71ST REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

6 DECEMBER 2018

Agenda Item 7:

Report on the status of implementation of the New Urban Agenda (HSP/CPR/71/7)
UN-Habitat’s Progress on Implementation of the New Urban Agenda
Theme: UN-System, Partnerships and Advocacy
Report for the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Period: June - December 2018

Governments in the Quito declaration underline the importance of UN-Habitat’s role within the UN system as a focal point on Sustainable Urbanization and human settlements development and in the implementation, follow up and review of the New Urban Agenda (NUA). This report will focus on progress in two key elements of UN-Habitat’s focal point role in the past six months:

- Strengthening UN Inter-agency coordination and collaboration in supporting implementation of the NUA and urban dimensions of the SDGs
- Mobilizing multi-stakeholder partnerships for advocacy, implementation, follow up and review of the NUA and urban dimensions of the SDGs.

1. **UN Inter-Agency Coordination and Collaboration**

I. **UN-System Wide Strategy**

There has been a phenomenal shift towards urbanization in recent years, with over half the world’s population currently living in cities and expected to increase to 70 per cent by 2030. Such rapid urbanization is a mega trend that calls for urgent attention towards addressing the challenges of unplanned urbanization while at the same time harnessing the opportunities good urbanization brings in addressing poverty, promoting inclusive growth, employment and climate-smart development.

Agenda 2030 observes the opportunities of sustainable urbanization to drive equity, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity, as reflected in SDG 11, as well as a number of other goals and targets. It will be impossible to address poverty (Goal 1), inequality (Goal 10), climate change (Goal 13), gender equality (Goal 5), water and sanitation (Goal 6), economic growth and employment (Goal 8), industrialization and innovation (Goal 9) and consumption and production patterns (Goal 12) without addressing the way cities grow and function. The transformative commitments, drivers of change and means of implementation of the NUA provide a framework to accelerate progress in localizing and achieving the SDGs in cities and other human settlements.

The Secretary General’s UN reform aims to enhance the UN Development System’s effectiveness, efficiency and coherence in supporting countries to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary General’s Independent Assessment Panel of UN-Habitat highlighted the following:

- “failure within the UN system to adequately acknowledge the pace, scale and implications of urbanization, the dependence of the 2030 Agenda on the direction of urban development, or the fundamental role played in urban development by local governments and other local actors;
- A call for stronger engagement, integration, and coherence across the UN System.
- A recommendation to establish a strong coordinating mechanism to convene all UN agencies and partners on urban sustainability.
A subsequent GA resolution of 2017 on “Strengthening UN-Habitat” calls for development of a UN System-wide strategy for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. Key developments in the past six months in this area include:

- Endorsement by the Secretary General and UN Senior Management Group, on 6th June 2018, of UN-Habitat Executive Director’s proposal for the key elements of the UN system-wide strategy and UN-Habitat’s leadership in developing the strategy.

- UN-Habitat is now leading a Task Team of initially 12 UN agencies in preparing a paper on UN systemwide coherence for sustainable urban development.

- Key elements of the paper include:
  
  a) **The Potential of Sustainable Urbanization as Transformative Force for:** access to basic services, land and housing; spatial designs that enhance social cohesion and inclusion; economic prosperity; climate action; peace, security and humanitarian action; and public health and safety.
  
  b) **Frontier Issues:** factors that will either accelerate or mitigate the potential of sustainable urbanization, and how these can be anticipated (AI, geo-spatial tech, pandemic, accelerated migration, rising sea levels).
  
  c) **Expected Outcomes:** SDG 11 targets and related urban targets of associated goals, and the utility of transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda as means to realize these outcomes.
  
  d) **Implementation of NUA at National and Subnational Level:** practical strategies member States, municipalities, and other stakeholders can use to localize the SDGs, with reference to AFINUA and the action plans of other relevant global agreements and commitments.
  
  e) **UN Collaborative Implementation Framework (UN CIF):** mechanism for inter-agency cooperation organized along functional areas of data, policy implementation, partnerships, and financing
  
  f) **Alignment of HLCP/UNSDG:** alignment of analytical work of HLCP with actions of UNSDG Strategic Results Groups and Transition Team, globally, regionally and at country level.

