

Management Response

Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Flagship Reports: Global Report on Human Settlements and State of the World's Cities Report

The current document presents the views of UN-Habitat Management to the report *Evaluation of UN-Habitat's Flagship Reports*. The evaluation was undertaken at the request of UN-Habitat as part of its continuous effort to assess results and effectiveness in normative work. The evaluation was included in the Evaluation Plan 2012-2013. It was managed by the Evaluation Unit and conducted by two independent evaluators. The evaluation focused on the results achieved by the flagship reports in UN-Habitat's normative work, sharing of responsibilities, appropriateness of planning and conceptualization, production, dissemination and follow-up on reports; and resource allocation for producing the reports. Norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system were adhered to in the evaluation process.

UN-Habitat Management welcomes the external evaluation report and would like to express its appreciation of the participatory and positive spirit in which the evaluation team conducted the evaluation and presented its findings. The evaluation was very timely in view of the on-going process to merge the State of the World Cities report and the Global Report on Human Settlements and prepare the new flagship report entitled *World Cities Report 2015*. The following provides the overall response by UN-Habitat Management to the evaluation findings, recommendations and issues raised in the report.

The Management acknowledges the finding that the flagship reports represent a major and sustained effort by UN-Habitat to articulate its views about important and relevant urban topics. The report reveals that the UN-Habitat flagship reports are produced with much smaller budgets and much smaller staff than such reports of other United Nations agencies and deliver considerable value for money. The Management appreciates that the Global Report on Human Settlements (GRHS) has been valued for its synthetic summary of global thinking on selected issues. The report has been used widely by academics in the English-speaking world as a reference document for research and teaching. Management supports that the State of the World's Cities Report (SWCR) has been valued for its efforts to provide new forms of analysis, relying on UN-Habitat's own data, and to present analysis and recommendation in shorter, more visual form that is more accessible to policy and non-academic audiences.

In addition, Management wishes to acknowledge the possible trade-offs identified in the evaluation report, which should be considered in order to strengthen the future management of the multiple steps in the flagship report process:

- Wide coverage of urban issues at a specific point in time versus a thematic focus
- Reliance on new data generated by UN-Habitat versus summary of existing data and material external to the agency

- Reliance on UN-Habitat staff as primary authors of the flagship reports versus use of external consultants as primary authors
- Reliance on UN-Habitat staff for review for quality control versus use of an external advisory group
- Assignment of flagship report production to a specific team within the agency versus involving many more staff from other branches
- Use of traditional print media for report dissemination, including a publisher and distributor, versus reliance on new forms of electronic publishing and media for dissemination
- Continued allocation of budgetary and human resources for publication of a single English-language report version (re-)allocation of available resources towards publication of reports in other languages.

On the issue of participation of UN-Habitat staff, Management is of the view that the flagship report process should be open to all branches and that there is a need to find a way to ensure such inputs are timely and of good quality. In terms of integration of the production process; this should be done with careful attention to the framing of messages and key arguments in early stages of the process. Management notes the concerns raised in the evaluation report over budget. It is important that budget details of what will go into each phase of producing and disseminating the report such as production, translation, printing, electronic copy and dissemination are clearly specified. Launching the report on the same day in all countries using a set of carefully crafted outreach tools and data should also be considered and innovative ways of translation and dissemination should be explored further. Management is mindful of the issue of data. By bringing in new data from partners, it will be possible to attract more readers of the report. Funds for data access could be found through partnerships.

In conclusion, the Management takes note of the report and accepts nine recommendations and partially accepts nine recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations will require involvement beyond the Research and Capacity Development Branch (R&CDB). The evaluation report will be a useful tool for the R&CDB to ensure better coordination between the flagship reports and the activities and capacities of the rest of UN-Habitat. As indicated throughout the evaluation report, coordination is essential to cost-effective production of a high quality flagship report.