UN galaxy as the expert agency for sustainable urban development. Around one third of the approximately 240 indicators in the 2030 Sustainable Urban Development Agenda are related to urbanization. A majority of indicators in SDG11 are within the acknowledged realm of UN-Habitat expertise and leadership.

*Demonstrate UN-Habitat’s leveraging of partnerships.* The communication strategy will support UN-Habitat to promote its critical role as the go-to agency on sustainable urban development with the expertise and recognized authority to leverage partnerships and cooperation towards achieving SDG and NUA outcomes.

*Raise the profile of Sustainable Urban Development and Urbanization in general as an epochal issue.* UN-Habitat must continue to leverage the very issue for which it exists: sustainable urban development in a world pressured by climate change, demographic boom, and the exponential rise of urban populations.
THE 2016 STRATEGY

Objective one – Prepcom III and Habitat III

AOC will:

10 July deadline.

- **1st product** – Work with Programme Division to deliver a version of the *New Urban Agenda* that is simplified for general public consumption, branded and visually attractive, laid-out into electronic form for electronic distribution, suitable for transformation into exhibit materials, and print-ready. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure.

- **2nd product** – Work with Programme Division to construct a *framework document focusing on five key countries* (regionally representative), around which can be diagrammed factors that demonstrate UN-Habitat’s long-standing work in sustainable urban development, the impact of that work on communities, and the connection of that work with the 30 key action points of the NUA, the SDGs, and the 21 projects defined by Programme Division as representative of UN-Habitat’s work. This document will be simplified for general public consumption, branded and visually attractive, laid-out into electronic form for electronic distribution, suitable for transformation into exhibit materials, and print-ready. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure.

- **3rd product** – Will produce an *electronic timeline of UN-Habitat’s institutional development, corresponding with significant markers in the exponential rise of urbanization*. This product will be in electronic form, of high transaction value over social media, and capable of reproduction into print form for inclusion in an AOC marketing kit or for exhibit materials. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure.

- **4th product** – Will develop a *visual theme* for application to a wide variety of products such as posters, which will carry through Surubaya and Quito. The explicit aim of this conceptual effort is to humanize the overly technical appeal of UN-Habitat.

25 July deadline

- **1st product** – Depending on Programme output, AOC will layout a *compendium of 5 flagship programmes*, that demonstrate the UN-Habitat business model, and the cost-effectiveness and scalability of UN-Habitat programmes, applicable to the demands of the New Urban Agenda. This product will be branded and visually attractive, laid-out into electronic form for electronic distribution, suitable for transformation into exhibit materials, and print-ready. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure.
• **2\textsuperscript{nd} product** – Develop a marketing kit containing an institutional history, key fact sheets, the UN-Habitat/Urbanization timeline, the 5 Flagship Programme Compendium, and the New Urban Agenda. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure.

• **Additional products** will be based on the **four products of Surabaya**, such as exhibition-ready materials that require cost-recovered funding, and which depend on an idea of the form of the Surabaya exhibition space.

17 October deadline

• **Products for Quito** will build on those prepared for Surabaya, with an enhanced exhibition, audio-visual and Mobile Application versions of some products, and additional data visualizations. The 21 projects identified by Programme Division as ‘high-impact’ will be showcased. Cost-recovered funding will be required in order to produce printed products such as a brochure, and electronic, audio-visual, web, and mobile products.

CURRENT STATUS and progress in 2016 – AOC has already worked with Programme Division to simplify the 30 Key Action Points of the NUA which emerged from the Zero Draft Outcome negotiations, into a form for more general consumption. Progress has been made on key fact sheets, an institutional timeline, a marketing kit, a number of high-impact stories derived from the 21 programme projects, and the 5 country framework (as a result of excellent work from Programme Division), and a data platform for the timeline has been identified and source coding obtained.

**Objective two – Normative communications**

**AOC will:**

• Continue to build better cooperation with regional and liaison offices, based on their requirements, and strengthen communications functions in those offices where possible. A regional communications consultant for Latin America has been identified, but funding yet to be obtained. A strategy has been completed for the Brussels office, ROAF, and a new initiative is afoot (part completed) with the Global Alliance for Urban Crises in New York.

