



BUILDING BRIDGES

Executive Director's Report (2018–2023)



UN-HABITAT

Executive Director's Report (2018–2023)

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In the past six years, UN-Habitat has grown from strength to strength. The World Urban Forum is now indisputably the world's premier United Nations platform for sustainable urbanization. The Foundation non-earmarked fund has displayed a surplus for 2 consecutive years, **emerging from a 12-year deficit**. The total earmarked and technical cooperation fund is **USD 700 million**, recalling the significant work of UN-Habitat including in over **600 cities** worldwide.



Maimunah Mohd Sharif

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and UN-Habitat Executive Director

FOREWORD

I am pleased to report that UN-Habitat has been able to galvanize Member State support at the second United Nations Habitat Assembly (UNHA). UN-Habitat is fully engaged in the implementation of all the resolutions of UNHA1 and UNHA2. Our focus on least developed countries and Small Island Developing States must be redoubled. In a world faced with polycrises, multilateralism can only be a good thing. The more we invest in supporting Member States build bridges, the more peace and development can be secured.

UN-Habitat is now present in all global platforms including at the UN General Assembly where we were selected on the high impact pillar on localization. We have successfully advocated for the ministerial roundtable at COP28 and COP29. I am glad to report that this is now a standard feature, linking the mandate of the organization with the wider priority of the triple planetary crisis. UN-Habitat is also invited to attend the ministerial meeting on sustainable urbanization by the G7, G20 and G77+China. It is very clear that shelter, housing, and sustainable urbanization cut across all political divides. UN-Habitat's efforts here once again highlights the value added of the United Nations and its funds and programmes as bridge builders.

UN-Habitat has also built up a significant portfolio in urban crisis management. With the support of donors, we have been able to strengthen our services and support to communities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, DR Congo, Somalia, and other countries facing conflict. We continue to be a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) where it is now recognized that crises, whether man-made or as

a result of extreme weather and natural disasters, have a major urban component. The provision of adequate shelter continues to be at the core of UN-Habitat's mandate.

At the second United Nations Habitat Assembly, and in the remaining two years of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the provision of adequate and affordable housing is a key concern of all Member States. If we are to turbo-charge the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat's core mandate on housing needs to be significantly strengthened. Together with other resolutions including on people-centred smart cities, it is important that we adopt a people-centred approach in all that we do. A human rights-based approach to housing – where housing is a basic right and not merely a commodity – needs to be mainstreamed.

Finally, it gives me great pleasure to announce that the host of the 13th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF) is Baku, Azerbaijan. From WUF9 in Kuala Lumpur to WUF11 in Katowice, this unique platform brings together all the stakeholders of UN-Habitat and its mandate. Going forward, I am sure that we will transition from declared actions to actions fulfilled, transforming WUF into one of the global platforms of the United Nations for cities and stakeholders of the New Urban Agenda and the Habitat Agenda, to report on significant achievements made in the implementation of the SDGs and other global goals.

Looking ahead, I wish to highlight on the building metaphor that best describes what we do at UN-Habitat. In the past six years, we have not only built

greater coherence within the organization where the normative and operational dimensions of our work have become more aligned, but we have also aligned our aspirations with those that Member States are willing to support. In the field as well as in the multilateral arena, we have managed to build bridges between those we serve and those who govern.

The journey continues as we complete the implementation of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and the development of the next Strategic Plan that will see us through to 2030. I wish us all the best of luck in the coming years.



Maimunah Mohd Sharif

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
UN-Habitat Executive Director

Nairobi, Kenya
5 January 2024

CHAPTER
01STATE OF OUR
URBANIZING WORLD

Thousands of people walk daily by this popular 1.2 kilometer-long pedestrian walkway in Barcelona, Spain
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Our urban world, our urban future

When humanity crossed the 8 billion mark in November 2022, approximately 4.52 billion people were living in cities. This marked an increase of more than 290 million people since Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif began her tenure in 2018, and of more than 530 million since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015.

Over this time period, cities have remained vital to the global economy, environment, and quality of life. Urban areas continue to contribute to more than 80 per cent of the world's GDP, sustaining billions of jobs around the world. Yet this economic output and development have come at a cost. Cities still generate more than 70 per cent of global carbon emissions, driving the accelerated warming of our climate and increased insecurity for billions of people around the world.



By 2050, over **6.68 billion people** are expected to live in cities – or roughly two-thirds of the global population.

Tomorrow will only be more urban than today. By 2050, over 6.68 billion people are expected to live in cities – or roughly two-thirds of the global population. Perhaps surprisingly, most of this urban growth will not take place in the megacities of today, but rather in small and intermediate cities of fewer than 250,000 people. It will be fastest in the least developed regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and South and South East Asia.

In this context of rapid and immense urban growth, it is imperative that we work to make urbanization an even greater force for sustainable development, leveraging UN-Habitat's leading role in promoting sustainable cities and communities in the United Nations system. Nearly 65 per cent of the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets may not be fully achieved without the involvement of urban and local actors. It is thus time to think, plan and act urban across the SDGs.

[Progress towards sustainable cities and communities](#)

UN-Habitat's latest global assessment report ***Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet (2023)*** details progress towards achieving SDG 11, halfway into the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda. The report finds that we are far from achieving the targets of SDG 11 and that we will fail to do so without critical interventions from urban actors across the globe. The facts reveal the scope of the gap.

On housing, the absolute number of slum dwellers has continued to rise, while the proportional decline in slum populations has slowed. 165 million slum dwellers have emerged globally over 20 years, reaching nearly 1.1 billion in 2020. While these slum dwellers are overwhelmingly concentrated in Africa and Asia (90 per cent), an additional 318 million people are experiencing homelessness across all regions of the globe. UN-Habitat has estimated that 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units are needed every day to meet the projected demand for adequate housing in 2030.

Only about half of the global urban population has convenient access to public transport, which mostly consists of low-capacity modes of transport such as buses across all regions of the world. Road fatalities and injuries furthermore continue to derailing progress, with about 1.3 million people dying each year as a result of road traffic accidents.

Gaps in basic services and infrastructure remain substantial. Globally, 2.2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water services, 3.4 billion lack safely managed sanitation services, and 1.9 billion lacked basic hygiene services in 2022. In 2020, the world generated 2.3 billion tonnes of

municipal solid waste, of which almost 40 per cent was managed in uncontrolled facilities, predominantly open dumpsites.

The physical expansion of cities has consistently outpaced population growth, indicating a trend towards urban sprawl. This is reflected in both land consumption rates exceeding population growth rates – by 0.3 and 0.4 percentage points over the past couple of decades – as well as global increases in the built-up area per capita from 161 square metres in 1990 to 169 square metres in 2020.

Further, only an average of 45.2 per cent of urban dwellers across the globe have convenient access to public spaces, leaving the majority of urban residents and visitors without adequate opportunities to enjoy the benefits of these spaces. Only a quarter of 1,072 cities sampled across 120 countries had dedicated more than 20 per cent of their area to open public spaces or streets, indicating low prioritization of such spaces in most of the urban world.

Disaster threats are significant with cities accounting for about 60 per cent of all displacements from conflicts and natural disasters. In the coming decades, hundreds of millions in urban areas will likely be affected by rising sea levels, increased precipitation, inland floods, frequent and stronger cyclones and storms, and extreme temperatures.

[Transformative shifts for a better urban future](#)

The scale, complexity and multidimensional drivers of urbanization call for transformative shifts that move away from business as usual responses to realize SDG 11. Transformative shifts entail significant and fundamental changes in approach or direction to embrace innovative and bold measures that can bring about substantial change. Change is possible and change is happening.

Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet (2023) reviews action by national, local and regional governments and other stakeholders to promote sustainable cities and communities. Still, we need to do more.

It is especially critical to fully leverage the urban opportunity to advance global agendas. Cities need to be at the forefront of climate action, as they account for a significant portion of global emissions and energy use. Empowered cities and local governments can drive transformative shifts

in crisis recovery and sustainable development. Further, reinstating housing as a central focus is pivotal for renewing the social contract between governments and their citizens. The potential of digital technology to accelerate sustainable development will also depend to a large extent on smart city development. These were also the messages from Member States during the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (June 2023).

Urbanization – how cities develop and grow – is central to determining our quality of life. Promoting environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable cities and human settlements is key to preserving the built and natural environment for present and future generations.



Disaster threats are significant with cities accounting for about **60 per cent** of all displacements from conflicts and natural disasters.

Floods in Thailand ©Shutterstock



CHAPTER 02

ENGAGEMENT WITH MEMBER STATES

Engagement with Member States through the governance structure of UN-Habitat

In December 2018, the General Assembly through its resolution A/RES/73/239, dissolved the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, replacing it with the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly), composed of universal membership. This made the UN-Habitat Assembly a high-level decision-making body on sustainable urbanization and human settlements. The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Executive Board are designated as the two permanent intersessional bodies of the UN-Habitat Assembly, making it a three-tier governance structure. This three-tier governance structure, the establishment of which was created during the tenure of the Executive Director, has provided a robust mechanism to engage with Member States.

The United Nations Habitat Assembly

The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly took place from 27 to 31 May 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, and adopted the Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2020-2023 along with five substantive resolutions and a ministerial declaration. The report of that session is available as document **A/74/8**.

The second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly took place in Nairobi from 5 to 9 June 2023 and adopted 10 substantive resolutions, a ministerial declaration, and five decisions which included the extension of the strategic plan to cover the period 2020-2025. That session is currently adjourned to achieve the alignment of the organization with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), and will resume in 2025.

The first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly attracted national delegations from 127 countries and 49 ministers and had a total of 3,900 participants.

*The second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly took place in Nairobi from 5 to 9 June 2023
©UN-Habitat*



The second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly attracted national delegations from 137 countries and 81 ministers and had a total of 4,703 participants.

Both the first and the second sessions of the UN-Habitat Assembly were successful in delivering important conclusions in the form of ministerial declarations and resolutions, addressing urban challenges with links to global agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda.

A framework for robust follow-up on resolutions passed by the United Nations Habitat Assembly has been initiated, introducing a new approach for monitoring a balanced implementation of resolutions.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif with Cabinet Secretary of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development Hon. Alice Wahome, during the UN-Habitat Executive Board that took place in Nairobi, Kenya, on 28 November 2023 ©UN-Habitat



The Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) was retained pursuant to resolution A/RES/73/239 and has met twice since 2019: once for a high-level midterm review in 2021 focusing on the implementation of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat, and once in 2023 to prepare for the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The CPR, in its midterm review, found the strategic plan to still be relevant and supporting the repositioning of UN-Habitat as a major global entity of the United Nations and as a centre of excellence.

The Executive Board

The Executive Board, which was newly established pursuant to the recommendation of resolution A/RES/239, has met at least twice every year since 2019. The Executive Board has been consistent in considering the following, among others matters:

- Implementation of the UN-Habitat strategic plan and resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly
- Consideration and approval of the annual draft work programme and draft budget
- Financial, budgetary and administrative matters
- Implementation of the reform of the UN development system
- Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat.

The briefings on the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat to the Executive Board, with input from partners, have become increasingly appreciated, allowing Member States to go beyond normal oversight and see the impact of UN-Habitat's work and its contribution to the SDGs and other global agreements.

During the intersessional period, the ad hoc working groups which were created by the Executive Board to assist in considering the issues coming before the meetings of the Executive Board have been instrumental in ensuring continuous engagement between Member States and UN-Habitat. The working groups have been an avenue for consultations, strategic guidance and promotion of transparency and effectiveness, as well as consensus building on pertinent issues between the oversight bodies and the Executive Director.

By the end of November 2023, the Executive Board had held 10 regular sessions since its creation and about 70 ad hoc working group meetings.

The Executive Board remains a key body through which the Executive Director regularly reports to Member States and through which UN-Habitat receives guidance on its work.

Outcomes of the implementation of the governance structure

The outcomes of the implementation of the governance structure adopted in 2018 are as follows:

- Strengthened accountability and trust between UN-Habitat and Member States through the governing bodies
- Increased oversight by Member States on the work of UN-Habitat, particularly in the implementation of the strategic plan, the work programme and budget, and financial status of UN-Habitat
- Effective monitoring of the implementation of the decisions of the UN-Habitat Assembly through its subsidiary organs, the Executive Board, and the CPR
- Human settlements issues are increasingly reflected effectively in meetings of the governing bodies, particularly in the

sessions of the Executive Board and its ad hoc working groups

- The more frequent meetings of the governing bodies are playing an increasing role for donor interactions and potential new pledges/funding for UN-Habitat. The proceeding notwithstanding, funding is still an issue that must be dealt with if UN-Habitat is to implement its mandate effectively.

Engagement with Member State beyond the governance structure

Engagement with Member States have also been through relevant General Assembly-mandated meeting such as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to assess progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, held in April 2022, the World Urban Forum sessions which are held every two years, and other meetings such as ministerial meetings on urbanization during the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, as at COP27 and COP28.

In addition to the numerous bilateral meetings, consultations between the Executive Director and regional groups take place every quarter. These have enabled the Executive Director to engage with Member States to understand the peculiar nature of their regional concerns, understanding their expectations, and to receive guidance on the work of UN-Habitat such as regional activities, financial status, and resource mobilization.

Informal briefings by the Executive Director to Member States have also offered a mechanism for UN-Habitat to engage with all Member States on areas of priority for them.

Member States have explicitly expressed appreciation for the transparency and accountability culture provided by UN-Habitat.

Top five concerns of Member States

- 1. Implementation of the New Urban Agenda:** Member States are concerned with low national reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and have advised on the need to understand the principal obstacles and related solutions including possible capacity-building.
- 2. Crisis and recovery:** Member States welcome the continued support provided by UN-Habitat for the reconstruction of the human settlements in countries, territories, and areas affected by conflict and disasters, and wish to see reporting of ongoing activities of UN-Habitat in this regard in a uniform manner.
- 3. Localization of the SDGs:** Member States recommend active advancement of the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals through normative guidance, technical assistance, and strategic partnerships.
- 4. Budgeting and resource mobilization:** Member States appreciate the shift to realistic annual budgeting and the increasingly positive results on resource mobilization which needs to continue as the organization stabilizes.
- 5. Communication:** Member States would like to see strengthened communication on UN-Habitat's work and its impact.

CHAPTER 03 | ENGAGEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM



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Progress in partnerships with United Nations agencies and the Development Coordination Office

In its resolution 77/173, the General Assembly encouraged UN-Habitat to accelerate the implementation of the United Nations system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development, endorsed in October 2018 by the Chief Executives Board as a means to facilitate coordination among entities of the UN system and provide effective support for countries in the implementation of the urban dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and New Urban Agenda.

The resolution called upon UN-Habitat to continue working closely with UN entities to promote joint urban programming at the country level, and to support country efforts towards the SDGs through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

To fulfil this mandate, UN-Habitat has strengthened its work with UN entities through global inter-agency and bilateral cooperation, regional collaborative platforms, and joint urban programming in collaboration with UN country teams. UN-Habitat has also increased its efforts on the repositioning of the UN Development System (the UN reform).

At the 10th and 11th sessions of the World Urban Forum, UN resident coordinators gathered with the support of UN-Habitat and the Development Coordination Office (DCO) to identify ways to accelerate joint urban programming as a means of implementation of UN Cooperation Frameworks in selected high-opportunity countries. This joint initiative on sustainable urban development undertaken with DCO is a significant opportunity to provide support for the implementation of the UN system-wide strategy at country, regional, and global levels. It promotes joint programming to tackle urban challenges and harnesses urban opportunities within UN Cooperation Frameworks. To succeed in its UN system-wide support functions, UN-Habitat is revising its organizational procedures in terms of provision of technical assistance and advisory services to local and national governments.

UN-Habitat has also advanced its collaboration with the UN Regional Economic Commission. This includes the development of the guideline for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) on SDG implementation which has reached 47 countries and produced a total of 247 VLRs as of November 2023. At the regional level, UN-Habitat has also brought urban issues into the UN system collaboration networks through systematic work with Regional Collaborative Platforms and the organization of Regional Forums for Sustainable Development.

Since 2019, UN-Habitat has also coordinated with the UN in the regions and at Headquarters on the development of a global urban monitoring system. UN entities have contributed disaggregated urban data and spatial analyses to 30 UN country teams for Common Country Analysis updates and adopted New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 indicators for monitoring of the impact of their work on sustainable urbanization.

Although uptake of the sustainable urban development goals and the New Urban Agenda by the UN Development System remains relatively weak, UN-Habitat has succeeded since 2018 in engaging UN entities in numerous global urban initiatives. Major achievements include the

establishment and co-chairing of the Local 2030 Coalition, the Secretary-General's Action Plan on Urban Displacement, and the UN Task Force on Future of Cities, that lead to the establishment of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments.

Production of the two Secretary-General's Quadrennial Reports (2018 and 2022) engaged between 20 to 30 UN entities for updates on UN system contributions to the New Urban Agenda implementation. The Urban Agenda Platform was established by UN-Habitat in 2021 as a global data and knowledge repository and sharing facility for all urban stakeholders on the New Urban Agenda implementation.

