Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat

Twentieth session (Nairobi, 4–8 April 2005)

Notification by the Executive Director

Dates, venue and participation

1. The twentieth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) will be held from 4 to 8 April 2005. The meeting will take place at the headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya. A copy of the provisional agenda for the meeting is attached herewith and will be followed, in due course, by other documentation.

2. The session will be opened at 10 a.m. on Monday, 4 April 2005. Representatives and invited guests are kindly requested to be seated by 9.45 a.m.

3. A list of the members of the Governing Council for the year 2005 is attached to the present notification as annex I. In this regard, the Executive Director wishes to point out that, pursuant to rule 61 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, a State which, though not a member of the Governing Council, is a Member of the United Nations or a member of a specialized agency may participate in the deliberations of the Governing Council in the capacity of observer.

Informal consultations

4. In order to facilitate the work of the Governing Council, arrangements have been made for informal consultations to be held among the regional groups on various matters before the Governing Council, in particular the election of officers, on Sunday, 3 April, beginning at 11 a.m. The first issue of the Journal for the session, to be issued on Sunday, 3 April, will include information on the allocation of rooms for those meetings. Attention is drawn to the note on the geographical distribution of officers elected at previous sessions of the Governing Council, attached to the present notification as annex II.

5. In addition, it is expected that various partners, notably local authorities, parliamentarians and non-governmental organizations, will convene their own informal consultations, events and activities before and during the session. Detailed information regarding these consultations, events and activities will be communicated to all participants by the secretariat, as soon as it is available.
Key issues to be discussed

6. Among the key issues to be considered by the Governing Council at its forthcoming session are:

   (a) Implementing and monitoring the goal of the United Nations Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers;

   (b) Recommendations on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities;

   (c) Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation;

   (d) Two special themes, on:

      (i) Involvement of civil society in improving local governance;

      (ii) Post-conflict, natural and human-made disasters assessment and reconstruction;


7. Accordingly, the Executive Director would like to stress the importance of full participation at the session by all States. As a number of important decisions pertaining to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda are expected to be taken by the Governing Council, it is hoped that States will see the need for high-level, policy-making representation, as well as substantive representation, at the session.

8. The Executive Director wishes to bring to the attention of Governments resolution 16/12 of 7 May 1997, in which the Governing Council invited Governments to include in their delegations to future sessions of the Governing Council representatives of local authorities and relevant actors of civil society, particularly the private sector, non-governmental organizations and research organizations in the field of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. The Executive Director wishes also to stress the importance to the twentieth session of the Governing Council of the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, with regard to the roles of local authorities and members of civil society.

9. It should also be noted that, pursuant to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, the Governing Council has amended its rules of procedure to provide for the effective participation of local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners in the deliberations of the Governing Council. These new provisions are contained in Rules 64–67 of the Governing Council’s new rules of procedure.

10. The Executive Director would also like to emphasize that both UN-Habitat and member States benefit substantially if States include in their delegations their permanent representatives to the Programme or representatives of other focal points in Nairobi with whom UN-Habitat deals on a continuous basis. States are requested to inform the Executive Director of the composition of their delegations as soon as possible. In accordance with rule 16 of the Governing Council’s rules of procedure, the credentials of representatives should be submitted to the Executive Director, at the latest, before the end of the first meeting of the session.

Organizational arrangements for the session

11. Annexes III and IV to the present notification contain the Executive Director’s suggestions concerning procedural and organizational aspects of the twentieth session of the Governing Council and a suggested timetable, while annex V contains a list of the agenda items for the session, with the corresponding pre-session documents.

