Draft minutes of the seventieth meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 20 September 2018

Opening of the meeting
1. The meeting was opened at 9.15 a.m. on Thursday, 20 September 2018, by Mr. Fernando Estellita Lins de Salvo Coimbra, Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
2. The meeting was attended by 85 participants from 53 countries and 2 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Mr. Christian Fellner (Austria); Mr. Erik Lundberg (Finland); Ms. Aline Kuster-Ménager (France); Ms. Annett Günther (Germany); Mr. Alberto Pieri (Italy); Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie (Norway) and Mr. Dmitry Maksimychev (Russian Federation).
4. He then thanked and bade farewell to the following representatives who had recently departed the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Committee: Ms. Tarja Fernandez (Finland); Ms. Jutta Frasch (Germany); Mr. Mauro Massoni (Italy); Mr. Victor Conrad Ronneberg (Norway); Mr. Elsadig Abdalla Elias Diab (Sudan) and Mr. Abdulmonem Annan (Syrian Arab Republic).

Agenda item 1
Adoption of the agenda
5. The agenda was adopted, as amended, on the basis of the revised provisional agenda (HSP/CPR/70/1/Rev.1).

Agenda item 2
Adoption of the draft minutes of the sixty-ninth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
6. The Committee approved the minutes of its sixty-ninth regular meeting, held on 21 June 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes (HSP/CPR/70/L.1).

Agenda item 3
Executive Director’s briefing to the Committee of Permanent Representatives
7. In her oral briefing, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohammed Sharif, drew attention to a document entitled “Executive Director’s Briefing to the Committee of Permanent
Representatives” (HSP/CPR/70/3), which provided updates on activities undertaken by the secretariat since the last regular meeting of the Committee.

8. The Executive Director delivered a presentation accompanied by visual slides highlighting a number of activities contained in her briefing (HSP/CPR/70/3). She focused in particular on activities related to the internal reform of UN-Habitat, the strategic planning process and the reform of the United Nations development system.

9. With regard to the internal reform of UN-Habitat, since the last meeting of the Committee the secretariat had continued to take steps to realize the vision and mission of UN-Habitat identified through extensive consultations with staff, member States and other stakeholders, and to build a more trusted, transparent, accountable, effective, efficient, fit-for-purpose and collaborative organization. Recent relevant achievements included the identification of agents for change from within UN-Habitat to help effect the necessary changes in the culture and values of the organization; the holding of regular town hall meetings with staff to further build trust, improve transparency and break down organizational silos across UN-Habitat; and the launch of a monthly Executive Director video series to keep staff informed of the reform measures taken by management.

10. At the organizational level, key achievements in the internal reform process included the finalization of the resource mobilization strategy; the launch of an audit that would assess and make recommendations for improving the financial and management situation of UN-Habitat; the launch of internal austerity measures related to human resources, travel and office space; and the development of draft policies for harmonizing the hiring of consultants and for hiring and supervising interns. As part of its resource mobilization efforts, the secretariat planned to hold strategic funding dialogues in Asia, the Middle East and Africa with the aim of attracting increased member State voluntary contributions to UN-Habitat. In addition, as a way to better advertise its normative work, the secretariat planned to start sending communications to Committee members announcing and sharing the links to all new UN-Habitat publications.

11. With regard to the development of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, the plan would be developed in close consultation with member States and would seek to align the work of UN-Habitat with common goals and strategies in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and the New Urban Agenda. The secretariat had prepared a situation analysis of UN-Habitat and, through extensive internal and external consultations, had identified a vision and mission for the organization. Next steps in the formulation of the strategic plan included the holding of a retreat with Committee members on 27 September 2017 to discuss the findings of the situation analysis and of consultations with member States and other stakeholders from September to November 2018, with a view to obtaining the Committee’s endorsement of a draft strategic plan in December 2018.

12. In parallel with the development of the strategic plan, the secretariat was preparing a programme of work and budget for 2020 for consideration and endorsement by the Committee in December 2018. The document would be aligned with the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025 and would be presented in the new format of the United Nations Secretariat, which, in line with General Assembly resolution 72/266 of 24 December 2017, on shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations, would include an annual rather than a biennial budget and would consist of three main parts, namely, long-term organizational priorities and objectives; a plan for programmes and subprogrammes and programme performance information; and resource requirements. UN-Habitat was required to align the current programme of work and budget 2018–2019 with the new format. The secretariat would therefore revise that document for consideration by the Committee prior to its submission to the General Assembly for consideration in January 2019.