Regarding bilateral collaboration with UN entities, the past six years have seen an increasing number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed between UN entities and UN-Habitat. Ten new MoUs have been signed since 2018¹. An analysis of the value added of the MoUs for UN-Habitat's inter-agency cooperation and development indicates that the MoUs are particularly valuable when cooperation reaches country-level initiatives implemented in cooperation with UN country teams within country Cooperation Frameworks.

[The Inter-Agency Standing Committee](#)

The inclusion of a domain of change on "Effective Urban Crisis Prevention and Response" in the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has allowed to build up a stronger normative agenda, drawing on UN-Habitat's vast experience in fragile settings over the last decades.

¹ Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (signed in 2023); International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2020); UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) (2022); UN Development Programme (UNDP) (2020); UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2019); UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2018); UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2018); UN Office for Information and Communication Technology (UNOICT) (2020); UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) (2020); World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) and UNESCO (work started in 2023).

UN-Habitat's Executive Board has recognized this and has called up on UN-Habitat to deploy its experience with urban profiling and urban recovery frameworks in new crisis settings. Corporate engagement has resulted in a first-ever recognition of the importance of urban planning and the role of local governments in finding solutions to internal displacements, as set out in the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

This also enabled the development of much stronger strategic partnerships with humanitarian actors such as UNHCR and IOM. The very innovative solutions to refugee situations in Kenya, moving away from camps to integrated human settlements with host communities, is the basis for the Human Settlements Pledge at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (which took place in Geneva in December). This new programmatic approach

will now be promoted with the World Bank and UNHCR in other settings. Within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), UN-Habitat continues to advocate for the role of local governments as part of the localization agenda. This was done successfully in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the growing impetus to localize the 2030 Agenda, 2021 witnessed the launch of the revamped Local2030 Coalition. Spearheaded by UN-Habitat as the permanent co-chair and Head of Secretariat, with UNDP as the first rotational co-chair and FAO incoming, the Coalition has become the UN System-wide platform and network for supporting and accelerating the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

*UN Agencies
handing over of
Covid-19-related
water supply and
handwashing
facilities at Ward K
Tamale, Ghana 2021
© UN-Habitat*



CHAPTER 04 PARTNERSHIPS

The Secretary-General in his report on ***Our Common Future*** puts emphasis on the role of civil society, the private sector, academia, youth, and other actors towards achievement of peace and sustainable development. This is crucial as the world grapples with various challenges affecting the Decade of Action to 2030.

In the last six years, starting just before the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018, UN-Habitat has been working systematically to galvanize support from its non-governmental partners.

The Executive Director, having initiated and implemented gender-based participatory budgeting in Penang, Malaysia, believes strongly in the role of civil society partners in policy-shaping, especially at the local level. Without the buy-in and contribution of resident associations, professionals, academics, special interest groups, the private sector, women, youth, and other partner groups, policies cannot be translated into positive action on the ground.

Soon after the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat embarked on the development of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 as well as the preparation of the SDG 11 report as part of the review by the High-Level Political Forum in New York. In both cases, specific efforts were made to involve stakeholders in the design and implementation of the strategic plan and the SDG 11 report. Altogether, 265 stakeholders were engaged in the preparation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (extended to 2025), and many continue to be involved in its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

A lot of energy, critical support, and value added can be harnessed through a more systematic way of engaging with non-governmental partners. During the First Global Stakeholder Forum organized on the eve of the first United Nations Habitat Assembly in May 2019, the Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) was established. This was in response to the call by stakeholders to provide space for civil society, the private sector, youth, and other stakeholders to better contribute to the intergovernmental processes at UN-Habitat. It was also a mechanism that allowed all our non-governmental partners to work cohesively to provide the much-needed support.

Indeed, SAGE also had the role of advising the Executive Director on UN-Habitat policy and programme design as well as on the implementation of its mandate. This was a clear signal to the importance attached to stakeholder engagement, cooperation, and collaborations. The three declarations adopted by stakeholders at the two global stakeholder forums and the global stakeholder consultation on implementation of the New Urban Agenda are useful references to stakeholder engagement in UN-Habitat's work.

SAGE has been a strong support in ensuring strategic engagement of stakeholders in the World Urban Forum preparatory process complementing the role of the Executive Director's Advisory Group on Gender. This helped strengthened UN-Habitat's outreach and strategic engagements in key global events and meetings including at the World Economic Forum, G7, G20, and G77+China, bringing urbanization to the heart of key influential political and economic groupings.

The establishment of the Council of Urban Initiatives in collaboration with the London School of Economics and University College London was another milestone in our efforts to enhance stakeholder engagement in our work.

The World Urban Campaign was also strengthened and as a result several urban campuses and thematic campaigns took place, and many more are planned in the coming years.

UN-Habitat supported the Secretary-General's taskforce on the future of cities, and the result of that work culminated in the inauguration of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments on 4 October 2023.

The youth advisory board has been revived to ensure youth issues are mainstreamed in normative and operational work, and youth and urban development issues are adequately considered in global and regional agendas.

SAGE and other stakeholders have also contributed immensely to the design and deliberations of the draft stakeholder engagement policy and stakeholder engagement mechanism. UN-Habitat hopes that Member States can agree on the policy before the resumed session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2025.

Whilst COVID-19 caused a lot of disruption to our way of life, it also led to new ways of collaborating as we transitioned to online meetings cutting down on travel costs. This also meant that we were able to be more inclusive and stakeholders were not left behind. SAGE mobilized nearly 400 participants at the global stakeholders' consultation on implementation of the New Urban Agenda just before the High-Level Meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda held on 28 April 2022. Some of the case studies collected are a good addition to the Urban Agenda Platform.

SAGE members contribute regularly to Expert Group Meetings and dialogues organized within the context of COVID-19, World Habitat Day, and World Cities day to mention but a few. SAGE also played a key role in the preparation of the Report on Cities and Pandemics in 2021.

265 stakeholders were engaged in the preparation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (extended to 2025), and many continue to be involved in its implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.



SAGE mobilized nearly **400 participants** at the global stakeholders' consultation on implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

At the same time, United Cities and Local Governments, together with UN-Habitat, co-led numerous online dialogues on cities and COVID-19 beyond the pandemic, which generated a lot of knowledge, information, good practices, and policy briefs.

Efforts by other stakeholders who individually and collectively worked tirelessly to alleviate those worst affected by COVID-19, especially in slums and informal settlements, were greatly appreciated. Civil society, local governments and others stepped up efforts to deliver basic services to the ones most in need, including the homeless.

The collaboration with a consortium of commonwealth associations led by the Commonwealth Association of Architects, the Commonwealth Planners Association, and others, culminated in the adoption of a Commonwealth Declaration on Sustainable Urban Development by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Kigali, Rwanda, in June 2022. This declaration will enhance action towards sustainable urban development and human settlements around the Commonwealth, especially amongst least developed countries.

The establishment by the President of the 76th Session of the General Assembly of a stakeholder advisory board on sustainable urban development within the context of the High-Level Meeting on implementation of the New Urban Agenda provided space for stakeholders to engage at a high level in shaping the outcome of the High-Level Meeting.



The Global Stakeholder Forum, held on 3 – 4 June 2023 ahead of the second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly for stakeholders to coordinate their input into the Assembly © UN-Habitat

Expansion of the work on cities and climate change through collaboration and cooperation with Member States and other stakeholders has led to a growing presence at various sessions of the COP. The Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative is likely to enhance our work on cities and climate change.

The work programme on innovation and digital technologies has expanded greatly with the support of diverse stakeholders including Member States. The second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly saw the adoption of 11 resolutions which recognize involvement of stakeholders in their implementation as well as SAGE support.

UN-Habitat's internal networks, such as the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), the Global Water Operative Partnership Programme, the Slum Upgrading Programme, the Global Safer Cities Programme, Urban Planning Labs, Global and Local Urban Observatories, the Global Public Space Programme, the Cities and Climate Change Programme, and the Urban Resilience Programme continue to thrive with the support of stakeholders at all levels.

The flagship programmes out of the strategic plan have come together with the support of Member States and stakeholders.

UN-Habitat has also developed a resource mobilization strategy which takes account of stakeholders including the private sector, foundations, and philanthropists. The private sector strategy was reformulated, and a network of foundations and philanthropists was established with enhanced interest in UN-Habitat's work.

Collaboration with people with disabilities and older persons was also strengthened through a series of MOUs and joint programmes at the global level. The cooperation with the World Blind Union is a good example. The 11th session of the World Urban Forum held in Katowice, Poland, was acknowledged by the United Nations High-Level Committee on Management to be the most inclusive major UN event to date.

The last six years has shown that partnerships are fundamental for the successful implementation of the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other global commitments such as climate change, financing for development, and disaster risk reduction. A lot more can be done to properly fund partnership engagement and activities.

CHAPTER 05

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES AND INTER-AGENCY PLATFORMS

Intergovernmental processes

UN-Habitat's three-tiered governance structure

In December 2018, the UN-Habitat New York Office, together with the Office of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, supported efforts by the General Assembly to adopt a resolution elevating the 58-member Governing Council with the universal membership-based United Nations Habitat Assembly and calling for the establishment of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat comprised of 36 members elected by the universal governing body. The resolution retained the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UN-Habitat to prepare for regular sessions and undertake a high-level midterm review of decisions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly.

The adoption of a new governance structure was the result of many years of negotiation facilitated by the Open-Ended Working Group established by the General Assembly and led by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat. The Chair travelled to New York to present the findings of the Group to the President of the General Assembly and to the Chair of the Second Committee. Thereafter, UN-Habitat provided technical support to the Second Committee for its deliberations on the draft resolution on UN-Habitat, facilitating efforts to integrate the findings of the Open-Ended Working Group, while offering additional operational paragraphs pertaining to the modalities of introducing and financing the new governance structure.

Upon adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution in December 2022, UN-Habitat worked systematically to support Member States to prepare for and convene the first regular session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly. This involved assisting the Committee of Permanent Representatives to draft resolutions and rules of procedure, and to assist Member States in the elections of the President and Bureau of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, the President, Bureau, and membership of the Executive Board, and the Chair and Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

UN-Habitat supported Member States in 2023 to convene the second regular session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly. This included the Executive Director's Theme Paper for the second regular session that offered guidance to Member States on how the governing body may best realize its role as the pre-eminent intergovernmental platform on global urban policy. It urged alignment of the resolutions adopted at the second regular session with the recommendations of the Secretary-General's 2022 Quadrennial Report on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, with the outcomes of the ECOSOC special meeting on sustainable urban development in April 2022, with the commitments of the General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in April 2022, and with the resolution of the General Assembly on UN-Habitat of December 2022. In a departure from prior sessions of governing bodies of UN-Habitat, the second regular session adopted resolutions clustered on areas of action to accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda. These at once offered policy advice to countries and strategic direction to the UN-Habitat Secretariat.

High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on implementation of the New Urban Agenda

On 27 April, the President of the General Assembly convened the high-level meeting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The meeting drew 85 inscribed statements from Member States and from the Africa Group, EU, G-77, and ASEAN. In addition to interventions by Member States, over half of the segments of the High-Level Meeting included local and non-state actors, many appearing in the General Assembly hall for the first time. The President's summary included a pathbreaking Annex of Actions based upon the commitments by Member States. It highlighted the strategic role of the New Urban Agenda as a road map to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and other global agendas.

Second, it urged countries to pursue housing, urban climate action, urban crisis reduction and recovery, SDG localization, and financing sustainable infrastructure – five areas of action to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The decision to hold the High-Level Meeting was the result of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in December 2020. Some Member States were concerned about the growing number of meetings convened by the General Assembly and about the multiple sessions of the three-tier governance structure of UN-Habitat. Others noted the precedent set in 2001, five years after Habitat II, of the Istanbul+5 Conference to review progress on the outcome of the Habitat Agenda. They felt it prudent for the General Assembly to convene a similar meeting in 2022, six years after Habitat III, this time to renew focus on the New Urban Agenda.

To accommodate these two perspectives, Member States agreed to a more modest meeting of the General Assembly, a one-day session without a negotiated outcome document and integrated into existing global and regional platforms.

In the interim period, the Executive Board of UN-Habitat took forward the General Assembly resolution by issuing a decision calling upon UN-Habitat to integrate the high-level meeting of the General Assembly into five different, mutually reinforcing processes. These included the Secretary-General's Quadrennial Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda to serve as the official pre-session document of the High-Level Meeting, a decision subsequently supported by the President of the General Assembly.

At regional level, the preparatory process encompassed the five Regional Forums for Sustainable Development for which Member States produced inputs to the High-Level Meeting about experiences to date on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. A third process was the ECOSOC special meeting on sustainable urbanization from the perspective of inequality and UN reform that was held one week prior to the High-Level Meeting, agreed to by the President of the General Assembly and ECOSOC. Forth, that events organized on the occasion of the High-Level Meeting include the key constituencies of the New Urban Agenda, including local governments, private industry, planners, and grassroots organizations. Finally, that the day after the High-Level Meeting, the Government of Poland hold a meeting linking the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting with the 11th session of the World Urban Forum in Katowice in June 2022.

Noting the need to sustain attention on the New Urban Agenda, the President of the General Assembly established the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Urbanization for the duration of his tenure (September 2021 to August 2022). He invited eight permanent representatives, the President of ECOSOC, two mayors, and one representative for each of the Regional Economic Commissions, grassroots organizations, professional associations, private industry, and UN-Habitat. The committee developed the pre-session concept note and agenda for the High-Level Meeting.

An important outcome of the High-Level Meeting was the establishment of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization, and the New Urban Agenda. Launched by the governments of Botswana and Slovakia, the Group of Friends is the interface between the UN Secretariat in New York and the Second Committee, Third Committee, and Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. The President of the General Assembly in June 2022 presided over the inaugural session of the Group of Friends that has since met quarterly and now numbers 52 members of permanent missions in New York. While historically UN-Habitat has enjoyed the support of Member States in preparation for intergovernmental meetings such as Habitat III, the Group of Friends is the first such body to operate in perpetuity to strengthen UN-Habitat, promote the mandate of sustainable urbanization, and accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

General Assembly resolution on ending homelessness

The General Assembly in December 2021 adopted the first-ever resolution on homelessness tabled by Madagascar. Member States recognized that homelessness is the result of not only inadequate housing but also poverty, poor access health systems, domestic violence, internal displacement, drug addiction, and discrimination. They called for the development of comprehensive policies to end homelessness and programmatic interventions that include persons experiencing homelessness as active partners, rather than as passive recipients. Also recommended in the resolution is a call for a working definition on homelessness to enable countries to establish baselines and monitor progress.

The Secretary-General submitted the 2023 Report on Homelessness based on a series of consultative meetings of Member States and various local and non-state actors. The Third Committee of the General Assembly reviewed the 2023 Report in its preparation of the second iteration of the resolution on homelessness, that will be adopted

officially in December 2023, acknowledging the need for additional analysis on the manifestations of homelessness, comprehensive policies, working definitions, and monitoring systems. Further, Member States called for a third iteration of the resolution in December 2025 that builds upon the implementation of the resolution on housing adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023, and the outcome of the World Social Summit in September 2025.

Recent efforts by the General Assembly to elevate homelessness were the result of technical support of the UN Secretariat, notably the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN-Habitat Housing Unit, and the UN-Habitat New York Office. In 2018, DESA and UN-Habitat convened in Nairobi an expert group meeting on homelessness that helped to identify critical issues and mobilize a network of interested Member States and various local and non-state institutions committed to ending homelessness. Thereafter, in 2019, the New York Office convened meetings with these networks elevating the issue further.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic had a powerful impact on the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development, not least homelessness, prompting Member States to adopt international legislation to end homelessness. The Secretary-General noted in his Policy Brief on COVID-19 in an Urban World issued in July 2020 that the pandemic is like an X-ray machine, revealing to all multiple forms of inequality and discrimination. The UN-Habitat report ***Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future*** issued in 2021, noted further that COVID-19 not only deepened existing inequalities, but also created new vulnerabilities. Many countries responded to the pandemic by placing a moratorium on evictions and allowing persons experiencing homelessness to occupy public spaces. Others made significant investments in affordable housing. It was in this context that in 2021, Member States joined Madagascar in adopting a resolution on homelessness.



Social distancing, a measure to curb the spread of COVID-19, Düsseldorf, Germany © Shutterstock

Inter-agency platforms

Reform of the United Nations development system

In 2018–2019, the New York Office played an instrumental role in the development of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF), key instruments applied by UN country teams to bring about reforms to the development system and management of the United Nations. In 2019, UN-Habitat served as the Chair of the inter-agency task force established by the Deputy Secretary-General to develop guidance to UN resident coordinators in the preparation of CCAs with impact on 120 UN country offices worldwide.

This elevated UN-Habitat as a trusted member of the United Nations with capacity to provide analytical guidance on underlying structural causes of inequality, elements of economic transformation, environmental sustainability, and devolution of institutional structures of public administration. It also provided opportunities for the UN country teams to apply concepts of balanced territorial development, spatial inequality, inclusive urban

planning, and national urban policies, as well as to appreciate the importance of harnessing sustainable urbanization to advance equality, economic transformation, climate action, and multilevel governance.

