Press Release

2 April 2008: The last session of the Steering Committee marks the end of the Somalia Urban Development Programme, while the signing Ceremony of the Joint Programme Document on Local Governance and Service Delivery initiates a new era of UN-HABITAT interventions in the Somali region.

On Wednesday, 2 April 2008, the last session of the Somalia Urban Development Programme Steering Committee took place at UN-HABITAT Headquarters. The main donors of the programme, namely the European Commission, UNDP, Government of Italy, DFID and SIDA, reviewed successes and constraints of three years of urban development activities in the region. Donors expressed highest satisfaction with regard to the success of the programme and the concrete results that were achieved.

UN-HABITAT and its main partners – ILO and the Italian NGO Consortium UNA – drew lessons for replication from the different components of the programme: (1) urban governance, including legal and institutional reforms, municipal governance, and land management, (2) urban management, including strategic planning and development control, land management, municipal finance, basic services delivery and local economic development, and (3) implementation of local projects.

Following the Steering Committee, a Signing Ceremony for the Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralised Service Delivery took place at the UN Recreation Centre. UN-HABITAT, ILO, UNCDF, UNDP and UNICEF will jointly implement this Programme over the next five years, starting with a two-year phase. The Joint Programme is an enforceable commitment to pool resources of the UN system and to ensure that the Somali people have a commanding role in driving local development at the community and municipal levels. The signing ceremony also marked a significant move towards a One UN country strategy for local governance in Somalia.

In bringing together the skills and resources from the ILO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF and UN-HABITAT, the Joint Programme will support local development with more appropriate and harmonised strategies and improved cost efficiency. Representatives of key donors such as the European Commission, SIDA and DFID were present at the signing ceremony to express their support for the Joint Programme.

The Programme will build on the framework of the 2008-12 Somalia Reconstruction and Development Programme and the 2008-9 UN Transition Plan. The Joint Programme will adopt a comprehensive approach towards supporting local governments as credible and professional service providers, strengthening civic awareness and participation in local decision-making and development and increasing public investment in basic services. The programme will support (i) policy and legal frameworks for decentralisation, local government, service provision and land, (ii) local government systems, vertical and horizontal inter-government linkages and civic education initiatives, (iii) investment in public services and goods through testing the Local Development Fund model, direct service provision and promotion of public-private partnerships, and (iv) processes and systems for housing, land and property disputes and resolution. Implementation will focus on gender and women in local government, human rights and local governance, and good governance principles of transparency, accountability and participation.
UN-HABITAT, UNDP, ILO, UNICEF and UNCDF sign the Joint Programme document