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UN-Habitat Assembly Highlights: Thursday, 30 May 2019

On Thursday, the first UN-Habitat Assembly (UNHA 1) elected its Executive Board and hosted its first Board meeting. The Executive Board elected Lori Dando (US) as Chair, and adopted its agenda and rules of procedure.

In plenary, delegates heard national statements. A high-level session on innovative mobility for sustainable cities in Africa took place in the afternoon, exploring the policy dimensions of urban mobility, especially better coordination between national transport and urban policies.

Executive Board

UNHA elected 36 member states to the Executive Board by acclamation: Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Senegal, Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia, Kenya, Angola, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Republic of Korea, China, Japan, India, Iran, Indonesia, Pakistan, Poland, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Romania, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Uruguay, Canada, France, Sweden, Turkey, USA, Germany, Spain, and Portugal.

The Board elected Lori Dando, US, as its Chair.

Adoption of the Executive Board's Rules of Procedure:

At the first meeting of the Board, Chair Dando proposed, and delegates agreed, to adopt their rules of procedure (HSP/HA/1/9). CHINA, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, proposed that non-state actors could participate in Executive Board meetings (rule 17) "as observers," and with BRAZIL, COSTA RICA, and ETHIOPIA, called for the rules to be endorsed by the Assembly. ROMANIA and POLAND noted



Lori Dando, US, Chair of the Executive Board

that the rules had already been adopted and should not be reopened. The EU, supported by the US, underlined that this amendment would change the rule's spirit.

Chair Dando assured delegates that the rules would be forwarded to the Assembly for adoption. The UN Legal Advisor reiterated that the proposed amendment to Rule 17 is substantive and should be introduced as a proposal to amend the text, as set out in rule 19. CHINA then withdrew the amendment.

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda: The Board adopted the agenda (HSP/EB/1/1), including: the adoption of the rules of procedure proposed by Chair Dando; and the endorsement of the draft resolution on safer cities proposed by Germany, South Africa, and Brazil.

Election of the Executive Board Bureau: The Board elected China, the Russian Federation, and Argentina as Vice-Chairs; and Malawi as rapporteur.

Draft Workplan of the Executive Board for 2019–2020: Noting no supporting documentation for this item, Chair Dando proposed, and delegates agreed, that: the Executive Board would convene from 18-20 November 2019; the Bureau would meet prior to the next Board meeting; and the annual work programme and budget, and the annual report on the implementation of the strategic plan would be considered at the next meeting.

Approval of the annual work programme and the budget for 2020: Chair Dando proposed deferring consideration of the work programme and budget (HSP/EB/1/2) to the next meeting.



Martha Delgado Peralta, UNHA 1 President

Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif noted that the Board's first task would be to review the budget, and called for the Board to support financial resource mobilization.

Safer Cities: As recommended by the UNHA drafting committee, Chair Dando proposed, and delegates agreed, to approve the draft resolution on UN System-Wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements (HSP/HA/1/L.4).

Closing: Chair Dando closed the meeting at 4.30pm.

National Statements

BURKINA FASO, EGYPT, and others welcomed the Assembly's theme and sub-theme, noting that these are key to addressing rapid urbanization at the national level. PORTUGAL noted that the country's urban policy is based on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and includes a focus on decarbonization and incorporating circularity to promote a better quality of life. MEXICO noted that the country's new government has prioritized the elimination of poverty and reducing inequalities, including through urban development plans; and called on UN-Habitat to partner with other UN agencies to ensure the world meets the SDGs.

CAMEROON highlighted that the country is prioritizing efficient city design to address rapid urban growth, and announced their contribution of USD 565,000 to UN-Habitat's work in the region. ZIMBABWE drew attention to city upgrading programmes, home refurbishments, and urban regeneration activities at the national level. Describing the dire conflict situation in the country, YEMEN called for financial assistance to ensure the provision of shelter to those most affected. SOMALIA called for special attention to post-conflict societies in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

SPAIN noted that SDGs "will be achieved through a bottom-up approach," stressing the role of local governments to promote social cohesion in urban centers. BRAZIL observed that the new UN-Habitat structure will accelerate

implementation of the NUA and the SDGs, stressing the need to increase coherence in capacity building, including via the relevant draft resolution. Emphasizing the role of the private sector, COLOMBIA drew attention to the promotion of city models that are balanced, and focused on efficient land use, provision of services, and social inclusion.