In 2017–2018, the UN Secretariat in New York under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General launched a series of reforms of the development system and management of the United Nations. These actions were undertaken pursuant to a General Assembly resolution that called upon the UN Secretariat to improve policy advisory and technical support to countries through enhanced coordination mechanisms, greater country ownership, and dedicated focus on attainment of the SDGs.

On coordination, the UN Secretariat established the Development Coordination Office (DCO) in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General replacing the Development Operations and Coordination Office (DOCO) in UNDP. It also involved the establishment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, replacing the United Nations Development Group chaired by the UNDP Administrator. Henceforth the Resident Coordination System reported to the front office of the UN system with DCO offering administrative support and UNSDG providing policy coherence across the UN system.

In response to requests by Member States to increase country ownership, the Deputy Secretary-General established guidelines to UN resident coordinators. These included procedures for negotiating the CFs and for anchoring these in the 2030 Agenda such that the outcomes of CFs were specified SDGs. In this way, the *raison d'être* for the UN at country level was to assist countries achieve a set of SDGs agreed to by the host country and the UN system. Resource mobilization shifted accordingly with a clear distinction between funding the UN and supporting efforts by countries to mobilize funds for and invest in the SDGs.

The UN-Habitat New York Office participated significantly in various working groups of the UNSDG established to further the above reforms. In addition to chairing the inter-agency task team to develop guidance on the Common Country Analysis, the New York Office also supported working groups on the CF guidance, regional reforms, economic transformation, the Management and Administration Framework for country level operations (MAF), and financing SDGs, among other groups. Through this active engagement, the New York Office provided important guidance to the Executive Director in preparation for meetings of the Chief Executives Board (CEB), Senior Management Group, Executive Committee, and UNSDG principals meetings. Further, the New York Office facilitated the work of UN-Habitat senior managers to support the UN reforms, including the development and implementation of the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development as outlined below.

United Nations System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development

Endorsed by the Chief Executives Board in May 2019, the strategy guides efforts to promote sustainable urban development utilizing global, regional, and country-level inter-agency platforms established as part of the reforms of the development and management system of the United Nations. It provides a broad framework for UN entities to work with UN-Habitat to achieve their respective mandates on children, health, refugees, food, and labour, among others, by engaging local governments on urban data, urban planning, and national urban policies.

The Secretary-General called for the establishment of the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development following a July 2018 meeting of his Senior Management Group. Noting that the UN required a whole-of-system approach to support Member States in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, he requested UN-Habitat to work through the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the Chief Executives Board to develop the strategy.

UN-Habitat led a small working group of HLCP from October 2018 to April 2019 to solicit inputs from 12 UN entities spanning humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, human rights, and peace and security. Through this process, the HLCP presented the system-wide strategy for CEB endorsement in May 2019.

Subsequently, UN-Habitat facilitated the implementation of the strategy through the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, and other global inter-agency platforms. UN-Habitat utilized the strategy to establish global cooperation agreements with UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, and UNEP, among other UN entities. The strategy featured at regional level in the annual plans of the UN Regional Collaborative Platforms to align urban development initiatives of the Regional Economic Commissions, UNDP, and the UN Development Coordination Office.

At country level, UN-Habitat worked with DCO to convene meetings of Resident Coordinators at the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in February 2020, and at the 11th Session of the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland, in June 2022. Twenty Resident Coordinators shared experiences in promoting sustainable urban development in Common Country Analyses and in Cooperation Frameworks, agreeing to work with UN country teams to develop joint programming designed to achieve Cooperation Framework outcomes on poverty reduction, economic transformation, climate action, and crisis reduction and recovery. These efforts resulted in a commitment by UN-Habitat and DCO to promote joint programming in 27 opportunity countries.

In October 2022, the HLCP embarked on a review of the implementation of the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development, the findings of which were endorsed by the Chief Executives Board in November 2022. The HLCP found that the global, and to a lesser extent regional, inter-agency platforms had successfully integrated the strategy and that five UN entities

had adopted urban development in their respective four-year strategic plans and annual work plans. It also noted, however, that UN entities had been less successful in implementing the strategy at country level primarily due to the absence of funding but also because of negative perceptions about urbanization held by UN entities responsible for environmental sustainability and agricultural development. The Chief Executives Board endorsed the recommendations of HLCP to support DCO and UN-Habitat efforts at country level and to develop an addendum policy to the system-wide strategy on agriculture and environmental sustainability in an urbanizing world.

Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments

On 6 October 2023, the Secretary-General convened the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments comprised of senior representatives of 5 national governments and 15 local and regional governments. Co-chaired by Spain and the Regional Presidency (Governor) of Mauritania, the Advisory Group seeks to promote multilevel governance and elevate the importance of subnational governments for the 12-month period leading to the Summit of the Future in September 2024. UN-Habitat is the Secretariat of the Advisory Group supported by United Cities and Local Government on behalf of the Global Task Force on Local and Regional Governments, and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. At the inaugural meeting, the Secretary-General was accompanied by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chef de Cabinet, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy, and the Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

The origins of the Advisory Group stem from the 2020 meeting of the Senior Management Group (held monthly for UN leadership) during which the

Secretary-General called for the establishment of the UN Task Force on the Future of Cities to identify ways to engage local and regional governments in intergovernmental and national planning processes. From 2020 to 2022, the Task Force, chaired by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, convened meetings of 20 UN entities and invited representatives of the Global Task Force on Local and Regional Governments. It assembled inputs from UN entities and from local and regional governments to develop recommendations for consideration by the Secretary-General as an input to the preparation of the report on **Our Common Agenda**. Drawing upon this input, the Secretary-General in July 2022 included a recommendation in the report on Our Common Agenda calling for the establishment of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments.

The Advisory Group is tasked with preparing four deliverables. It recently completed the first deliverable, the input to the Summit of the Future offering recommendations on the importance of multilevel governance and local and regional governments and on how best the Advisory Group can contribute to the preparatory process and the proceedings of the Summit. In February 2024, the Advisory Group will recommend specific institutional mechanisms to engage local and regional governments in intergovernmental and national planning processes. Subsequently, in March 2024, the Advisory Group will develop a framework to guide how UN country teams and local and regional governments work together to assist countries to achieve the SDGs. To prepare this deliverable, the Advisory Group will work closely with the Local2030 Coalition, the UN-led, multistakeholder initiative to localize the SDGs. The final deliverable of the Advisory Group will be a policy brief on multilevel governance and the role of local and regional governments. It is envisioned that the Secretary-General will disseminate the policy brief to Member States in July 2024, in advance of the Summit of the Future.

CHAPTER 06 | OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL

Regional Office for Africa (ROAF)

The Regional Office for Africa (ROAF) is active in 49 of 55 countries in the region. The total value of ROAF's portfolio stands at USD 51.5 million. The ROAF portfolio is mainly focused on helping countries deal with challenges associated with displacement (both internal and cross-border) as a result of conflict, impact of climate change, and other causes. Scaling up through regional/cross-border programmes is proving effective, such as in the Sahel region. This entails finding the right connections, increasing impacts such as smart urban resilience projects, economic corridor development, and working with regional institutions. UN-Habitat is also working towards establishing a stronger subregional presence in West Africa and Southern Africa. It already has a subregional multi-country office supporting Central and Eastern Africa.

Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)

The Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) covers 18 countries in the Arab region with an ongoing active portfolio in 14 countries, extending between development, recovery, and peacebuilding interventions. With the increased complexity and urban nature of crises in the region, urban rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction remain a priority in several countries.

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) is actively engaged in operational activities across more than 30 developing countries in the region. In 2022, ROAP extended its local cooperation arrangement for another five years enabling continued service in country and field offices in the region. ROAP celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2022. ROAP has developed a unique footprint by sharing with 42 developing countries in the Asia and the Pacific region its flagship approach putting communities in informal settlements and slums in the front seat of their own development. ROAP supports seamless recovery through people-centred approaches towards resilient communities with access to shelter and resilient infrastructure, critical services, and livelihoods ensuring tenure security across the urban-rural continuum and using area-based people-centred approaches.

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)

UN-Habitat works in 23 out of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In a middle-income region, ROLAC has implemented a multi-country approach in three subregions: Mesoamerica, Andean Countries, and the Southern Cone. In addition, the process of establishing a multi-country team in the Anglophone Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) should be finalized in 2024.

In the last 6 years, UN-Habitat reached directly in LAC around 540 cities and it is estimated that up to 5,000 municipalities benefited from the positive impact of UN-Habitat's programmes in the region through national programmes and policies.

The main areas of work in the region include national urban and housing policies, neighbourhood integration of migrants, community and neighbourhood improvement, and public spaces. The new emerging areas of engagement are financing, climate action, and housing in the Anglophone Caribbean; financing, informal settlements, support to urban and territorial development policies, and urban safety in Mexico, Cuba, and Central America; localizing SDGs, waste management, internally displaced persons (IDPs), urban planning, and territorial development in conflict areas in Colombia and Andean Countries; and localizing SDGs, informal settlements, and urban safety in Brazil and Southern Cone countries.

South-eastern Europe and Western Balkans

UN-Habitat is involved in various initiatives and partnerships to support sustainable urban development in Kosovo. The Inclusive Development Programme, implemented by UN-Habitat in Kosovo and financed by Sweden, integrates seven northern Kosovo municipalities into a broader planning framework, emphasizing the strengthening of social contracts through civil society mobilization and enhancing local-central and intermunicipal dialogue. Additionally, the programme has successfully implemented several capital investment projects, contributing to sustainable urban development in several municipalities. UN-Habitat has also played a crucial role as a facilitator and mediator in addressing urban planning and local government capacity-building issues in northern Kosovo, despite political challenges. UN-Habitat provides support to various bodies related to urban planning, legislation, and promotional activities related to urban planning and the environment. UN-Habitat is also involved in facilitating the activities of the Collegia of Spatial Planning within the Association of Kosovo

Municipalities, addressing spatial planning challenges at the local and central levels.

In Serbia, in close collaboration with the UN Country Team and other development partners, three priority areas have been identified: 1) improving access to housing for vulnerable communities and upgrading informal areas to create more inclusive neighbourhoods, with a focus on Roma communities; 2) addressing climate adaptation in urban areas; and 3) providing technical support for digitalization and people-centred smart cities. UN-Habitat, in partnership with UNEP, is also working on capacity development related to air pollution through nature-based solutions in Belgrade and developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for Kragujevac. Furthermore, a Voluntary Local Review for the city of Nis is being prepared, which will host the second National Urban Forum in Serbia in 2024. In close collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UN-Habitat has prepared a publication on the implementation of the urban dimension of the SDGs in Serbia.

South Caucasus

The recent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Southern Caucasus Region (September 2023) has drawn global attention. UN-Habitat, as a part of the broader UN Country Team efforts in both countries, led by the Resident Coordinators, is dedicated to supporting long-term peacebuilding initiatives in the region, with a focus on regional development for prosperity.

Armenia has approached the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UN-Habitat to prepare a Country Profile on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization. This represents a great opportunity to start engaging with the country. A joint fact-finding mission is planned for spring 2024.

In May 2023, UN-Habitat has established a project office in Azerbaijan. While supporting the UN efforts in developing a Joint Recovery Needs Assessment, UN-Habitat is actively promoting the implementation of a National Urban Policy in Azerbaijan which will address the balanced

development of the country embracing the “great return” process and reconstruction of liberated areas in Karabakh. In 2022 and 2023 respectively, two National Urban Forums (NUFs) were held in the country. In 2023, the second NUF inaugurated the 2023 Azerbaijan Urban Week comprising also the first Organization of Turkic States Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization and the global observance of the 2023 World Habitat Day in Baku, Azerbaijan. In 2022, Azerbaijan made voluntary contributions of USD 3 million, and in 2023, USD 400,000 for World Habitat Day as well as USD 1 million both as a voluntary contribution and earmarked funding for implementation in the country. In 2023, Azerbaijan appointed an Ambassador to Kenya, acting as a Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Kenya.

In Georgia, UN-Habitat has been asked to provide technical support to the development of the National Spatial Development Plan (NSDP). This initiative is led by the newly established Spatial and Urban Development Agency (SUDA). SUDA is also planning to host the first National Urban Forum in Georgia in 2024.

Central Asia

In Kazakhstan, city profiles were prepared jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for the Cities of Astana and Almaty, and a Degree of Urbanization (DEGURBA) training was conducted in 2022 and 2023. Kazakhstan attended the first Organization of Turkic States Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization in September 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and highlighted the importance of collaborating with UN-Habitat in achieving sustainable urbanization in the country. A fact-finding mission is planned for spring 2024.

In Kyrgyzstan, UN-Habitat has initiated multiple regional projects focusing particularly on the city of Bishkek. Collaboratively with UNECE, a city profile has been prepared, complemented by advisory services aimed at enhancing air quality through nature-based solutions. Concurrently, support is being provided for the development of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, a joint effort

with UNEP. Furthermore, plans are in place to commence a housing assessment for Kyrgyzstan in 2024. Additionally, UN-Habitat, through its Urban Lab, has initiated a resilience-informed Strategic Spatial Planning and Capital Investment Planning under the Urban Resilience Programme in the city of Naryn.

In Tajikistan, UN-Habitat has implemented three regional projects. In the city of Dushanbe, collaborative efforts with UNECE have resulted in the preparation of a city profile and plans are underway for a Voluntary Local Review. Advisory services have been extended to enhance air quality through nature-based solutions, complemented by training sessions on DEGURBA for relevant stakeholders. Through its Urban Lab, UN-Habitat completed a Strategic Spatial Plan which translated into a regulatory master plan by the government, and a Capital Investment Plan under the Urban Resilience Programme in the city of Khorog.

In Turkmenistan, in February 2023, UN-Habitat led a joint United Nations mission to the city of Arkadag, comprising UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and UNDP, to review the urban planning approach, implementation, and management of Arkadag City, contributing to the localization of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities in Turkmenistan. Based on the recommendations of the mission, the Government of Turkmenistan requested UN-Habitat's support for achieving “A better urban future for all – Towards Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable Cities and Communities in Turkmenistan”. The project document is planned to be signed in December 2023 and will lead to the establishment of a UN-Habitat project office in Ashgabat.

In Uzbekistan, from 2019 to 2022, UN-Habitat was actively engaged in providing technical support for addressing housing and sustainable urbanization challenges. In 2021, a collaborative effort with the United Nations Department of Economic and

Social Affairs (UN DESA) led to the onboarding of an Urban Advisor. Uzbekistan participated in DEGURBA training, contributing to its capacity-building on evidence-based policymaking in this regard. A regional project, conducted jointly with UNECE, focuses on overcoming barriers to achieving adequate and affordable housing, aiming to enhance the understanding of housing requirements for marginalized communities at the policy level. Moreover, Uzbekistan participated in the inaugural Organization of Turkic States Ministerial Meeting on Housing and Sustainable Urbanization in September 2023 in Baku, Azerbaijan. During this event, Uzbekistan emphasized the significance of collaborating with UN-Habitat to achieve sustainable urbanization in the country. Additionally, within the framework of a conference on Demographic Urban Resilience which took place in November 2023 jointly organized with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a fact-finding mission will be conducted to formulate a comprehensive UN-Habitat engagement strategy for Uzbekistan.

Eastern Europe and other countries

In Belarus, UNECE and UN-Habitat organized three fact-finding missions consisting of expert meetings and policy dialogues. In June 2018, UNDP and UN-Habitat jointly organized a workshop on implementing International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning and its adaptation to regional planning (IG-UTP) to establish national priorities for Belarus and learn from international best practices. In May 2019, the Belarus city profile was launched jointly by UNECE, UNDP, and UN-Habitat.

In Moldova, UN-Habitat's involvement in the Chisinau Economic Forum in 2022 marked the initiation of renewed collaboration with the country. Subsequently, UN-Habitat has been actively identifying areas for technical support within the country. This includes assistance in implementing the Chisinau Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and addressing obstacles to adequate housing for marginalized groups through evidence-based

approaches to housing policy, particularly in response to the significant influx of refugees from Ukraine. A fact-finding mission is scheduled for 2024 to further assess and strengthen engagement.

In the Russian Federation, UN-Habitat's Moscow Office oversees the Programme's work in the country. It translates major publications and the quarterly magazine, *Habitat Debate*, into Russian. In 2023, a Russian contribution of USD 274,000 was received. UN-Habitat technically supported the preparation of Moscow's first Voluntary Local Review. In 2022 and 2023, the Moscow Urban Forum took place and UN-Habitat's Moscow office translated the ***SDG 11 Synthesis Report - Tracking Progress Towards Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable Cities*** and ***Human Settlements and the New Urban Agenda Illustrated Handbook*** into Russian.

In Türkiye, UN-Habitat has had various engagements over the past years leading to the development of a UN-Habitat Country Programme document, which is currently being discussed as a basis for the establishment of a Türkiye project office. Moreover, the Government of Türkiye has also indicated great interest in hosting a UN-Habitat regional office. From 2019 to 2021, the Future Cities Programme provided technical assistance to three metropolitan municipalities (Ankara, Istanbul, and Bursa) and one district-level municipality.