13. Lastly, with regard to the reform of the United Nations development system, as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 72/279, on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the secretariat had developed a road map with specific actions to be undertaken by UN-Habitat in the reform areas specified in the resolution, namely, a new generation of United Nations country teams; the reinvigoration of the role of the resident coordinator system; a revamping of the regional approach; strategic direction, oversight and accountability for system-wide results; and funding. The implementation of the road map would enable UN-Habitat to engage with other entities of the United Nations system, and it was closely linked with the Programme’s ongoing work in coordinating the development of a United Nations system-wide strategy for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/226.
14. In closing, the Executive Director highlighted some of the figures and information provided in her briefing (HSP/CPR/70/3) related to key portfolio developments and to recent missions undertaken by herself and the Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira. She invited members to participate in “Urban October”, a series of activities being organized by the secretariat that would include the celebrations of World Habitat Day on the theme of municipal solid waste management on 1 October 2018 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and of World Cities Day on 31 October in Liverpool, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

15. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for her briefing, which demonstrated her continued and energetic efforts to improve the engagement of the secretariat with member States and to strengthen UN-Habitat in order to demonstrate its unique role and added value within the United Nations system. All the representatives who took the floor also expressed their appreciation to the Deputy Executive Director for her outstanding contribution to the work of UN-Habitat and wished her the best in her future endeavours.

16. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, said that it was crucial, in the context of the negotiations on a resolution on UN-Habitat by the Second Committee (Economic and Financial Committee) of the General Assembly, that member States fully endorse the report of the open-ended working group of the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 72/226, on the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements and on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and strengthening of UN-Habitat. The working group had been tasked with examining options for strengthening member States’ oversight of UN-Habitat and the appropriateness of the financial rules and regulations and of personnel, procurement and budgetary matters. The working group’s report and the recommendations set out therein reflected a delicate compromise reached by member States after many years of discussion. The endorsement of the report by the Second Committee would contribute to strengthening member States’ oversight of and participation in the work of UN-Habitat and help the Programme to attract funds and to advance its administrative and governance reforms, all of which would enable it to successfully carry out its mandate as the United Nations focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

17. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed as positive steps in the internal reform process the decentralization of the budget function and the launch of a financial and management audit of UN-Habitat, which would help the secretariat to improve its own accountability and efficiency.

18. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed her commitment to working closely with colleagues in New York on the resolution on UN-Habitat to be considered by the Second Committee with a view to ensuring that the concerns expressed by member States were duly addressed in the resolution. Another representative informed the Committee that his Government would sponsor a draft resolution on UN-Habitat for consideration by the Second Committee during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly and he invited member States to support the draft resolution. Supported by another representative, he expressed confidence that the endorsement of the report by the Second Committee would ensure better member State oversight of the Programme and thereby inspire all member States to make additional financial contributions to the Programme.

19. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that UN-Habitat revenue in 2018, especially for technical cooperation, was an encouraging sign that there was continued interest by member States in the work of the Programme. Noting that the non-earmarked funding crisis continued, however, he expressed the hope that non-earmarked contributions to UN-Habitat would increase both in terms of volume and number of contributors in order to ensure that the Programme was able to carry out and expand its policy work. With regard to the austerity measures undertaken by the secretariat, he said that temporary austerity measures were justified, but he encouraged the Executive Director to continue to engage with member States, including in capitals and by means of multilateral platforms, to demonstrate the added value, unique mandate and expertise of UN-Habitat. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to provide detailed information on the benefits of the austerity measures taken, stressing that that information would help to secure member State support for such measures.

20. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that the secretariat share the resource mobilization strategy with the Committee so that member States could understand, and help the secretariat to achieve, the goals contained therein. Yet another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that member States be given the opportunity to provide comments on the strategy.
21. Several representatives said that they looked forward to open and inclusive discussions on the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, including at the informal retreat to be held on 27 September 2018 and during subsequent meetings.

22. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated his repeated calls for the urgent finalization of the UN-Habitat stakeholder engagement policy, which had been due to be finalized in December 2017.

