Statement by the Chair of the Subcommittee and Small Working Group on the Stakeholder engagement policy


Chair’s Summary

The 2nd meeting of Small Working Group on the stakeholder engagement policy was scheduled for September 14 at 9:30 am.

There seemed to have been some problems with communication and only the Chair (U.S.) and four Member States (China, Turkey, Mexico and Columbia) were in attendance. Even then, some in attendance had not received the papers under discussion until very late.

Under those circumstances, those present still had some fruitful discussions, along with the representatives of UN-Habitat, led by Ms. Christine Musisi, but decided that there was not enough representation by Member States to adopt any conclusions or recommendations.

The representatives present reviewed the three operative paragraphs of Resolution GC26/7, highlighted the issues around which the working group was formed. These are repeated below for the readers:

1. Decides to reconfirm, upon request, the accreditation to the Governing Council of the stakeholders that were accredited to Habitat III;
2. Requests the Executive Director to disseminate widely all relevant information on the procedures for the accreditation of stakeholder organizations to sessions of the Governing Council;
3. Also requests the Executive Director, in consultation with Member States, to develop a draft stakeholder engagement policy, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society, and to submit the draft policy by the end of 2017 for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives with a view to submitting it for consideration and possible approval by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session.

On the stakeholder engagement policy, the member states appreciated the extensive research and work completed by the Secretariat. Further, the member states concurred that such a policy/program is a guide future actions of UN-Habitat. However, the Member States present specifically noted that in previous discussions, both with in CPR committee and subcommittee meetings, as well as discussions of the small working group, most comments were directed at the language on accreditation for participation in Habitat meetings.

Furthermore, the Secretariat highlighted a decision taken by ECOSOC to invite all organizations accredited to Rio environment Conference in 1992, and Rio +20 in 2012 to apply for consultative status in 2018 as these two categories will be abolished after the deadline. The two categories to be abolished are equivalent to stakeholders accredited to Habitat II and III within the context of UN-Habitat. Given that this would have a significant impact on Habitat accreditation status which is linked to ECOSOC, the member states present suggested Habitat’s accreditation policy should be urgently reexamined and considered separately from a broader stakeholder engagement policy.
Secondly, for some UN entities like UNEP all organizations, including those in consultative status with ECOSOC, must apply for accreditation to the environmental assembly. This is partly to confirm continuing relevance of these organizations to the agenda.

As the CPR reviews stakeholder accreditation to UN-Habitat they may wish to consider alignment with current UN Development system practices or, like UNEP, require all organizations to apply for accreditation. This implies an amendment of Rule 66 of the Governing Council rules of procedure, as well as GC resolutions 19/8 and 26/7 which provide for more less automatic accreditation for organizations accredited to Habitat II and III.

Thus, the members present at the working group meeting requested the Secretariat to revise the papers once more and create one short paper exclusively focusing on accreditation procedure and criteria and that this policy be presented to the CPR for discussion and approval as soon as possible. A more thorough stakeholder engagement policy can be submitted to member states for comment and discussion.