MAURITIUS emphasized that "innovation is synonymous with economic stability, global prosperity, and survival." He underscored the need to address cities directly to promote sustainable urbanization, notwithstanding the role of national governments. LIBERIA emphasized the need to coordinate work among different sectors, not only to reduce disparities, but also to promote institutional collaboration.

CANADA and AUSTRALIA stressed that healthy, diverse, and safe communities leave no space for exclusion and intolerance. Underscoring that the NUA calls for inequality reduction, sustainable economic growth, and gender equality, they emphasized empowerment of women and girls as well as the need to ensure the recognition of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) community in the urban sustainability discussion.

CHILE highlighted national initiatives including programmes to: provide housing to vulnerable families; revitalize deteriorated areas; and create a network of urban parks. CAMBODIA expressed commitment to the NUA and outlined efforts to mainstream relevant aspects into national policy and plans. The PHILIPPINES highlighted a long-term vision to provide shelter and security, and city developments, including the new Manila Bay.

MALAWI welcomed ongoing UN-Habitat reform efforts announcing a non-earmarked contribution of USD 10,000 and called for the UN-Habitat country office in Malawi to be reopened. TIMOR LESTE highlighted national policies and legislation, and requested additional support for urban development and housing.

The GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER FORUM presented the first Global Stakeholder Forum Declaration on a new stakeholder compact for the NUA aimed at creating an



Delegates gather for the first meeting of the Executive Board



Siraj Sait, Global Stakeholder Forum



Delegates consult between sessions

enabling environment for innovative urban solutions. The INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNERS introduced the Habitat Professionals Forum, which represents 15 million professionals worldwide, who are interested in engaging in the implementation of the NUA through national and local government partnerships.

CAMPUS HOUSING SERVICES called on the Assembly to consider requiring, in UN-Habitat's procurement processes, statements of commitment to the implementation of the NUA from private sector institutions. Expressing support for the Stakeholder Advisory Group, the CONSORTIUM FOR SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION called for UN-Habitat to also work with architects, city planners, and designers to assist countries to create sustainable, efficient urban areas. GLOBAL RIGHTS TO CITIES stressed that actioning the "right to cities" will strengthen the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs.

Special Event: Innovative Urban Mobility for Sustainable Cities in Africa

Panel on urban mobility: Oliver Lah, Wupperthal Institut, Germany, moderated the session. Rafael Tuts, UN-Habitat, on behalf of Executive Director Sharif, emphasized the need for more inclusive, safe, and reliable transport as an enabler of social and economic development. In a video message, Jean Todt, UN Special Envoy for Road Safety, pointed out that 1.5 million people die on the roads annually, and recommended: regulating ride hailing services; advancement in transport technology; and promoting infrastructure updates that prioritize non-motorized transport.

Zemedkun Girma Tessema, Africa Transport Policy Programme, World Bank, highlighted that the programme aimed at contributing to transport policy development. Sylvain Haon, Union Internationale des Transports Publics, explained how his organization is working on sustainable urban mobility strategies and engaging with local communities, emphasizing the need for mobility champions.

During the high-level panel discussion, James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, and Urban Development, Kenya, discussed transport challenges in Nairobi and the introduction of an integrated transport system combining Bus Rapid Transport with commuter trains and investments in the road network. Tazer Gebreegziabher Berha, State Minister, Ethiopia, discussed plans to triple the

road network, highlighting challenges around maintaining infrastructure, administering the rail networks, and highway connectivity issues.