23. A number of representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for new UN-Habitat projects approved in their countries or regions and for support provided to their countries for conducting events and activities aimed at advancing sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

24. Responding to comments, the Executive Director thanked representatives for their support and constructive remarks, in particular those related to their willingness to work in close coordination with their New York counterparts on the draft resolution concerning UN-Habitat to be considered by the Second Committee. She urged all Committee members to work toward ensuring that the concerns expressed by member States were addressed in the draft resolution.

25. With regard to the stakeholder engagement policy, the Executive Director said that the small working group that had been set up to discuss the draft policy had held its last meeting on 14 August 2018 and the secretariat expected member States to agree on the draft policy in the coming weeks. As for the resource mobilization strategy, the secretariat would share the strategy with the Committee during the retreat to be held on 27 September 2018 on the new strategic plan. Lastly, the secretariat would provide details on the impact of the austerity measures it had implemented under agenda item 4.

**Agenda item 4**

**Quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat**

26. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat (HSP/CPR/70/4), which outlined the financial situation of the Programme for the quarter ending 30 June 2018.

27. The Executive Director highlighted key information contained in the quarterly report, which was presented in a new format, and described the challenges faced by the Foundation general purpose fund and the measures taken by the secretariat to address those challenges. Stressing that the Governing Council had approved a Foundation general purpose budget of $26 million for the biennium of 2018–2019, of which $13 million represented the budget for the year 2018, she said that the Foundation general purpose fund, which was made up of voluntary non-earmarked contributions and was the main core fund of UN-Habitat, had experienced a constant and long-term decline in revenue that had not been matched by a reduction in expenditures. As at 30 June 2018, the fund’s revenue for the first six months of 2018 totalled $1.1 million, while expenditures for the same period had totalled $3.5 million, of which 97.5 per cent had been used to fund 46 positions. That situation had resulted in a net operational deficit of $2.4 million and the complete depletion of the remaining statutory operational reserves, which had amounted to $2.3 million as at 31 December 2017. Assuming that current financial trends continued, the Foundation general purpose operational deficit was expected to reach $4.4 million by the end of 2018.

28. The 2018 programme support budget approved by the Executive Director was $13.2 million and, as at 30 June, programme support revenue for the first six months of the year had totalled $4.4 million, while expenditures for the same period had totalled $3.5 million, of which 86 per cent had been used to fund 51 staff positions. Although UN-Habitat had a significant balance in its programme support fund, as shown in figure 3 in the quarterly report, expenditures were projected to exceed fund revenue in 2018 owing to outstanding commitments of more than $3 million related to office operations and other services, and an operational deficit of at least $1.1 million was expected by the end of 2018. Furthermore, should current trends in the Foundation general purpose fund continue, the $3 million loan that UN-Habitat had taken in 2017 from the overheads account of the programme support fund to cope with the deficit in the Foundation general purpose fund was unlikely to be repaid. Taking into account that the overhead rate charged by UN-Habitat, which had averaged 5.6 per cent in 2017, was comparatively low within the United Nations system, part of the solution lay in negotiating a higher overhead rate with donors.

29. With regard to the UN-Habitat appropriation from the regular budget of the United Nations, the amount approved by the General Assembly for the year 2018 totalled $9.7 million. As at 30 June 2018, expenditures for the first six months of the year had amounted to $5.3 million, of which approximately 89 per cent related to staff costs for 79 positions, and the secretariat expected the total allocation to be fully expended by the end of 2018. It was worth noting that, as a result of austerity
measures in the regular budget, UN-Habitat expected a $107,600 reduction in its regular budget allocation in 2018.

30. With regard to the Foundation special purpose fund, the approved budget for the year 2018 was $65.7 million. As at 30 June, the fund’s revenue had totalled $17.4 million, while total expenditures for the first six months of the year had amounted to $19.4 million. As reflected in annex E to the quarterly report, the fund balance carried forward at the end of the reporting period amounted to $96.6 million, including a reserve of $4 million. As for the technical cooperation fund, the projected budget for the year 2018 was $148.2 million. As at 30 June, the fund’s revenue for the first six months of the year had totalled $71.4 million, while total expenditures for the same period had amounted to $41.8 million. The fund balance at the end of the reporting period had totalled $241 million, including a reserve of $11.4 million.

