Draft minutes of the twenty-fifth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 13 June 2007

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 13 June 2007 by Ms. Elisabeth Jacobsen, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

2. The meeting was attended by 67 representatives from 51 countries and one observer from the Holy See.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

3. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting, as set out in document HSP/CPR/25/1.

4. The Chair noted that the present meeting was the first formal meeting of the Committee since the recent twenty-first session of the Governing Council and she looked forward to a good dialogue on the outcome of that session. Some ten resolutions had been adopted at the twenty-first session, including a major watershed resolution on the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008–2013, which she believed would enable a balance to be found between normative and operational activities, and enable UN-Habitat to work better at country level and with other institutions. In considering the resolution on the Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, the establishment of an experimental phase for reimbursable seeding operations for low-income housing and infrastructure had been agreed upon. She concluded by drawing the attention of the members of the Committee to the paper circulated to them showing the schedule of future meetings of the Committee and its working groups.
Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which was held on 27 March 2007

5. The Committee approved and adopted the draft minutes of its extraordinary meeting, held on 27 March 2007, as contained in document HSP/CPR/25/2.

Item 3: Implementation of the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat

6. Mr. Solomon Karanja (Kenya), in his capacity as co-chair of the working group on budgetary and administrative matters, reported on the work of the working group, following the approval of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) by the twenty-first session of the Governing Council. The working group had the task of aligning the revised strategic framework and work programme documents for 2008–2009 with the MTSIP, and to ensure that the key features of the Plan for 2008–2009 had been integrated into those revised documents. He described the procedure followed whereby the secretariat had incorporated the written comments of the working group into the final version of the documents. The revised strategic framework document had been submitted to the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 8 June, and additional amendments to the strategic framework had also been submitted on the same date. The secretariat had informed the Committee that reports would be provided to it and to the twenty-second session of the Governing Council on the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the twenty-first session including 21/1 and 21/2 on the MTSIP and the Work Programme and Budget.

7. The Chair then opened the floor for members of the Committee who wished to comment on the tabled document HSP/GC/21/7 (“Proceedings of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) at its twenty-first session”).

8. One representative wished to know if the amendments to the resolutions adopted at the Governing Council had been incorporated into the text. A representative of the secretariat replied that they had been incorporated and no other changes had been made to the text apart from those of an editorial nature.

9. One representative pointed out a discrepancy in the text of resolution 21/2, whereby in paragraphs 1 and 17, the same document (HSP/GC/21/5/Add.1) had been referred to as “a note by the Executive Director” and “a supplementary report” respectively. The Chair acknowledged the discrepancy, saying that it would have been preferable to have used identical language in both paragraphs. She noted, however, that the footnote in each case referred, correctly, to the same document.

10. The Executive Director then made a statement on the agenda item. She said that in-house work had been proceeding to put in place the machinery that would produce an Action Plan by the fourth quarter of the current year for the implementation of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan. That machinery consisted of a Steering Committee comprised of divisional directors assisted by a small inter-divisional change team, and four task forces. Those task forces, each headed by a divisional director, had already begun their work. The target was to produce the aforementioned Action Plan during the period September to November of the current year, in consultation with the Committee, to be endorsed by the December CPR meeting, for presentation to the second donors’ open-ended conference in January 2008. She appealed for support from the members’ governments, especially support in kind (additional human resources) for the work ahead.

11. Regarding resolution 21/10, on the Foundation and the application of experimental reimbursable seeding operations (ERSO), and other financial innovations, two important steps needed to be taken in the months to come: to develop an operational manual for ERSO, and to prepare the draft terms of reference for a steering committee for ERSO, including its objectives and scope of work. She wished to invite member States, particularly donors, to submit names of experts in housing finance for possible consideration as members of that steering committee.

