Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Twenty-seventh regular meeting
Nairobi, 6 December 2007

Draft minutes of the twenty-sixth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 27 September 2007

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 9.45 a.m. on Thursday, 27 September 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 71 representatives from 57 countries and one observer mission 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/26/1/Rev.1.

Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which was held on 13 June 2007

4. The Committee approved and adopted the draft minutes of its twenty-fifth regular meeting, held on 13 June 2007, as contained in document HSP/CPR/26/2.
Item 3: Update on the ongoing strategic UN-Habitat activities within the context of United Nations reform, including preparations for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly

5. Introducing the item, the Executive Director referred to the recent High-level Meeting on Climate Change in New York, at which she had made a presentation on the contribution of UN-Habitat to addressing the challenge of climate change. She had stressed that how cities were managed and planned would to a large extent determine the scale and pace of climate change, as over 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions originated from cities. It was her intention to convene an interdisciplinary expert group in Nairobi to work towards a comprehensive strategy to cope with climate change at city level.

6. She was pleased to inform the Committee that the following Chief Executives’ Board meeting, to be held in October 2007, would devote one of its sessions to the issues of urbanization and human settlements. That would afford her the opportunity to present the vision and mission of the UN-Habitat Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan and the commitment on the part of UN-Habitat to playing a catalytic role in the area of sustainable urbanization and the Millennium Development Goals. In a similar vein, UN-Habitat was contributing actively to reviewing the workings of the Environmental Management Group, where cities and climate change could provide a good entry point for mainstreaming the issue of sustainable urbanization.

7. UN-Habitat would team up with other agencies at the strategic planning level to share action plans, working methods and tools for results-based management and system-wide reform. In that regard, the forthcoming Conference on the State of Safety in the World’s Cities that UN-Habitat was organizing in Monterrey from 1 to 5 October 2007 would see a gathering of other agencies and major players to discuss how best to tackle that issue in a concerted manner.

8. Regarding preparations for the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, she was pleased to announce that the Secretary-General’s report entitled “Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and Strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)” had just been released as document A/62/219, and would be posted on the UN-Habitat web site. She highlighted one of the issues suggested in the report, namely, system-wide coordination in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. She believed that it would be opportune to have the Habitat Agenda and sustainable urbanization included on the agenda of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

9. A representative, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the release of the Secretary-General’s report and said that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly would be an appropriate forum in which to stress the need for urgent and concrete actions to build up the momentum of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

10. A representative, speaking on behalf of the European Union, offered support for the ongoing work mentioned by the Executive Director. He further suggested that more briefings by UN-Habitat for assistants and deputies in diplomatic missions in Nairobi would be useful in raising awareness of the work being carried out.

11. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his Federation valued the role of UN-Habitat, and encouraged the organization to give specific priority to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, for example, in the provision of clean water and sanitation. The Russian Federation was holding an event in Moscow in November 2007, within the framework of cooperation with UN-Habitat, to brief Russian municipalities on improving their management processes, so as to provide affordable housing at the local level. He expressed the hope that the Executive Director would be able to attend this meeting.

12. The Chair then said that she wished at that point to welcome the new members of the Committee, as follows: Ms. Lisa Filipetto, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Australia, Mr. Charles T. Mogotsi, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, Mr. Pierandrea Magistrati, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy, Mr. Ahmad Bader Razouqi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait, Mr. Muhammed K. Ndanusa, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria, Mr. Majok Guandong Thiep, Ambassador and Permanent
Representative of Sudan and Mr. Apichit Asatthawasi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand. She also bade farewell to the following representatives who had left the Nairobi duty station: Mr. George Atkin, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Australia, Ms. Cristina Funes-Noppen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Belgium, Mr. Matti Kääriäinen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland, Mr. Emanuel Seri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Israel, Mr. Satoru Miyamura, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan, Mr. Wojciech Jasinski, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland, Mr. Abdelrahman Nimeri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sudan and Mr. Solomon L. Mumbi, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Zambia.

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


14. Introducing the item, the Deputy Executive Director said that substantial progress was being made in developing implementation plans for the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) and the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations (ERSO), to begin in January 2008. The steering committee for the implementation of the Plan and the four task forces appointed to deal with its key elements had begun their work, and a comprehensive progress report, including a summary of actions taken so far had been presented to the working group of the Committee on 10 September 2007. The meeting had decided to establish an open-ended contact group to provide an informal forum for the secretariat and the members of the Committee. An action plan on implementation would be presented at the Committee meeting on 6 December 2007. In the meantime, a more complete description and time frame of implementation activities would be presented at the meeting of the working group on ERSO on 31 October 2007.

