

Hab Post

Updates from
UN-Habitat

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Highlights from the October
2020 Executive Board session

Editor's note

Dear Reader,

Last month, our Executive Board held its second (virtual) session for the year 2020. Today, we would like to share with you the main outcomes of the discussions with Member States and what to expect for the next session. We also invite you to consult the resources used during the presentations and links to learn more.

And as mentioned in a previous issue of HabPost, podcasts are trickling out: you will find an announcement in this issue, so look out for the next podcast in the making.

Happy reading!

The HabPost Team



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Alerts

COVID-19

- As of 17 November 2020, there were close to 55 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including close to 1.3 million deaths, reported to WHO. Monitor the situation [here](#).
- Pfizer has launched a pilot delivery programme for its experimental COVID-19 vaccine – which was shown to be more than 90 per cent effective in preventing the virus based on initial data – in four US states.
- [Moderna's](#) experimental vaccine is 94.5 per cent effective in preventing COVID-19 based on interim data from a late-stage trial, the company said on Monday.
- Children and young people from 50 countries warn of the surge in violence, child marriage and labour during the pandemic. 81 per cent of children say they have seen or experienced violence during the pandemic, with 82 per cent saying COVID-19 has disrupted their education. Read the infographic [here](#).
- [The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund](#), hosted by UNOPS, launched on Tuesday. The Fund is seeking USD 2 billion over the coming five years to support countries in bringing sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health to all. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the fundamental role that sanitation and hygiene play in stopping the spread of diseases.
- Remember, you can track the statistics on the COVID-19 situation in Kenya on the [WHO-OCHA COVID-19 Operations Dashboard](#).



Highlights from the October 2020 Executive Board session

From 27 to 29 October 2020, the Executive Board of UN-Habitat held its second session for the year 2020. This was the first time an online session of a governing body benefitted from interpretation in all six official languages of the UN. Despite the global circumstances, the Board conducted its business smoothly, not least thanks to the support of all UN-Habitat colleagues involved in the process.

Over 240 participants and 120 UN-Habitat personnel connected for the three-day gathering, including the president of the UN-Habitat Assembly who commended the work of UN-Habitat in the fight against COVID-19 and urged Member States to renew their support to our agency, including with financial contributions.

To start with, the Executive Board **approved the annual work programme and budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2021**. It also empowered the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters to discuss the draft work programme for the year 2022 (for submission to UNHQ by 15 January 2021) and the draft budget for the year 2022 (for submission to UNHQ by 15 February 2021).

Click [here](#) to access all presentations by the Secretariat



Ad-hoc working groups

Three ad-hoc working groups were established in November 2019 to assist and advise the Executive Board. The Board considered and adopted the recommendations of the working groups as follows:

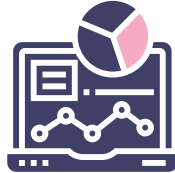
1. The ad-hoc working group on **programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters**, which recommended to set the amount of the Foundation non-earmarked budget to **USD 10 million** for 2021.
2. The ad-hoc working group on **working methods**, which presented a set of recommendations related to the Executive Board and Member States, documents and presentations, and the role of the Secretariat. The recommendations were adopted, and the mandate of the working group brought to an end.
3. The ad-hoc working group on the **development of the stakeholder engagement policy**, which will hold an online organizational meeting and resume its work once in-person meetings are possible.

But three days of discussions didn't stop there. The Board looked at:

1.

Finance, restructuring, and staff composition

The Board discussed the financial and staffing status of the organization and the ongoing restructuring process. It discussed resource mobilization efforts as well as implementation of the report of the Board of Auditors, provided guidance for enhancing geographical and gender representation, and considered the Organization's initiatives to address geographical and gender imbalance, while acknowledging that austerity measures currently in place offer little flexibility for hiring.



2.

COVID-19 response

UN-Habitat presented its COVID-19 response plan including progress made, partnerships across the globe, and resources mobilized and needed. The Executive Board acknowledged the concrete results achieved on the ground and the availability of knowledge materials.



3.



Strategic planning

Strategic plans provide the agency with focus to positively transform lives in cities and communities around the world. The Executive Board reviewed and adopted the supporting documents required for the implementation of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan:

1. Implementation of the organizational and personnel accountability framework within UN-Habitat
2. Results-based management policy
3. Results framework
4. Partnership strategy including UN-Habitat engagement with the private sector and non-governmental partners
5. Impact communications strategy
6. Resource mobilization strategy

4.



Resolutions and decisions by the UN-Habitat Assembly

UN-Habitat briefed the Board on progress in implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly in May 2019. The briefing outlined progress made on specific resolutions, including the United Nations System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements, gender equality, and enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. While the Board appreciates progress made, it asked UN-Habitat to better communicate work and outcomes to Member States.

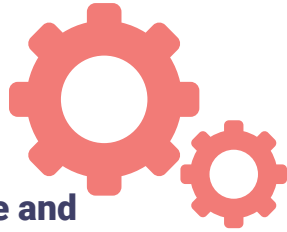


5.