- The draft paper will be considered by the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) at its 37th session in April 2019. Upon endorsement by the HLCP, it will be presented to the UN Chief Executive Board for endorsement and possible discussion at its May 2019 meeting in Geneva.

- This joint work will provide opportunities to map the status of the work of other UN agencies on sustainable urbanization and thereafter.

### II. UN-Habitat’s internal efforts to strengthen UN system-wide approach to sustainable urban development

UN-Habitat is implementing an action plan for strengthening the UN system-wide approach to sustainable urban development at global, regional, country and local levels, based on the above-mentioned UN CIF which was endorsed by about 15 UN agencies at the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, February 2018. An overview of the framework is outlined in the table below.
**UN-Habitat: Overview for Strengthening the UN System-wide Approach for Sustainable Urbanization**

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<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE AND DATA FOR POLICY</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL</th>
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<td>ADVISE AND MONITORING</td>
<td>1. Develop UNDAF New Urban Agenda Guidelines and information packages for UN country-level teams</td>
<td>1. Develop a UN System-wide strategy for building partnerships on sustainable urbanization, based on identified issue-based knowledge products 2. Establish partnership modalities for implementation of UN System-wide strategy and the UN Collaborative Implementation Framework 3. Strengthen UN system-wide strategic engagement in the World Urban Forum and thematic networks</td>
<td>1. Coordination of the international community around financing for sustainable urban development. 2. Financing for specific issue-based elements of sustainable urbanization through pooled funding mechanisms such as IFSUD and the SDG Fund.</td>
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<td>1. Develop integrated issue-based knowledge products on sustainable urbanization for coherent policy reviews 2. Coordinate incremental data systems 3. Develop global efforts on follow-up and review of the NUA/SDGs</td>
<td>1. Develop learning platforms (within existing mechanisms) to align UNDAFs at regional level with the New Urban Agenda</td>
<td>1. Enhance cooperation of UN-Habitat and SUD stakeholders with UN System and inter-governmental bodies 2. Strengthen partnership with Regional Economic and Social Commissions and Regional UNSDGs</td>
<td>1. Strengthen partnership with regional development banks</td>
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<td>GLOBAL</td>
<td>1. Develop integrated regional knowledge products and platforms incl. issue-based ones 2. Develop regional follow-up and review mechanisms of the NUA/SDGs</td>
<td>1. Alignment of NUA in UNDAFs and UN Agency Strategies 2. Country-level collaborative implementation programmes 3. Integration of Sustainable Urban Development in National Strategies</td>
<td>1. Integrate Sustainable Urban Development financing in UNDAFs 2. Strengthen institutions, legal frameworks and substantive and administrative capacity through IFSUD and urban window of the UN SDG Fund 3. Strengthen capacity of sub-national authorities on local public financial</td>
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<td>REGIONAL</td>
<td>1. Strengthen coordination of UNCT urban data including issue-based elements for policy review 2. Enhance capacity for country/city monitoring of urban data</td>
<td>1. Strengthen UN engagement in national level sustainable urban development platforms and forums. 2. Create enabling environment for investment through capacity building and advocacy 3. Expand South-South and city-city cooperation</td>
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<td>COUNTRY/LOCAL</td>
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**Legend:**
- **NUA:** New Urban Agenda
- **SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals
- **UNDAFs:** United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks
- **UNSDFs:** United Nations Sustainable Development Fund
Implementation modalities for the UN CIF include:

a) **Strategic Leadership (Ongoing Consultations among UN Principals)**

Following the 6 June 2018 session of the SMG, the Executive Director has embarked upon a series of informal, bilateral consultations with her counterparts in other agencies with the approach to establish relations and explore how they are addressing urban issues. Thus far, the ED has engaged 6 heads of UN agencies and is assessing the need to establish an Urban Management Group mirroring the Environment Management Group by UNEP to provide strategic leadership in implementing the UN systemwide strategy. The Executive Director is also exploring ways to secure UN-Habitat’s membership to the UNSDG which would be an excellent platform to advance systemwide coherence for sustainable urbanization.

