UN-Habitat policy on accreditation and strengthening of stakeholder consultations
in UN-Habitat governance and decision-making processes

This policy aims to strengthen accreditation and enhance coherence in stakeholder consultations in UN-Habitat governance and decision-making within the context of intergovernmental processes. The policy supports implementation of UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 26/7 – Accreditation.

The policy builds on UN-Habitat unique stakeholder engagement approaches and platforms, especially the World Urban Forum (WUF), the World Urban Campaign, networks and advisory boards, which give voice to stakeholders, especially those often left behind, and promote the sharing of experiences, good practices, policies, and practical measures to address the challenges of rapid urbanization, shelter for all, cities and human settlements.

1. Definition of stakeholder

Stakeholders shall be further classified as follows:
(i) General observer status if they work in most focus areas of UN-Habitat and within its mandate, especially urban planning and design, housing and slum-upgrading, disaster risk reduction and rehabilitation, urban basic services – mobility, water, sanitation, solid waste management; smart cities and innovation, climate change and resilience, conflict, migration, partnerships, advocacy and communication for sustainable urban development, public space and cultural heritage.
(ii) Special observer status if they work in specific areas (one or two) of sustainable cities and human settlements.

Stakeholders in the general observer status category may be granted observer status to attend all sessions of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs. They may designate up to 5 representatives of the organisation to attend a Governing Council Session.

Stakeholders in the special observer status category may only be accredited to specific sessions focusing on the respective areas of competence. They may designate up to 2 representatives to attend a relevant session.

Members organisations in each Major Group and other stakeholders’ category may be granted general or specific observer status provided they meet all the requirements. Each major
group and other stakeholders may designate up to 10 representatives to attend a session.

2. Accreditation process and criteria

The process
For stakeholders to participate in the work and governance of UN-Habitat as observers, and to assess relevance to the overall agenda of UN-Habitat, that is, adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements this policy provides for continuous accreditation, review and reporting process as follows:

a) Representatives and members of Local governments and associations may attend public sessions of the UN-Habitat Governing Council and its subsidiary organs in accordance with rule 64 of the UN-Habitat Governing Council rules of procedure and operative paragraph 2 of GC resolution 19/8.

b) Implementing partners duly vetted by the Secretariat, with on-going agreements of cooperation with UN-Habitat, and with interest in attending a particular session of the Governing Council may attend upon invitation by the Executive Director to a session.

c) UN-Habitat shall reconfirm upon request by relevant non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, and organisations accredited to Habitat II in 1996 and Habitat III in 2016, to attend as observers, relevant sessions of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs or any other governance structure in accordance with relevant rules of procedure, and GC resolution 19/8 and 26/7 respectively. But provided these organizations comply with the reporting requirements in section 5 of this policy below, particularly submission of biennial reports on activities in support of UN-Habitat mandate and work—shelter for all, sustainable cities and human settlements.

Accreditation Criteria

a) The organization shall be registered as a not-for profit organization with a government authority in a country with its headquarters and where registration is required. In a country where registration is not required an organization shall be legally established with proof of existence issued by a government authority.

b) The vision and mission of the stakeholder organization shall be in line with UN-Habitat’s vision, mission, mandate and work on sustainable cities and human settlements in an urbanizing world, with proof of geographical coverage at national or international level.

c) The stakeholder organization should have been in existence for two years, shall be credible with a track record and achievements in the field of sustainable cities and human settlements.

d) Major Groups and other stakeholders as well as multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances shall demonstrate due diligence and ensure compliance with criterion 3a-c above in their own membership management.

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(i) Being legally constituted as a not-for-profit entity in a given country;
(ii) Having been in existence for two years;
(iii) Having a track record in the field of cities and human settlements development
(iv) Having a proven national or international scope of activities.

3. Accreditation Procedure
Organisations seeking accreditation shall complete online an application form which requests key information about the organization and attach all relevant documents, including the following:

a) A scanned letter requesting accreditation, printed on the official stationery of the organization;
b) Copy of the constitution, charter, statutes or by-laws, and a copy of registration or incorporation certification, if applicable, of the organization and any amendments to those documents;
c) List of affiliates and members of the governing body and their nationalities;
d) Proof of experience and interest in cities and human settlement development issues or sustainable development;
e) Detailed account of the scope of the activities of the organization including copies of the annual or other reports of the organization with financial statements, and a list of financial sources and contributions, including contributions from Governments;
f) A brief description of programmes and activities of the organizations in areas relevant to the work and mandate of UN-Habitat.

The Secretariat will work with each organization to ensure all relevant information is provided. Then, the Secretariat shall prepare a report on organizations seeking accreditation that meet the above accreditation criteria for submission to the next session of the CPR for review and consideration eight weeks before session.

What to do if a member state objects to accreditation of an organization?
The following is a procedure to be followed in case of any objection:

a) A member state shall inform the Secretariat including the reasons for objection with supporting documents if any, within 14 days upon receipt of the list of organisations seeking accreditation. This information shall be shared with the CPR members.
b) The Secretariat shall inform the affected organization of a member states objection within 7 days upon receipt of notification of an objection by a member state. The organization shall be required to respond within 14 days, upon receipt of the notification from the Secretariat.
c) The CPR shall set up a working group to consider Member States objection and the responses from concerned organization(s) within 7 days upon receipt of an organisation’s responses.
d) The member state and the concerned organisations shall be informed of the decision
reached. If the CPR working group in consultation with members states and concerned organization, is not satisfied with the response then the organization shall be removed from the list of organisations accredited to the Governing bodies. The Secretariat shall inform the concerned organization accordingly.

