Agenda Item 2:

Adoption of the Draft Minutes of the 38th Regular Session of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), which was held on 15 September 2010 (HSP/CPR/39/2).
Draft minutes of the thirty-eighth regular meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, held on 15 September 2010

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 9.55 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 September 2010, by the Chair, Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

2. The meeting was attended by 56 participants from 42 countries and one observer mission.

3. At the Chair’s request, Mr. Chris Mensah, Secretary to the Governing Council, explained the new seating arrangements that had been introduced in line with the practice of the United Nations General Assembly, noting that the Governing Council of UN-Habitat was a subsidiary organization of that body.

4. The Chair recalled that Ms. Anna Tibaijuka’s tenure as Executive Director of UN-Habitat had come to an end on 31 August 2010. Mr. Joan Clos of Spain had been elected by the General Assembly as her replacement for a term of four years with effect from 18 October 2010. In the meantime, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had appointed Ms. Inga Björk-Klevby as the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat.

5. The Chair welcomed the following new permanent representatives to the Committee: Mr. Ghorm Said Malhan (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Milan Zachar (Slovakia) and Mr. Kosit Chatpaiboon (Thailand), and bade farewell to the following permanent representatives who had departed the Nairobi duty station, thanking them for their contribution to the Committee’s work, which had greatly assisted it in discharging its mandate: Ms. Lisa Filipetto (Australia), Mr. Ross Hynes (Canada), Mr. Deng Hongbo (China), Mr. Saher Hamza (Egypt), Mr. Dumitru Neagu (Romania), Mr. Tony Steven Msimanga (South Africa) and Ms. Nyasugara Kadege (United Republic of Tanzania).

6. The Chair also bade farewell and expressed his gratitude to Ms. Elisabeth Jacobsen (Norway), who had chaired the Committee from 2006 to 2007, and to Ms. Jacqueline Mendoza (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), from whom he had assumed the chair.
Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

7. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set forth in documents HSP/CPR/38/1 and Add.1, as orally amended.

Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 14 June 2010

8. The Committee approved and adopted the draft minutes of its thirty-seventh meeting, held on 14 June 2010, as contained in document HSP/CPR/38/2.

Item 3: Election of the additional member of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the biennium 2010–2011

9. The Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Tse Hou Hew, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia to UN-Habitat, to the position of Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the biennium 2010–2011.

Item 4: Report on the medium-term strategic and institutional plan peer review

10. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat presented the peer review report on the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan in the period 2008–2013, as contained in document HSP/CPR/38/9. She said that the report had been produced by an independent panel established by the Committee that had worked independently and transparently for the past nine months. It contained significant findings and specific suggestions for the Committee. She thanked the panel members for their tireless work.

11. Ms. Agnes Kalibbala, speaking as chair of the panel, drew attention to the questions that the review had considered, namely whether UN-Habitat had become more effective and enhanced its focus and efficiency in its operations, with the aim of improving the pace and quality of the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

12. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives thanked the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat for her introductory remarks and the panel members for their hard work. A number expressed their satisfaction with the work accomplished, emphasizing the importance that their Governments attached to the results of the review.

13. One representative said that exercises such as the review were important to promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness and to chart a constructive way forward. While such exercises should be carried out at regular intervals, they nevertheless required much time and effort, and it was sufficient to carry out a review every second year. One of the findings was that the focus of UN-Habitat had become clearer but not necessarily sharper, indicating that work remained to be done and that it was necessary and important for the organization to be reformed. She sought clarification of how the review would be incorporated into the work of UN-Habitat and the time frame for its implementation. The exercise also provided an opportunity to reflect on the value of independent evaluations, and it was to be hoped that there would be more independent reviews in the future.

14. A number of representatives said that it was important to make use of the review’s findings, expressing the hope that the senior management team would respond speedily to the report. Several noted that the Committee had had no opportunity to discuss the report, asking whether it would be procedurally correct for the Committee to adopt or endorse it. Some said that it would be premature to endorse the report without first considering the management team’s response.

15. One representative expressed appreciation for the leadership of the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat while a number also welcomed the appointment of the new Executive Director, expressing the hope that he would encourage UN-Habitat staff and management to keep up the important work of internal reform and provide a driving force for that work, while continuing to raise the organization’s prestige and overseeing work to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

16. The Committee took note of the report.
Item 5: Preparations for the medium-term strategic and institutional plan midterm review

17. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat recalled that Governing Council resolution 21/2 of 20 April 2007 had requested the Executive Director, in collaboration with the Committee, to conduct a midterm review of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan and to present the results to the Governing Council at its twenty-third session. The peer review report had a broadly similar purpose, scope and focus as the midterm review, and the secretariat was therefore seeking the Committee’s guidance as to whether the peer review, together with the management response and action plan, could serve the purpose of a midterm review.