In October 2022, the global observance of World Habitat Day was celebrated in Balıkesir. In November 2023, based on the support by the Mayor of Balıkesir as Head of the Turkish Union of Municipalities, UN-Habitat's SDG Cities Flagship initiative launched the SDG Cities Hub for Turkish Cities in the city, providing a systematic approach and support structure that supports cities to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

In 2022, the global observance of World Habitat Day (WHD) was celebrated in Balıkesir and the global observance of World Cities Day (WCD) celebrated in Üsküdar in 2023. Continuing its role as a leader in urban sustainability, Balıkesir, in 2022,



following WHD, held the first Interregional Summit of Cities – Latin America and Türkiye, bringing together five mayors under the auspices of the Andean Regional Hub. Following the devastating earthquake in February 2023 in Türkiye, UN-Habitat conducted several missions to the affected areas, both of technical and advocacy level, fostering the importance of UN-Habitat's technical support in urban recovery efforts in the country.

In Ukraine, UN-Habitat has been exploring how its expertise in conflict contexts could support the recovery of cities upon request of its Executive Board in March 2022. A broad dialogue involving a wide range of stakeholders in Ukraine, followed by consultations with national and local authorities, UN sister agencies, as well as local and international NGOs, took place as part of an Urban Crisis Track at the 11th World Urban Forum in Katowice (June 2022). In 2022 and 2023, UN-Habitat secured funding from the governments of Germany, Slovakia, and the United States of

America, allowing UN-Habitat to provide technical support to national, regional, and local governments in Ukraine in their urban recovery efforts.

The focus is on connecting early recovery initiatives with long-term recovery and reconstruction plans, with an emphasis on technical assistance, capacity-building, and policy advisory services. Moreover, UN-Habitat leverages the United Nations Innovation and Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC Hamburg) to implement digital solutions for assessing, modelling, and scaling up proposed interventions. As of June 2023, UN-Habitat has established an office in Kyiv, with an Urban Lab set to follow. The Urban Lab will serve as a hub for urban experts to support government initiatives in local recovery planning and facilitate knowledge-sharing on urban issues. UN-Habitat will also collaborate with the Ministry of Restoration to identify policy gaps and create an enabling environment for sustainable recovery in Ukraine.

*World Habitat Day
observance 03
Balikesir Türkiye 03
October 2022
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Top achievements in the last six years

Regional Office for Africa (ROAF)

- Support towards urban climate resilience (Madagascar, Mozambique, Comoros, Malawi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Somalia, Kenya, Guinea Bissau).
- Support towards Own Source Revenue (self-declared autonomous region of Somaliland, Kenya, DR Congo).
- Support to land reforms and human settlements in post-conflict areas (DR Congo/Ituri region, Uganda, Burkina Faso).
- Support to the development of spatial development frameworks (Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, Somalia, Kenya).
- Support towards the development of national housing policies (Zambia, Malawi, Senegal, Lesotho, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana).
- Support towards the development of urban policies (at least 40 sub-Saharan African countries have National Urban Policies with 22 of them receiving support from UN-Habitat).
- Support to Common Country Analysis (CCA)/ United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)/ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (43 sub-Saharan African countries).
- Development of key regional programmes and engagement towards strengthening urban climate resilience in Southeast Africa, smart urban resilience joint regional programme (JRP) with UNDP, sustained partnership with DiMSUR (the Subregional Technical Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban resilience), collaboration with the African Union Special Technical Committee (specifically on

the Africa Union Urban Resilience Programme and development of the Harmonized Framework for the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda).

Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)

- Sustainable recovery and reconstruction (Iraq, Lebanon).
- Housing, land, and property rights (Egypt, Iraq, Palestine).
- Building resilience and addressing climate change impacts (Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon).
- Urban planning and national urban policies (Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine).
- Future Saudi Cities Programme helping Saudi cities become more sustainable and inclusive.

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

- Climate resilience programme (Cambodia, Fiji, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam).
- Urban ecosystems-based approaches (Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Solomon Islands).
- Accelerating net-zero and resilient urban development (development of climate change action plans in 100 cities and provinces in the Asia-Pacific region and for over 200 communities and informal settlements, and solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the city, neighbourhood, and building level supported in China, Pakistan, and Viet Nam).
- Promoting green and resilient housing (Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan).
- Integrated resource management, including land-based solutions to marine plastic litter (Afghanistan, India, the Philippines, Thailand).

- Solid waste management solutions with significant reduced emissions and water pollution footprint through the semi-anaerobic Fukuoka Method have been disseminated.
- Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda).
- National Urban Policy (India, Iran, Myanmar, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, as well as requests from Tonga and Vanuatu).
- Degree of Urbanization methodology for measuring urban areas (Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal).
- Innovative urban recovery programme in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake (Nepal).
- Connecting innovators to cities and communities in development (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Iran, Myanmar, China, Cambodia, Malaysia, Fiji, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Viet Nam, and Nepal)
- The City Prosperity Initiative developed the City Prosperity Index in more than 400 cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, allowing cities to have a useful tool for monitoring and evidence-based policymaking.
- Eleven cities in Central America, including in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Dominican Republic, benefited from urban integrated operations.
- Ten cities in six countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad and Tobago) adapted and deployed plans in vulnerable neighbourhoods for effective integration between migrants and hosting communities.
- The city of Rio de Janeiro integrated more than 11,000 families from the favelas in the social development policy for informal neighbourhoods through innovative community mapping.
- The Province of Neuquén, Argentina, was supported through an inclusive public space programme.

Regional Office for Latin America (ROLAC)

- UN-Habitat supported Bolivia to develop its participatory National Urban Policy (NUP), complemented with urban agendas in more than 20 cities. UN-Habitat contributed and supported the processes for NUPs in Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, Cuba, Peru, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama.
- UN-Habitat supported socioeconomic post-COVID-19 recovery plans in a few communities and municipalities in Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, and Jamaica.
- The State of Alagoas in Brazil implemented an integrated strategy for neighbourhood and community transformation in informal settlements.
- Anglophone Caribbean countries were provided support through a Caribbean strategy for informal settlements upgrading.
- Development of regional public goods to support 33 countries in LAC implementing the New Urban Agenda.
- Development of an urban integrated operations methodology to support local implementation of the New Urban Agenda through integration of data/planning/project structuring/blended financing.
- The Urban Circuit platform in Brazil became the prime New Urban Agenda/SDG Localization exchange and advocacy platform in Latin America and the Caribbean. So far, it hosted close to 1,000 events from Brazil, Lusophone countries, and Latin America.

- Development of a multi-country operational approach for Mesoamerica, covering 11 countries. The process is being replicated for Andean Countries, Southern Cone Countries and Anglophone Caribbean Countries, as well as in Southeast Asia and West Africa. The model has introduced efficiency gains and economies of scale as well as new ways of working and interacting with UN Resident Coordinator System.

Eastern Europe and other countries

- Appointment of a Principal Coordination Officer of UN-Habitat in Europe based in Geneva, Switzerland (1 November 2023).
- Establishment of project offices in Baku, Azerbaijan (May 2023) and Kyiv, Ukraine (June 2023). National Urban Forums have been organized in various subregions and countries of the region, identifying the need for peer learning to build capacities across countries.
- First Meeting of Ministers in Charge of Housing and Sustainable Urbanization of the Organization of Turkic States (30 September 2023) in Baku, Azerbaijan (attended by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan).
- Following the increased demand for UN-Habitat's services in the wider Eastern European and neighbouring regions, UN-Habitat has started to conceptualize the development of a Regional Strategy for (Eastern) Europe, South Caucasus, and Central Asia.

High-impact projects and opportunities to scale up

Regional office for Africa (ROAF)

- "Strengthening Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Africa" under the Adaptation Fund, focusing on four countries (Mozambique, Malawi, Comoros, Madagascar) with multiple select cities, addressing transboundary

climate change-induced hazards experiences in Southeast Africa and more specifically in the four participating countries and cities. The project is now being scaled up to West Africa.

- "Go Blue Project" focusing on Kenyan coastal cities in six local county governments and aiming at developing and mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of coastal urban and marine environment in planning and management at policy and behavioural level, especially for young people and women, in direct connection to sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and coastal tourism, as well as adopting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Eco-village resettlement project "Roça Sundry Community Sustainable Project" in São Tomé and Príncipe offering 113 houses to the 511 members of the Roça Sundry/Terra Prometida community.

Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)

- The "Quality-of-Life (QoL)" initiative aiming to develop a comprehensive, human-centric concept of quality of life including objective and subjective factors and to promote it as a primary urban development objective. The QoL Index is expected to have the potential to make a significant and positive contribution to localizing and accelerating the SDGs by guiding effective policy and decision-making to enhance the quality of life for urban dwellers.
- Housing, land, and property rights to secure land rights; issuance of occupancy certificates; approval of the legal decree to recognize the land rights of the Yazidi minority in Iraq; provision of social housing in Mosul, Iraq comprising 9 buildings with a total of 324 housing units; and rehabilitating housing for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip addressing damages from the May 2021 war.
- Public space (Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Palestine).
- Urban basic services.

- Urban crisis response and recovery, for instance in Lebanon following the Beirut port explosion, or neighbourhood and urban profiling implementation in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.
- Urban farming and food security (Lebanon, Palestine).

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

- "Afghanistan Urban Peacebuilding Programme (AUPP)" for a total of about 165,000 direct beneficiaries (and approximately 570,000 indirect beneficiaries), surpassing the set targets. The programme triggered positive change in safety and security situations at municipal and community levels.
- "Phase II Afghanistan Urban Safety and Security Programme (AUSSP II)" had an estimated 173,250 direct beneficiaries and over 5.5 million indirect beneficiaries and successfully introduced the concept of urban safety and security to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, contributing to women's well-being, societal status, and increased participation in governance and decision-making.
- Securing Communal HLP Rights in Afghan Cities Project.
- National Urban Policy and Smart City Strategy Document (Iran).
- Myanmar Climate Change Alliance (MCCA).
- Facilitating Return of IDPs Through Rehabilitation of Community Infrastructure and Facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- Rebuilding Marawi project (Philippines) with the key achievement of building 1,000 permanent houses in 5 resettlement sites and training 4,000 households in construction, small-scale enterprise development, and other similar skills considering gender balance, peacebuilding, and social development.

- "Human Development Initiative through Empowerment and Settlement Improvement in the Plantation Settlements" in Sri Lanka.

Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean (ROLAC)

- The "Territórios Sociais" programme in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro and the State of Alagoas informal settlements programme have supported more than 15,000 families in informal settlements to have access to social policies.
- The "Inclusive Cities" programme helped with the effective integration of Venezuelan migrants with hosting communities in 10 cities in 6 countries through a new set of area-based methodologies with focused impact in informal neighbourhoods.
- The "New Urban Agenda Programme in Central American Countries" has developed an inventory of human settlements aimed at supporting efforts towards poverty reduction.
- Programmes developed with INFONAVIT and FONATUR Mexico allowed to support more than 25 municipalities in developing their Urban Development Plans. A platform was designed to facilitate training and access to UN-Habitat toolkits for more than 100 municipalities in their efforts to develop or improve their planning instruments.
- An "Urban Planning On-line Personalized Support Facility" was put in place in Central America and can be scaled up to the whole region where more than 15,000 municipalities are looking daily for innovative solutions for their sustainable urban planning challenges. This is particularly important for Middle-income countries.
- **The Territorial-Industrial Prospective Atlas for Foreign Investment** has been developed together with UNIDO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico with the objective of providing a tool to national and subnational authorities to promote new investments in promising

economic sectors and within a framework of shared territorial prosperity.

Eastern Europe and other countries

- (Sub)regional projects have been instrumental in terms of establishing initial presence in various countries in the region and building a programmatic portfolio, in line with the implementation of United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.
- In Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, a subregional approach based on multi-country work is recommended as the wider region is diverse with varying geopolitical dimensions.
- The "Azerbaijan Model" for UN-Habitat's engagement in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and with the country has inspired other countries to follow, for instance Turkmenistan.
- Urban recovery approaches implemented in the liberated areas in Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Türkiye contribute to UN-Habitat's normative work and can be shared in other contexts.

Quick statistics of our overall footprint

Regional Office for Africa (ROAF)

ROAF is active in 25 of 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2023, the total active ongoing projects portfolio in Africa stood at 59 projects, valued at USD 128 million with the following country-specific impact:

- Urban policy and planning: Senegal, Guinea, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia (regional planning).
- Durable solutions for Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in cities: Burkina Faso, Somalia, the Sahel region, DR Congo.

- Affordable housing: Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Central African Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cabo Verde.
- Climate change and disaster risk reduction in Mozambique and Malawi, other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, Addis Ababa.
- Blue/green economy: Kenya ("Go Blue" project).
- Urban mobility and public spaces: Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda.
- Land management: DR Congo.
- Smart Cities: Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Rwanda.

Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS)

- ROAS signed 23 new projects across the Arab region in 2023, with a total value of USD 31 million.
- The Saudi Arabia office was established in October 2023 to become the newest office of UN-Habitat established globally.
- In Iraq, the main donors are the European Union, the Government of Japan, the Government of South Korea, the Government of Germany, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAD), the Kuwait Relief Society, and the Iraqi Trust Fund. For the last six years, UN-Habitat Iraq received a little under USD 105 million and has a portfolio of pipeline projects of USD 22 million.
- Since 2018, the UN-Habitat Yemen Programme received USD 12.4 million, and its current project volume is USD 6.3 million.
- Since 2017, the Kuwait office has raised and helped mobilize more than USD 16 million and KWD 50,000 in in-kind contributions.
- The Palestine programme has four active projects in 2023 with a total value of USD 18 million.

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

- The current total portfolio of ROAP is USD 165 million which includes 80 projects at different stages of execution.
- The current climate change portfolio of USD 87 million consists of 36 country projects, 2 regional projects, and components of 2 global projects. Over the period 2018 to 2023, climate projects in 20 countries supported close to 100 local authorities and well over 500,000 direct beneficiaries.
- The current Adaptation Fund portfolio stands at USD 68 million.

Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC)

- Through country, subregional, regional, and global programmes, UN-Habitat reached around 540 cities. It is also estimated that through national programmes and policies more than 5,000 municipalities will benefit from the positive impact of UN-Habitat's work in the region.
- During the period 2018-2023, UN-Habitat worked in 23 out of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Eastern Europe and other countries

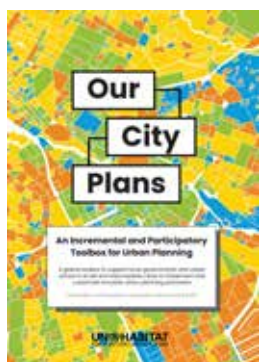
- In the Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, and Central Asia region, UN-Habitat's impact has faced limitations due to the absence of a designated regional office. With only a project office in Pristina, Kosovo, and a liaison office in Moscow, Russian Federation, most initiatives have originated from the headquarters, executed by colleagues across different divisions.
- In a positive development, UN-Habitat inaugurated a project office in Baku, Azerbaijan, in May 2023.
- Currently, there are ongoing discussions in Serbia and Turkmenistan to establish project offices, with expressed interest from Georgia and Kazakhstan, too.
- Ongoing discussions with Türkiye involve the potential establishment of a national project office, and there is interest in setting up a UN-Habitat regional office for the respective region in Istanbul, Türkiye.
- In terms of resource mobilization, Azerbaijan donated USD 3 million and USD 500,000 in voluntary non-earmarked contributions respectively in 2022 and 2023. This was preceded by Türkiye in 2021, with a voluntary contribution of USD 200,000.

UN-Habitat Chief of Staff (a.i.), Office of the Executive Director Mr. Neil Khor receives Kilifi County spatial plan from Hon. Maureen Mwangovya, the County Executive Committee Member (CECM), Lands, Energy, Housing, Physical Planning & Urban Development in the County Government of Kilifi, © UN-Habitat



CHAPTER 07

TOP NORMATIVE PRODUCTS AND PRIORITIES



Our City Plans

UN-Habitat's global Our City Plans toolbox empowers local governments and urban actors by fostering inclusive and integrated urban planning processes. This modular approach, adaptable to local contexts, covers key thematic areas like participation, urban finance, climate action, and socio-spatial inclusion. Emphasizing stakeholder engagement and data analysis, it serves as an internal asset, contributing to the harmonization of UN-Habitat's specialized tools. The tool and its online platform support an overarching, integrated process, reinforcing UN-Habitat's commitment to providing global scale assistance to cities.



Priorities for the next two years

Leveraging the Our City Plans tool and platform and aligning with the SDGs localization efforts, UN-Habitat is well placed to offer concrete ways to translate assessments and objectives into solutions and decisions at city and neighbourhood level and establishing a link between these solutions and financial mechanisms.



Public Space Toolkit

The Public Space Toolkit is a suite of tools from policy to practice in support of city-wide and site-specific strategies and interventions in public space. From the inventory and assessment methodologies to the participatory tools for co-design, to the guidance on city-wide strategies, management, and maintenance, the Public Space Toolkit supports the achievement of SDG 11.7. globally.