12. Comprehensive information for participants regarding such matters as accommodation, visas, medical requirements and other matters will be distributed shortly. Any inquiries regarding such matters or any other matters concerning the organizational aspects of the session should be directed to Mr. Joseph Mungai and addressed as follows:
Annex I

Governing Council of the
United Nations Human
Settlements Programme

Membership in 2005¹
(58 members)

**African States (16)**

- Burkina Faso (2006)
- Burundi (2006)
- Congo (2007)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (2006)
- Ghana (2008)
- Kenya (2007)
- Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (2008)
- Malawi (2006)
- Nigeria (2007)
- Rwanda (2008)
- Sierra Leone (2006)
- Senegal (2006)
- South Africa (2007)
- Swaziland (2007)
- Uganda (2008)
- United Republic of Tanzania (2008)

**Latin American and Caribbean States (10)**

- Argentina (2006)
- Brazil (2006)
- Chile (2006)
- Costa Rica (2007)
- Ecuador (2006)
- Mexico (2007)
- Paraguay (2007)

Three vacant seats ²

**Eastern European States (6)**

- Belarus (2007)
- Bulgaria (2007)
- Poland (2006)
- Russian Federation (2006)
- Czech Republic (2008)

One vacant seat²

**Western European and other States (13)**

- Belgium (2008)
- Canada (2008)
- France (2008)
- Germany (2007)
- Greece (2007)
- Israel (2007)
- Netherlands (2006)
- Spain (2007)
- Turkey (2006)
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2006)
- United States of America (2006)
- Sweden (2008)

One vacant seat²

**Asian States (13)**

- Bangladesh (2008)
- China (2008)
- Indonesia (2006)
- India (2007)
- Iran (Islamic Republic of) (2006)
- Japan (2006)
- Jordan (2007)
- Pakistan (2006)
- Philippines (2007)
- Saudi Arabia (2007)
- Sri Lanka (2007)
- United Arab Emirates (2008)

One vacant seat²

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¹ Information received from the Economic and Social Council as at December 2004.

² Vacancy to be filled in January 2005.
# Annex II

**Geographical distribution of officers elected at previous sessions of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Session of the Governing Council</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Vice-Presidents</th>
<th>Rapporteur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Sweden)</td>
<td>African States (Malawi) Eastern European States (Poland) Latin American States (Mexico)</td>
<td>Asian States (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>African States (Kenya)</td>
<td>Asian States (Pakistan) Latin American States (Mexico) Western European and other States (Sweden)</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Poland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>Latin American States (Mexico)</td>
<td>African States (Nigeria) Asian States (Iraq) Eastern European States (USSR)</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>Asian States (Philippines)</td>
<td>African States (Lesotho) Eastern European States (Hungary) Western European and other States (Federal Republic of Germany)</td>
<td>Latin American States (Jamaica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)</td>
<td>Asian States (Sri Lanka) Latin American States (Jamaica) Western European and other States (Canada)</td>
<td>African States (Egypt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Finland)</td>
<td>African States (Zambia) Eastern European and other States (Bulgaria) Latin American States (Argentina)</td>
<td>Asian States (Bangladesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>African States (Gabon)</td>
<td>Asian States (India) Latin American States (Chile) Eastern European States (United States of America)</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>Latin American States (Jamaica)</td>
<td>African States (Tunisia) Asian States (Sri Lanka) Eastern European States (Hungary)</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Greece)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Turkey)</td>
<td>African States (Kenya) Asian States (Bangladesh) Eastern European States (Poland)</td>
<td>Latin American States (Chile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Tenth</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Bulgaria)</td>
<td>Asian States (Indonesia) Latin American States (Colombia) Western European and other States (Finland)</td>
<td>African States (Kenya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Eleventh</td>
<td>Asian States (India)</td>
<td>African States (Botswana) Latin American States (Brazil) Western European and other States (United Kingdom)</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Poland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>Region 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Twelfth</td>
<td>Latin American States (Colombia)</td>
<td>African States (Gabon) Eastern European States (Hungary) Western European and other States (United States of America)</td>
<td>Asian States (Sri Lanka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Thirteenth</td>
<td>African States (Zimbabwe)</td>
<td>Asian States (Sri Lanka) Eastern European States (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) Latin American States (Brazil)</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Fourteenth</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Finland)</td>
<td>African States (Uganda) Asian States (Philippines) Eastern European States (Romania)</td>
<td>Latin American States (Chile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Fifteenth</td>
<td>Eastern European States (USSR)</td>
<td>Asian States (Indonesia) Latin American States (Venezuela) Western European and other States (United Kingdom)</td>
<td>African States (Cameroon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Sixteenth</td>
<td>Asian States (Bangladesh)</td>
<td>African States (Kenya) Latin American States (Mexico) Western European and other States (Norway)</td>
<td>Eastern European States (Romania)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Seventeenth</td>
<td>Latin American States (Colombia)</td>
<td>African States (Senegal) Eastern European States (Bulgaria) Western European and other States (Sweden)</td>
<td>Asian States (Iran, (Islamic Republic of))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Eighteenth</td>
<td>African States (Algeria)</td>
<td>Asian States (Bangladesh) Eastern European States (Russian Federation) Latin American States (Argentina)</td>
<td>Western European and other States (Turkey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Nineteenth</td>
<td>Western European and other States</td>
<td>African States (Malawi) Asian States (Sri Lanka) Eastern European States (Poland)</td>
<td>Latin American States (Chile)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under the principle of geographical rotation provided for in rule 17, paragraph 2, of the Governing Council's rules of procedure, the following regional groups should provide candidates for the offices in question for the twentieth session of the Governing Council:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Region 1</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Region 2</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Twentieth</td>
<td>Eastern European</td>
<td>Asian States Latin American States Western European and other States</td>
<td>African States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex III