Claver Gatete, Minister of Infrastructure, Rwanda, outlined transport regulatory requirements and highlighted the role technology plays in "tap and go" payment on buses, and bus arrival information. Nouredine Selmi, Minister of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Planning, Tunisia, discussed collaboration with Morocco and Libya on a major highway project, and efforts to develop the interior of the country and build smart cities.

Damià Calvert i Valera, Regional Minister of Territory and Sustainability, Catalonia, Spain, highlighted: an integrated fare system; the need to expand the transport network; and a t-mobility card, a new method to calculate fares according to real distance travelled. Jane Akumu, UN Environment, stressed the need for more fuel-efficient vehicles, especially in African cities, noting that although motorization rates are low, growth rates are in double digits.

Operationalizing Mobility Policies: Chris Kost, Africa Director, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, called for ensuring a dedicated space for public transport in city planning, not as an after-thought, but as a priority. Amanda Ngabirano, Vice President, World Cycling Alliance, underscored cycling- and walking-inclusive plans for cities. Winnie Mitullah, University of Nairobi, stressed the need for building relevant skills and expertise, in addition to financial resources.

Edwins Mukabanah, Chairman, Federation of Public Transport Sector Operators, Kenya, highlighted capacity building, sustainable funding, and data access and management. Susan Goodwile, Flone Initiative, discussed the need for safe and accessible public transportation for women and other vulnerable groups in African cities.

Inspiring Innovation and Mobility Solutions: Stefanie Holzwarth, UN-Habitat, moderated the session. Arlene Ducao, Multimer Biosensors, presented a tool, which uses biometric data to measure cyclists' stress levels in Nairobi. Vincent Loubiere, Airbus Urban Mobility, focused on integrating air mobility within a broader, holistic mobility system. Cezanne



Rafael Tuts, Director of Programme Division, UN-Habitat

Maherali, Uber East Africa, highlighted Uber Movement, a tool using Uber data to enhance city planning, and Speeds, a tool measuring average speed on individual streets.

Federico Parolotto, Mobility in Chain, presented different projects around the world, including redistribution of urban spaces and the use of technology for data collection. Filip Lövström, CEO and CTO, Opibus AB, focused on electrified safari vehicles and motorbikes, offering cost-effective and environmentally sustainable transport solutions.

Gladys Njeri, University of Nairobi, discussed acceleration and incubation services as well as funding support to scale up transformative solutions for urban mobility in African cities. Jackie Klopp, DigitalTransport4Africa, highlighted efforts to connect different mapping initiatives for high-quality, transport-related data generation, and sharing through open source tools.

Jonas Tesfu, Co-Founder and CEO, Pangea Accelerator, highlighted ways to accelerate the uptake of digital solutions to address urbanization challenges in Africa. Alex Mungai, Little

Cab Kenya, presented some of the benefits the service provides, including environmental sustainability, employment generation, and safety.

Mobility Solutions for a Better Climate Future and tracking action towards the SDGs: Maruxa Cardama, Secretary General of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport, highlighted a vision for decarbonizing transport in cities, and efforts to mobilize the transport sector towards the UN Secretary-General's upcoming Climate Summit. Robert Ndugwa, Head, Global Urban Observatory, UN-Habitat, discussed progress on monitoring target 10 of SDG 11 on access to public transport, and support to countries to collect relevant information.

