



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2026/023

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

There was a need to strengthen planning, performance measurement and risk management to better demonstrate the contribution of communication, advocacy and partnership activities to the achievement of UN-Habitat's corporate objectives

**19 August 2026
Assignment No. AA2025-250-02**

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over communications, advocacy and partnership activities conducted to increase awareness and transparency and strengthen collaboration among relevant stakeholders. The audit covered the period from January 2023 to December 2025 and included: (a) strategic and operational planning; (b) work plan implementation; (c) project performance monitoring and reporting; and (d) evaluation.

While key communication, advocacy and partnership activities were undertaken, the lack of a robust results framework, limited alignment between strategic and operational plans, weaknesses in risk management, incomplete performance monitoring, and inadequate operational controls over digital communication platforms reduced UN-Habitat's ability to demonstrate the impact of these activities in supporting corporate objectives.

OIOS made four recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UN-Habitat needed to:

- Ensure that the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division develops a communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with a clear, measurable results framework incorporating key performance indicators and targets, to demonstrate impact.
- Systematically identify and assess risks relating to communication, advocacy, and partnership activities areas and implement risk mitigation measures in accordance with the enterprise risk management framework.
- Develop and implement operational project documents and plans, including standard operating procedures, for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms, with clearly outlined expected benefits.
- Develop mechanisms to proactively ensure compliance with the World Urban Forum donor agreement provisions on budget expenditure and obtain written authorization for variations beyond agreed thresholds.

UN-Habitat accepted the recommendations and initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of communication, advocacy, and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

2. UN-Habitat is mandated by the General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities and serves as the focal point for urbanization and human settlements within the United Nations system. Its vision is “a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world,” and its mission is to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action, with a commitment to leaving no one and no place behind.

3. UN-Habitat’s 2020–2025 strategic plan focused on promoting sustainable urbanization to drive development, peace, and better living conditions worldwide. It was built around four key areas: (a) reducing inequality and poverty; (b) boosting shared economic prosperity; (c) strengthening climate action and environmental management; and (d) improving urban crisis prevention and response. Communication, advocacy and partnerships were recognized as important enablers of implementation, supporting policy influence, stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization, visibility of results and collaboration necessary for the achievement of the strategic plan's objectives.

4. UN-Habitat developed an impact communication strategy in August 2020 to raise awareness on sustainable urbanization (including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 11) and the New Urban Agenda, strengthen its visibility, and position itself as a leading authority on urban issues. The strategy focused on three roles: engaging stakeholders, driving change through advocacy, and reinforcing its thought leadership. Its intended outcomes were increased awareness of urban issues, stronger visibility of UN-Habitat’s work and impact, and greater participation from key stakeholders such as Member States, local governments, the private sector, and civil society.

5. In parallel, a partnership strategy was developed in January 2020 aimed at strengthening engagement with Member States and the United Nations system, mobilize stakeholders, and increase resources to support programme delivery. It sought to position UN-Habitat as a global centre of excellence, reinforce its mandate, enhance coordination across the United Nations system, leverage partner expertise, and attract investment for the corporate strategic plan, recognizing that effective partnership management is essential for achieving results and sustaining funding.

6. Over the period covered by the audit, the External Relations and Partnership Branch, within the External Relations, Knowledge and Innovation Division of UN-Habitat was responsible for providing strategic advice, guidance, and operational support on communication, advocacy, and partnership management to internal programmes, senior leadership, and a wide range of external stakeholders, including Member States, media, civil society, private sector partners, and local governments. The Branch also built and maintained strategic partnerships, mobilized stakeholders and resources, and facilitated engagement across global, regional, and country levels. In addition, it supported major corporate events and global platforms, particularly the World Urban Forum (WUF) and other United Nations conferences, while supporting intergovernmental relations and stakeholder participation. The World Urban Forum secretariat, also within the Division, coordinated UN-Habitat’s activities related to WUF.

7. As of 31 December 2025, the External Relations and Partnership Branch had 19 staff members, comprising 5 professional and 14 general service staff. Following recent organizational restructuring,

communication, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement functions, previously undertaken by the External Relations and Partnership Branch, are now under the Communication and Advocacy Branch within the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division. For this report, the Branch is referred to in the name in effect for the period covered by the audit.