31. An examination of the overall financial situation of UN-Habitat showed that performance in earmarked funding, in particular in the technical cooperation fund, remained strong, and that member States and other donors continued to see UN-Habitat as a valuable project partner. The performance of the core fund was, however, a major problem and was expected to reach an operational deficit of $5.5 million, comprising a $4.4 deficit in the Foundation general purpose fund and a $1.1 deficit in the programme support fund. While programme support revenue was meant to cover the indirect costs associated with supporting the activities that generated that revenue, UN-Habitat had had to use such funds to offset the operational deficit in its Foundation general purpose fund, and it would have to continue to do so until a balance between its core funding income and revenue was achieved through increased contributions and cost savings.

32. As a way of coping with the situation, the secretariat had implemented austerity measures against the Foundation general purpose and programme support funds, including a recruitment freeze, a freeze in the reclassification of posts to higher grades, a suspension of the issuance of new contracts or temporary appointments and consultancy services, a suspension in the granting or extension of special post allowances, a reduction in paid overtime, restrictions on official travel, a requirement for all staff travel to be in economy class, and a reduction in office space allocation. As explained in the quarterly report, the austerity measures focused on generating savings and restricting growth on non-staff expenditures, so they could only partially address the situation because most of the core budget resources were used to fund staff. If the core budget income situation did not improve, additional savings would need to be made on staff resources, which would inevitably have an impact on the normative work of UN-Habitat. In order to mitigate the risk of losing valued expertise, UN-Habitat would strive to facilitate the transfer of staff financed through the Foundation general purpose fund to more secure sources of funding.

33. In addition to cost-saving efforts, UN-Habitat was aware of the need to design a more streamlined approach to its operations, including through the decentralization of certain processes and procedures and a more efficient use of common services. Stressing that such measures were already under way and that, as discussed under agenda item 3, the secretariat had launched an internal reform process that would transform UN-Habitat into a more transparent, effective, efficient and accountable organization, the Executive Director urged member States to support her in transforming UN-Habitat and ensuring that the Programme was able to carry out its mandate by increasing their contributions to the Foundation general purpose fund.

34. In closing, she expressed appreciation to the Governments of Botswana, Chile, India, Kenya, Jordan, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania for contributions received since the last regular meeting of the Committee. She also thanked the European Union and the Governments of India, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for contribution agreements signed in the second quarter of 2018 for earmarked activities.

35. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended the Executive Director for her strong leadership and welcomed the austerity measures that she had implemented. Expressing concern that the operational deficit in the core budget of UN-Habitat was hindering the Programme’s ability to implement its programme of work and to support implementation by member States of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, she said that the upcoming negotiations on a draft resolution on UN-Habitat at the General Assembly session offered member States a unique opportunity to address the financial situation of UN-Habitat. She expressed the view that that the new resource mobilization strategy could contribute to those negotiations and she asked all the regional groups to work in a
unified manner to ensure that UN-Habitat was further strengthened and able to fulfil its role as the United Nations focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements.

36. Responding to questions, the representative of the United Nations Office at Nairobi said that the programme support and Foundation general purpose funds were core funds used to support the management, operations and normative work of UN-Habitat, and the use of such resources, including transfers from one fund to another, was at the discretion of the Executive Director. If the Foundation general purpose fund did not repay the $3 million loan it owed to the programme support fund, and if non-earmarked contributions did not increase, UN-Habitat would need to revise its business model to implement its programme of work with significantly fewer staff, in addition to taking austerity measures, negotiating a higher programme support cost overhead rate with donors, increasing its programme delivery rates, strengthening cost recovery and exploring ways of transferring core staff into appropriate vacancies in the earmarked portfolio of activities. Failing that, the Programme would become a liability to the general fund of the United Nations, which was not permissible.

**Agenda item 5**

**Implications of the United Nations development system reform for UN-Habitat work in the field**

37. Introducing the item, the Executive Director drew attention to a document entitled “Reform of United Nations Development System: immediate and short-term actions to kick start UN-Habitat’s engagement” (HSP/CPR/70/5), which set out a comprehensive action plan developed by UN-Habitat to contribute to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018, including a list of specific actions related to each operative paragraph of the resolution contained in the annex to the document.

