

Summary Report on the side- event

Panel discussion: Affordable housing and inclusive urban development for All

**COMMISSION for
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

United Nations Headquarters, New York

The Panel discussion: Affordable housing and inclusive urban development for All, organized by Division for Inclusive Social Development (UNDESA) with collaboration and support from UN HABITAT, was held on 10 February 2020, at the UNHQs New York, during the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development. The event, brought together a group of global leading experts, policy makers from member states and the United Nations entities responsible for social development and urban /housing development. The event identified key challenges, opportunities and explored promising strategies and practical solutions to promote affordable housing and inclusive urban development for all, including in particular for those in vulnerable situations such as older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, indigenous peoples and the homeless.

The meeting was chaired and moderated by Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of DISD/DESA. Key note speech was made by Ms. Francesca Deferrari, Officer-in-Charge of the UN- Habitat New York Office. Presentations were delivered by Ms. Marissa Plouin (OECD) , Mr. Emeka Obioha (Nigeria), Mr. Jan Wampler (MIT and University of Southern Florida) and Ms. Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter (FAIA, Woodbury School of Architecture).

Following the panel presentations, the Chair facilitated an interactive dialogue among panelists and other participants, further the exchanges among them around raised questions and comments from the floor.

The meeting participants highlighted that Housing is a vector for socioeconomic inclusion and development. Access to housing is a precondition for access to employment, education, health, and social services. A well-functioning housing market can be a vector for economic development and a potential source of job creation. In order to address the current housing challenges, all levels of government should put housing at the centre of urban policies by placing people and human rights at the forefront of the development agenda. A well-functioning housing sector and access to adequate housing can indeed make a real difference in the lives of our people and the prosperity of our countries and cities. The future of sustainable urbanization therefore depends on how policy makers position housing as a priority in the public debate

around sustainable urban development. And in this endeavor, accessibility and universal design shall be actively promoted in housing and urban development. The needs of socially disadvantaged groups must be fully taken into account in housing and urban development by Governments, housing and urban development sector and the broad civil society including the private sector players.

Out of the rich discussions of the event, participants generated a set of policy and action-oriented recommendations for different levels of stakeholders to consider to address identified issues and challenges and to promote affordable housing for all especially including for those in the least developed and developing countries and those people in more vulnerable situations and status.

Some recommendations to the Governments:

1. Progressive policies that will address difficulty in land appropriation for public housing purposes
2. Institute measures to regulate prices of building materials or make them more affordable
3. Political will and good governance to end unnecessary bureaucracies and corrupt practices at different stages of the affordable housing delivery system
4. Regulate the market such as interest rate regime to make it more affordable for the poor.
5. Institute intervention measures to assist poor households with tools such as low or no interest loans.
6. support or develop social housing such as Community Dormitories for all categories of homeless, especially the unemployed and street children (until adulthood) who cannot manage household.
7. Adequately consider diverse social categories, including the persons with disabilities in poverty, such as many blind and others with physical challenges in the design of affordable housing in order reduce cost for these categories of people to inhabit.
8. Strengthen government partnership with private sector who are involved in housing projects

To the United Nations and international development agencies:

1. Strengthen Partnership with governments through building capacities of government functionaries in terms of good governance and technical requirements towards affordable housing.
2. Strengthen partnership with Civil Society based Organizations (Community and Non-Governmental Organizations) through capacity building and dissemination of new technologies and affordable practices in housing.

To Civil Society:

1. The focus should remain with self-organizing and self-help initiatives and practices and practices, such as cooperative societies.
2. Formalizing all the activities of self-organizing groups, such as co-operative societies in order to be able to access all necessary benefits for its members through government
3. Ensure that various indigenous building materials and practices are constantly promoted through transferring such knowledge and skills to future generation of communities

4. Engage in modification of old practices and be receptive to new suitable practices that is adaptable to the environment
5. Strengthen partnership with the government and development agencies

To Academic and housing and urban development professional community

A special proposal was made to call for a three- year program to design inclusive and accessible housing that meets specific criteria and needs of people in vulnerable situations around different regions of the world. Urban design and architect university Faculty, practicing architects, and students from each of these schools and studios would target a region or community to help guide the design.