b) **Coordinated Action Planning (UNSDG)**

UN-Habitat has assigned focal points to participate in the four Strategic Results Groups (SRG) and their Task Teams. The SRGs include: 1. SDG Implementation; 2. Financing; 3. Business Innovation; 4. Partnerships.

As a member of the data task team of the SDG Implementation results group, UN-Habitat is working with five agencies to align data generated by the city prosperity index with the statistical division of DESA, policy bureau of UNDP, and the equivalent data collection and analytics sections of other agencies.

Another example is the multi-stakeholder task team of the partnerships results group where UNH is engaging UN agencies to participate in the World Urban Forum.

As part of enhancing the Innovative Financing agenda, UN-Habitat has actively worked with UN DOCO and other UN agencies to support establishment of the UN SDG Fund, including an Urban Window which is linked to the Implementation Facility for Sustainable Urban Development (IFSUD). Joint work with the World Bank on IFSUD is in progress in Mexico and Kenya and will be rolled out in Rwanda, Egypt and Uganda. The work so far includes diagnostics, feasibility studies, preparation of bankable projects for public and private investment and support to accelerating implementation of national and regional urban strategies.

c) **Regional Cooperation and support to UNSDG at country level**

UN-Habitat recognizes that efforts by UN agencies to coordinate support to member States to promote sustainable urbanization will vary from region to region, and that agencies will have to modify global frameworks when attempting to apply these to the conditions of each region. UN-Habitat also notes that the reforms ongoing in the UN will lead to the decentralization of administrative authority and to more significant integration of the regional economic commissions, and regional offices of other UN organizations.

Further, UN-Habitat will need to be set up properly to participate in inter-agency teams coordinated by UNSDG regional directors charged with facilitating dialogue among regional economic commissions and regional offices of other UN agencies to provide integrated policy support to UN country teams. Enhancing participation in regional coordination mechanisms will be an important way for UN-Habitat to provide technical and policy advice on sustainable urban development to many member States, well beyond the number of countries in which the agency is physically present. In this way UNH could support the urban dimensions of Common Country Assessments (CCAs), next-generation UNDAFs, and Resident Coordinators Offices (RCOs) – without physical presence.
UN-Habitat also takes note of the importance of prioritizing countries to provide in-country advisory services to the Resident Coordinator Offices and support integration of sustainable urban development in National Development Frameworks and UN CCA/UNDAFs.

The Executive Director has appointed a Senior Advisor to develop a concrete operational strategy and modalities to strengthen UN-Habitat’s engagement and action at regional and national levels.

2. Partnerships

UN-Habitat has a history of working with a wide range of partners through its engagement with the UN system, governments and other stakeholders including civil society organizations, international financial institutions, academia and the private sector. While UN-Habitat’s partners operate at various levels of engagement, each contribute strategically to the implementation of urban imperatives outlined in the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. A Stakeholder Engagement Policy is being considered by Member States to strengthen partners’ participation in governance processes, influence UN-Habitat policies and decisions and promote coherence in engagement with UN-Habitat initiatives.

I. Local and Regional Authorities

Local and regional governments have been identified as strategic partners in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and urban related SDGs. Local and regional governments have demonstrated influence over global and national decisions particularly in the promotion sustainable urban development priorities. UN-Habitat’s partners in local and regional authorities have also been instrumental in mobilizing support for concrete commitments and actions at all levels to facilitate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and urban related SDGs.

In the past six months, UN-Habitat has engaged in several activities that have promoted the strengthening of local or regional governments in implementing, monitoring and reporting on the sustainable urban development priorities outlined in the New Urban Agenda.

a) The Sustainable Cities Dialogue in Strasbourg, France- May 24-25th 2018

In May 2018, UN-Habitat co-organized the Sustainable Cities Dialogue in coordination with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The event was also supported by United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments.