Priorities for the next two years

UN-Habitat will expand its efforts in support of SDG 11.7 and roll out tools and approaches for cities to increase their green spaces for enhanced biodiversity in cities.

Urban health: Integrating health/cities and pandemic report

Expanding UN-Habitat's efforts in urban health involves addressing critical dimensions of urban development that profoundly influence public health. This initiative fosters the adoption of health-positive solutions in urban planning, design, and management. Developed in collaboration with WHO, this sourcebook serves as a cornerstone for self-assessment, capacity-building, and enhanced urban planning practices for urban health outcomes.

Notably, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat conducted an analysis of urban impacts and responses which yielded crucial lessons and recommendations tailored for urban decision-makers.

Enhancing Cost-Effective Investments for Better Urban Health Outcomes is a strategic guidebook for governments with limited budgets, providing a roadmap for optimizing urban development investments. Offering a comprehensive perspective, it guides city leaders and the private sector in prioritizing initiatives with maximum health benefits.

Priorities for the next two years

Emphasizing evidence-based decision-making and innovative approaches, these normative guides empower policymakers to allocate resources effectively, tailored to the current global challenges and priorities.

Gender: Her City Toolbox

Her City Toolbox empowers cities to elevate and integrate the participation of girls in urban planning, a crucial element of long-term strategies for sustainable societies. The digital toolbox outlines a unique process with nine building blocks, serving as a guideline for girl-centric city planning. With 1,200 users from 430 cities and 350 initiatives in 120 countries, the platform, including social media, reaches 7 million people. Her City publications, such as ***A Guide for Cities to Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Planning and Design*** and ***Cities for Girls, Cities for All*** have garnered 10,618 views and 7,511 downloads.

Priorities for the next two years

Her City Toolbox support will intensify scaling and managing a global network for gender-transformative cities. UN-Habitat and partners extend awareness-raising and technical capacity-building for mayor and urban professionals. A Community of Practice fosters global exchange, elevating the topic on global agendas and efficiently localizing SDGs for inclusive, sustainable cities.

Technical guidelines and strategies on adequate housing

Building on a combination of technical guidelines and strategies, UN-Habitat has developed a holistic approach to adequate housing that promotes integrated urban development and that recognizes the needs of all urban residents, particularly those experiencing poverty or facing



challenges to the achievement of their rights, such as women and children. This work has culminated in the establishment of the first universal intergovernmental body on adequate housing in the United Nations Habitat Assembly Resolution HA2/7 and the adoption of an integrative framework for technical assistance and normative cooperation on slum transformation in Resolution HA2/2, both adapted to future multilateral development frameworks. Homelessness is a universal challenge to the right to adequate housing that is linked to extreme poverty and many other causes of vulnerability and exclusion. UN-Habitat has led in the preparation of two reports of the Secretary-General, which have supported one and an expected second General Assembly resolution on the subject.

Priorities for the next two years

UN-Habitat's achievements have changed the shape of multilateral discourse on homelessness, highlighting its global relevance and emphasizing the gender dimension of the challenge. The future priority is to establish the common monitoring framework recommended by the report and use this to increase political accountability for solutions.

Urban mobility

UN-Habitat assists local and national governments in formulating Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). These plans optimize urban mobility, promote proximity, connectivity, and address critical issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and road fatalities. The strategic framework emphasizes strengthening local and national capacities for long-term sustainable urban mobility planning, with a focus on informed investment decisions prioritizing public transport, walking, and cycling. The goal is to achieve co-benefits such as improved urban air quality, resilience, and balanced development.

UN-Habitat's initiative includes the development of the guidebook **Streets for Walking and Cycling**, tailored for African city planners, engineers, and architects. This effort extends to the ongoing review of national street design manuals in countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Rwanda.

Priorities for the next two years

Integration of electric mobility plans into SUMPs is facilitated by the e-Mobility Toolbox, an online portal serving as a valuable resource for the development, implementation, and monitoring of innovative electric mobility solutions in cities.

People easily walk on the newly transformed pedestrian-oriented Luthuli avenue in downtown Nairobi
Photo © UN-Habitat



Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) through GWOPA

The Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) has been a driving force behind the global scale-up of the Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (WOPAs), facilitating peer-to-peer collaborations and partnerships between water and sanitation service providers, enhancing their capacities and performances in alignment with localized SDGs. GWOPA is committed to improving sanitation and wastewater services along the entire value chain through the sanitation-focused WOPs approach.

Priorities for the next two years

The sanitation-focused WOPs approach is a commitment by GWOPA that extends to improving sanitation and wastewater services along the entire value chain. The alliance adopts a sanitation-focused WOPs approach to drive advancements in water and sanitation services to benefit all.

Cities and Climate Change

The Pro-Poor Climate Action framework forms a foundation for enhancing climate resilience in critical areas. Complementing this, the **Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk Guide** provides a step-by-step approach for community assessments and action planning. UN-Habitat's commitment to advancing climate action is exemplified in the guide **Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions through Urban Climate Action in 2020**, with subsequent reviews commissioned at COP27 in 2022 to guide national governments. UN-Habitat promotes urban climate change research and innovation as seen in the Innovate4Cities Conference proceedings in 2021 which is shaping the global urban climate change research agenda. This dedication is evident in **Cities and Nature: Planning for the Future** which introduces new principles and actions for enhanced quality of urbanization process.

Priorities for the next two years

UN-Habitat's renewed emphasis will be on city-wide and nature positive, climate-resilient planning, and developing climate finance, energy access, and energy poverty-related normative tools.

Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement into Urban Policy: A Guide

This comprehensive guide supports governments in managing migration and displacement in urban areas. It outlines basic policy processes and includes a 10 step pathway for a holistic, integrated policy response. Emphasizing data collection, planning, inclusive services, integration, and collaboration, the guide provides insights into gaining more funding and resources for the local level.

Priorities for the next two years

The Mainstreaming Migration and Displacement into Urban Policy Guide is part of UN-Habitat's institutional plan on solutions to internal displacement, in response to the Secretary-General Action Agenda. As such, its use will be promoted in the countries affected by forced displacement and will be part of the strategic programming partnerships with IOM and UNHCR. At the same time, UN-Habitat will continue to identify opportunities to raise awareness of the Guide in global platforms such as the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, Urban October, and the 12th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12).

The Urban Monitoring Tool on Urban Safety

Implementing the United Nations System-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements

supports improved quality and consistency of municipal prevention policy and programming on crime and violence and enhancement of urban safety and human security. The Safer Cities Programme, with the Global Network on Safer Cities, have developed an Urban Safety Monitoring Tool prototype that is being piloted in South Africa, Mexico, and Canada to assess the indicator selection criteria, identify relevant local data sources in different contexts, and identify mechanisms and interventions to strengthen local knowledge management systems to enable effective implementation of the monitoring tool.

Priorities for the next two years

The main challenges for entrenching safer cities approaches are the need to strengthen a multi-dimensional approach to urban safety to improve delivery and scale of impact at all levels; the mainstreaming and global outlook of urban safety as a cross-cutting theme in sustainable urban development; and the promotion of measurement, monitoring, and reporting of the urban safety approach through peer reviewing, advocacy, outreach, and communications.

CHAPTER 08 LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs



Through extensive political and institutional partnership efforts, a demonstrated capacity to deliver innovative and impactful technical support at the country level, and a strong corporate push, UN-Habitat has become the lead UN entity on SDG localization and engagement with local and regional governments.

Over the past few years, the Programme has developed the most integrated and complete approach to localizing the SDGs in the UN system, anchored in five main components: the Global Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF); Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs); the SDG Cities Flagship Initiative; Multilevel Governance for SDG localization (MLG); and the Local2030 Coalition. UN-Habitat's footprint on SDG localization exceeds 20 countries, and new teams of experts are being consolidated at headquarters and across our regional and country offices. As a result, UN-Habitat has been mandated to lead the two key

UN mechanisms on SDG Localization and local governments: the Local2030 Coalition and the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments.

In addition, during the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, the Brazil-promoted resolution on Localizing the SDGs received wide consensus and was co-sponsored by 12 other countries: Argentina, Botswana, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Italy, Malaysia, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Through the resolution, Member States further mandated UN-Habitat to strengthen the capacities of local and national governments on SDG data, reporting, and integrated planning as well as on multilevel governance approaches for SDG localization.

In terms of political and institutional engagement in the UN-led SDG fora, since 2020 UN-Habitat has coordinated "SDG localization Tracks" during

Diagnosing vulnerable territories: new team from the Territories of Citizenship project in training in the Alto Dom Bosco community, in Juiz de Fora, Brazil @ UN-Habitat/ Aléxia Saraiva

the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the UN General Assembly, including the SDG Summit, directly co-organizing and engaging in more than 48 sessions. This also includes what have become structural special HLPF events such as the Local and Regional Governments Forum and the Voluntary Local Reviews-Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VLR-VSR) Days. This work was finally picked up and translated into political commitment through the Declaration of the HLPF convened under the auspices of the General Assembly: "We commit to [...] further localize the SDGs and advance integrated planning and implementation at the local level."

The World Urban Forum, the world's largest conference on sustainable urbanization, has also become a key platform to advance the discussions on SDG localization. At WUF11 in Katowice (2022), 13 sessions were organized within the SDG Localization Track, with speakers coming from 42 countries. Over half of these were representatives of local and regional governments, including mayors and governors. The upcoming WUF12 will be centred on the topic of localization.

In line with the objective and mandate of the resolution on localizing the SDGs, UN-Habitat is leading worldwide technical support on SDG localization. Focusing on the work on VLRS and SDG reporting, over the years, UN-Habitat supported 22 cities to develop their VLRS, including, for instance, Madrid (Spain), Amman (Jordan) and La Paz (Bolivia). The Programme is currently advancing technical cooperation in 13 countries: Georgia, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Palestine, the Philippines, Serbia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Gambia, and Tunisia. Based on these experiences, an innovative Action-Oriented VLR Methodology will be released in December 2023 to facilitate the connection between SDG reporting and action and integrating the Global Urban Monitoring Framework as an indicator basis for VLRS.

UN-Habitat also pioneered the work of the United Nations on Multilevel Governance for SDG localization (MLG) by launching the first-ever global

research on this topic along with a new interactive online platform. Efforts are ongoing to integrate MLG components into our country-level technical support with partners in Jordan, the Philippines, and Ghana, for instance.

As requested by Member States, efforts have been focused on strengthening our capacity-building offer on SDG Localization, now counting on both online and in-person training courses directed to both local and national governments and relevant stakeholders. Piloting has already commenced in 2023, looking into worldwide implementation by the second quarter of 2024.

This work has advanced hand in hand with key political engagement with the local and regional governments constituency. With the support of UN-Habitat, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments convenes the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, which is identified by the New Urban Agenda as the political voice of local and regional governments in the follow-up and review of such work. Moreover, along with other key partners, the Local and Regional Government Forum convenes since 2018.

Finally, in October 2023, the UN Secretary-General launched his Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, which will work over a one-year period to ensure that the concerns and asks of



UN-Habitat also pioneered the work of the United Nations on Multilevel Governance for SDG localization (MLG) by launching the first-ever global research on this topic along with a new interactive online platform.

*The Local 2030
Coalition Secretariat
event in Bilbao
© UN-Habitat*



local and regional governments are fully considered in the process and outcome of the Summit of the Future. UN-Habitat provides Secretariat support to the Advisory Group.

Local2030 Coalition as one of twelve high-impact initiatives at the SDG Summit

The Local2030 Coalition was chosen as one of the twelve high-impact initiatives presented during the SDG Action Weekend, on the margins of the 2023 SDG Summit. This recognition also places on the Coalition the important responsibility of ensuring that localization pushes the achievement of key SDG transitions like food systems, energy access, digital connectivity, education, job creation, social protection, and addressing climate change,

biodiversity loss, and pollution.

A diverse group of ministers, governors, mayors, development banks and civil society representatives participated in the event and highlighted practices, initiatives, and solutions to enhance local actions and multilevel governance approaches towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Ambitious targets were set at the launch of the initiative, including facilitating major private sector investments aligned to the SDGs in at least 100 cities; mobilizing USD 150 million invested in catalytic initiatives at the local level through the Joint SDG Fund's Localization Window; and ensuring that all key UN entities join the Local2030 Coalition, helping mobilize 1,000 local governments to join the UN-Habitat's SDG Cities initiative and impacting 1 billion lives.

*The Local 2030
Coalition Secretariat
in Bilbao
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CHAPTER 09 | FINANCING THE SDGs

The need for localized finance

Urbanization consistently correlates with increased GDP, as cities generate 80 per cent of global wealth through economies of agglomeration. Yet, rapid urbanization, especially in the Global South, often results in cities failing to meet growing population needs, leading to unplanned settlements, increased social inequality, and environmental degradation. The key challenge lies in the unmet financing gap, estimated at USD 1 to 1.5 trillion annually for global infrastructure in developing countries.

While depending largely on national transfers, in other words funding channelled through national government, cities can also generate own-source revenue through local taxes, charges, and service fees, and can attract external sources of capital, including development finance, municipal bonds, blended capital, and private capital. Yet, while diverse sources of finance are available to cities, cities encounter several challenges to access them. Fiscal transfers are limited in poorer economies and earmarked for national priorities. Own-source revenue provides municipal independence, but corruption, low compliance, and

*Skyline with skyscrapers over slums in Bandra suburb.
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India © Shutterstock*



The SDG Cities Flagship Initiative aims to work with **1,000 cities** and impact **1 billion lives** by 2030.



weak administration hinder its potential. External finance is attractive but challenging for cities with low credit scores, few profitable projects, and inadequate financial management.

UN-Habitat has therefore developed a range of programmes and technical assistance tools to support cities to plan and adequately finance their sustainable development needs.

SDG Cities Flagship Initiative

The SDG Cities Flagship Initiative provides cities with a systematic approach to delivering the SDGs with a focus on data-driven, inclusive approaches to identify development priorities in line with the SDGs. It builds local institutional capacity in areas of data management, strategic and spatial planning, governance, and service delivery, and supports the financing of SDG impact initiatives through the finance instruments outlined below.

Urban landscape
© Shutterstock



Its delivery approach combines the provision of a comprehensive set of digital tools with tailored technical expertise provided by SDG Cities hubs. Launched in 2020, the initiative aims to work with 1,000 cities and impact 1 billion lives by 2030. Tools, partnerships, and pilots were established during the COVID-19 pandemic, and since 2022, 93 cities across all regions have engaged, including through partner organizations, and a further 174 have expressed interest to join.

Own Source Revenue (OSR)

Optimizing Own-Source Revenue (OSR) is crucial for enhancing city resilience, expanding fiscal capacity, and gaining access to credit. UN-Habitat has found that developing countries tap only 20 per cent of their OSR potential, lagging significantly behind OECD counterparts, and accordingly face challenges in attracting private investments and assuring repayment. UN-Habitat's innovative online tool, the Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis tool (ROSRA), aids local governments in assessing OSR systems, identifying barriers, and prioritizing reforms. UN-Habitat also assists local governments in implementing land value capture mechanisms, where rising land value in cities is harnessed for urban development.

These interventions have yielded remarkable results. For example, one Afghan city experienced a property tax revenue surge of 279 per cent in three years; cities in Puntland and in the self-declared autonomous region of Somaliland witnessed 300 per cent increases in property tax revenues between 2008 and 2016, while Kiambu County in Kenya doubled own source revenue through accounting reforms. The ROSRA tool has now been digitized and is about to be applied at scale worldwide.

Cities Investment Facility (CIF)

The Cities Investment Facility (CIF) programme, initiated by UN-Habitat, focuses on attracting external sources of capital to support SDG-related priorities of cities. Through its three pillars – the Cities Investment Portal, the Cities Investment Advisory Platform, and Cities Investment

Vehicles – CIF helps to assess the feasibility of urban infrastructure projects and supports the preparation of these projects into bankable investments that reach financial close. Launched at the 10th World Urban Forum in 2020, CIF now comprises seven specialist organizations and has a pipeline of 18 major projects that will deliver measurable impact on SDGs, valued at USD 925 million. The portfolio has a regional breakdown of 40.9 per cent in Africa, 36.4 per cent in Asia-Pacific, 18.2 per cent in Latin America, and 4.5 per cent in Arab States. Key sectors include urban climate adaptation and resilience; land, housing and shelter; urban basic services; local economic development; and urban regeneration.

Integrated and spatially informed capital investment planning for expenditure optimization

Between one third and half of public investments are wasted due to poorly targeted and inefficient allocation. This will amount to USD 2.4 trillion in developing countries between 2015 and 2030. Through spatially-informed multi-year capital investment planning, UN-Habitat assists governments to efficiently prioritize funding towards projects that are most beneficial – economically, fiscally, spatially, and socially. An effective capital plan links the capital and operating budgets of a city to integrated urban and strategic plans that incorporate current and future infrastructure needs and service gaps, and are aligned to the SDGs.