8. From 2023 to 2025, UN-Habitat operated with total budgets of \$182.2 million, \$181.0 million, and \$177.2 million, respectively. Communication and advocacy activities were supported through a project portfolio of approximately \$12.3 million, including \$10 million allocated to the twelfth WUF session (WUF12), a key global advocacy and partnership platform.

9. UN-Habitat utilized several information systems to support its communication, advocacy and partnership management including the following: (a) the Global Event Management System (GEMS) for important events; (b) online media platforms including the UN-Habitat website, You Tube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Flickr; and (c) Umoja, which was used for processing payments, travel, procurement activities, and the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) module for project management.

10. Comments provided by UN-Habitat are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

11. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes over communications, advocacy and partnership activities conducted to increase awareness and transparency and strengthen collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

12. This audit was included in the 2025 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk that potential weaknesses in implementation of communications, advocacy and partnership activities could have an adverse impact on the achievement of UN-Habitat's objectives.

13. OIOS conducted this audit from February to May 2026. The audit covered the period from January 2023 to December 2025 and focused on: (a) strategic and operational planning; (b) work plan implementation; (c) project performance monitoring and reporting; and (d) evaluation. Major developments since January 2026 were also reviewed.

14. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data extracted from Umoja to identify trends and anomalies, assess performance and identify risks; and (d) sample testing of transactions on a judgmental basis.

15. To assess reliability, integrity, accuracy, and accessibility of data pertaining to communication, advocacy and partnership management activities, OIOS: (a) reviewed existing information about relevant data management systems; (b) interviewed UN-Habitat personnel knowledgeable about the data; and (c) traced a random sample of data to source documents. Based on the review, OIOS determined that the data was sufficiently reliable to address the audit objective.

16. The audit was conducted in accordance with the Global Internal Audit Standards.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Strategic and operational planning

Absence of results-based planning and performance management for communication, advocacy and partnership activities

17. The results-based management approach adopted in UN-Habitat requires that programmes: (a) develop results frameworks with clearly defined outputs, outcomes, indicators, and targets; (b) align strategies and activities with corporate results; and (c) establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track performance and support decision-making.

18. The External Relations and Partnership Branch developed communication and partnership strategies in 2020 to support the corporate strategy. However, the strategies: (a) lacked clearly defined and integrated measurable indicators and targets for outputs, outcomes, and impacts; (b) were not clearly linked to corporate results contained in the UN-Habitat results framework; and (c) were not updated following the extension of the UN-Habitat strategic plan from 2020-2023 to 2025. In addition, UN-Habitat had not established a structured reporting arrangement for communication, advocacy and partnership activities, limiting its ability to systematically monitor and report performance.

19. Furthermore, there were inconsistencies between the communication and partnership strategies and the corresponding annual work plans developed. The strategies outlined one set of expected results and targets, while the annual work plans applied different metrics and baselines. These discrepancies were partly attributed to adjustments in response to resource constraints and the decentralized allocation of responsibilities across sections and units within the External Relations and Partnership Branch and with other UN-Habitat organization units. They however resulted in UN-Habitat facing challenges in: (a) demonstrating contribution of communication, advocacy and partnership activities to strategic objectives; and (b) tracking communication and advocacy reach, stakeholder engagement, and partnership outcomes.

20. The UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 recognized communication, advocacy, and partnerships as one of the five core means of its implementation. Accordingly, OIOS was informed that the communication, advocacy, and partnerships strategies to support the strategic plan were being developed. It would be important to follow the results-based management approach in developing these strategies. In this regard, OIOS noted that in November 2025, the UN-Habitat Executive Board approved a structured monitoring and reporting framework (UN-Habitat 2026-2029 Strategic Plan and Monitoring framework) that included baseline values and corresponding targets and indicators, including those to track communication, advocacy and partnership activities.

(1) UN-Habitat should strengthen results-based management for communication, advocacy, and partnership functions by ensuring that the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division develop, in alignment to the UN-Habitat 2026-2029 Strategic Plan and Monitoring framework, a communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with a clear, measurable results framework incorporating key performance indicators and targets, to demonstrate impact.

UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 1 and stated that it would update its communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with the relevant baseline values and corresponding targets and indicators already included in the structured monitoring and reporting framework in the approved UN-Habitat 2026-2029 Strategic Plan.

Lack of adequate mechanisms for risk management

21. The UN-Habitat enterprise risk management (ERM) framework requires that risks are systematically identified, assessed, mitigated, and monitored. In addition, risk responses should be tracked and reported through established systems, including the Umoja IPMR module.

