

## **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).**

**22 May 2024**

UN-Habitat continues **prioritizing adequate housing as a key entry-point for delivering poverty and inequality reduction in cities and human settlements**. The **continuum of adequate housing** covers the **spectrum of 1) homelessness of more than 300 million people, 2) people living in slum conditions of more than 1.1 billion, of which 500 million are children, and 3) another significant share of about 500 million people living in inadequate housing** (spending more than 30 percent of the monthly income for housing). The **whole inadequate housing spectrum** is expected to grow to **3 billion by 2050, if no urgent action is taken**.

There is a **global trend of increasing housing unaffordability, and the lack of access to adequate housing for all**, particularly for the vulnerable. Housing inadequacy minimizes the access to other basic needs such as to food, education, and health services and contributes to the experience of multi-dimensional poverty. This is a key concern to UN-Habitat.

**Adequate housing is understood as an integrated and inclusive approach in UN-Habitat's work**. It brings together major areas of expertise of UN-Habitat: spatial planning and design, mobility and transport, water and sanitation, physical and social infrastructure, land management and governance, housing design and finance, multi-level governance and empowerment of local authorities, socio-economic development and integration, social cohesion, and cultural adequacy to name a few. Sometimes, they can be direct single entry-points to engaging with national and local governments and start off the transformative process. However, for the full transformative impact, they are to be delivered in integrated packages for **progressively delivering the Right to Adequate Housing** and its seven principles, leaving no one behind.

In general, people living in **Least Developed Countries** experience **more deprivations** and a significant **higher prevalence of informality and slums**. The lack of adequate housing is particularly **strongly experienced in Africa**. For example, only **22% of residents in Freetown** have access to improved, private sanitation facilities and only **3% of urban households** have access to piped indoor drinking water, with **39% of households instead relying on public taps**. In Accra, in both the formal and informal housing sectors, an **estimated 65% of households are occupying one room**, and an average household size of four persons. Nairobi's informal settlements already **experience higher temperatures than the rest of the city**, largely because of scarce vegetation, limited reflectivity, and extremely dense structures.

**A significant proportion of the urban population in many African countries** living below the poverty line, cannot afford even the cheapest formal sector housing, and is therefore left with the choice of inadequate living conditions within informal settlements only. The most vulnerable and majority of people lacking access to adequate housing are women.

The relevance for UN-Habitat's work has recently been elevated by Member States during the UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023, when **Resolution HSP/HA.2/RES.7 (2023) Adequate Housing for All and (HSP/HA.2/Res.2) Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030** were endorsed. Both resolutions are rooted in the drive towards the reduction of poverty and inequalities and have complementary actions.

In line with the above, UN-Habitat has taken steps towards strengthening monitoring, knowledge, policy support and action-oriented and partnership-driven implementation towards transformative, scalable, and sustainable urban development.

For example, in response to the Resolution on Adequate Housing for All, UN-Habitat will support Member States to undertake its first session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All in December 2024. UN-Habitat has started the development of a new housing indicator set for monitoring the integrated nature of adequate housing and its vehicles of implementation. A knowledge platform in support of learning and exchange is in development too.

A Global Action Plan for Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements and Slums, launched in October 2022, has been endorsed by key partners of UN-Habitat. It is thriving towards a collective vision, tangible actions and coordinated efforts in achieving bigger impact and mobilize more partner, resources, local and national governments, and communities. A joint implementation framework is to provide a roadmap.

UN-Habitat's flagship programmes such as the *Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities* focusing on urban regeneration to reduce spatial inequality and poverty have incorporated housing responses and are equipped to provide such integrated packages. The *Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor* focuses on the most vulnerable in informal settlements, and the *Smart Cities Programme* is providing solutions for data collection of informal settlements leveraging digitalization for diverse contexts.

Other Global Programmes such as the Global Water Operators Partnerships Alliance (GWOPA) and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) are long-standing normative contributors to inequality and poverty reduction, empowering women and delivering human rights in cities and human settlements.