The Secretariat shall circulate the final list of accredited organisations to the CPR members for information including information on objection raised and the process followed.

Accreditation is not a requirement for participation in the implementation of projects, programmes or partnerships.

Alternatively use the following UNEP Approach – para 16-20

16. The UNEP secretariat will review accreditation requests against the accreditation criteria and supporting evidence presented by applicants; following which the Secretary of the Governing Bodies will communicate with those organizations that meet the criteria, thus allowing these organizations to engage with UNEP in line with the following paragraphs 17 and 18.

17. The Secretariat will not receive accreditation requests during the period between OECPR and UNEA.

18. The list of organizations that met the accreditation criteria will be circulated among the UNEA members no later than two months before the Open-ended meeting of the CPR, for review and consideration by member states. The basis of any objections about the fulfillment of the accreditation criteria by particular organizations shall be raised by a member State not later than one month before the OECPR. Supporting documentation, if necessary, should be shared with the Secretariat which will make it available to the members of CPR. The Secretariat will engage in consultations with the member states that had raised the concerns and inform the particular organization accordingly.

19. Those organizations that failed upon such review and consulting to meet the accreditation criteria will be removed from the list of organizations that met the accreditation criteria. The final list of accredited organizations will be presented for information to the OECPR as part of a report on the accreditation process, including information on objections raised by member states and on how these were handled. Following the OECPR, the respective organizations will be informed about their accreditation status.

20. Accreditation is not a requirement for participation in the implementation of projects, programmes or partnerships. Participation modalities in the implementation of such projects, programmes or partnerships are set out in the UNEP partnership policy.”

4. Accreditation benefits
Given the intergovernmental nature of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat, accredited stakeholders will have an opportunity to be consulted on agenda setting, policy and decision-making processes. All accredited organisations shall enjoy the same privileges, which shall include the following:

a) Observer status at all public meetings of the Governing bodies and subsidiary organs,
quadrennial urban assembly, Executive Board, and expert meetings.

b) Representatives of the organization receive official notification and invitation to make an oral or written statement, speak on a panel or organize a side events in accordance with the Governing Council rules of procedure. These submissions may include contributions and recommendations for agenda items of sessions of the Governing body and its subsidiary organs and recommendations on the subject matter of draft decisions for consideration by Member States. Advance notification shall be given, if a participation in a particular meeting is restricted. Session presidents or chairs are encouraged to provide opportunities for accredited stakeholders to speak on topics of interest in such public meetings;

c) Representatives of the organization are entitled to a ground pass, which allows them to attend all public meetings and events.

d) UN-Habitat will convene a multi-stakeholder dialogue during the session of the Governing Council to allow stakeholders to deliberate and prepare inputs to relevant topics under consideration by the Governing Council.

e) Designated seats will be reserved for major groups and stakeholders in all public meetings of the governing bodies for designated representatives.

f) Accredited stakeholders will have access to documents publicly available on the UN-Habitat websites and portals; official documents and reports of UN-Habitat; and documentation related to the work of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, including pre-session and in-session documents made available in public meetings. The UN-Habitat Secretariat will make every effort to provide access to such documents in a timely manner, using electronic and other modern information systems to facilitate delivery. Accredited stakeholders will be granted access to other relevant information portals. The UN-Habitat Secretariat will ensure that input received from major groups and stakeholders will be made available on the relevant web portals.

5. **Reporting process**

   a) All duly accredited organizations shall submit to the Secretariat brief periodic reports on their relevant activities every two years. These reports will contribute towards assessment of organisations’ contribution and support given to UN-Habitat mandate and work including good practices. The reports will also inform preparation of the Quadrennial report on implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the report on monitoring implementation of SDG11.

   b) If any stakeholder organization cannot submit a periodic report as required in 5 (a) above, after a reminder, the Secretariat shall suspend accreditation status with approval of Member States within 3 months upon issuance of notification by the Secretariat. Failure to comply by submitting reports as required, may lead to withdrawal of accreditation completely. If this happens then the concerned organization shall re-apply in order to be granted accreditation to UN-Habitat governing bodies.

6. **Other matters**

   **Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum**
Prior to each session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council UN-Habitat will facilitate the organization of a Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum that will provide an opportunity for accredited stakeholders to consolidate their views and prepare their input to the session and its subsidiary organs.

Member states and representatives of international organizations may participate in the Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum as observers. Major groups and stakeholders are encouraged to submit the main outcomes of such meetings in writing to the Governing Council, through the UN-Habitat secretariat, on the first working day of the session.

**Major Groups and Stakeholders Mechanism**

Accredited stakeholders may form stakeholder bodies or other groups to organize their contributions and facilitate their participation in UN-Habitat processes. While self-organized, such bodies must adhere to the principles of transparency, responsibility and accountability, and respect the diversity of views among stakeholders on all issues.

**Use of information and communications technology to enhance effective participation**

The use of modern information and communications technology will enhance the effective participation of stakeholders in a cost-effective manner. In addition to physical presence at meetings, virtual and online participation will also be made possible through webcasting of relevant meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, UN-Habitat events, information platforms and discussion forums in accordance with the rules of procedure and the related access to information policy.

**Participation of non-accredited stakeholders**

While retaining the intergovernmental nature of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, the president of the Governing Council or the chairperson of a subsidiary organ, in consultation with the relevant Bureau, may invite a non-accredited organization or individual, on the basis of their competency, expertise and experience, to meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs for a specific task or purpose, in accordance with the existing rules of procedure.

**Stakeholder engagement handbook**

UN-Habitat Secretariat shall prepare a stakeholder engagement to guide stakeholders on how to engagement and participate in UN-Habitat policy and decision-making processes in the context of intergovernmental processes, and in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.