

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)

GENERAL UPDATE: 23 FEBRUARY 2014

A. Introduction

The purpose of the present note is to provide an update on what has happened so far in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), as well as a general roadmap on what is to follow, especially during the 2014-2015 biennium.

B. United Nations General Assembly Resolutions on Habitat III

The General Assembly, through its resolution 66/207 of December 2011, decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016. The purpose of the conference would be to reinvigorate commitment to sustainable urbanization through a “New Urban Agenda”. The Assembly decided that the Habitat III preparatory process would make use of planned regional and international meetings in order to reduce costs.

In mid-2012, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Dr. Joan Clos, was designated Secretary-General of Habitat III. In December 2012, the General Assembly, through resolution 67/216, established the Habitat III Preparatory Committee (Prepcom). It also decided that the first meeting of the Prepcom would be held in New York for two days during the 69th session of the Assembly. The second meeting of the Prepcom would be held in Nairobi in 2015 for three days, taking advantage of the 25th session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council. The Assembly further decided that the final dates, format and organizational aspects of Habitat III would be considered not later than its 69th session. It established the Habitat III Trust Fund, and requested the Habitat III Secretary-General to prepare a proposal for consideration by the UN-Habitat Governing Council at its 24th session on how best to provide inputs and support to the Habitat III preparatory process.

C. UN-Habitat Governing Council Resolution on Habitat III

The Governing Council of UN-Habitat, through its resolution 24/14 of April 2013, accepted the main elements of the Habitat III Secretary-General’s proposal, but requested him to refine it by: (i) considering the inputs of UN system organizations and Habitat Agenda partners to the Habitat III preparatory process; (ii) presenting strategic options for UN-Habitat’s contribution to the Habitat III preparatory process; (iii) providing a think piece that would serve as a conceptual basis for the Habitat III preparatory process; and (iv) suggesting guidelines and format for the preparation of Habitat III country reports. The Council also requested Member States to establish or strengthen their National Habitat Committees and to prepare Habitat III national reports, using those committees, before the first meeting of the Prepcom. The Council further requested the Habitat III Secretary-General to prepare, with the support of the UN system, regional and global reports based on country reports, and to provide support to Member States in the preparation of their Habitat III national reports.

D. Follow-up on Governing Council Resolution on Habitat III

UN-Habitat has now prepared a draft Habitat III ‘think piece’, which has been presented to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and distributed to other UN system organizations for comments and further inputs. UN-Habitat has also developed two strategic options for its input to the Habitat III preparatory process. Each option envisages a different level of funding. Maximum effort will be made to mobilize sufficient voluntary contributions for the best case scenario, i.e. US\$8.9 million.

UN-Habitat has further developed draft guidelines for the preparation of Habitat III national reports. These have benefitted from the inputs of Member States and Habitat Agenda partners, including through an e-consultation,

and have been distributed to all Governments. These guidelines, together with an earlier guide on the establishment or strengthening of National Habitat Committees distributed to all Governments in January 2013, have enabled the preparation of Habitat III national reports to begin.

In addition, UN-Habitat has prepared proposals on the contributions of the UN system and Habitat Agenda partners to the Habitat III preparatory process. These were endorsed at a UN interagency meeting held on 3 July 2013 in Geneva, at which a UN Interagency Coordination Committee for Habitat III was established. Another meeting of the Coordination Committee was held on 27 November 2013 in New York.

More formally, UN-Habitat has recently proposed the introduction of a new agenda item titled “A New United Nations Urban Agenda” in the work of the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). On the basis of discussions on this agenda item, it is expected that the HLCP will make policy recommendations on “A New United Nations Urban Agenda” for the CEB’s approval. It is also envisaged that those recommendations will constitute the formal input of the UN system organizations to the Habitat III preparatory process.

E. Funding for Habitat III and Establishment of Habitat III Secretariat

The UN Controller has fully operationalized the Habitat III Trust Fund, which is expected to mobilize US\$8.9 million, and an account for deposit of voluntary contributions has been opened. About US\$500,000 and one Junior Professional post have so far been contributed to the Trust Fund. In December 2013, the UN General Assembly allocated, under Human Settlements (Section 15 of the UN Regular Budget), an amount of US\$2,073,700 for the Habitat III preparatory process during the 2014-2015 biennium. A further amount of US\$1,063,000 was allocated under General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management (Section 2 of the UN Regular Budget) for the organization of the first two Habitat III Prepcom meetings, in September 2014 and April 2015, respectively. Subsequent to this, the Habitat III Secretary-General established the Habitat III Secretariat on 4 February 2014, to be headed by a Habitat III Deputy Secretary-General (D2 level), and recruitment has commenced.

F. Main Habitat III Processes and Events: 2014-2015 [To be continually updated]

1. *January-August 2014*: Preparation, by Governments, of national Habitat III reports.
2. *September 2014-March 2015*: Preparation, by UN-Habitat, of Habitat III regional reports for consideration by regional inter-governmental bodies.
3. *Fifth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD 5), 25-28 February, N’Djamena, Chad*: Beginning of discussion of African position on and roadmap towards Habitat III Conference.
4. *Seventh Session of World Urban Forum (WUF 7), 5-11 April 2014, Medellin, Colombia*: (i) Launching of Habitat III preparatory process; (ii) Consideration, by all Habitat Agenda partners, of key issues that could be included in the outcome document of Habitat III; and (iii) Pledging session for Habitat III Trust Fund.
5. *Fifth Session of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD 5), Second half of 2014*: Beginning of discussion of Asia-Pacific position on and roadmap towards Habitat III.
6. *First Meeting of the Habitat III Prepcom, 17-18 September 2014, New York, USA*: Possible agenda items include: (i) Election of Bureau and Chair; (ii) Draft rules of procedure, including proposals on improved participation of local authorities and other stakeholders in the preparatory process and the Conference itself; (iii) Organizational and procedural matters; (iv) Progress to date, remaining gaps and new and emerging challenges in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and relevant internationally agreed development goals, as well as consideration of the theme of the Conference
7. *Second Meeting of the Habitat III Prepcom, April 2015, Nairobi, Kenya*: Negotiations on outcome document of Habitat III likely to commence.