

# Evaluation of the UN-Habitat Liaison Offices



MARCH 2012

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UN  HABITAT

## Evaluation Report 6/2012

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Assessment and Classification of Emergencies
EC	European Commission
EUR	Euro
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
LENSS	Local Estimate of Needs for Shelter and Settlement
MTSIP	Mid-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USD	United States Dollar

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the UN-Habitat liaison offices was conducted at the request of UN-Habitat Management. It served to fulfil task 118 identified in the One UN-Habitat Action Plan of 19 October 2011, which called for an assessment of the implications of the UN-Habitat organizational reform of its liaison offices in New York, Geneva, Brussels and Washington, D.C.

The liaison offices were established one-by-one over several decades and have carried out their generic functions to different degrees facing various challenges at systemic level and related to the specific context in which each liaison office operates. The primary function of the offices is to forge partnerships with United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations, donors and civil society at global centres. Other functions include advocacy and marketing of UN-Habitat key priorities, programmes and products; resource mobilization; information sharing; and follow-up. In the new reform of UN-Habitat, the project-based management approach has been adopted and is expected to affect all entities of the Agency, including the liaison offices, in ensuring that they contribute towards increasing efficiency, productivity as well as transparency and accountability of UN-Habitat.

### II. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the roles, relevance, efficiency and effectiveness and implications of the new reform on the liaison offices. Specifically, the objectives were to assess effectiveness and efficiency of the liaisons offices in carrying out key functions in terms of organizations and technical representation, information sharing, advocacy and outreach, building of partnerships, resource mobilization and the way in which each office delivers and conducts its work. The evaluation also assessed how the new reform could impact the liaison offices and suggested how the strategic roles of the liaison offices could be enhanced in the new reform.

The evaluation was managed and conducted by the Evaluation Unit with the support of an external consultant, Ms. Nefise Bazoğlu. The evaluation took place over the period from November 2011 to March 2012. Different methods of data collection were used, and included desk review of documents, visits to the liaison offices to conduct interviews with staff and other stakeholders, and a questionnaire was administered to staff at headquarters and liaison offices. No cost-benefit analysis was carried out due to difficulties encountered in collating the different sources. Another limitation was that it was not possible to interview all stakeholders, in particular national officials in the host cities of the liaison offices.

### III. KEY FINDINGS

#### Organizational and Technical Representation

The offices have represented UN-Habitat at political and technical levels within United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and regional bodies and civil society. The New York office has played a critical role in following up on UN-Habitat's work programme approval processes lobbied delegates to the United Nations General Assembly for negotiating critical resolutions of interest to the agency and participated in a wide range of working groups, task forces and executive committees, including the United Nations Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The Geneva office has focused more on programmatic aspects of humanitarian aid, representing UN-Habitat in meetings aimed at resolving humanitarian challenges. The office has actively represented UN-Habitat and participated in the Consolidated Appeal Processes, and the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund. The Brussels office has represented UN-Habitat in the European Union and its subsidiary bodies and institutions, advocating policy dialogue that has led to improved working

#### Partnerships

The liaison offices have forged key partnerships. Some of these partnerships are the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Others are the Norwegian Refugee Council and non-governmental organization consortia in Geneva, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. Partners also include the United Nations Development Group in New York, European Union institutions in Brussels, the World Bank, Cities Alliance, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States, and the Inter-America Coalition for the Presentation of Violence in Washington, D.C. These partners have appreciated UN-Habitat's activities, events and contributions.

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