UNCDF partnership

In 2022, UN-Habitat formalized a partnership with UNCDF that provides a “fused offering” for cities, bringing together the finance tools of respective agencies under a single integrated offering. Within this framework, UN-Habitat supported UNCDF in establishing a subnational investment guarantee fund within the European Trust Fund for Sustainable Development that de-risks SDG

related investment in cities. UN-Habitat and UNCDF have recently mobilized a joint initiative in Ghana to support 10 cities to accelerate SDGs and are working towards replicating this in 8 more countries. UN-Habitat and UNCDF have also jointly launched a women-led cities initiative that focuses on financing initiatives that improve women safety and inclusion and women entrepreneurship in cities. The initiative is a collaboration with private sector and development finance institutions.

Towards a Local Finance Framework

UN-Habitat is creating an evidence-based Local Finance Framework (LFF) to guide governments, financiers, and partners in navigating financial options for local development. Recognizing diverse contexts and financing mechanisms, the LFF shifts from project financing, which often comes at high collateral costs by local government in higher risk environments, to a coordinated and holistic approach to local development finance that considers both project viability and the financial capacity of cities. The framework offers a systematic analytical approach to identifying key local capacity constraints and enabling factors, and provides tailored solutions to strengthening the financial position of cities and meeting investment priorities. Experts across development fields are being gathered to refine the tool, and engagement with the Local2030 Coalition is also planned.

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CHAPTER 10

RE-THINKING WASTE MANAGEMENT



UN-Habitat encourages city managers and governments to embrace a human rights-based approach by respecting and supporting communities that help keep our cities healthy.

In 2018, UN-Habitat's Executive Director together with H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya launched the Waste Wise Cities initiative to address the increasing global waste management crisis. Adding a fourth "R" to the 3Rs approach to waste management (reduce, reuse, recycle), the Executive Director introduced the concept of "re-think". It is important to encourage consumers to re-think before buying, consuming, or throwing away waste matter.

It is estimated that 3 billion people worldwide have no access to proper waste disposal facilities. Waste from homes, markets, businesses, and institutions is thrown on the streets, in drains, dumped next to communities, or openly burnt. Not only does this make our cities unsightly and unattractive to tourists and investors, but it also leads to flooding, air and water pollution, diseases, as well as respiratory and other health problems.

By 2050, the total municipal waste generated in cities will double from 2 billion to 4 billion tons. The urban poor are the most affected. Working with the International Alliance of Waste Pickers, UN-Habitat encourages city managers and governments to embrace a human rights-based approach by respecting and supporting communities that help keep our cities healthy.

Waste management operations account for a significant proportion of city budgets, but financing for waste management remains inadequate. UN-Habitat is helping cities collect waste data and monitor; conduct capacity-building and educational training sessions; and support cities to develop

bankable projects involving waste management.

UN-Habitat believes that cities can effectively tackle the waste management problem when regarding waste as a resource, contributing also to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution. To be successful, cities must deal with their waste management issues in their context, while also learning from the experience of other cities. To date, more than 200 cities have joined the Waste Wise Cities network, and more than 50 waste management officers are embedded in local councils, especially in the Global South.

Advisory Board on Zero Waste

Established by UN Secretary-General António Guterres under the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Zero Waste (77/161) adopted on 22 December 2022, the Advisory Board has two missions: sharing best practices and success stories, and promoting zero waste initiatives at the local and national level. The Board aims to raise awareness and disseminate relevant information regularly through various means including reports, websites, and social media, especially during the global celebration of the International Day of Zero Waste, observed on 30 March each year, and celebrated for the first time in 2023.

The board is a multidisciplinary, regionally and gender-balanced group of 12 worldwide eminent advisors, moderated by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and chaired by the First Lady of Türkiye, Emine Erdoğan.

The complete list of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board of Eminent Persons on Zero Waste is:

- **Emine Erdoğan**, First Lady of Türkiye (Serving as Chairperson)
- **José Manuel Moller**, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Algramo (Serving as Deputy Chairperson)
- **Gino Van Begin**, Secretary-General, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability
- **Fatima Maada Bio**, First Lady of Sierra Leone
- **Mellisa Santokhi-Seenacherry**, First Lady of Suriname
- **Muhammad Yunus**, Co-founder and Chairman, Yunus Environment Hub
- **Carlos Silva Filho**, President, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)
- **Laura Reyes**, Executive Director, CEMPRE (Compromiso Empresarial para el Reciclaje)
- **Lara van Druten**, Chief Executive Officer, The Waste Transformers
- **Saleem Ali**, Professor, Energy and the Environment at the University of Delaware, and Honorary Professor, Sustainable Resources Development, University of Queensland
- **Hakima El Haite**, Founder, EauGlobe
- **Vijay Jagannathan**, Secretary-General, CityNet Asia Pacific

Advisory Board
on Zero Waste ©
Daily Sabah





Chakarail
damping site in
Taita–Taveta
County, Kenya
© UN-Habitat



It is estimated
that **3 billion**
people worldwide
have no access
to proper waste
disposal facilities.

International Day of Zero Waste

On 14 December 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution at its seventy-seventh session to proclaim 30 March as International Day of Zero Waste, to be observed annually. Türkiye, with 105 other countries, put forward the resolution. It follows resolutions focused on waste, including the resolution End plastic pollution: towards an internationally legally binding instrument adopted at the United Nations Environment Assembly on 2 March 2022.

The International Day of Zero Waste encourages sustainable production and consumption habits and aims at increasing awareness of how zero-waste projects accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Promoting zero-waste initiatives through this international day can help advance all the goals and targets in the 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 11 and Sustainable Development Goal 12. These goals address all forms of waste, including food loss and waste, natural resource extraction, and electronic waste.

During the International Day of Zero Waste, Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector, academia, youth, and other stakeholders are invited to engage in activities aimed at raising awareness of national, subnational, regional, and local zero-waste initiatives and their contribution in achieving sustainable development. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat jointly facilitate the observance of the International Day of Zero Waste.

CHAPTER

11

COP28



Cities contribute approximately three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions. The processes and technologies for an urban climate transition are available and yet the relative and absolute contribution to greenhouse gas emissions by cities has been rising steadily.

Urban centres are also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Key infrastructures are concentrated in cities and more than two-thirds of the one billion slum dwellers are impacted by climate change.

By 2050, about 2.5 billion more people will live in cities, marking 68 per cent of the world's population and further amplifying the need for urgent pathways towards sustainable, resilient, and climate neutral urban development.

UN-Habitat's mandate on strengthened climate action and improved urban environment (Domain of Change 3) has received strong endorsement by Member States at the second United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023. The resolution on climate change² requests UN-Habitat to further strengthen its work related to climate change at

the city and community level to support multilevel climate action and to continue the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change, first convened at COP27.

Against the backdrop of this strengthened mandate, UN-Habitat's engagement at COP28 was significant. Two personnel were seconded to the cities team of the COP28 Presidency in support of the Local Climate Action Summit and to coordinate the Multilevel Action, Urbanization, Built Environment / Transport Day including the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change.

UN-Habitat co-organized and co-chaired the first Local Climate Action Summit together with the COP28 Presidency and Bloomberg Philanthropies, attended by over 250 mayors and opened by the Secretary-General. The event highlighted the critical role of multilevel climate action. A notable outcome was the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) pledge, signed by 71 national governments by the end of COP28 (13 December 2023), committing to include multilevel action in COP28 outcomes and to collaborate with non-state actors for the 2025 revision of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

*Ministerial Meeting
on Urbanization and
Climate Change at
COP28*
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² <https://unhabitat.org/resolution-25-enhancing-the-interlinkage-between-urbanization-and-climate-change-resilience>

The Second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change was the curtain raiser of the Multilevel Action, Urbanization and Built Environment / Transport Day. The event was attended by over 1,000 participants. 48 ministers and vice-ministers, 7 mayors, as well as representatives of 11 international organizations, multilateral development banks, and community organizations spoke. A highlight was the dialogues between mayors and ministers from the same countries that jointly pledged stronger collaboration. A joint outcomes statement of the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change and the Local Climate Action Summit was issued.

UN-Habitat further facilitated multilevel dialogues as co-organizer of the Multilevel Action and Urbanization Pavilion with the Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) Constituency to the UNFCCC. Over 50 substantive events were held at the pavilion – in addition to daily briefings and networking events. This strong collaboration with the city networks (including ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, C40, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Global Covenant of Mayors) had received a strong boost by the Secretary-General at a closed-door meeting with the principals of UN-Habitat and the City Networks on the Cities, Regions and Built Environment Day at COP26 in Glasgow. Further to the above-mentioned flagship and pavilion events, UN-Habitat organized 45 additional events.



COP28 marked the formation of a strong coalition for multilevel climate action. All key outcome documents include strong references to cities, local governments, and multilevel action.

UN-Habitat has consolidated its role as a key partner for national and local governments in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. In the follow-up to COP28, key priority actions have been identified for accelerating established and emerging policy and technical advisory services:

- Support multilevel climate action at the national level by strengthening the urban content of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and supporting urban policy and planning frameworks (key UN partner: UNDP).
- Support local action with an emphasis on urban planning, climate resilient, and net-zero urban basic services, mobility, housing, and construction as well as nature-based solutions (key UN partner: UNEP).
- Access to climate finance (key UN partner: UN Capital Development Fund, multilateral development banks, and vertical funds).
- Climate Change Innovation (key UN partners: UNEP, UNDP, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity) and Science (strong engagement in support of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Cities).
- Integrated city-region planning with emphasis on evidence-based decision-making as well transparency and integrity when reporting emission reductions and resilience measures (key UN partners: World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Satellite Centre of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNEP, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and City Networks).

UN-Habitat is well-positioned to support national and local governments. Additional support by Member States for a strong mandate for implementing local climate solutions as well as funding from vertical funds, traditional donors, and philanthropies, are urgently needed to ensure that local action can play the necessary role in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Skyline in
Bangladesh, Dhaka
© UN-Habitat



UN-Habitat has consolidated its role as a key partner for national and local governments in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.



CHAPTER 12 | COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

UN-Habitat's objective is to promote a better quality of life for all in a rapidly urbanizing world. Cities and human settlements play a key role in preserving our planet for current and future generations.

From 2018 to 2023, UN-Habitat focused on advocacy and communications to change the narrative on cities and human settlements to present them not only as sources of problems but also as catalysts of change and drivers of opportunities. Through various communication tools, UN-Habitat has been positioned as a thought leader in sustainable urban development and planning.

Key publications and policy documents

- **World Cities Report 2020: The Value of Sustainable Urbanization**
- **World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities** – an outlook of urban development scenarios and policy recommendations
- **Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future** – policy recommendations to create resilience and prepare cities for future pandemics

- **Our City Plans: An Incremental and Participatory Toolbox for Urban Planning** – guidelines for participatory urban planning processes
- **SDG 11 Report: Rescuing SDG11 for a Resilient Urban Planet** – progress on achieving SDG 11 and where we stand with global targets
- **Global Urban Monitoring Framework and Urban Recovery Framework** – comprehensive tools to harmonize urban indices and a universal framework for measuring the performance of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Urban October

World Habitat Day, celebrated on the first Monday of October, and World Cities Day, on 31 October, turned into the Urban October campaign – 31 days to promote sustainable urbanization and human settlements. Celebrations start with World Habitat Day at the beginning of the month and finish with World Cities Day at the end of October.

Between 2018 and 2023, the global observances of World Habitat Day were held in: Nairobi, Kenya, in 2018; Mexico City, Mexico, in 2019; Surabaya, Indonesia, in 2020; Yaoundé, Cameroon, in 2021; Balıkesir, Türkiye, in 2022; and Baku, Azerbaijan, in 2023.



High-level meeting on Financing Sustainable Urban Development at the World Cities' Day in Istanbul, Türkiye on 31 October 2023 @ UN-Habitat



World Cities' Day Mayor's forum for road safety in Istanbul, Türkiye 30 October 2023 @ UN-Habitat

Between 2018 and 2023, the global observances of World Cities Day were held in: Liverpool, United Kingdom, in 2018; Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2019; Nakuru, Kenya, in 2020; Luxor, Egypt, in 2021; Shanghai, China, in 2022; and Üsküdar, Türkiye, in 2023.

- More than 1,000 people registered for World Cities Day 2023 events
- More than 500 in-person attendees were registered at the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2023
- More than 500 events on urban issues and housing were organized annually
- More than 300 cities engaged in Urban October events
- More than 5 million people were reached on social media during Urban October
- Nine First Ladies attended the World Cities Day 2023 celebrations in Türkiye under the auspices of the First Lady of Türkiye.
- More than 2,000 media clips were generated during Urban October



Global observance of the World Cities' Day in Istanbul, Türkiye on 31 October 2023 © UN-Habitat

World Urban Forum and National Urban Forums

The World Urban Forum (WUF) has turned into the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization and UN-Habitat's flagship event.

- WUF9 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, attracted more than 24,000 participants
- WUF10 in Abu Dhabi, UAE, attracted more than 13,000 participants
- WUF11 in Katowice, Poland, attracted more than 17,000 participants from 158 countries.
- More than 60 countries held their National Urban Forums
- 162 countries have National Urban Policies
- 40 countries submitted their New Urban Agenda implementation reports.

National Urban Forums were used as the main platform to align multiple stakeholders and develop a common vision for sustainable urban development that advances the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

World Urban Campaign

From 2018 to 2023, the World Urban Campaign (WUC) has been the central advocacy vehicle to promote urban solutions and engage partners towards the implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda. During this period, the World Urban Campaign achieved notable milestones, including a substantial increase in partnerships, the growing influence of Urban Thinkers Campuses, and heightened visibility worldwide.

In 2023, WUC revisited its approach to actively seek high impact and the participation of the private sector and philanthropies. Under the slogan "Improving 1,000 Cities and 1 Billion Lives by 2030":

- More than 185 new partners joined WUC over the past 7 years
- More than 300 partners are part of WUC today
- More than 200 Urban Thinkers Campuses were organized by partners
- More than 100 action events were held to advocate for sustainable urban development
- More than 35,000 people engaged in Urban Thinkers Campuses.



More than **500 events** on urban issues and housing were organized annually.



More than **300 cities** engaged in Urban October events.

Nine First Ladies attended the World Cities Day 2023 celebrations in Türkiye under the auspices of the First Lady of Türkiye.

Our website audience across key web platforms increased exponentially:

- 200 per cent growth in web traffic to unhabitat.org from 58,000 visits to 199,000 a month during the second United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023.
- 900 per cent growth in web traffic to the Urban October website from 900 visitors to almost 9,800 visitors in the run-up to Urban October.

Media coverage

On average, media coverage returned around 2,000 articles and online stories monthly, with an engagement of between 7,000 to 12,000 people. Media coverage of the Executive Director's activities and missions returned between 20 and 40 articles each month, with an overall reach and engagement of 1,200 to 6,000.

Over 100 interviews were done by the Executive Director during her tenure. A sample of interviews from 2022-2023 include:

- A documentary by CNBC on rising sea levels and floating cities
- A story by BBC World on sea level rises and floating cities
- A story by the Financial Times on the World Cities Report and urban sustainability
- Devex on the New Urban Agenda and urban planning
- A series of interviews by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation ahead of the second United Nations Assembly
- One-to-One programme by TRT World on cities and climate action

Website and social media

UN-Habitat's social media footprint has increased across various corporate channels on average by 50 per cent, growing from 400,000 followers to more than 600,000 followers since 2022.

- LinkedIn – from 100,000 followers to more than 200,000 followers
- Instagram – from 53,000 followers to more than 78,000 followers
- Executive Director's Twitter – grew from 18,000 to 24,400 followers organically.



**40 countries
submitted
their New
Urban Agenda
implementation
reports.**

- A series of interviews by CGTN America on the second United Nations Habitat Assembly and SDG 11 report
- Nikkei Japan on sustainable urban development at the G7 meeting in Japan.

In addition, over 20 articles and opinion pieces by the Executive Director were published. Some of them include:

- The Nation: Creating a better future for 8 billion people
- The Nation: How Africa can navigate urban climate paradox
- Devex: As cities lead on climate, national governments must pitch in
- Devex: Slums are the next front line in the fight against the coronavirus
- UN Chronicle: It's All about Cities: We Mustn't Flip the Coin on Sustainable Investment
- Reuters: It's time to rekindle the spirit of Stockholm 1972
- Reuters: How cities can build a healthier future for all

Under the leadership of the Executive Director, UN-Habitat started to work with Goodwill Ambassadors and champions of sustainable urban development.

- Her Royal Highness Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, a leading philanthropist and the Secretary-General of

Alwaleed Philanthropies, was appointed as UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Arab States in 2020.

- Blaise Matuidi, international footballer and 2018 FIFA World Cup winner, was appointed UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Africa in 2021. A video on the launch of the partnership with the Executive Director's and Matuidi's messages was developed and disseminated on social media, generating more than 10,000 "likes" online.

UN-Habitat has engaged with various leaders who serve as champions of sustainable urban development:

- First Lady of Türkiye Emine Erdogan, a champion of zero-waste initiatives and Patron of World Cities Day 2023
- Mayor of Banjul in Gambia Rohey Malick Lowe, a champion of gender inclusion and champion of women's participation in urban development
- President of the Union of Municipalities of Türkiye Yücel Yılmaz, champion of local urban development and zero-waste initiatives
- United Nations Special Envoy on Road Safety Jean Todt, champion of global awareness about road safety engaging with over 95 countries and 1,000 cities in implementing actions to save lives.

