

UN-Habitat Inputs to the report of the Secretary-General, A/76/234, on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027).

05 May 2025

UN-Habitat continues to reaffirm its unwavering commitment to the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality in cities and human settlements, across the urban-rural continuum. In 2024, UN-Habitat facilitated progress in various areas, contributing to the creation of safer, more inclusive, equitable and sustainable livelihoods, as demonstrated in the following achievements:

- **70,000+ people** across 14 cities gained **access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces**.
- **316,000 people** benefitted from **improved water and sanitation services**.
- **205,000 people** in slums and informal settlements in 27 cities across 19 countries were supported in accessing basic services, giving them access to services such as **water, sanitation and clean energy**.
- **98,000 households** gained more **secure land tenure** through improved documentation, helping to foster peace and prosperity in their communities.
- **162+ countries** reported having **national-level urban policies**, of whom 64 countries are supported by UN-Habitat, creating more inclusive, sustainable, and well-planned cities.
- **27 countries** were supported in **collecting SDG data** and implementing the globally harmonized approach to defining cities and human settlements, enabling better policy decisions to improve living conditions.
- **68,000 people** have access to public transport and **sustainable mobility options**, enhancing economic opportunities, improving quality of life and reducing inequality.
- **14 cities and 2 countries** adopted **strategies towards ending homelessness and ensuring sustainable access to adequate housing for all**.

However, efforts need to be multiplied: global trends and numbers show that, globally, poverty and inequality rates have not significantly decrease – in particular, with regards to **access to housing and basic services**.

In 2024, an estimated **318 million people are homeless worldwide**, and one in four people live in conditions which harm their health, safety and prosperity.

More than **1.1 billion people live in slums or informal settlements**, out of which 90 per cent of whom reside in Africa and Asia and 500 million are children.

Additionally, **14% of urban residents lack access to safely managed drinking water**; 2 out of 5 people globally lack safely managed sanitation services – a fundamental aspect in the fight against poverty.

Overall, **the full spectrum of inadequate housing** – including homelessness, slum conditions, unaffordability, service unavailability, inhabitability, inaccessibility, poor location, cultural inadequacy - is projected to affect **3 billion by 2050**, unless urgent action is taken. To put this number into perspective, nearly **96,000 new housing units would need to be built every day** to meet adequate housing needs by 2030. In other words, one home would need to be built every second. Without proactive measures, the housing deficit will worsen, exacerbating urban inequality and driving millions into informal settlements and slums.

Addressing this **growing global housing gap** is quintessential to poverty eradication and inequality reduction. Safe and adequate housing is a pivotal lever for accessing education, employment opportunities, gender equality, health and well-being – all essential components of poverty and inequality reduction. Housing inadequacy can therefore be considered intrinsically linked to multi-dimensional poverty.

Consequently, through its new Strategic Plan (2026-2029), UN-Habitat has made access to adequate housing, land and basic services its strategic focus for the four next years to come, strategically aligning with the two final years of the Third United Nations Decade for Poverty Eradication (2018-2027).

To **accelerate global impact**, UN-Habitat continues to support Member States in developing national and sub-national solutions. In 2024, through the implementation of resolutions UNHA 2/2 (on accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums) and UNHA 2/7 (on adequate housing for all)¹, UN-Habitat has advanced key normative guidance; bolstered the work of country offices in implementing slum upgrading and housing projects; and convened a pioneering **Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, in December 2024, in Nairobi**. This inaugural session successfully gathered over 200 experts from governments, civil society and the private sector, calling for intensified global efforts for adequate housing for all. The session provided an opportunity for Member States to assess progress and address remaining challenges through multilateral cooperation. Reports and presentations² underscored the importance of integrated housing policies, innovative financing mechanisms, data-driven solutions and strengthened global partnerships.

¹ <https://unhabitat.org/post-session-documents-of-the-second-session-of-the-united-nations-habitat-assembly>

² <https://unhabitat.org/meetings/open-ended-intergovernmental-expert-working-group-on-adequate-housing-for-all>

Lastly, in addition to addressing poverty eradication and inequality reduction through adequate housing and basic services, UN-Habitat has continued to increase normative and operational efforts towards (among other things) **gender equality and social inclusion, climate resilience for the urban poor and access to sustainable finance**. This is reflected in ongoing efforts through resolution UNHA1/4 on achieving gender quality to support safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, as well as initiatives through UN-Habitat's "*RISE-UP: Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor*" flagship programme, and through continued engagements for the preparations of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4, July 2025).