12. The Deputy Executive Director noted that the proposed Action Plan that the Executive Director had mentioned would cover the first biennium in its first phase. On Monday 18 June, a planning meeting would be held with the Committee to map out a critical path for the work ahead, and the secretariat would present a road map for consideration by members of the Committee.
13. One representative, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, thanked all member States and the secretariat for their tireless efforts in contributing to the successful outcome of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council, and assured the Committee of the Group’s continued support to and cooperation with the programme of UN-Habitat. The Group recognized and appreciated the importance of the resolutions that had been adopted at the twenty-first session, and believed that all the elements of those resolutions should be incorporated into the work programme, thereby strengthening it. He said that the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan had set a new tone for UN-Habitat and should provide a sharpened focus, a better programme alignment and strengthened results-based management. The Group welcomed the holistic approach of integrating the implementation of the water and sanitation and slum upgrading efforts. The Group looked forward to a strengthened institutional arrangement for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and particularly supported the introduction of experimental reimbursable seeding operations and the broadening of the financial base of UN-Habitat.

14. The representative of the Group of 77 and China also emphasized the importance of the UN-Habitat supported regional consultative forums, which provided a strong impetus for elevating urbanization and urban poverty issues in the development agenda of member States. He reiterated the assurance that the Group would continue to make constructive contributions to the process of strengthening UN-Habitat for the benefit of the deprived people in the international community.

15. Speaking on behalf of the European Union, one representative said that the European Union appreciated the work that had gone into the success of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council, on the part of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the secretariat, the Group of 77 and China and all the member States. He welcomed the adoption of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan and the other important resolutions. He assured the Committee of the continued cooperation of the European Union. As his country also held the Presidency of the G8, he also noted with appreciation the successful outcome of the recent G8 summit, particularly in its focus on Africa and on climate change.

16. The representative of China associated his country with the views expressed by the representative of the Group of 77 and China. He noted that the city of Yangzhou in China had sent a technical group to help a women’s group in Tanzania with their housing needs and aspirations. He also introduced to the Committee the new Deputy Permanent Representative of China, Mr. Shangchu Ming, who had high qualifications and expertise in planning.

17. Many representatives took the floor to express similar sentiments to those expressed by previous speakers. Several welcomed the idea of the emphasis placed on the governance structure of UN-Habitat. Several representatives said that much emphasis had been placed and much had been achieved in normative activities, but stressed the need to show results on the ground and to turn ideas into actions at regional and country levels. One representative said that he wished to underscore the importance of stakeholder engagement, which was equally as important for programme delivery as internal work or the reorganization of UN-Habitat. One representative recalled the need to implement projects in countries with economies in transition, and said his country was grateful for the support for the resolution on Arctic settlements.

18. The Executive Director thanked the members of the Committee for their constructive observations and said that they would all be taken into consideration. Regarding normative and operational activities, she noted the crossover between normative and operational activities, for example, in land tenure actions, where the political or normative issues had to be addressed before arriving at the financing implications and solutions.

19. The Committee took note with appreciation of the reports submitted by the co-chair of the working group on budgetary and administrative matters and by the Executive Director.

**Item 4: Quarterly progress report on the financial situation of UN-Habitat**


21. The Executive Director said that the annual general-purpose income target for the current biennium was $12.5 million, of which $4.7 million had already been paid or confirmed in writing. She strongly encouraged donors to make their pledges and contributions early in the year and preferably through multi-year agreements in order to enable the organization to plan effectively for the delivery of the 2006–2007
work programme. She recalled the numerous resolutions adopted, in particular the one on the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, all of which required additional financial resources to implement, and she asked for support to ensure that they were adequately and appropriately funded.

22. As at 18 May 2007, contributions to UN-Habitat from governments, various organizations and public donors for specific programme and project activities had amounted to approximately $43.6 million for the year 2007. She expressed appreciation to all those donors for their support. In that regard, she thanked the Government of Norway and the Government of Kenya for specifically increasing their general-purpose contributions to the United Nations. She also informed the Committee that the Secretary-General had contributed $100,000 for training programmes in Kibera, Nairobi.

23. The Committee took note with appreciation of the report submitted by the Executive Director.

**Item 5: Any other matters**

24. The Executive Director informed the Committee that, from 4 to 7 July 2007, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro would be attending the International Women’s Summit: Women’s Leadership on HIV and AIDS in Nairobi.

**Closure of the meeting**

25. The Chair declared the twenty-fifth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives closed at 12 noon on Wednesday, 13 June 2007.