Ref: UNH-SGC-O-170536

13 December 2017

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the recently adopted resolution by the General Assembly on strengthening of UN-Habitat and to share with you the resolution A/C.2/72/L.67 which requests;

‘the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to establish an open-ended Working Group in Nairobi to examine, taking into account relevant work, including of mechanisms under the auspices of UN-Habitat, different options for strengthening Member States’ oversight of UN-Habitat, including, but not limited to, those presented in the New Urban Agenda6, or a focused Executive Board, or a universal Urban Assembly, as well as appropriate combinations thereof, and decides that the mandate of this Working Group shall also include consideration of the appropriateness of financial rules and regulations and of personnel, procurement and budgetary matters, and requests the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to make available to Member States findings and recommendations of the Working Group, including any necessary adjustments to UN-Habitat’s existing governance and administration arising from the options presented, as soon as possible, but no later than 30 June 2018, for the consideration and appropriate action of the General Assembly during the seventy-third session’

In that respect, I wish to encourage all Regional Groups to ensure effective representation and participation in the open ended Working Group.

Historically, the subject of strengthening of UN-Habitat has crossed the path of the CPR before and I wish to share some of these historical activities with you. In 2004, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, based upon an in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat, called for the sharpening of the Organization’s programmatic focus. UN-Habitat responded to the evaluation by preparing a Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP). The Governing Council at its twenty-first session in April 2007, approved the MTSIP as a strategy for the period 2007-2013 and in its resolution 21/2 of 20th April 2007, requested the Executive Director to consult the CPR on the need to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance structure.

In 2009, during the twenty-second session of the Governing Council, the Executive Director in response to resolution 21/2 submitted a note on the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance structure of UN-Habitat, contained in document HSP/GC/22/2.Add.3

The Governing Council responded to the submission of the Executive Director by adopting resolution 22/5, initiating the governance review. That resolution required the Executive Director and the CPR to undertake jointly, an examination of the governance of UN-Habitat with a view to identifying an implementing way to improve accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of the functions of the existing governance structure and identify potential or any relevant changes for consideration during the twenty-third session.

The terms of reference to guide the activities undertaken pursuant to resolution 22/5 were jointly formulated by a geographically balanced cross section of members drawn from the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the secretariat.

At its twenty-third session, based upon the report of the Executive Director contained in Document HSP/GC/23/2.Add.1 and the Note by the secretariat contained in document HSP/GC/23/INF/7, the Governing Council adopted resolution 23/13 requesting the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the secretariat of UN-Habitat to jointly engage in a governance review process to:

- To further examine the options for reform and to develop a preferred option,
- Develop a procedure for the examination phase,
• Seek consensus on the identified option and
• Develop an action plan and present it to the general assembly at its 67th session if applicable.

To accomplish that task, a consultant was hired with the following three main outputs:

• A comparative analysis of different governance models based on presentation made to the Open Ended Consultative Group by representatives of various UN organizations whose governance structures UN-Habitat can learn lessons from.
• An examination of the governance options as identified in the Note by the Secretariat to the Governing Council contained in document HSP/GC/23/INF/7 amongst others
• An Action Plan that suggests specific recommendations, explains steps that must be taken and clarifies financial, legal and procedural implications

The Consultant’s report, contained in document HSP/GC/24/INF/6 was availed to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session. The Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session did not adopt any resolution on the governance review process due to the lack of consensus.

In December 2013, the General Assembly of the United Nations through resolution 68/239 took note of the governance review process of UN-Habitat and encouraged consensus on how to proceed with the governance review.

From June 2014 to April 2015, UN-Habitat’s CPR created the governance working group, facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Nigeria and the United States of America, which resulted in the draft resolution on governance review presented to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session.

In April 2015, the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session adopted resolution 25/7 on UN-Habitat governance reform in which it decided to strengthen the oversight role of the Governing Council and the CPR by requesting the CPR to establish a Working Group on Programme and Budget. The CPR established the Working Group on Programme and Budget at its fifty-seventh regular meeting held on 12 June 2015.

In May 2017, during the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council held from 8-12 May 2017, the Governing Council adopted resolution 26/1 on the governance reform and the extension of the mandate of the Working Group on Programme and Budget, ensuring that the Working group shall continue its work for at least until the next session of the council in 2019.

I hope this brief background will assist you in your work with the open ended Working Group. I have attached all the documents referred herein for ease of reference.

This being my last communication to you as Chair, since my term as the Chair of the CPR comes to an end at the end of this month, I wish to thank you sincerely for the tremendous support you have always accorded me and the Bureau. To my colleagues of the Bureau let’s just say I couldn’t have had a more dedicated and supportive Bureau for which I am grateful. The new Chair of the CPR will continue with the work of the open ended Working Group in the beginning of the New Year.

Please accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration
Yours Sincerely,

James Kimonyo
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Rwanda to UN-Habitat