The dialogue aimed to:

- Facilitate multilevel dialogue between national and local governments;
- Exchange experiences, solutions, challenges on various dimensions of sustainable cities and human settlements;
- Prepare a joint local-national contribution for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and in particular for the Local and Regional Governments Forum.

The Dialogue gathered over 350 participants from more than 25 countries including Mayors, Governors and Ministers and a range of international partners, in Strasbourg, France at the invitation of Mr. Roland Ries, Mayor of Strasbourg, and Mme. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat. The participants of the Sustainable Cities Dialogues reaffirmed that an enabling political, legal, institutional
and financial framework is needed for the achievement of SDG 11 and the urban related dimensions of Agenda 2030. Urban governance was also identified as the cornerstone of effective and sustainable implementation of SDG11 and the link between all urban targets.

The governance dimensions of the implementation of SDG 11 highlighted in the New Urban Agenda were recognized by participants as an effective means of localizing urban related SDGs. This political, institutional and operational approach called for more networked systems of governance and an increased interactive and multidimensional dialogue that bridges SDGs and the New Urban Agenda implementation that puts citizens at the center of the development.

b) The Local and Regional Governments Forum, 2018 High Level Political Forum - July 16th, 2018

The engagement of local authorities was recognized at the first regional and local governments forum which brought together representatives of local and regional governments, member states, and other stakeholders to support the participation of local authorities in SDGs follow-up and review processes.

The first half of the forum discussed key challenges, and best practices of local implementation of the 2030 Agenda spearheaded by local and regional governments. Participants at the session called for the creation of new tools for multi-level government leadership to maximum collaboration and optimized resources.

The second half of the forum reviewed initiatives from regional and local governments from Latin America, Asia, and Europe that have been working on financial mechanisms to promote SDGs implementation. Speakers also emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships and reviewed local and sub-national monitoring tools and systems for reporting on SDGs.

II. Stakeholder Engagement

a) UN-Habitat Partners Forum, High Level Political Forum

Over 60 representatives of academia, civil society, private sector, women, children and youth, professionals and other stakeholders engaged with the Mme. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, UN-Habitat’s Executive Director on her vision – a better quality of life for all in a rapidly urbanizing world. She reiterated her drive to regain trust of member states and stakeholders alike, and to ensure that stakeholders contribute effectively to the identification of UN-Habitat priorities and strategies. Stakeholder welcomed the Executive Directors’ message with its emphasis on people, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, assessing impact, transparency and accountability.

UN-Habitat’s proposal to establish an international advisory group and internal steering committee on partnerships to facilitate coordination, alignment and enhanced stakeholder engagement in policy and programmes was welcomed. Other key issues included; the role of science and technology, cities in crises, migration, emerging partnership structures, access to justice and the right to the city, and the revived role of the World Urban Campaign. Key highlights included the role of data and evidence in monitoring implementation of SDG 11 and the NUA, gender equality, youth, sustainable and friendly partnerships.

3. Advocacy

I. High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

As part of the follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments particularly Agenda 2030, the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) was held in July 2018 for
the annual thematic review of the SDGs on “transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. SDG 11 was one of the four SDGs considered for in-depth review.

UN-Habitat, as a focal point in the UN system on sustainable urbanization and human settlements in the demonstrated its leadership and support for a wide range of partners. The Executive Director shared her vision on the reform of UN-Habitat and the overall direction of the organization with key Member States, UN agencies and other partners.

During the HLPF, UN-Habitat initiated actions that: promoted increased support to the organization from Member States, donors and stakeholders; initiated the establishment of the UN and Stakeholders Collaborative Implementation Frameworks and demonstrated a collaborative approach to UN-Habitat’s work and promoted specific flagship initiatives of the organization.