Proposed organizational arrangements for the twentieth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

Note by the Executive Director

1. The Governing Council may find it conducive to the efficient conduct of its work during the twentieth session to adopt the organizational arrangements set out below.

A. Bureau

2. In accordance with rule 17 of the Governing Council's rules of procedure, the Bureau should consist of a President, three Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur, elected with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution by rotation among the regional groups of States. Annex II to the present notification shows the geographical distribution of members of the Bureau at previous sessions of the Governing Council.

3. As provided for in rule 18 of the Governing Council's rules of procedure, one of the Vice-Presidents should be designated to chair the sessional committee of the whole referred to in paragraph 16 below. The remaining two Vice-Presidents would assist the President of the Governing Council directly in his or her duties in plenary and chair the ad hoc drafting committee referred to in paragraph 17 below.

B. Plenary

4. Following consultations with the Bureau of the Governing Council, it is recommended that the plenary divide its work into two segments: first, a high-level segment of ministers, heads of delegations and mayors, which would be held on the first and second day; and, second, dialogues with local authorities and other partners to be held on the third day.

C. High-level segment

5. It is suggested that the high-level segment of ministers, heads of delegations and mayors focus its discussions on the following three agenda items:

   (a) Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): progress report of the Executive Director (item 4 of the provisional agenda);

   (b) Implementing and monitoring the goal of the United Nations Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers (item 6 of the provisional agenda);


6. With a view to accommodating the 60–80 delegations who normally attend the sessions of the Governing Council, it is recommended that, during the high-level segment, each delegation be allowed a maximum of five minutes speaking time and that this limit be strictly adhered to. In this context, it should be noted that part of the morning meeting on the first day will be taken up by organizational matters.

7. In establishing the list of speakers for the high-level segment, precedence will be given to ministers and deputy ministers. These will be followed by other heads of Government delegations and Habitat Agenda partners.
D. **Dialogues with local authorities and other partners**

8. The dialogues with local authorities and other partners will focus on:
   
   (a) Recommendations on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities (item 7 of the provisional agenda);
   
   (b) Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (item 8 of the provisional agenda).

9. In this regard, it should be recalled that, in operative paragraph 2 of its resolution 16/12 of 7 May 1997, the Governing Council decided “to provide, at future sessions [of the Governing Council], opportunities for partners to engage in a dialogue among themselves and with Governments; such dialogues may, as appropriate, serve as an input to the deliberations [of the Governing Council]”.