• Devise a crisis/sensitive issues protocol before the end of 2016, for rapid deployment in response to reputational issues.

• Devise an emergencies communications response protocol before the end of 2016, as a standard operational procedure in the event of natural and man-made disasters.

• Has supported two, and will support the launch of the remaining three “Science of Cities” studies produced by UN-Habitat in partnership with New York University and the Lincoln Institute.
CURRENT STATUS and progress in 2016 — The transparency initiative “Open UN-Habitat” now features on the landing-page of the main website. Since the beginning of this year, UN-Habitat has vastly increased its Twitter activity around the ED, as well as its output of op-eds and speeches. It produced and launched the most successful flagship publication launch for many years (the World Cities Report) in New York, with excellent coverage and plans for more launches. This report also saw our first deep exploration of data visualization, Mobile Applications, and an innovative crowd-sourcing social media campaign (statistics available). AOC provided support to the ROLAC office during the recent Ecuador emergency. AOC is now actively engaged in building the web platform the Cities Prosperity Index, and all associated products, with rollout due to begin by the end of June. AOC is also actively engaged in a cost-recovery project proposal for the Saudi 17 Cities project. It has promoted Japan visibility in the new UN-Habitat programme in northern Kenya.

Objective three – The challenge, the solution, and UN-Habitat’s impact

AOC will:

- Develop a strong, simple, memorable, own-able, and viral visual and linguistic communications thematic discipline that will introduce colour, the human element, and humour into UN-Habitat’s communications around URBANIZATION, and SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT, thus boldly linking UN-Habitat inextricably with one of the great issues of our time.
- Will brand UN-Habitat headquarters, improving signage and general visual communications throughout the compound, communicating core messages to staff and guests on a rotational basis.
- Present the UN-Habitat status and strategy to the Global UN Department of Public Information summit in Vienna in July, and will draw on direct DPI support in preparations for Surabaya and Quito.
- Will continue to publish directly to staff, member states, and partners the impact of UN-Habitat’s work through various bulletins.

CURRENT STATUS and progress in 2016 – UN-Habitat has already developed a stage I concept to develop a visual and linguistic discipline into all marketing and communications efforts. Roll-out is being developed for Surabaya. In addition to the public “Urban Insight” AOC has initiated a partner-oriented newsletter called “Urban Impact,” which draws together high-impact UN-Habitat stories, as well as an internal newsletter called “Together to Quito”, which keeps staff abreast of vision, substance, and thinking around the NUA. AOC has conducted three “Single Brain Thinking” production sessions around visual identity, encouraging cross-fertilization of
Objective four – A ‘fit-for-purpose’ AOC

AOC will:

- Strengthen the core production and media services team by aligning skills with outcomes through a full functional analysis (underway).
- Build core skills to identify, pitch, cost, and project manage cost-recoverable projects (already begun as staff share existing skills).
- Build core flexible production capacity by maintaining existing project staff levels, aligning skills with outcomes, and drawing on exterior skills on a project basis (already begun in preparations for Surubaya).
- Upskill staff in development communications training (current proposal in development with Aga Khan University).
- Continue the promotion of AOC’s “Menu of Services” to internal and external clients.
- Continue to develop feedback loops as part of full client service by reporting back on results where possible (such as the media and dissemination report compiled after launch of World Cities Report).
- Source funding for baseline surveys of UN-Habitat’s constituencies.

CURRENT STATUS - AOC developed the first cost-recovery plan to be accepted by OOM as credible and achievable, backed up by a just-completed three-day ERD retreat to create vision and strategic objectives through to the end of 2017, and to align functions with outcomes. In March it developed and disseminated internally and externally a complete “Menu of Services” which has resulted in new business. As funds from the cost-recovery programme begin to come into effect in the second half of 2016, project staff contracts will be regularized beyond the current three-month limit in order to boost job security. Currently, in addition to normative work, there are more than a dozen additional cost-recovery initiatives underway, with more on the horizon, including external partner services. AOC has begun compiling and using a roster of ‘light management’ ad hoc consultants for key creative and substantive products, both to obtain talent, and to up-skill existing staff who can draw on external knowledge. Key skills in costing and project management are now being shared within the team.
THE COMMUNICATIONS ‘TOOLKIT’

The communication toolkit will include:

- **The main UN-Habitat website**

- **Traditional media services** such as op-eds, placed articles, expert interviews, media analysis etc.