To maximize the impacts, a select of housing designs may be exhibited at the United Nations and other arenas along with publications illustrating and promoting such successful housing designs and transfer knowledge and good practices.

Tentative programme

| Agenda items | Suggested timeframe |
|---|----------------------------|
| Opening | 1:15-1:25pm |
| 1. Ms. Daniela Bas , Director of DISD/DESA: Moderator’s opening remarks and introduction of the panel discussion | 5 minutes |
| 2. Remarks by Ms. Francesca Deferrari , Officer-in-Charge of the UN- Habitat New York Office | 5 minutes |
| Panelists discussion | 1:25 – 2:25pm |
| 3. Presentations by panelists | (5-7 minutes per panelist) |
| (1) Ms. Marissa Plouin (OECD) (2) Mr. Emeka Obioha (Nigeria) (3) Mr. Jan Wampler (MIT) | |

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| (4) Ms. Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter (FAIA, Woodbury School of Architecture) | |
| 4. Moderated interactive discussion | 1.55-2:25 pm |
| 5. (1) Interventions by lead discussants (2) Q & A (questions, comments, or interventions specifically related to the panel presentations) (3) Concluding observations/responses by panellists | 3 minutes per each lead discussant 1 minute each panellist, 5 minutes in total |
| 6. Closing remark by Moderator | 2 minutes |
| | Total duration of the event: (90 minutes) |

Profiles of the panel

Chairperson/moderator: Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of Division for Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Keynote speaker: Ms. Francesca Deferrari, Officer-in-Charge of the UN- Habitat New York Office

Panelists:

Ms. Marissa Plouin, currently coordinates the OECD's work on affordable housing policies and the OECD Affordable housing database in the Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. In more than 8 years at the OECD, she has worked with national, regional and city governments around housing and urban policies, climate change, inclusive growth and

governance. Prior to the current role, she lead the OECD Champion Mayors initiative and contributed to the OECD's cross cutting work on inclusive Growth in the Office of the Secretary General. She also advised on housing affordability, urban policy and other matters to the Governments in France and USA.

Mr. Emeka Obioha, from Nigeria, is a full professor of Sociology in the Department of Social Sciences and Research Chair, at Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. He had previously worked as a Social Development Researcher and Expert at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and Professor at various universities in Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa.

Mr. Jan Wampler, is a Professor of Architecture, and Director of the Undergraduate Program in MIT- Massachusetts Institute of Technology and also a Distinguished Professor in University of South Florida. In the past four decades, Mr. Wampler worked and led in various capacities in teaching, designing and administrating urban development and housing in different cities in the United States of America. For instance, early in 1960s, he worked in San Juan, Puerto Rico as Director of the Diseño Urbano at ARUV. During this time, he designed numerous housing projects and received the First Design Award in 1968 from Progressive Architecture for the project La Puntilla in the old city of San Juan. Wampler was Director of the Planning Design Group for the Boston Redevelopment Authority during the time he designed the 1976 International Exposition that was to be built in Boston. Mr. Wampler published numerous papers and several books on architecture and urban development.

Ms. Ingalill Wahlroos-Ritter is a well-known architect, educator, a full Professor and Dean of the School of Architecture at Woodbury University. During a twenty-year teaching career, she has taught at Yale University, Cornell University, UCL Bartlett School of Architecture, and SCI-Arc. Ingalill is also Director of WUHO, the Woodbury University Hollywood gallery, and has produced over 100 exhibitions that have broadened the way the public views architecture. Ingalill has collaborated on multiple award-winning projects including as façade consultant on Bloom with DoSu Architects, the Portland Aerial Tramway with AGPS, the Centre Pompidou exhibition, Continuities of the Incomplete, with Morphosis, and as project architect for the Corning Museum of Glass with Smith-Miller + Hawkinson.