10. In pursuance of the above decision, and with a view to increasing the participation and contribution of local authorities and other partners in the work of the Governing Council, arrangements have been made for dialogues with local authorities and other partners to be held during the plenary meeting on the third day, as indicated in annex IV to the present notification. These dialogues, which will be on the themes mentioned in paragraph 8 above, will be based on the format followed by Committee II at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, whereby representatives of partner groups will be given an opportunity to make a substantive presentation followed by a dialogue or discussion between Governments and partners on the presentations.

11. To this end, local authorities and other partners are encouraged to submit, in advance, a written summary of their presentation to the secretariat for distribution to all participants ahead of the meeting. They are also encouraged to include in their presentations specific issues of strategic importance to the implementation of the draft work programme of UN-Habitat for the 2006–2007 biennium (document HSP/GC/20/9).

12. It is expected that the presentations to be made by representatives of local authorities and other partners will be the result of consultations by these groups with non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, the private sector, professionals, researchers and labour unions. Arrangements will be made for local authorities and each group of partners to have, if they so wish, consultations in Nairobi immediately prior to the twentieth session of the Governing Council, or at the time and venue of their choice.

13. Detailed information on the organization of these dialogues is contained in annex VI to the present notification.

E. **Summaries by the President**

14. At the end of the high-level segment and the dialogues with local authorities and other partners, the President, drawing from the deliberations in the two plenary segments, will prepare a summary of the main issues raised in the high-level segment and the conclusions or recommendations made during the dialogues. These summaries will reflect the main thrust of the discussions and key positions stated during the two segments and will be submitted to plenary for endorsement.

15. Once endorsed by the Governing Council as an accurate reflection of what transpired in the high-level segment and in the dialogues with partners, the President’s conclusions and recommendations will serve as guidelines for follow-up action by Governments, local authorities, other partners and the secretariat.

F. **Sessional committee of the whole**

16. Bearing in mind the organization of work for previous sessions of the Governing Council and the above recommendations on the work of the plenary, the Governing Council may wish to establish a sessional committee of the whole which would be given responsibility for agenda items 5 (a) and (b), 6, 9, 10 and 11, with the remaining items being considered by the Governing Council sitting in plenary.
G. Drafting committee

17. At its nineteenth session, on an informal basis, the Governing Council established an ad hoc open-ended drafting committee under the chairmanship of one of the Vice-Presidents to pre-screen draft resolutions submitted by delegations with a view to merging, reconciling or clarifying them, as necessary, prior to their consideration by the Governing Council. The Governing Council may wish to continue this practice, which was widely felt to have enhanced the efficiency of its work.

H. Proposed timetable

18. A proposed organization of work and timetable for the twentieth session of the Governing Council is provided in annex IV to the present notification.

19. A list of the agenda items for the twentieth session of the Governing Council and corresponding documents is provided in annex V to the present notification.
Annex IV

Proposed organization of work and timetable for the twentieth session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

Nairobi, 4–8 April 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Plenary</th>
<th>Committee of the Whole</th>
<th>Drafting committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, 4 April</strong></td>
<td>a.m. Opening of session Organization matters: Items 1, 2 and 3 High-level segment: Items 4, 6 and 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.m. High-level segment: Items 4, 6 and 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, 5 April</strong></td>
<td>a.m. High-level segment: Item 4 and 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consultations on draft resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.m. High-level segment: Item 4 and 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, 6 April</strong></td>
<td>a.m. Dialogue I on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities (item 7)</td>
<td>Items 6 and 9</td>
<td>Item 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.m. Dialogue II on strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (item 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, 7 April</strong></td>
<td>a.m.</td>
<td>Items 9, 10 and 11</td>
<td>Consultations on draft resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.m. Draft reports on items 5 (a) and (b), 6, 9, 10 and 11.</td>
<td>Draft reports on items 9, 10 and 11.</td>
<td>Consultations on draft resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, 8 April</strong></td>
<td>a.m. Draft reports of the Committee of the Whole. Draft reports of plenary on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 and on the two dialogues</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consultations on draft resolutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p.m. Draft resolutions from the drafting committee. Items 12, 13, 14 and 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The drafting committee will start its work, formally, on the morning of Tuesday, 5 April 2005. It may continue to work, informally, on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday. The meetings of Thursday, 7 April (morning and afternoon), and Friday, 8 April (morning), will be provided with full interpretation.
Annex V

List of agenda items with corresponding documents

Item 1  Election of officers.