22. UN-Habitat did not have adequate risk management mechanisms in place to manage risks related to communication, advocacy and partnership activities as detailed below:

- a) The communication and partnership strategies did not identify or assess of risks associated with their implementation and establish mitigating actions. For example, communication, advocacy, and partnership functions were implemented with limited staffing and resource capacity. Notably, three senior positions within the External Relations, Knowledge and Innovation Division were being performed by a single staff member during the audit period, adversely affecting effective execution of key responsibilities. UN-Habitat did not establish mitigating actions to address the impact.
- b) UN-Habitat ERM risk register was outdated, as the latest version available was as of October 2023. As a result, emerging operational risks from 2024 and 2025 had not been identified, assessed, or addressed. Additionally, the register only captured risks related to advocacy activities.
- c) As of 24 March 2026, UN-Habitat had not provided evidence of the current implementation status of mitigation measures for risks rated as “high” in the ERM register relating to advocacy. These mitigation measures included:
 - Development of an internal compact to clarify UN-Habitat’s advocacy priorities;
 - Establishment of a clear institutional identity to support advocacy efforts;
 - Finalization of a strategic narrative articulating UN-Habitat’s vision;
 - Enhancement of donor intelligence and internal information management systems to align advocacy strategies with donor interests; and
 - Development of corporate guidelines for communication materials.
- d) Project documents for WUF and the World Urban Campaign (WUC¹) 2.0 identified several risks linked to advocacy, communication, and outreach, including reduced stakeholder engagement, declining participation, limited visibility, weak partner commitment, and perceptions of reduced relevance. However, these risks were not recorded, tracked, or monitored through the Umoja IPMR module, contrary to ERM requirements.

(2) UN-Habitat should strengthen risk management for communication, advocacy, and partnership activities by systematically identifying and assessing risks in these areas and implementing risk mitigation measures in accordance with the enterprise risk management framework.

UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 2 and stated that risk management for communication, advocacy, and partnership activities would be incorporated as part of the regular review and update of its ERM programme.

¹ A global advocacy platform and partnership movement designed to elevate the urban agenda and promote sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities. Coordinated by the UN-Habitat, it unites governments, civil society, private sectors, academia, and the media to share best practices and drive positive urban change.

B. Work plan implementation

23. The organizational units forming the External Relations and Partnership Branch (Communications and Media Section, Advocacy and Campaign Section, Partnership and Local Government Units) developed work plans, for the period 2023-2025.

24. The audit confirmed that the units implemented activities included in the 2023-2025 workplans. These included support for major intergovernmental and corporate events such as the UN-Habitat Assembly, High-Level Political Forums, Executive Board and Committee of Permanent Representative meetings, and WUF12. Additional activities implemented during the period included observation of International Women's Day, World Cities Day, International Zero Waste Day, World Cities Summit, World Habitat Day, as well as launch of World Cities Report, impact storytelling, stakeholder engagement activities and coordination of corporate partnerships. OIOS review of work plan implementation noted the following:

Event management processes were streamlined

25. UN-Habitat effectively deployed GEMS to support end-to-end planning, coordination, and delivery of legislative and non-legislative events. Since its introduction at WUF11 in 2022, the system has been progressively enhanced to improve functionality and support increasingly complex event management requirements. In 2025, the Events Team utilized GEMS for 14 meetings for Executive Board sessions, UN-Habitat Assembly-related meetings, high-level open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on adequate housing for all. It was also used for WUF12 in Cairo, Egypt, (2024), which was attended by approximately 24,000 in-person participants from 182 countries. GEMS supported management of approximately 690 partner-led events.

26. Programme managers interviewed during the audit provided positive feedback on the professionalism of event delivery. They also indicated that the use of GEMS contributed to improved operational efficiency, enhanced stakeholder experience, and strengthened data-driven decision-making during events.

Communication and advocacy plans were integrated in project design

27. Communication and publications guidance require that outreach and communication initiatives be planned and implemented as structured processes to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

28. A review of WUF and WUC 2.0 project documents indicated that advocacy, communication and outreach, were incorporated in project design. The External Relations and Partnership Branch contributed through strategic communication planning, advocacy messaging, stakeholder outreach and coordination mechanisms. The World Urban Forum secretariat developed the project documents and coordinated implementation, and reporting. For example, the WUF project document identified advocacy and communication as core elements, outlining strategies such as institutional positioning, engagement with the United Nations system, partner network expansion, internal coordination, and regional mobilization. It also defined high-level objectives including expanding audience reach, strengthening advocacy on sustainable urbanization, and enhancing visibility.