- **A ‘menu-of-services’** that has already been provided to UN-Habitat sectors, as well as existing and potential external partners, for the expansion of cost-recovered services.

- **Web-based platforms** and on-going development of major project initiatives such as the Cities Prosperity Initiative.

- **Sub-strategies** such as crisis communications procedures, or individual thematic, project-based, or regional strategies.

- **Conceptual services.** Whole-of-division “Single Brain Thinking” solutions to communications challenges that cross-fertilizes thinking, encourages originality, breaks down internal barriers, reduces repetitive work, shares burdens, encourages skills development, and enhances quality of products and services.

- **Branding.** Organization-wide branding discipline that will be vital to ensure maximization of corporate visibility.

- **Merchandising.** Branded promotional products that increase visibility for UN-Habitat and donors

- **Publication and intellectual property services.**

- **Public internal displays** that build the corporate image and promote the purpose of UN-Habitat to its staff.

- **Social media** including Facebook, Twitter (institutional and individual twitter accounts), and Instagram, as well as targeted social media campaigns.

- **Traditional print/visual publications** such as reports, technical materials and fliers.

- **Content-driven publishing products.** Focus on delivering content in various formats and channels depending on audience needs in order to reach wider audiences.

- ‘**New media’ print/visual** products such as infographics, which have a **high transaction value** for distribution through social media networks.

- **Traditional and new audio-visual production,** from more lengthy production pieces (The Urban Lecture Series), to GIFS.

- **New media technology** such as the distributive power of mobile applications (Apps), and the informational power of data-visualization, a tool that is ideal for data-driven narrative explanations of issues.
• **Informational** print and electronic products such as targeted newsletters.

• **Outreach activities**, not limited to traditional UN-Habitat outreach like Urban October, taking Habitat’s in-house expertise and using it to leverage public profile building and new partnerships through exhibition and seminar services

• **Develop a web-based information repository** of all key programme documents with different levels of access for different partners and stakeholders. This will facilitate better targeted information sharing across programmes, among implementation partners, and at the national, regional and global levels.

• **Updated corporate mailing list**, creating a tool for high level direct advocacy, outreach and dissemination of information on UN Habitat’s work through Social Media, e-newsletter (Urban Insights) and the external relations newsletter (Urban Impact).

• **Webinars**

• **Exhibitions** that promote UN-Habitat’s programmes, projects and policies at key events, conferences and strategic locations.

• **Virtual exhibitions** that capture the impact of selected UN Habitat programmes and disseminate to the widest range of existing and potential partners and stakeholders on a variety of electronic platforms.

**ADVOCACY PLATFORMS**

The World Urban Forum is UN-Habitat’s key advocacy platform. As one of the UN’s few truly open conferences, it attracts audiences of up to 22,000 (Medellin 2014) and is well respected in the urban partner, donor and stakeholder communities. It is one of UN-Habitat’s mandated activities and is coordinated within ERD to maximize its potential for global communications.

The World Urban Campaign is an advocacy and partnership platform to raise awareness about positive urban change in order to achieve green, productive, safe, healthy, inclusive, and well planned cities. It is coordinated by UN-Habitat and currently has 136 partners and networks.

Urban October spans UN-Habitat’s key global days – World Cities day, and UN-Habitat Day, providing a month-long opportunity for the raising of awareness around urbanization issues.

**TARGET AUDIENCES**

**UN Habitat management and staff** - The flow of information between management and staff; between programme personnel at headquarters and those in the field; and across different programmes must be enhanced for greater overall organizational efficiency and improved programme delivery. This is particularly important during the 2016-2017
period bridging Habitat III and its outcomes. It is a fact that staff widely regard UN-Habitat as ensconced in a ‘silo mentality,’ a perception which impairs effective cooperation and the delivery of programme.

UN-Habitat Governing Council, and CPR – There has been considerable emphasis from the organizations governance structure that the flow of information should be improved.