Item 2  Credentials.

Item 3  Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (HSP/GC/20/1; HSP/GC/20/1/Add.1; HSP/GC/20/INF/1; HSP/GC/20/INF/2).

Item 4  Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): progress report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/20/2; HSP/GC/20/2/Add.1; HSP/GC/20/2/Add.2; HSP/GC/20/2/Add.3; HSP/GC/20/2/Add.4, HSP/GC/20/3; HSP/GC/20/3/Add.1; HSP/GC/20/INF/4); Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council to UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/20/INF/3); (HSP/GC/20/2/Add.5; HSP/GC/20/INF/6; HSP/GC/20/INF/7).

Item 5  Special themes:
(a) Involvement of civil society in improving local governance (HSP/GC/20/4);
(b) Post-conflict, natural and human-made disasters assessment and reconstruction (HSP/GC/20/5).

Item 6  Implementing and monitoring the goal of the United Nations Millennium Declaration on improving the lives of slum dwellers (HSP/GC/20/6; HSP/GC/20/6/Add.1).

Item 7  Recommendations on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities (HSP/GC/20/7).

Item 8  Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (HSP/GC/20/8).

Item 9  Work programme of UN-Habitat for the 2006-2007 biennium and budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the 2006-2007 biennium (HSP/GC/20/9; HSP/GC/20/9/Add.1; HSP/GC/20/9/Add.2; HSP/GC/20/B1; HSP/GC/20/B2; HSP/GC/20/INF/5).

Item 10  Coordination matters:
(a) Cooperation between UN-Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme (HSP/GC/20/10);
(b) Cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations (HSP/GC/20/11);
(c) Matters arising out of the resolutions of major legislative organs of the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies which are brought to the attention of the Governing Council (HSP/GC/20/12; HSP/GC/20/B3).

Item 11  Themes for the twenty-first and other future sessions of the Governing Council (HSP/GC/20/13).

Item 12  Other matters (HSP/GC/20/14).

Item 13  Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the twenty-first session of the Governing Council (HSP/GC/20/15, prepared in-session).

Item 14  Adoption of the report of the session.

Item 15  Closure of the session.
Annex VI

Dialogues with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners

Schedule

1. The dialogues with local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners will be held in plenary on Wednesday, 6 April 2005, in the morning and afternoon meetings as indicated in Annex IV.

Format

2. The dialogues will be based on the innovative model launched at the Habitat II Conference and successfully revived at the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth sessions of the Governing Council. Accordingly, the Executive Director and designated representatives of Governments, local authorities and other groups of Habitat Agenda partners will make short substantive presentations followed by a discussion between delegations and panelists.

3. The two dialogues will be conducted as open discussions directly related to the themes of the dialogues. The discussions will be inclusive and substantive, and their results should be action-oriented. Delegations wishing to do so can, however, provide the secretariat with written statements in 250 copies, which will be circulated and synthesized in the President’s summary to be adopted by the Governing Council.

Expected results

4. The main purpose of the two dialogues is to present and discuss the planned contributions of Governments, local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners to the implementation of the relevant sections of the Habitat Agenda and the UN-Habitat work programme and related outputs. Accordingly, panelists and delegates are invited to focus their interventions on both the conceptual and operational aspects of the two dialogue themes. Once adopted, the President’s conclusions and the recommendations from the dialogues will serve as guidelines for follow-up action by Governments, local authorities, other Habitat Agenda partners and UN-Habitat.