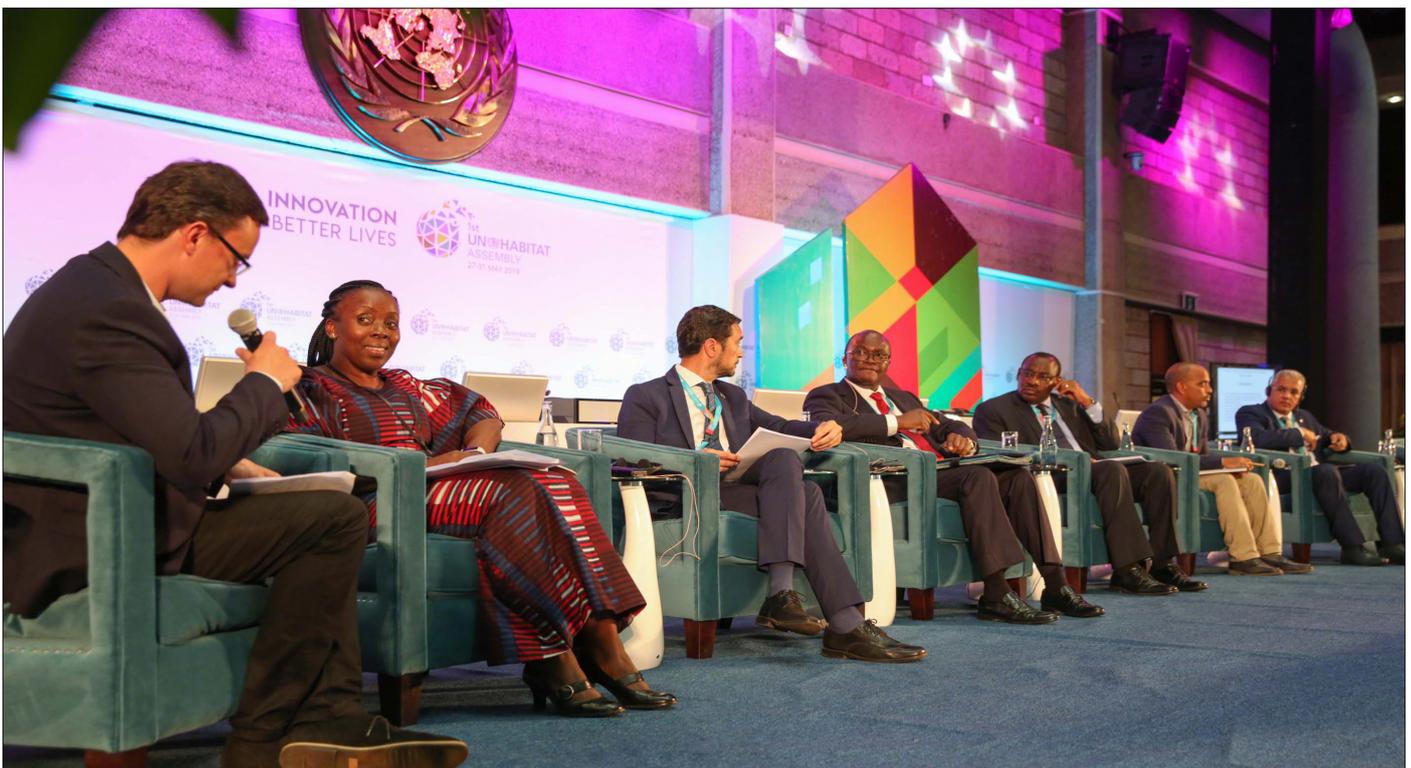
Philip Turner, International Association of Public Transport, highlighted outcomes from the 2014 Declaration on Climate Leadership, resulting in over 350 projects in 80 cities from over 100 organizations addressing sustainable transport. Anne Leemans, Yellow Design Foundation, Belgium, highlighted the SPINAPP project, designed to enable stations to become more environmentally sustainable and secure.

Susan Grant-Muller, University of Leeds, UK, discussed behavioral measures aimed at reducing carbon from the transport sector by encouraging people to rethink transport choices, delivered through digital technologies.

Towards Implementation Action: Daniel Guenther, BMZ, presented on the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI). Philip Dinga, C40 Cities Finance Facility, said the Facility is city-driven and non-burdensome.

Concluding the event, Debashish Bhattacharjee, UN-Habitat, presented the session's communiqué, which includes 11 recommendations to governments.

IISD Summary: A summary report of UNHA 1 will be available on Monday, 3 June 2019 at <http://enb.iisd.org/habitat/assembly1/>



Panel speakers for Policy-Making during the High-Level Session on Innovative Mobility for Sustainable Cities in Africa