38. Stressing that the United Nations development system reform sought to build a coherent, effective and efficient United Nations system that supported efforts by member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Executive Director said that the action plan set out in the document was aimed at ensuring that the UN-Habitat strategic planning process was fully in line with the reform of the United Nations development system. The action plan was closely linked with ongoing work to develop a United Nations system-wide strategy for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the related dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which had been called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/226, and which UN-Habitat had been asked to coordinate with a view to presenting the strategy for consideration and approval by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2019.

39. In response to General Assembly resolution 72/279 and as part of its efforts to coordinate the development of the system-wide strategy called for by General Assembly resolution 72/66, UN-Habitat had launched an active consultative process with the five United Nations regional economic commissions, United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations entities in New York to discuss ways of improving collaboration in four key areas, namely, knowledge and data, coherent policy support and guidance to countries, partnership and joint advocacy, and financing. Collaboration with the regional economic commissions and United Nations Sustainable Development Group regional teams would be informed by practical guidelines to help United Nations resident coordinators to integrate urban components into the new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and the practical guidelines would be aligned with a typology of human settlements based on regional trends and country contexts spanning the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

40. UN-Habitat had supported the efforts by the Secretary-General to create the Sustainable Development Goals Fund, including support for sustainable urban development, as well as the Multi-Partner Implementation Facility for Sustainable Urban Development, which, with the support of the World Bank, would help countries and cities to achieve sustainable urban development. Following the release by the Secretary-General of his implementation plan for the reinvigorated resident coordinator system on 11 September 2018, UN-Habitat was reviewing the plan to identify ways of more effectively supporting and influencing the scope and quality of the urbanization and human settlements work of United Nations country teams. Lastly, the Programme was engaging actively in the Sustainable Development Goals strategic result groups covering implementation, strategic financing, business innovation and strategic partnership.

41. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the interest of the secretariat in joining the transition team proposed by the Secretary-General to coordinate the United Nations development system reform process, and called on UN-Habitat to play a leading and exemplary role within the United Nations development system in the implementation of the reform. She suggested that UN-Habitat should ensure that the proposed
typology for human settlements was firmly based on regional trends and national contexts, that the practical guidelines for United Nations resident coordinators set out clear guidance for the integration of urban components into United Nations development assistance frameworks, and that the UN-Habitat strategic planning process was in line with the United Nations development system reform.

42. The Executive Director responded that the proposed typology for human settlements was the product of multiple bilateral meetings, but was still under development and would be validated and refined taking into account regional trends and national contexts. The typology would be discussed with the Committee during the upcoming retreat.

43. Responding to questions, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat expected to finalize the three policy papers to explore the contributions of the United Nations system to the implementation of the three transformative commitments for sustainable development of the New Urban Agenda in early December 2018, since the papers were part of the strategic plan preparation process. He said that the preparation of the papers would not require additional resources, and clarified that the secretariat had not been able to identify precise timelines for some of the medium-term activities set out in the annex to document HSP/CPR/70/5 because the implementation of such activities depended on factors such as the availability of core resources and the strategies of the different United Nations regional economic commissions.

Agenda item 6

Thematic/country presentation

44. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Thematic/country presentation” (HSP/CPR/70/6), which summarized the activities of UN-Habitat in Kenya since 2010.

45. Recalling that, under the strategic plan for 2014–2019, UN-Habitat was required to develop country programme documents to guide its country-level work, the Executive Director drew attention to the Habitat country programme document for Kenya for 2018–2021, which had been launched recently by UN-Habitat and the Government of Kenya and was the main vehicle through which UN-Habitat provided support to Kenya in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The document was also a tool to mobilize resources for the implementation of specific programmes and projects, and it focused on six strategic action areas, namely, improved land management and sustainably planned human settlements; improved access to quality urban basic services and infrastructure; improved access to quality and affordable housing and sustainable slum upgrading and prevention; innovation for improving urban economy and finance; improved urban governance and resilience; and capacity development and sensitization.

46. Reiterating her commitment to further improving the relationship between UN-Habitat and the Government of Kenya and to supporting interventions that had a positive impact on peoples’ lives, the Executive Director expressed appreciation to the national and local authorities of Kenya for their support to projects implemented across Kenya. She also encouraged Committee members to support the implementation and upscaling of interventions set out the Habitat country programme document for Kenya for the period 2018–2021.