CHAPTER

13

WORLD URBAN FORUM

In its short history, the World Urban Forum (WUF) has become the premier global event for sustainable urban development. From its inception in 2002 with 1,200 participants in Nairobi to a groundbreaking hybrid session in Katowice in 2022 with over 17,000 attendees, WUF has evolved into a vital platform for discussions on urban challenges.

UN-Habitat emphasizes the irreplaceable value of sharing ideas and community insights for urban development. WUF brings together a diverse community dedicated to enhancing cities and fostering bold ideas, creative initiatives, and progressive policy and practice.

Co-organized by UN-Habitat and host cities, WUF attracts a wide array of participants, including national ministers, mayors, United Nations representatives, academia, civil society, grassroots groups, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, and philanthropic foundations. Recent sessions have drawn attendees from up to 164 countries, participating in around 450 events over 5 days.

Survey results from 617 attendees across 3 WUF sessions reflect WUF's impact:

- 97 per cent expressed a willingness to attend again
- 94 per cent found the event extremely relevant to their work
- 77 per cent considered WUF more effective than other urban-themed conferences.

WUF9: kick-starting the implementation of the New Urban Agenda

WUF9 in Kuala Lumpur 2018 was a pivotal event post-Habitat III, focusing on New Urban Agenda implementation. With the highest attendance yet, 24,331 accredited participants contributed to the global dialogue on sustainable urban development. The forum featured over 600 events, providing a platform for networking and substantive inputs for the New Urban Agenda's implementation report.

WUF10: A global achievement on the eve of a global pandemic

WUF10 in Abu Dhabi in 2020 showcased inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban models. With 13,333 attendees from 169 countries, it set a participation record. The programme featured 6 dialogues, 16 roundtables, 16 special sessions, 5 assemblies, and an Urban Expo covering 18,000 square metres. WUF10 marked a historic shift with the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and the launch of the Alumni Network.



WUF11: Historical benchmarks set for inclusivity, accessibility, and gender parity

WUF11 in Katowice in 2022 defied odds, exceeding expectations with 17,003 participants. The five-day programme featured over 450 knowledge exchanges, including a groundbreaking “extraordinary dialogue on Urban Crisis”. WUF11 achieved a fully accessible venue, overall gender parity, and a hybrid format with 36 per cent virtual attendees. The Katowice Declared Actions presented voluntary commitments for the next two years, including the Forum-Policy-Practice Initiative and the Local2030 Coalition.

WUF12: It all starts at home: Delivering local actions for people and planet

The twelfth session of WUF, set for 4 to 8 November 2024 in Cairo, Egypt, marks a return to Africa after more than 20 years. Themed “It all starts at home: Delivering local actions for people and planet,” WUF12 aspires to be a catalyst for radical change. With a focus on showcasing and sharing proven global solutions and strategies, WUF12 aims to contribute significantly to realizing a sustainable urban future.

WUF12 aligns with growing calls to revitalize the multilateral system, coinciding with the United Nations Summit of the Future. It emphasizes the urgency to achieve affordability, social and environmental justice, people’s empowerment, and equitable transformation, addressing potential obstacles in the pursuit of a socially just and sustainable world. WUF12 is a pivotal stage for showcasing success stories and principles that underpin their success, emphasizing the critical role cities play in humanity’s present and future.

The WUF Alumni Network

In 2020, based on the recommendation by the UN-Habitat Executive Director, the WUF Alumni Network was formed. The host cities and Member States that have hosted the World Urban

Forum came together in Abu Dhabi at WUF10 to commemorate the 10th session of WUF and shared how WUF brought new ideas in the development of urban policies and planning in their respective countries. Legacy projects in the cities that have hosted WUF were also highlighted.

The alumni network convened again in the run-up to the 11th session of the World Urban Forum in April 2022 in Katowice, Poland. The members agreed to form a support system for the incoming host of WUF, sharing experiences and technical knowledge to ensure WUF continues to improve with changing times. The alumni network also agreed to establish its own terms of reference, agreed to contribute to supporting UN-Habitat in their own countries, and to jointly advocate for sustainable urbanization and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at each succeeding WUF session. They also agreed to monitor the implementation of the WUF legacy projects in their respective countries.

In recognition of the efforts to implement the WUF legacy projects, the UN-Habitat Executive Director presented Special Citation awards to Abu Dhabi (Department of Municipalities and Transport) and Kuala Lumpur (Urbanise Malaysia and Think City) at the 2022 Global Observance of World Habitat Day in Balıkesir, Türkiye.

The WUF Legacy Fund

To ensure continuity and to meet the recommendations of the WUF evaluation, the UN-Habitat Executive Director established the WUF Legacy Fund with the support of WUF10 host Abu Dhabi. The fund is established with the host country and is based on the concept of “paying it forward”. At the end of WUF10, a legacy fund of USD 1.5 million was established. Based on the same concept, after WUF11, the legacy fund has grown to USD 3.5 million.

The purpose of the fund is to support the advocacy and promotion of sustainable urbanization and the New Urban Agenda during the year immediately after convening the World Urban Forum. This also coincides with UN-Habitat’s intergovernmental

meetings including the convening of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to review the achievement of the Strategic Plan (2021) and the United Nations Habitat Assembly (2023).

The WUF Legacy Fund also supports the continuity of the WUF coordination team and contributes much needed support for the implementation of the WUF declared actions. It also supports the convening of the WUF Alumni Network and supports some of its activities.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director, upon agreement by the donor-host country, proposes a selection of initiatives that is mutually agreed upon. In the case of the WUF10 legacy contribution, seed funding was provided to support the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. This contributed to UN-Habitat's voluntary local review portfolio as well as UN-Habitat's contribution to the Local2030 Coalition. The same fund also contributed towards the creation of the New Urban Agenda platform, which is also attracting co-investments from Member States.

Another Legacy Fund initiative was the City Investment Facility, which has developed into a robust initiative. A result of the convening of private sector stakeholders at WUF10 with the support of Abu Dhabi Global Markets, the City Investment Facility aims to match cities and public investments

with investment-ready plans. It also serves to build capacity at the local level to help mayors and city managers develop and manage investments.

In 2023, the WUF11 legacy contribution was directed to support the greater integration between National Urban Policy and the national and regional urban forums. Additionally, the legacy fund also contributed towards the collaboration between UN-Habitat and the Economist Impact Group, which is focused on urban data and analytics. WUF11 funds will also go to support regional-level mobilization, including the World Urban Campaign and the UN-Habitat "1,000 Cities, 1 Billion Lives" campaign.

The WUF Declared Actions and Actions Fulfilled (SDG moment)

At the 10th session of the World Urban Forum, the UN-Habitat Executive Director introduced the concept of declared actions, which initiated the 10 year countdown to the Sustainable Development Goals. At WUF11, stakeholders and partners also recognized that what was needed was not only action but activities that contribute to transformative change. At WUF12, it is hoped that the WUF declared actions will also contribute to the SDG moment, whereby all stakeholders of the New Urban Agenda, the Habitat Agenda, and Member States will come together to report on actions fulfilled to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

WUF 10 in Katowice, Poland © UN-Habitat



CHAPTER

14

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

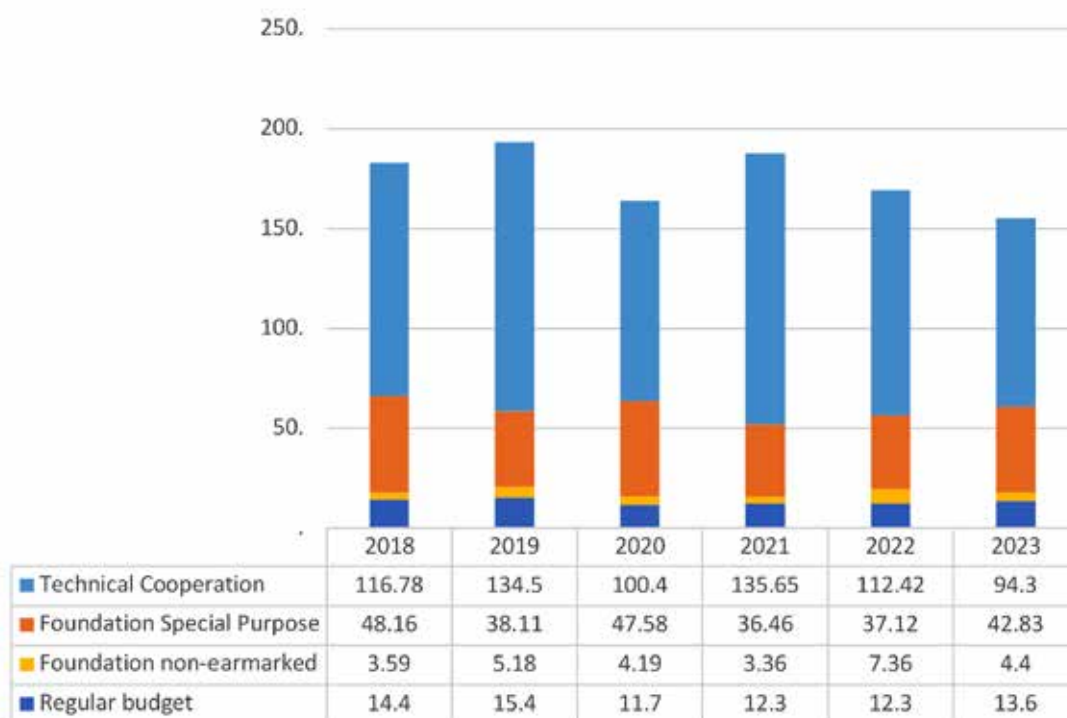
Overview

From 2018 to 2023³, UN-Habitat collected over USD 1 billion in cumulative funding across various funds. This includes USD 79.7 million from the regular budget and USD 972.5 million from extra-budgetary sources, including Foundation non-earmarked, Foundation special purpose, and Technical Cooperation funds.

Strategic Plan period
(2020-2023)

In 2019, the United Nations Habitat Assembly in its first session approved the UN-Habitat Resource Mobilization Strategy 2020-2023 to secure adequate, predictable, and flexible funding to implement the organization's strategic plan.

UN-Habitat acquisitions 2018-2023 (as of 15 December 2023, million USD)



During this phase, UN-Habitat collected just over USD 676 million, accounting for 79 per cent of the total budget approved across the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Regular budget remained relatively steady, ranging between USD 11.7 to 13.6 million annually. In 2023, a small increase occurred due to seven additional regular budget posts approved in 2022.

³ The figures in this section present the amounts indicated in the contribution agreements signed in the year 2023 up to 15 December 2023. The figures of 2023 are interim figures and are subject to potential adjustments once the year concludes and final reports are compiled in early 2024. Contributions may not have been received in full as many contribution agreements are made on a multi-year basis, and payments will be made in several disbursements. Therefore, there is a difference between the amount of acquisition and the amount of revenue.

The Foundation non-earmarked fund exhibited stability, reaching its apex at USD 7.3 million in 2022 and settling at USD 4.4 million in 2023. Going forward, efforts will be made to further strengthen this funding stream by institutionalizing non-earmarked contributions from some Member States, securing multi-year contribution agreements, and exploring innovative funding mechanisms such as the Sustainable Cities and Communities Foundation (former Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation).

The Foundation special purpose fund for normative activities showed consistency at around USD 40 million yearly, indicating sustained and strong demand for UN-Habitat's normative work and expertise in sustainable urban development.

The technical cooperation fund remains UN-Habitat's primary revenue source, despite a decrease from its peak of USD 135.7 million in 2021 to USD 94.3 million in 2023. This funding stream is heavily impacted by field demands, shaped by global and local contexts and the ever-evolving development priorities of countries and cities. The surge in 2021 resulted partly from delayed processes in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside increased demand in responding to the pandemic. Conversely, the decline in 2023 might indicate evolving development priorities in the field and challenges within the global economic landscape.

2023 contributions snapshot

In 2023 (as of 15 December), UN-Habitat acquired USD 155.1 million, surpassing the total budget approved in the Work Programme and Budget of UN-Habitat for the year 2023 by USD 2.2 million (one per cent). This surpasses the rate of previous years, signifying a balanced and healthier resource mobilization and financial management approach.

Core contributions

- Regular Budget: USD 13.6 million, exhibiting slight growth attributed to the approval of seven additional regular budget posts.
- Foundation non-earmarked fund: USD 4.4 million, exceeding the approved budget for the year 2023 (USD 3 million) by over 1.4 million.

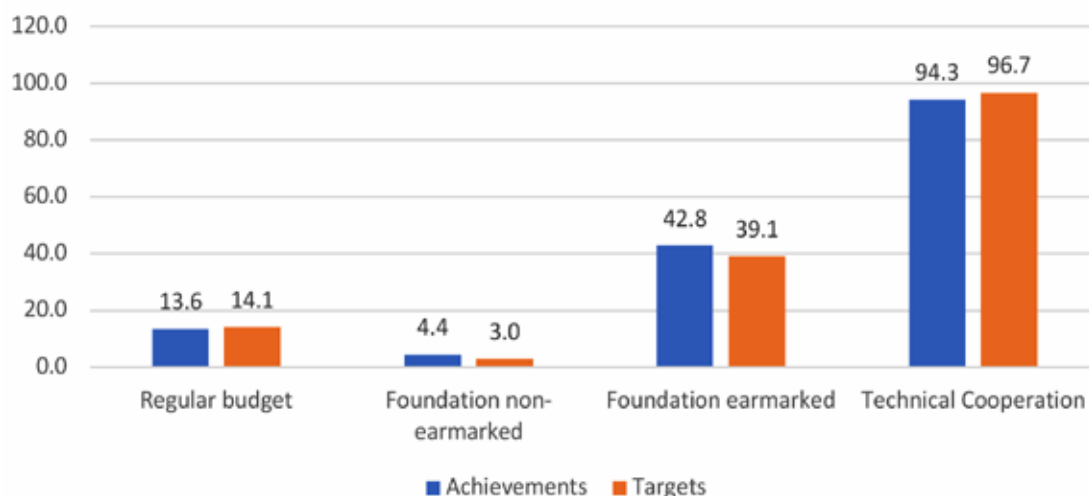
Together with the austerity measures on expenses and budget control, this marks the second consecutive year of a surplus in UN-Habitat's core fund, underscoring a healthier core funding base – a key organizational priority for resource mobilization.

Remarkably, UN-Habitat received non-earmarked contributions from 29 Member States this year, marking the highest count between 2020 and 2023. This signals a modest expansion of the donor base for core resources – a pivotal element of the resource mobilization strategy.



This marks the second consecutive year of a surplus in UN-Habitat's core fund, underscoring a healthier core funding base – a key organizational priority for resource mobilization.

UN-Habitat acquisition by fund type 2023 (as of 15 December, million USD)



Earmarked contributions

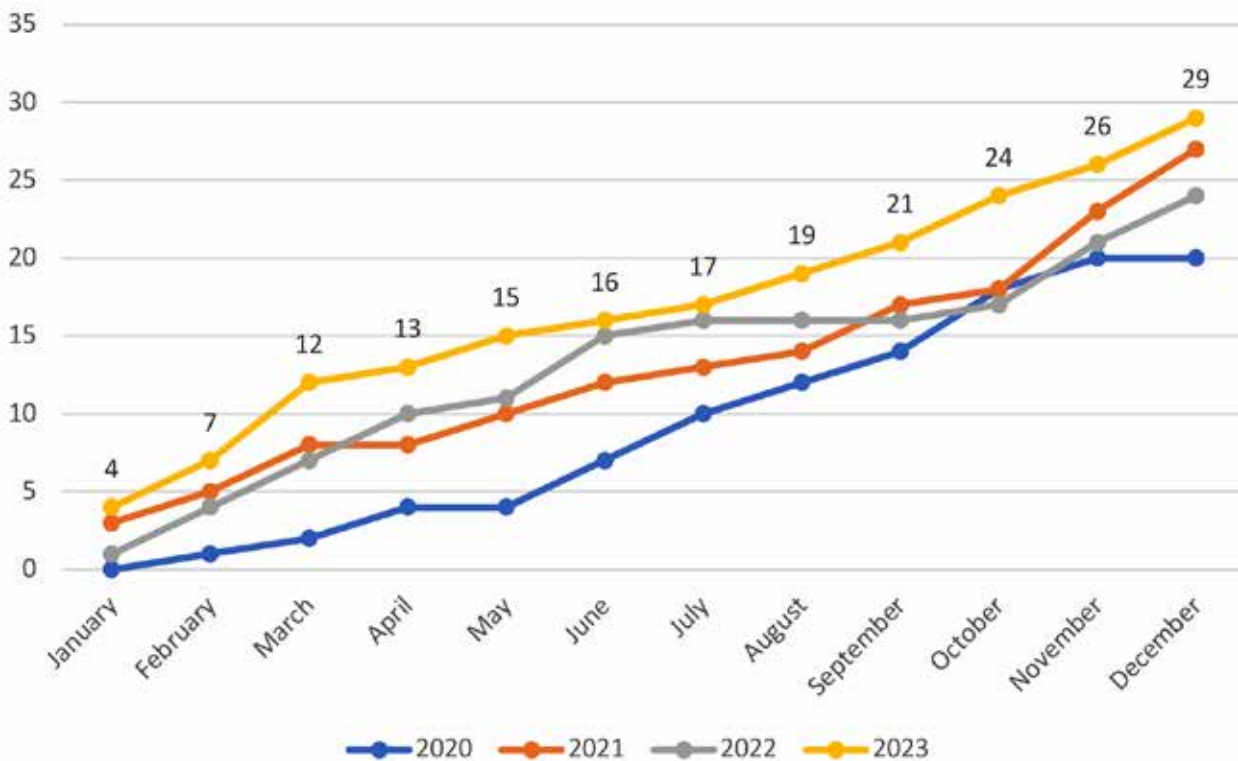
- Foundation earmarked fund: USD 42.8 million for normative activities, surpassing the yearly target by 10 per cent.
- Technical cooperation fund: USD 94.3 million, achieving 98 per cent of the yearly target for operational work at the regional and country levels.