29. Similarly, the WUC 2.0 project document included an advocacy and communication plan comprising defined target audiences, communication channels, messaging strategies, outreach activities, and inclusive partnership approaches.

The effectiveness of digital communication platforms was limited

30. UN-Habitat's corporate website and social media platforms are essential tools for visibility, stakeholder engagement, and dissemination of organizational priorities. However, weaknesses in planning, resourcing, editorial oversight, and standard operating procedures, have limited their effectiveness.

- a) Corporate website - The redevelopment of the corporate website, led by Communication and Media Section, faced a significant funding shortfall, with only \$140,000 available against an estimated requirement of \$1 million. The absence of a consolidated project plan with clearly defined objectives, scope, timelines, deliverables, and expected corporate benefits, resulted in fragmented implementation and repeated delays. As of March 2026, the website remained incomplete and contained outdated information such as resource mobilization activities for COVID-19 and an earthquake that took place a year ago in Asia. This reduced the effectiveness of the website as a primary communication platform and potentially affected stakeholder engagement. In addition, it was not clear whether evolving cybersecurity risks had been adequately identified and addressed.
- b) Social media platforms - Inconsistencies were observed across UN-Habitat's six institutional social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Flickr). For example, UN-Habitat was described differently across platforms, reflecting gaps in enforcement of editorial standards and decentralized content management. These inconsistencies risk weakening corporate identity, creating stakeholder confusion, and reducing the impact of communication efforts.

(3) UN-Habitat should develop and implement operational project documents and plans, including standard operating procedures, for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms, with clearly outlined expected benefits from its presence.

UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it would develop a standard operating procedure for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms.

C. Project performance monitoring and reporting

31. During the audit period, the External Relations and Partnership Branch and the World Urban Forum secretariat supported programme and project management teams to implement the projects listed in table 1.

Table 1: Communications and advocacy projects undertaken from January 2023 to December 2025

Project	Start Date	Operational end date	Project budget \$
WUC 2.0 programme	28/10/2022	28/10/2026	179,368
World Cities Day 2022	02/10/2022	31/12/2024	350,000
World Cities Day 2023	08/06/2023	31/12/2025	400,000
World Habitat Day 2023 Baku Azerbaijan	08/06/2023	31/12/2025	400,000
World Cities Day 2024 Queretaro Mexico	08/06/2023	31/12/2025	400,000
WUF 12	01/01/2024	31/12/2028	10,000,000
Corporate website	07/01/2024	30/06/2025	141,270
World Cities Day 2025 Bogota Colombia	15/07/2025	14/07/2027	400,000

Source: UN-Habitat donor agreements and project documents/concept notes

32. OIOS reviewed the management of the projects, including whether project objectives, expected results, indicators and targets were adequately defined and monitored, and whether performance information was complete, reliable and supported by evidence. OIOS also examined the adequacy of data recorded in Umoja IPMR and supporting project documentation. The review results are presented as below.

UN-Habitat was taking action to enhance the monitoring and reporting of project performance based on defined expectations

33. UN-Habitat requires project documents to include logical frameworks with defined performance indicators, baselines, targets, and means of verification, to monitor and report on project activities through established systems such as the Umoja IPMR module. However, a review of performance monitoring arrangements, including data recorded in the Umoja IPMR module and supporting documentation, identified shortcomings in implementation including the following:

(a) Incomplete monitoring of WUF performance indicators

34. Of the 42 indicators included in the WUF12 results framework, 16 indicators (approximately 38 per cent) recorded either actual results of zero or performance below the established targets. These indicators relate primarily to areas intended to demonstrate the impact and sustainability of WUF outcomes, including stakeholder participation, initiatives demonstrating measurable impact, policy integration related to the New Urban Agenda, and partnership engagement during the intersessional period.