47. Mr. Thomas Chiramba, Senior Human Settlements Officer, Regional Office for Africa, delivered a presentation on the work of UN-Habitat in Kenya since 2010, which had been guided by, among other instruments, the country’s development programme, Kenya Vision 2030; the President of Kenya, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta’s “Big Four Agenda”, which focused on manufacturing, food security, affordable housing and universal healthcare; the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Kenya; Kenya’s implementation framework for the New Urban Agenda; and the Habitat country programme document for Kenya.

48. Data provided by the Government to the high-level political forum on sustainable development showed that 46 per cent of Kenya’s population in urban areas lived in informal settlements or inadequate housing, and that only 46 per cent of solid waste generated was collected and properly disposed of, showing that housing and solid waste management were two significant urban challenges in Kenya. Furthermore, while Kenya had put in place numerous instruments for sustainable urban development, their implementation remained a challenge.

49. Since 2010, UN-Habitat had implemented 30 projects in Kenya, which together represented an investment of $14.5 million and translated into approximately 3 to 4 projects of less than $500,000 implemented every year. Most of the projects were located in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, and were focused on youth empowerment, water and sanitation, city planning and housing. Data verified from 11 such projects showed that they had benefited over 222,000 people, primarily in the area of
water and sanitation, but also by providing training and creating employment opportunities. He provided examples of projects executed, including a project on participatory slum upgrading and prevention, which had benefited some 12,000 people; a project on basic services, which had helped Kiambu county to increase its revenue from $1.2 billion to $2.4 billion within two years and had established a semi-anaerobic sanitary landfill that was being replicated in other cities, including Addis Ababa; and a project on water supply and sanitation in the Lake Victoria region, which, with an investment of $7 million, had provided 100,000 people with access to safe drinking water and 80,000 people with access to sanitation in three secondary cities and had improved the cities’ capacities in areas such as the management of utilities, operations, maintenance and integrated urban development planning.

50. A financial contribution of $600,000 from the Government of Kenya for testing some of the approaches described in the New Urban Agenda had enabled UN-Habitat to provide support to Kenyan towns, including through the design of new streets in Ruiru to promote non-motorized transport, which had enhanced local economic activity through improved pedestrian accessibility; the development of a sustainable mobility approach for Ruiru, which several counties wanted UN-Habitat to replicate with World Bank support; and the development of a long-term solid waste management strategy for Kisii town, which had included the testing of recycling approaches that had created employment opportunities for young people.

51. In closing, he said that in order to achieve greater impacts in its host country UN-Habitat would need to attract resources in the order of $4 million per year; find ways to reach a greater number of counties located far away from Nairobi, especially in the North and in coastal areas; and overcome challenges associated with lack of capacity in the country’s newly created urban boards. UN-Habitat would continue to focus on addressing such challenges and on taking advantage of opportunities associated with the devolution of services to local governments, the President’s Big Four Agenda, the improved relationship between UN-Habitat and the Government, and the growing number of development partners interested in supporting urban development.

52. In the ensuing discussion, one representative urged UN-Habitat to provide expert input into relevant national legislative processes, stressing that county governments were critical players in sustainable urban development in many countries but could do very little if national laws did not reflect international norms and policies. He further suggested that UN-Habitat should help to build the capacities of national governments and higher education institutions. Another representative said that the UN-Habitat country programme should implement projects in coastal zones on important issues such as integrated coastal zone management, disaster risk reduction and solid waste management.

53. One representative suggested that UN-Habitat reinstate field visits by the Committee to specific project sites to enable members to see UN-Habitat activities first-hand. Another representative suggested that future presentations should cover activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, which would help the Committee to gain a broader perspective of activities and to promote South-South cooperation in human settlements and in implementing the New Urban Agenda.

54. The Chair said that the Bureau had discussed the issue of thematic/country presentations and had agreed that in the future the Bureau would play a role in deciding how countries were selected and how information was presented in order to ensure adequate geographical distribution and that due consideration was given to proposals presented by members, such as the reinstatement of field visits.

55. The Executive Director said that the secretariat had taken note of all the comments by members and would discuss ways in which UN-Habitat could provide expert input to national legislative processes and develop projects in coastal areas in the future.