UN-Habitat was associated with over 50 events over the two-week period, working closely with a wide range of UN entities, Governments and other partners. UN-Habitat also contributed to the organization of the Local and Regional Government Forum and Local 2030.

The Executive Director delivered remarks in several events and hosted a High-Level Reception to launch the first SDG 11 Synthesis Report and to share UN-Habitat’s vision to become fit-for-purpose in supporting the Agenda 2030. UN-Habitat also organized a dedicated Forum for its partners to discuss concrete ways to strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships.

An active social media campaign was conducted in which UN-Habitat was mentioned over 75 million times. In addition, an international media press briefing was held at UNHQ, several press releases were issued and a joint Op-Ed was published in conjunction with UNDP.

An exhibition and a ‘tiny’ eco house (in collaboration with UNEP) also helped to position SDG11 in a second place amongst the SDGs under review. UN-Habitat also worked closely with the city of New York to provide on-site discussions during an Urban Walk and a Bike Ride.

These promotional activities resulted in elevating SDG11 to second place amongst the SDGs under review during the HLPF week.

Some of the key messages and opportunities emanating from the HLPF included: (i) the role of local governments and efforts to localize the SDGs need to be scaled up making it fully part of local / urban development plans and (ii) more efforts are needed to integrate contributions from local and regional governments, Regional Economic Commissions, the UN System and other stakeholders including communities in reports coordinated by UN-Habitat. (iii) Based on information from the Voluntary National Reports, progress towards SDG11 is mixed, with key challenges related to adequate, affordable and accessible housing; public spaces and city sprawl.¹

II. Urban October

October is a month dedicated to raising awareness on urban challenges, successes and sustainability faced by cities and human settlements around the world and is referred to as Urban October. UN-Habitat marks Urban October through 2 key advocacy platforms: World Habitat Day (WHD) on 1 October and World Cities Day (WCD) on 31 October. This year, partners and stakeholders were mobilized around the themes
of the 2 dates; Municipal Solid Waste Management for WHD and Building Sustainable and Resilient Cities for WCD.

During Urban October, over 150 events took place across almost 50 cities in about 30 countries. Active campaigns aimed at promoting Urban October resulted in an increase of UN-Habitat media mentions and appearance. UN-Habitat appeared in 48.8 million article views with 168 editorial mentions. India dominated the media global coverage of Urban October flagship days at 41% followed by United States (13%) and the United Kingdom (8.7%). A report by Meltwater indicates that the online post with the greatest impact was one that stated that partnership is key to addressing the challenges of urbanization and contribute to sustainable urban development.

Below are key highlights of Urban October.

a) World Habitat Day
   - Participation of the President of Kenya at WHD global observation in Nairobi and over 750 participants
   - Re-launch of the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour, awarded to five recipients including civil society, academia, local government and national government from the regions of Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, Africa and Arab States.
   - Launch of Waste-Wise Cities global campaign with the support of the World Urban Campaign
   - World Habitat Day events in nearly 80 cities worldwide

b) World Cities Day
   - Successful global observation in Liverpool, United Kingdom, including participation from Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique, Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Brazil, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and others
   - World Cities Day events took place in 66 cities around the world including significant events in China.

c) World Urban Campaign (WUC) Steering Committee
   - Renewed Commitment of the WUC to support and coordinate stakeholders’ engagement in UN-Habitat’s advocacy work and to support implementation of the new Strategic Plan

4. Conclusion:

The second half of 2018 has been a very active period for UN-Habitat in promoting UN system-wide coherence, strategic partnerships and advocacy in the implementation as well as follow up and review of the New Urban Agenda and urban related SDGs. While there is some progress, it is important to invest more in strengthening UN-Habitat’s capacity to fulfill its focal point role. There is more potential and demand to mobilize stakeholders at all levels in all countries to contribute to the New Urban Agenda, influence policies of national and local governments and private sector towards sustainable urbanization and increase investments in sustainable urbanization. Only then will it be possible to fulfill the objectives of the NUA and achieve the SDGs, leaving no one and no place behind.