(b) Absence of performance monitoring frameworks for some key initiatives

35. A review of selected advocacy and campaign activities, including World Cities Days, indicated that while concept notes and programme documentation outlined objectives and expected outcomes for these initiatives, no formal logical frameworks were developed. Furthermore, related indicators were not captured or tracked in the Umoja IPMR module. For example, the concept note for the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2024 outlined objectives such as recognizing the leadership of local governments and youth in advancing climate and local action for cities, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders, and highlighting successful city projects and youth-led initiatives, but no follow-up mechanisms were defined to assess their outcomes and impact. Similarly, the concept notes for the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2025 set out objectives including promoting people-centered smart cities, facilitating exchange of experiences and best practices among cities, and encouraging international cooperation to advance sustainable urbanization, but had no defined expected results in terms of outcomes and impact.

(c) Lack of alignment between logical framework and Umoja IPMR indicators

36. Not all indicators defined in the WUC logical framework were captured in the Umoja IPMR module. In addition, review of the logical framework noted that means of measurement were not specified for the indicators. The absence limits the ability to identify the specific data sources or documentation required to substantiate reported results.

37. Collectively, the above observations indicated gaps in the project performance monitoring framework, limiting the completeness, reliability and verifiability of performance information and reducing assurance over reported results.

38. UN-Habitat explained that it had already acknowledged historic data-quality challenges in IPMR and had taken concrete, executive-led corrective action. The Executive Director formally established the Task Force on Data Quality and Integrated Database Management by a memorandum dated 28 October 2025 to address long-standing audit observations related to data quality, consistency, governance, and

system integration. The Task Force was actively implementing corrective measures across defined workstreams, including improvements to data standards, governance frameworks, system integration, and capacity-building. Furthermore, the revised Programme Review Guidelines (2025), effective 1 January 2026, introduced a formal accountability framework for IPMR and monitoring, including escalation of persistent non-compliance to individual performance assessments. Extensive agency-wide training and targeted reviews were conducted between February and April 2026 to ensure implementation.

Inadequate compliance with donor agreement provisions on budgetary expenditure

39. The agreement between the United Nations and the major donor supporting WUF12 provided that it would only be modified by written agreement between the parties. The approved budget of \$10 million annexed to the agreement established the agreed financial structure of the project. Notably, reallocations exceeding 20 per cent represented a variation in the approved budget structure and required prior written donor approval.

40. Staff and other personnel costs for WUF 12 amounted to \$4.8 million, while non-post expenditure totaled \$5.2 million. OIOS reviewed non-post expenditures amounting to \$3.9 million and found that they were supported by appropriate documentation and incurred for project purposes. The transactions reviewed comprised contractual services (\$451,314), travel (\$2,671,782) and other operating costs (\$777,084). However, comparison of the approved project budget with actual expenditure as of 9 February 2026 identified variances exceeding 20 per cent across several budget categories, as summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of budget variances exceeding 20 per cent

Budget category/Outcome	Approved budget \$	Actual expenditure \$	Variance %
Registration	200,000	350,113	+75
Exhibition and merchandise	520,000	695,683	+34
Material and equipment	50,192	195,982	+390

41. UN-Habitat indicated that:

- Over-expenditure on registration and exhibition and merchandise was primarily linked to salary increases at the end of 2023 and 2024.
- Material and equipment expenditure exceeded its allocation due to additional contractual services and operating costs. This included payments for software applications for meetings such as Zoom.

42. However, UN-Habitat did not provide a specific explanation for exceeding the 20 per cent budget variation threshold without documented prior written approval from the donor. This created a risk of non-compliance with the donor agreement, which could adversely affect transparency with the donor and support for future initiatives.

(4) UN-Habitat should develop mechanisms to proactively ensure compliance with World Urban Forum donor agreement provisions on budget expenditure and obtain written authorization for variations beyond agreed thresholds.

UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it would implement the recommendation with the WUF 14 donor agreement.

D. Evaluation

Recurring WUF evaluation issues were being addressed

43. The UN-Habitat evaluation policy requires systematic generation, dissemination and use of lessons learned from evaluations to support institutional learning and uptake of recommendations. In addition, Governing Council resolution 26/6 calls for clearly defined objectives, measurable indicators and strengthened reporting on WUF outcomes. These requirements imply that evaluation recommendations should be consolidated, assigned, tracked, implemented and formally closed at programme level to demonstrate accountability and learning.

44. A review of evaluation reports for WUF9, WUF10, WUF12, and the 2018–2023 WUF programme cycle identified recurring findings across successive cycles, including: (a) limited measurement of long-term impact; (b) challenges in attributing results to WUF interventions; (c) absence of structured mechanisms to track post-forum outcomes and commitments; (d) limited evidence of efficiency and value for money; and (e) weaknesses in institutional learning processes, including limited closure of recommendations.