UN-Habitat Implementation Partners - Many national, regional and international organizations are partnering with UN Habitat in the implementation of various programmes. The communication strategy will incorporate mechanisms to provide them with easy access to the most current information on the status and impact of programmes.

International Urbanization Sector Players - An even larger and more diverse group of international entities are engaged in activities that relate to urbanization in one way or another. To establish and firmly entrench UN-Habitat’s leadership position, different communications solutions will be needed for different niche audiences. Different niche audiences lend themselves to different messaging, choice of media, and feedback mechanisms. The communication strategy will facilitate the most effective dissemination of information to each target group identified through the most effective and cost-efficient channels.

Media – Media coverage of urbanization issues nationally, regionally, and globally is predominantly focused on highlighting the myriad challenges resulting from rapid urbanization rather than on the potential solutions, including policy reforms, which are necessary to ensure sustainable urban development. Training and sensitizing of national, regional and international media practitioners on critical issues surrounding sustainable urban development will enable them to play a more effective role in disseminating information to other target audiences. The media are also an important partner in initiating and influencing policy dialogue.

SOME KEY MESSAGES

- Urbanization, along with climate change, is the great human challenge of this epoch.
- The confluence of climate change, demographic boom, and exponential urbanization is unprecedented.
- Urbanization can be a tool for sustainable development.
- Urbanization affects quality of life.
- Urbanization is the link between many of the SDGs.
UN-Habitat is the UN’s urbanization agency, working for a better urban future.

UN-Habitat leverages good partnerships for robust results.

UN-Habitat as a One Billion Dollar agency.

UN-Habitat is fit-for-purpose and the partner of choice.

UN-Habitat programming is evidence-based and high-impact.

EVALUATION AND AMENDMENT

In the absence of a previous time bound and delivery-based communications strategy, linked to programmatic outcomes, this document is intended as a holding strategy throughout 2016. However it is intended to be measured and evaluated despite the extremely short timeframe, and amended accordingly where weaknesses are apparent. Evaluation tools that are being considered include:

**Audience survey**

UN-Habitat lacks a 360-degree qualitative and quantitative audience analysis. Such an analysis would survey UN-Habitat’s presumptive primary audiences in order to learn their attitudes to brand, mandate, mission, and implementation recognition, as well as best ways to communicate with given audience segments, and frequency of interactions, depending on the segment characteristics (Inside influencers; Skeptical supporters; Missed connections; Untapped activators; Outside influencers).

**KAP survey**

Effective monitoring and evaluation of communications strategies typically requires the establishment of an objective entry point. This can be done through a rapid baseline Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Survey carried out before a strategy is implemented. At the end of a given time frame (in this instance, the duration of this strategy which is intended to be used through 2016) the same survey is repeated and the responses evaluated against those received in the first survey to establish how attitudes, behavior, and level of awareness have changed.

**Key Informant Interviews (KII)**

These can be conducted with selected opinion leaders. The KII identify key problem areas from the perspective of potential beneficiaries, their perceived priorities for action, and their understanding of their roles in mitigating the problem.

**Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**
Groups of between 9 to 16 influential opinion leaders and community representatives may be invited for focus group discussions. Issues emerging from the KII inform discussion in the focus groups.

**Survey Questionnaires**

Questionnaires can be developed, administered and analyzed by communication focal points. They are administered to a sample population by the simple random method. The questionnaires should be simple and easy to administer. The issues addressed in the questionnaires cascade from the KII and FGDs.

**Media Monitoring**

At the community, national and regional levels, mechanisms to monitor media coverage of the impact of programme initiatives can be established for both mainstream and social media.

**Community Monitoring**

Monitoring of public participation in communication activities at the community level should be carried out by the communication focal point.

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

- Effective implementation of this communication strategy will require adequate human, skills, and monetary resources.

- This communication strategy must be seen as a cross-cutting, organizationally strategic and immutable component of programme planning and monitoring, with organizational ownership.

- Further, the support of management and staff throughout UN-Habitat for *the service promise inherent in this strategy*, is critical to successful implementation, both for the free flow of information and exchange of ideas, and for the business support necessary from programme and region to ERD.

- Communication cannot be considered as an external activity only. Effective internal communication is key to enhancing overall organizational effectiveness, building morale, and creating a common sense of purpose and ownership.