Dialogue I: Effective decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities

Wednesday, 6 April 2005, morning meeting

5. In its resolution 19/12 of 9 May 2003, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to take further steps and measures to intensify dialogue on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities among Governments, local authorities and other Habitat Agenda partners, including through the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat, the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) and the second session of the World Urban Forum, with the aim of developing recommendations to be presented at the twentieth session of the Governing Council and documenting best practices. Resolution 19/12 endorsed the proposal by the Executive Director to establish a multi-disciplinary ad hoc advisory panel on decentralization to support the dialogue process and requested the Executive Director to take steps to mobilize additional extra-budgetary resources to enable the ad hoc advisory panel to perform its tasks.

6. The first step towards the implementation of resolution 19/12 was the establishment by UN-Habitat of an Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization (AGRED), which held its inaugural meeting in Gatineau, Canada, on 9–10 March 2004 under the umbrella of UNACLA. UNACLA, which was established in January 2000 pursuant to resolution 17/18 in order to strengthen the international dialogue with local authorities on development issues, has been instrumental in raising the profile of local authorities at the international level. UNACLA members’ have actively participated in the dialogue process on decentralization for the last five years. Its task is to facilitate dialogue between local authorities, national Governments and the United Nations system through a systematic and practical exchange on substantive issues, which should contribute to strengthening the role of local authorities in international development and the promotion of democratic governance.
7. The inaugural meeting of AGRED was followed by a dialogue session on decentralization entitled “Urban renaissance: towards new powers for local governments in a globalizing world”, held during the second World Urban Forum in Barcelona on 13-17 September 2004. The dialogue placed special emphasis on the linkages between urbanization and globalization on the one hand, and decentralization trends on the other. Given the rapid urbanization of the world and the impact of global trends on the lives of citizens, an innovative strategy that empowers local communities to pursue global standards in harmony with local objectives is crucial.

8. On 14 September 2004, the second meeting of AGRED was convened in Barcelona to finalize the draft guidelines on decentralization and agree on the format of a compendium of best practices on decentralization in line with resolution 19/12. The proposed guidelines are attached to document HSP/GC/20/7 on the implementation of resolution 19/12. A first draft of the Compendium of best practices on decentralization, if available prior to the Governing Council, may also be circulated to the Council’s members as an information document.

9. Given the progress made in the implementation of resolution 19/12 and the overall work done by UN-Habitat on decentralization and the strengthening local authorities, and considering the interest from all Habitat Agenda partners in these activities as well as the Agreement of Cooperation between UN-Habitat and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), a dialogue session on decentralization will take place as part of the official deliberations of the Governing Council under agenda item 7. This dialogue will provide a forum for a broader discussion of the principles outlined in the guidelines referred to in paragraph 4. Its main purpose will be to obtain governmental views and recommendations on the implementation of the proposed guidelines.

**Dialogue II: Financing shelter and urban development**

**Wednesday, 6 April 2005, afternoon meeting**

10. The second dialogue session will provide an opportunity for delegates at the twentieth session of the Governing Council to discuss three key elements of financing shelter and urban development. The first will be the role of cities in subnational, national and regional economic development and how financing shelter and urban infrastructure can serve as strategic investment to accelerate economic growth. The second concerns the challenge of improving donor coherence in financing shelter and urban development. Delegates will have the opportunity to consider poverty reduction strategies and country assistance strategies and their effectiveness in harmonizing the priorities of national Governments, multilateral financial institutions, multilateral development agencies and bilateral development cooperation agencies. The third element is the role of domestic capital markets and the financial instruments that can attract private investment for shelter and related urban infrastructure. The dialogue will also provide an opportunity for delegates to review progress to date on the forthcoming *Global Report on Human Settlements 2005: Financing Human Settlements and Urban Development*. A synthesis of the draft report will be made available to delegates prior to the twentieth session of Governing Council. The secretariat intends to invite accomplished academics, policy makers and practitioners to participate in the dialogue as panelists, who will share experiences on financing shelter and urban development.