45. UN-Habitat indicated that it had started addressing these recommendations, including in preparations for WUF13 (held in May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan). Remedial measures reported included strengthened internal tracking of workplans, outputs, risks and issues, as well as initiatives aimed at improving long-term impact, stakeholder engagement and follow-up of outcomes and commitments. These include new platforms and approaches such as the Practice and Solutions-Oriented Track (WUF Practice Hub), expanded capacity development (WUF Academy), targeted engagement of under-represented groups, and a strengthened focus on global policy dialogue.

46. UN-Habitat further advised OIOS of enhancements in stakeholder engagement approaches extending beyond the Forum, including mechanisms to capture inputs prior to events and to monitor post-forum outcomes and commitments. UN-Habitat explained that these measures were intended to address previously identified gaps in structured follow-up and to strengthen continuity between WUF sessions.

47. In view of the information provided by UN-Habitat to address recurring evaluation issues, including improvements in tracking, stakeholder engagement and follow-up mechanisms, OIOS concluded that no recommendation is warranted at this stage.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

48. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UN-Habitat for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UN-Habitat should strengthen results-based management for communication, advocacy, and partnership functions by ensuring that the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division develop, in alignment to the UN-Habitat 2026-2029 Strategic Plan and Monitoring framework, a communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with a clear, measurable results framework incorporating key performance indicators and targets, to demonstrate impact.	Important	O	Receipt of the updated communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with a clear, measurable results framework incorporating key performance indicators and targets to demonstrate impact.	30 September 2027
2	UN-Habitat should strengthen risk management for communication, advocacy, and partnership activities by systematically identifying and assessing risks in these areas and implementing risk mitigation measures in accordance with the enterprise risk management framework.	Important	O	Receipt of updated UN-Habitat risk register and evidence of implementation of risk mitigating measures for communication, advocacy, and partnership activities.	30 June 2027
3	UN-Habitat should develop and implement operational project documents and plans, including standard operating procedures, for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms, with clearly outlined expected benefits from its presence.	Important	O	Receipt and evidence of implementation of UN-Habitat operational project documents and plans, including standard operating procedures, for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms.	30 September 2027

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁴ Date provided by UN-Habitat in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
4	UN-Habitat should develop mechanisms to proactively ensure compliance with the World Urban Forum donor agreement provisions on budget expenditure and obtain written authorization for variations beyond agreed thresholds.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of mechanisms developed to proactively comply with the WUF 14 donor agreement provisions on budget expenditure.	30 September 2027

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UN-Habitat should strengthen results-based management for communication, advocacy, and partnership functions by ensuring that the Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division develop, in alignment to the UN-Habitat 2026-2029 Strategic Plan and Monitoring framework, a communication, advocacy and partnership strategy with a clear, measurable results framework incorporating key performance indicators and targets, to demonstrate impact.	Important	Yes	Chief of Communication and Advocacy Branch	September 2027	The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan has a structured monitoring and reporting framework approved by the Executive Board at its session in November 2025, and includes baseline values and corresponding targets and indicators, including those to track communication, advocacy and partnership activities. UN-Habitat will update its communication, advocacy and partnership strategy accordingly.
2	UN-Habitat should strengthen risk management for communication, advocacy, and partnership activities by systematically identifying and assessing risks in these areas and implementing risk mitigation measures in accordance with the enterprise risk management framework.	Important	Yes	Chief of Communication and Advocacy Branch	June 2027	UN-Habitat will incorporate this as part of regular review and updates of its enterprise risk management.
3	UN-Habitat should develop and implement operational project documents and plans, including Standard Operating Procedures, for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms, with	Important	Yes	Chief of Communication and Advocacy Branch	September 2027	UN-Habitat will develop an SOP for its corporate presence on websites and social media platforms

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Management Response

Audit of communication, advocacy and partnership management at the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
	clearly outlined expected benefits from its presence.					
4	UN-Habitat should develop mechanisms to proactively ensure compliance with the World Urban Forum donor agreement provisions on budget expenditure and obtain written authorization for variations beyond agreed thresholds.	Important	Yes	Director of Corporate Management Division	September 2027	UN-Habitat will implement this with the World Urban Forum 14 donor agreement.