**Agenda item 7**

**Update on the preparations for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council, including dates and theme of the session**

56. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Update on the preparations for the 27th session of the Governing Council, including the dates and theme of the session” (HSP/CPR/70/7), and a document entitled “Proposed special theme for the 27th session of the Governing Council” (HSP/CPR/70/7/Add.1). He said that the Bureau had discussed, at a meeting held on 4 September 2018, whether the Committee should recommend to the Governing Council that it postpone its twenty-seventh session, which was currently scheduled to be held from 8 to 12 April 2019, to either the last week of May 2019 or other dates in June 2019, in order to give member States and the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi additional time for preparation.
to prepare for the session and in view of the fact that the United Nations Environment Assembly would hold its fourth session in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019.

57. The representative of the secretariat stressed that, should the Committee recommend changing the dates of the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council, the 58 members of the Governing Council would have 21 days to respond to the recommendation and positive responses by a simple majority of members would be required to change the dates of the session.

58. Introducing the document entitled “Proposed special theme for the 27th session of the Governing Council”, the Executive Director recalled that, in accordance with Governing Council resolution 20/21, on the organization and themes for future sessions of the Governing Council, the special themes of Governing Council sessions were to be selected by the Bureau of the Governing Council at least six months before the start of each session of the Council, on the basis of advice from the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. In consultation with the Bureau, the Executive Director had proposed the theme of “Partnering for evidence-based implementation” as the special theme of the twenty-seventh session. As outlined in the document, the aim of the proposed theme was to support member States, local authorities and their partners in integrated urban policymaking towards more effective and accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant global agendas. The theme was also in line with the recommendations of the 2018 report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/73/83-E/2018/62), which called for the adoption of an incremental and inclusive reporting system and for the creation of user-friendly and participatory data platforms. If chosen, the proposed theme would enable member States and partners to discuss how innovative data systems, including geospatial data, big data and community data, could serve to complement the progress reports submitted by member States on their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

59. In addition to discussing the proposed theme, the Executive Director urged member States to start thinking about the draft resolutions they would be submitting for consideration by the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session, stressing that the secretariat would organize subcommittee meetings to update member States on progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Council at its previous session and to discuss new resolutions for consideration by the Council at its forthcoming session. Recalling that, in accordance with rule 28 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, the Executive Director was required to prepare a statement on the budgetary implications of proposed resolutions, and that the Governing Council had set timelines for the submission of draft resolutions prior to each session, she urged Committee members to abide by those timelines. In closing, she said that the while the secretariat was keenly aware that the structure of the twenty-seventh session could be affected by the impending decision by the General Assembly on the governance structure of UN-Habitat, preparations for the session would continue for the time being.

60. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed a preference for holding the session in May 2019, while other representatives said that they were not in a position to comment on the proposed change at present. In response to a query from another member, the representative of the secretariat said that, should the date of the session be moved, the secretariat would still be able to prepare a report on the outcome of the session for consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

61. Following the discussion, at the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee decided to request the secretariat to send a note verbale to all Committee members proposing possible new dates for the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council, developed in consultation with the Presidency of the Governing Council, and inviting members to provide comments on the proposed special theme of the session. The Committee also agreed to request the subcommittee to discuss, and to decide on, the selection of the special theme and the dates of the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council. Lastly, the Committee requested the secretariat to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate subcommittee discussions on the draft strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, the draft stakeholder engagement policy and the United Nations system-wide guidelines on safer cities for further consideration by the Committee at its seventy-first meeting.
Agenda item 9

Any other matters

62. One representative, describing the multiple natural disasters and calamities that had affected his country, called on UN-Habitat to promote greater cooperation and the sharing of experiences pertaining to the development of human settlements that were capable of withstanding earthquakes and the expansion of water and sanitation services, and to enhance cooperation between mayors around the world with a view to addressing emerging challenges in urban areas.

63. The Chair announced that, in his capacity as chair of the open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/226, he would brief the Second Committee of the General Assembly during its consideration of a draft resolution concerning UN-Habitat at the seventy-third session of the General Assembly on the compromise reached by the open-ended working group.

Closure of the meeting

64. The meeting was declared closed at 1.15 p.m. on Thursday, 20 September 2018.