15. Several representatives took the floor to express their appreciation of the work done by the secretariat, recommending that it should focus on key priorities, keeping in mind the resource scenarios. One representative stressed the value of partnerships with the Cities Alliance and other agencies. In response the Deputy Executive Director agreed that there needed to be a link between the key priorities and available resources. The Executive Director said that the secretariat would take on board the need for prioritization. She also informed the Committee that the UN-Habitat office in Washington was working to improve partnerships with the World Bank, the Cities Alliance and others.

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

**Item 5: Progress report on the financial situation of UN-Habitat**

17. Representatives had before them a document entitled “Financial update: August 2007”.

18. The Executive Director said that the annual general-purpose income target was currently projected at $13 million, of which pledges amounting to $8.5 million had been received, and the balance of $4.5 million was still expected, based on prior year trends. The total general-purpose income for the biennium was still $2.5 million short of the $25 million approved by the twentieth session of the Governing Council.

19. As at 31 August 2007, contributions to UN-Habitat from governments, various organizations and public donors for specific programme and project activities had amounted to approximately $89.6 million for the year 2007. She expressed appreciation to all those donors for their support. In that regard, she recorded her appreciation to all the governments and organizations that had helped the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Programme for the Palestinian People and the Slum Upgrading Facility.

20. She pinpointed the challenges facing UN-Habitat, particularly its continuing reliance on unpredictable voluntary contributions, a relatively narrow donor base, and a continuing and rising imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions. She noted that the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit had made recommendations to legislative bodies touching on those points, notably the development of proposals for a voluntary indicative scale for core/non-earmarked contributions, a substantial increase in non-earmarked contributions that were crucial for the implementation of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP), and the continuance of the recommended rate of 13 per cent for programme...
support costs for earmarked contributions. She urged governments to consider those recommendations and in particular to support the Plan by making firm and timely commitments of adequate resources.

21. The representative of Sweden announced her Government’s voluntary contribution for 2007 of SEK 21 million, which was approximately equivalent to US$ 3 million. The Committee took note with appreciation of the report submitted by the Executive Director.

**Item 6: Other matters**

22. The Executive Director said that she had just returned from a preliminary visit to China in connection with the forthcoming fourth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Nanjing, China, from 13 to 17 October 2008. She would propose a meeting with a working group of the Committee for a briefing on the Forum. She informed the Committee that the Shanghai Expo 2010 would have as its theme “Better City, Better Life”, and UN-Habitat would take the lead in coordinating United Nations participation.

23. The Deputy Executive Director informed the Committee that she had attended a Retreat convened by the Secretary-General for heads and deputy heads of United Nations agencies in Turin from 31 August to 2 September 2007. The Secretary-General had presented his vision of United Nations reform, and had emphasized the need to “deliver as one”, and had also stressed teamwork and mobility of staff. She had also attended a conference in Copenhagen on “Future of Cities” from 23 to 26 September 2007, in which sustainable urbanization had been emphasized as a global challenge.

24. Ms. Mariam Yunusa, Coordinator of the World Urban Forum secretariat, gave a brief presentation on preparations for the Fourth Session of the World Urban Forum. She informed the Committee that in April 2007, a team had come from China in connection with the preparations, and at that time the theme for the forthcoming Forum had been agreed as “Harmonious Urbanization”. Further details of the venue were awaited, and a team from UNON would visit China to confirm other logistical preparations. The criteria for networking events had been defined and would shortly be loaded on to the web site, while focal points had been appointed to deal with various roundtables being planned, including those for the private sector and for mayors. An information brochure on the World Urban Forum would be produced shortly. She believed that there was sufficient lead-time to make all the necessary preparations.

25. The representative of Korea informed the Committee that the second United Cities and Local Governments World Congress would be held in Jeju, Korea, from 28 to 31 October 2007, with the theme “Changing Cities are Driving Our World”, with sub themes on “addressing climate change in cities” and “local governments building peace”.

26. One representative said that on returning from a leave of absence, he was concerned to find a communication from the secretariat dated 17 May 2007 regarding a revision of the 2008–2013 strategic framework and related budget allocations, and wished to know how a work programme and budget approved by the last Governing Council could be revised, as no other body had a mandate to revise that work programme and budget.

27. A representative of the secretariat clarified that the strategic framework and the related work programme had to be revised and endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives for submission to the Committee on Programme Coordination and eventual approval by the General Assembly. The work programme was common to both the Extra-Budgetary Component of the budget which is approved by the Governing Council and the Regular Budget Component approved by the General Assembly. The Committee on Programme Coordination had requested that the Strategic Framework and Work Programme be aligned with the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Action Plan once approved by the Governing Council. The Chair suggested that the representative might wish to discuss the query with the secretariat on a bilateral basis.

**Closure of the meeting**

28. The Chair declared the twenty-sixth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives closed at 12 noon on Thursday 27 September 2007.