Capacity-building

The Executive Board adopted the capacity building strategy. The strategy aims to fill the institutional and operational gap within UN-Habitat for greater coordination, coherence and monitoring of results, and to improve the delivery of capacity building services to Member States, local governments and other key urban stakeholders for greater impact and resource efficiency.

6.



Normative and operational activities

UN-Habitat presented to the Executive Board three distinct entry points to exploring the normative and operational activities of the Agency:

1. The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)
2. The Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA)
3. The Mozambique country programme – particularly the “building back better” and resilience-building approaches taken in areas affected by cyclones Idai and Kenneth

UN-Habitat also presented progress made with the Flagship Programmes as critical instruments for advancing a more integrated approach to its normative and operational activities. The Executive Board showed appreciation for the progress but raised concerns about the impact of the Flagship Programmes – especially in the Africa Region – and about the COVID-19-induced funding instability and the rather unclear focus of the human rights approach.

8.



Reform of the UNDS and alignment with QCPR

The Executive Board considered the steps taken by UN-Habitat to implement the reform of the UN development system (UNDS). Actions taken by UN-Habitat stem from the [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review \(QCPR\) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system](#) for the period 2017–2020 and from the [repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the QCPR](#) which seek to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations through reform of the development system and management.

UN-Habitat presented four scenarios to the Executive Board for the alignment of UN-Habitat Assembly cycles with the QCPR process. The Board decided to defer the discussion on one of the scenarios to the ad-hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters. The working group will be planning a meeting to make a recommendation.

The QCPR is an instrument that enables the General Assembly to provide the United Nations system with policy guidance and strategic direction and ensure adequate oversight and accountability. As part of the UN reform, the General Assembly called upon governing bodies to align to the QCPR for coherence.

7.



Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment in the workplace

Our Executive Director reaffirmed to the Executive Board her commitment on the matter and recalled that UN-Habitat has a Zero Tolerance policy for any act of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination, or abuse of authority. UN-Habitat is working to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place and actions taken to prevent and respond to allegations of SEA and sexual harassment in the workplace.



9.

Ethics

The Secretariat presented the Annual Report of the Ethics Office to the Executive Board. As part of the UN Secretariat, UN-Habitat implements its ethics-related activities with the support of the UN Ethics Office. Currently, the UN-Habitat Legal Unit serves as the focal point for all ethics-related activities.



10.

Decisions

The Board adopted [four decisions](#), namely:

- Decision 2020/3 on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the period 2014-2019, the Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2023, approval of the draft annual work programme and draft budget for the year 2021, implementation by UN-Habitat of the reform of the development system and management of the United Nations and alignment of the planning cycles of UN-Habitat with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process.
- Decision 2020/4 on financial, budgetary and administrative matters of UN-Habitat.
- Decision 2020/5 on the implementation of normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat including resolutions and decisions of the UN-Habitat Assembly and reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2020 and the implementation of sub-programmes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities.
- Decision 2020/6 on the Methods of work of the Executive Board and Workplan of the Executive Board for the year 2021.

What's next?

The end of a session of the Board means the start of another. The next session of the Executive Board will be held from 6 to 7 April 2021. Member States will be briefed on the status of the Work Programme and Budget for the year 2022 and will review the financial, budgetary and administrative matters of UN-Habitat including the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy. The Board will also review a proposal to improve geographical and gender balance at UN-Habitat.

The Board will further consider the annual report on UN-Habitat actions to strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and against workplace sexual harassment, including any actions to improve related policies and procedures at UN-Habitat.

Finally, the Board expects to be briefed on implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly; progress made in implementation of the United Nations development system reform; and normative and operational activities including reporting on programmatic

activities, implementation of sub-programmes and Flagship Programmes, and technical cooperation activities.

In the meantime, UN-Habitat will be holding a pledging session on 3 December 2020 to expand subscriptions of core contributions. Still in the meantime, the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies wanted to thank all colleagues for their continued support in holding successful sessions of the Board.



See you next year!



EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world

Want to know more?

-  [First Daily Journal](#)
-  [Second Daily Journal](#)
-  [Third Daily Journal](#)

COVID-19 has altered the way we execute our jobs and how we deal with chores at home. One of the things that changed with the pandemic is the way we engage with Member States. But it also uncovered a wealth of innovations in terms of new channels of communication available to us. **Marie-Pia Tixier**, Coordination Officer with the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies (SGB), shares her perspective with us.



“ In 2019, a simple visit to the office of the Secretary of the SGB would have answered a whole array of enquiries from a basic response to a Member State to the approval of an agenda item for an upcoming Bureau or ad-hoc working group meeting. COVID-19 has altered the way we engage with Member States and with colleagues for the foreseeable future.

The pandemic forced us into a new normal — and some might even say a new order. Case in point, last month’s session of the Executive Board was for the first time in the history of the Agency hosted virtually with the support of virtual interpretation services. The three-day session was a compromise, with priority agenda items benefitting from interpretation and others not.

The pandemic forced us into a new normal — and some might even say a new order.