18. In the ensuing discussion, one representative emphasized that much work had gone into the peer review, expressing the view that it was impractical to begin the process again for a full midterm review. She stressed that it was important to move forward with the management response and implementation of the peer review report. There was sufficient substance in the peer review for use as a basis for discussion and to enable the organization to improve and make progress with the reform process. She laid more emphasis on preparations by the secretariat for the forthcoming Governing Council session, during which the working groups would cover much ground.

19. Many representatives who took the floor supported that view. A number said that it was important to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary bureaucracy. One said that the substance of the peer review report, if approved, was more important than the procedure.

20. In her response, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat thanked members for their constructive interventions and understanding. She said that the secretariat would proceed as soon as possible with preparation of the management response to the peer review report and the action plan and would discuss with the Committee at its following meeting how the report would be presented to the Governing Council as a midterm review.

Item 6: Quarterly report on UN-Habitat country activities

21. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat outlined the activities undertaken in a number of countries during the three months from June to August 2010 as set out in document HSP/CPR/38/4/Rev.1.

22. The Committee took note of the report.

Item 7: Preparations for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly

23. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat gave an overview of preparations for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly as set out in document HSP/CPR/38/5. She highlighted the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme” (A/65/316) to be considered at that session and drew attention to the high-level summit on the Millennium Development Goals to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010, at which UN-Habitat would be participating in round-table sessions and hosting two side events.

Item 8: Quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat

24. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat said that the draft work programme and budget for 2012–2013 would be distributed to members once the new Executive Director had assumed his post and provided his input thereto. Five working group meetings were planned to discuss the draft document during November and December prior to the Committee’s thirty-ninth meeting, which had been rescheduled for 16 December 2010. Turning to matters pertaining to the current biennium, she provided an overview of the quarterly report on the financial status of UN-Habitat as set out in document HSP/CPR/38/6.
Item 9: Preparations for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat (Nairobi, 11–15 April 2011)

25. Introducing the item, the Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat recalled Governing Council resolution 20/21 of 2005, by which the Governing Council of UN-Habitat decided that the special themes of its future sessions would be selected by the Bureau of the Governing Council on the basis of advice from the Executive Director of UN-Habitat in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat, taking into account the outcome of the sessions of the World Urban Forum and the continuing implementation of the goal of the Millennium Declaration to improve the lives of slum-dwellers. Outlining preparations for the twenty-third session of the Governing Council, she said that the theme selection process was under way. The theme “Sustainable urban development: equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure” had been proposed by the Secretariat and discussed between the Chair of the Committee and its bureau.

26. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives sought clarification of the process for the selection of a theme for the session. One suggested that, if the theme had already been chosen, the Committee’s role was merely to endorse that choice. Many representatives underscored the importance of seeking member States’ input in theme selection.

27. The representative of the secretariat clarified that, in accordance with Governing Council resolution 20/21 an advisory proposal for the theme had been put forward by the Executive Director, discussed by the bureau of the Committee and forwarded to the President of the Governing Council for consultation with the Bureau. In the meantime, the working group on the preparations for the twenty-third session would also discuss the theme. The session’s theme would be decided upon during the consultative process between the President of the Council and the Bureau, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives. He stressed that the process for theme selection had been explained to members during a working group meeting held on 16 June 2010.

28. Several representatives highlighted the need for members to understand the rationale and motivations for particular theme selection and for capitals to be afforded sufficient time for reflection thereon to allow for meaningful discussion by the Committee. A number stressed the importance of selecting themes for future sessions in accordance with the provisions set out in resolution 20/21.

29. The Chair underscored the urgency of concluding consultations on the theme for the forthcoming session within the time frame indicated in resolution 20/21.

30. One representative requested the secretariat to disseminate documentation for the session well in advance of its opening.

31. The Committee agreed that the secretariat would ensure adequate informal consultation with the Committee over the following four weeks and distribute the concept note on the matter previously circulated to members of the Bureau prior to such consultations. The Committee would decide at its working group meetings whether to endorse or amend the proposed theme or take alternative action prior to resubmitting it to the President of the Council.

Item 10: Progress report on the governance review process

32. Introducing the item, Mr. Daniel Chuburu, chair of the implementation team on the governance review process, provided a progress report on the governance review process as set out in document HSP/CPR/38/8/Rev.1. He expressed his gratitude to his co-chair and the members of the implementation team (both Committee members and secretariat staff), for enhancing trust and understanding between the Committee and the secretariat.

33. A number of representatives expressed their gratitude to members of the implementation team and to the chair for his leadership in the governance review process.

34. The Committee endorsed the quick wins set out in document HSP/CPR/38/8/Rev.1.
Item 11: Other matters

35. The Officer-in-Charge of UN-Habitat informed the Committee that an induction seminar for new members would be held on 1 October 2010. Turning to the celebrations to mark World Habitat Day on 4 October 2010, she said that she would be representing UN-Habitat at the United Nations pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo on that day.

Closure of the meeting

36. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.25 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 September 2010.