In advance of the session of the Board, the Secretariat organized a total of seven trainings for Member States, the Chair of the Executive Board, members of the Bureau, Chairs of the Regional Groups, partners and stakeholders, and UN-Habitat staff to facilitate access and ensure familiarity with the platform. Luckily, the exercise proved to be useful and allowed us to conduct what we are all keen to describe as a fairly successful session.

All this would not have been possible without the constructive comments received from colleagues, which truly helped us in the preparation of the session. In all honesty, we would not have been able to do it without the undying support of everyone.

On the more private side of things, I have tried to turn the challenges I faced into successes by re-adjusting my daily routines to fit the new norm. I have for instance created time for physical exercise like Yoga, running, badminton, and ping pong, and I have also been making time for the occasional virtual Happy Hour with friends. With limited opportunities for physical meetings, these exercises have helped me keep mentally and physically fit.

I believe that it is our responsibility as individuals to keep each other safe, and to check on one another.

During these harsh times, many have lost loved ones and we have unfortunately had to bid farewell to colleagues. I believe that it is our responsibility as individuals to keep each other safe, and to check on one another. I am certain that this period has also granted us with an opportunity to create very strong personal relationships and stronger ethics.

Marie-Pia Tixier,
Coordination Officer, Secretariat of the Governing Bodies

Vacancies

Role
Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P3 (Project Post)
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
21 November 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Associate Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P2 (Project Post)
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
27 November 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Associate Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P2 (Project Post)
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
1 December 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P3
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
23 December 2020
[Apply Here](#)



Role
Chief Technical
Adviser, P5
(Temporary Job
Opening)
Duty Station
Kinshasa, Democratic
Republic of Congo
Deadline
26 November 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Upcoming events and corporate calendar



UN HABITAT



Euskal Hiria 2020 Cities for all: Ageing and Inclusiveness

This Expert Group Meeting is focused on the exchange of experiences and projects implemented in recent years in various parts of the world, in order to promote the development of policies aimed at facilitating and improving the lives of older people. During the meeting, four topics will be discussed: housing, mobility, public space, and health care. [More information](#) and [registration](#)



Smart Cities Summit - The New Age of Resilient Cities: Sustainability Powered by Disruptive Technologies

Our world has changed exponentially in a few short months and Smart Cities initiatives and projects have been put to the test in unanticipated ways. Some have performed beyond expectation, some have produced fortuitous benefits, others are struggling in the new normal. Smart Cities Summit will share these results through presentations from fellow cities and technology providers and discuss what works, what doesn't, and where to go next to continue building up the smart, sustainable, and resilient cities of the future. The conversations will cover the architecture of resilient cities and how the future will require evolution, innovation, and new ways to look at funding and partnering to keep it all moving forward. [More information](#)

Other organizers



Smart Cities and Buildings 2020

The resilience of our cities, society and living standards has just gone through an unpredictable stress test. Our usually lively city centres and streets emptied faster than ever. The world changed exponentially in just a few months. Local authorities could tangibly identify which Smart City initiatives worked and which ones need to undergo a major re-think. The pandemic accelerated the need for digitization, collaboration and innovation: a new age of modern cities and its purposes, services and infrastructure is shaping. This event will explore these forward-looking topics. [More information](#)



EAI SmartCity360° International Convention 2020

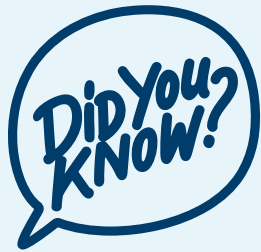
The 6th EAI International Convention on Science and Technologies for Smart Cities brings a holistic approach covering all aspects of science and technologies for Smart Cities. The Convention pulls together co-located conferences which cover a wide range of science behind the smart cities. It focuses on research and technology, creating a platform for the best researchers in the field to meet, connect, and engage while shaping the future of the cities we live in. [More information](#)



Global Smart Cities Forum 2020

Global Smart Cities Forum discusses and proposes innovative solutions for the future of smart cities in areas such as planning, implementation, and policymaking. The Forum aims to be the biggest platform to share, discuss best practices, and exchange innovative ideas and future-ready solutions through interactive participation by key stakeholders from across the globe. [More information](#)





UN-Habitat's Urban Impact Podcast

As promised, we are pleased to announce the launch of UN-Habitat's podcast series – called UN-Habitat's Urban Impact. For the first episode, which will be available online soon, we look at community action in one of Nairobi's informal settlements, Mathare. Highlighting the World Cities Day theme of **Valuing our Communities and Cities**, UN-Habitat's Doug Ragan talks to community leaders and activists about life in Mathare and overcoming the challenges of COVID-19.

The Urban Impact Podcast will look at issues relevant to UN-Habitat's mandate and work and will be a chance for us to highlight UN-Habitat's catalytic role on urbanization matters. Coming episodes will focus on the latest World Cities Report, COVID-19, and inequalities in cities and climate action.



Podcasts will be available on SoundCloud at <https://soundcloud.com/un-habitat-worldwide>. Follow us to be notified of podcasts as they become available!

Please do contact our Chief of Communication (Susannah.price@un.org) if you have ideas for future episodes, interesting speakers, or would like to volunteer to host.

We look forward to your participation!



Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at unhabitat-habpost@un.org.

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