Out of 64 donors, 37 (58 per cent) are non-Member States, encompassing 11 UN agencies and 26 other

entities, including intergovernmental organizations, local authorities, foundations, the corporate sector, and civil society groups, representing a diverse donor base.

In terms of geographical distribution, 50 per cent of the contributions originate from entities within the Western Europe and Other States group, followed by 31 per cent from global entities, including UN agencies. The Asia-Pacific group comes in third place, accounting for 15 per cent of earmarked contributions.

Number of Member States that have given core contributions



CHAPTER 15

FINANCE

At the end of 2022, UN-Habitat's non-earmarked Foundation fund earned a surplus for the first time in 12 years. Based on the principle of a budget as a spending plan and owing to renewed efforts by the Executive Director in resource mobilization, a surplus of USD 5.9 million was recorded as of 31 December 2022.

UN-Habitat entered 2023 by fully fulfilling the USD 3 million reserve set by the Executive Board and a positive net asset value of USD 1.9 million in the Foundation non-earmarked fund. UN-Habitat also paid the first instalment of USD 500,000 to repay the 2017 loan from the Project Support Fund.

Throughout 2022, resource mobilization efforts were doubled to diversify the pool of donor States. By 31 December, a record number of 29 Member States made contributions to the non-earmarked fund.

At the first 2023 Executive Board meeting in March, a budget ceiling of USD 4 million was instituted. A spending limit of USD 10 million was maintained on the Programme Support Cost (PSC) fund to ensure reserves could be built up.

UN-Habitat's earmarked funds remained relatively stable throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, averaging USD 150 million per year. However, in 2023, owing to the multi-crisis situation, a lot of funds were diverted away from development work. The technical cooperation fund received USD 94.3 million in 2023 (down from USD 137 million in 2021) whilst the Foundation special purpose fund for normative activities received around USD 40 million.

All seven posts that were converted from Foundation non-earmarked to regular budget were implemented. For 2024, there is room to negotiate

for a further expansion of the regular budget, especially for non-post costs.

As of 31 December 2023, UN-Habitat has kept expenses to USD 3 million and expenses on PSC to within the USD 10 million limit. At the same time, resource mobilization for the Foundation non-earmarked fund reached USD 4.2 million, which represents a surplus. This is the second surplus on the Foundation non-earmarked fund.

With a surplus of approximately USD 1.2 million, UN-Habitat is able to implement the scalability model that was approved by the Executive Board in November 2023. With consistent surpluses, it is envisioned that the implementation of the scalability model will take effect in 2025.

The Executive Board also approved the innovative funding mechanism called the Sustainable Human Settlements Foundation (SHSF). Following the guidance from the Executive Board, SHSF has since been renamed Sustainable Cities and Communities Foundation (SCCF). If successful, it is expected to top up the Foundation non-earmarked fund by an additional USD 5 million per annum. This additional fund will fund the work programme and budget approved by the Executive Board, who shall exercise oversight.

UN-Habitat will continue to adhere to this confident but conservative approach whereby budgets are regarded as spending plans. This policy continues to attract donors as well as institutional investors. It is also important to maintain the PSC spending limit within USD 10 million considering global trends and a possible decrease in programme support resulting from a reduction in technical cooperation earmarked funds.

CHAPTER 16 | ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2023, UN-Habitat continued to prioritize oversight functions encompassing evaluation and audits as an integral part of UN-Habitat's work. UN-Habitat witnessed efforts taken to embed audit and evaluative evidence within its management and accountability frameworks. As a follow-up to concerns from the Business Transformation and Accountability Division (BTAD) regarding low acceptance and implementation rates of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the Board of Auditors (BoA), and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommendations, in January 2023, during the Programme Management Committee (PMC) meeting, the UN-Habitat Executive Director requested preparation of a road map to ensure implementation of the JIU recommendations, specifically those addressed to the UN-Habitat Executive Director. UN-Habitat also requested that updates on the implementation of the JIU and OIOS's recommendations be standing agenda items for subsequent Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings, which take place every two weeks.

JIU review recommendations

Over 2020-2023, UN-Habitat was tracking a total of 102 JIU recommendations from 16 JIU review reports, including three reviews published in 2023:

- Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in the UN System
- Review of accountability frameworks in UN system organizations
- Review of the internal pre-tribunal stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of UN system organizations.

As of 30 October 2023, 45 per cent of the recommendations have been successfully implemented, 30 per cent are currently in progress, and 25 per cent have yet to commence. The sub-optimal implementation rates of JIU's recommendations present a systemic challenge, particularly for JIU-affiliated organizations within the United Nations Secretariat, such as UN-Habitat, UNEP, ITC, UNCTAD, and UNODC. UN-Habitat is grateful to BTAD for its unwavering support, ensuring the timely implementation of recommendations derived from JIU reviews, BOA audits, OIOS evaluations, and audits. This collaboration serves to fortify the efficiency and effectiveness of UN-Habitat, aligning with the broader goal of organizational enhancement.

OIOS and BOA recommendations

Priority has been given to the implementation of BoA and OIOS audit recommendations. Concerted and consistent efforts were made to implement and close audit recommendations. At least 60 per cent of BoA and OIOS recommendations have been implemented and closed. A biannual report on implementation is prepared and shared with the office of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

Monitoring of BoA and OIOS audit recommendations remains a continuous priority for UN-Habitat, with divisional and regional directors being accountable for the implementation of audit recommendations within their respective offices. As mentioned above, the status of the implementation of audit recommendation is a standing agenda item of the Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings.

OIOS is currently conducting the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The inception phase was completed, and the evaluation is now in its data collection phase. Evaluation findings from the 2021-2022 OIOS biennial study on strengthening the role of evaluation and application of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery, and policy directives found 13 out of 14 review evaluation reports from UN-Habitat to be of high quality. These were selected as good examples to be shared with other United Nations organizations via the OIOS-administered Evaluation Knowledge Management Platform that hosts evaluation reports conducted by all Secretariat entities.

UN-Habitat evaluation recommendations

An evaluation management response mechanism is in place and has been institutionalized to enhance corporate accountability for tracking implementation of evaluations recommendations resulting from evaluations commissioned by UN-Habitat. In 2023, the Independent Evaluation Unit of UN-Habitat was tracking 193 recommendations from evaluations conducted from 2020 to 2023. By 30 October 2023, out of 193 evaluations, 48 per cent were implemented, 32 per cent are in progress, and 20 per cent had not yet been initiated. Details of evaluations undertaken by UN-Habitat are available on the UN-Habitat evaluation website: www.unhabitat.org/evaluation.

The Independent Evaluation Unit is currently updating the UN-Habitat Evaluation Policy referencing the requirements of the new Administrative Instruction of the Evaluation in the UN Secretariat (ST/AI/2021/3).

Top achievements in the last six months

In carrying out its mandate to enhance the accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of UN-Habitat, along with ensuring compliance with oversight body recommendations, the UN-Habitat Executive Board was actively engaged in monitoring evaluations and the subsequent implementation of their recommendations. Notably, Executive Board meetings now incorporate a standing agenda item dedicated to reporting on the execution of JIU recommendations during the second or third session of the Executive Board's annual meetings. This directive from the Executive Board has significantly enhanced the implementation of JIU recommendations, underscoring the Executive Board's commitment to fostering organizational excellence.

The technical support provided by the BTAD will further enhance the evaluation culture at UN-Habitat.

Priorities

UN-Habitat, just like other United Nations agencies, is faced with the challenge of matching expectations of the role of evaluation with sufficient financial and human resources. This is a fundamental challenge that hinders strengthening of the evaluation function.

The adopted system-wide Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) is a good system for planning and monitoring projects. However, the system lacks a module for planning and following up on evaluations. There is a need to prioritize how the system could be improved with the evaluation module.

UN-Habitat also needs to improve communicating on evaluations and their role in the overall programming, implementation, and reporting of UN-Habitat's work and its achievements.

CHAPTER

17

STRATEGIC PLAN AND IMPACT

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for 2020-2023, approved by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2019 and extended until 2025 by the second United Nations Habitat Assembly in June 2023, has repositioned UN-Habitat as a major global entity and a centre of excellence and innovation. The Strategic Plan has allowed the organization to refocus on its niche position as the thought leader and go-to Programme for issues pertaining to sustainable urbanization and human settlements, setting the global discourse and agenda on sustainable urban development, driving policy discussion, generating specialized and cutting-edge knowledge, shaping technical norms, principles and standards, and acting as a multiplier in the exchange of knowledge, experience, and best practice in getting cities and other human settlements right.

The basis for the Strategic Plan was a new vision of “a better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world” which was encapsulated in four domains of change:

The following outlines the results of UN Habitat's work implemented from 2020 to 2023.⁴ The data collected here is a compilation from the results reported in:

- Selected Strategic Plan Results Framework indicators
- Monitoring of work programmes 2020-2023
- Annual reports from 2020 to 2022
- ECOSOC reporting from 2020 to 2022.

Summary

The implementation of the Strategic Plan over the past three years has proven the Strategic Plan to be a robust framework, including for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and a roadmap to use for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver on other global agendas (Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, Global Compact for Migration, Global Compact on Refugees, among others).

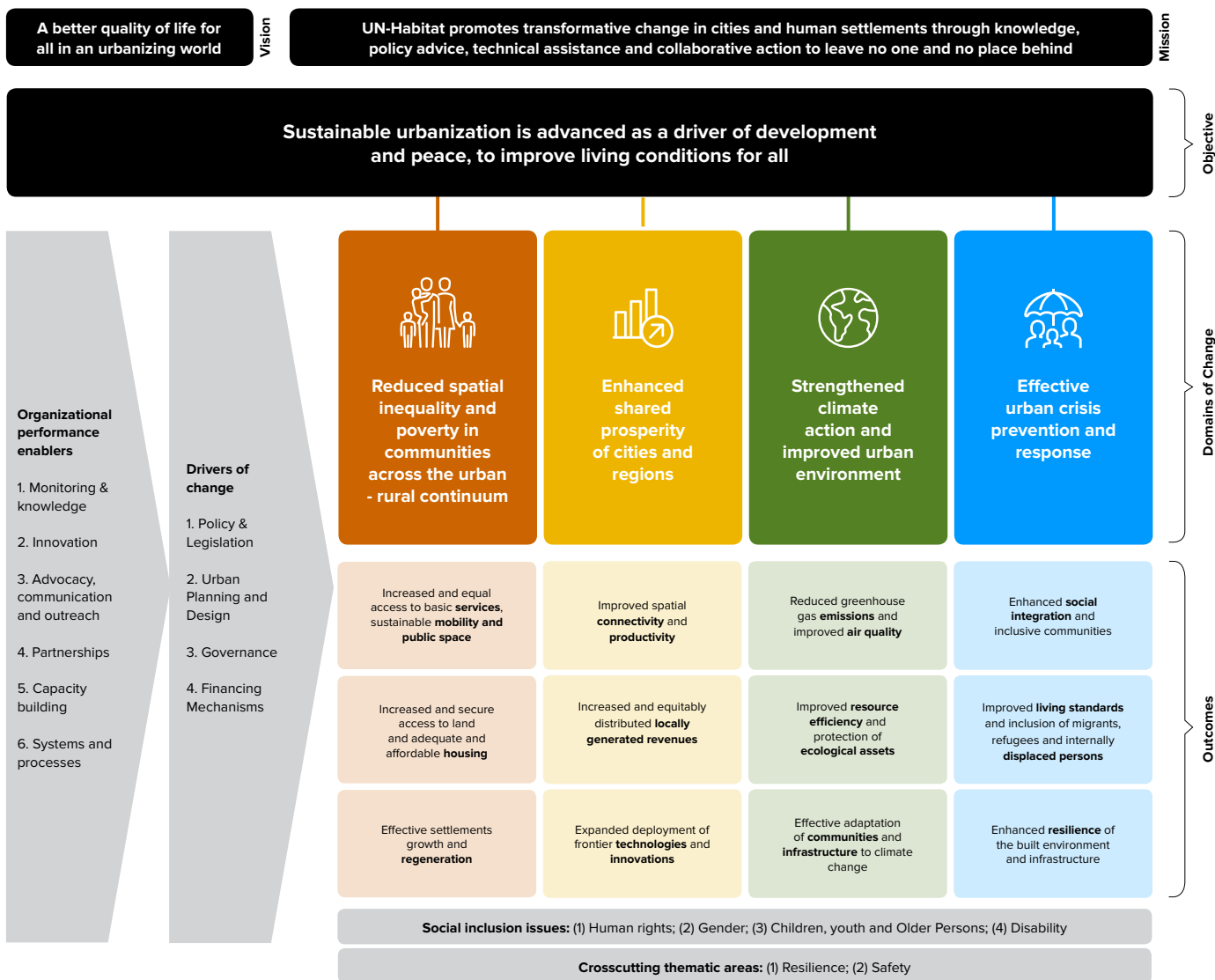
The current Strategic Plan has been a milestone shifting UN-Habitat's focus towards outcomes of global relevance and impact. It has allowed UN-Habitat to identify its value added much better amongst a wide variety of stakeholders and build much more strategic partnerships.

Remarkable impact has been achieved, even though the implementation period of the Strategic Plan was significantly marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions, among them, the dramatic increase of inequality and poverty in countries around the world.

Over the past three years, 3.4 million people gained access to urban basic services in informal settlements. We have supported 56 countries in different phases of their national urban policies. We have gathered 47 Member States for an urban

⁴ Note on methodology: UN-Habitat is expected to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan systematically in order to optimally manage the achievement of results. Monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan should be based on the Strategic Plan Results Framework containing 122 indicators (48 core). The Strategic Plan is implemented through annual work programmes (2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023), whereas the annual work programme is implemented through subprogrammes and projects. The work programme results and deliverables are monitored through the Strategic Management Application (SMA) and the projects through the Integrated Planning, Monitoring and Reporting system (IPMR). Since it has not been possible to monitor the Strategic Plan directly using either SMA and IPMR (there is no direct link to the Results Framework indicators), 20 core indicators from the Results Framework have been selected and prioritized. This data will be used to reflect UN-Habitat's impact during this strategic planning period and can support claims of transformative change as an effect of UN-Habitat's interventions.

UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2025



meeting during COP27. We have facilitated access by 2.32 million people to 137 safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces in 90 cities. We have supported 30 local governments to adopt people-centred smart city strategies and benefit from innovations addressing the digital divide. Through the Waste Wise Cities programme, 68 cities have improved their municipal solid waste management. Over 89 community centres in 6 countries have facilitated participatory and co-creation processes towards enhanced integration of refugees and migrants, and vulnerable host communities at neighbourhood level.

In addition, the outcome-oriented nature of the Strategic Plan has strengthened the integration of our normative and operational work, has made our programming more focused on impact, and allowed for more integrated solutions, delivering impact against outcomes across different Domains of Change. 40 per cent of the programmes and projects delivered results against all four Domains of Change. It also made it possible to ensure that all programmes and projects contribute to climate and urban environment outcomes, even if their focus was on sustainable mobility or planned city growth. This was facilitated by the new organizational structure put in place in 2020. It broke down several thematic silos and has strengthened integrated programming.

New Policy Priority Areas

- 1 **Adequate Housing** The right to adequate housing can support the reduction of poverty, exclusion, and inequality, and strengthen inclusive, planned, and sustainable urbanization.
- 2 **Climate Action** Urban and local climate and biodiversity action with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, multi-level governance and urban planning
- 3 **Urban Crises Recovery** Recognizing cities, local governments, and urban stakeholders as key protagonists to overcome crises and sustain peace can induce transformative shifts in recovery and more sustainable development.

Drivers

Localization

SDG localization through multi-level, participatory and inclusive decision-making processes

Finance

strengthening local government capacity to generate revenues from endogenous resources, integrating urban planning in national economic development, and facilitating private investment

The Domains of Change were mirrored in the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development approved by the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations. This greatly facilitated a broader mobilization of the UN system in support of sustainable urbanization and created much stronger strategic partnerships between UN-Habitat and other UN entities.

Across the domains of change, the current Strategic Plan has allowed for a much better positioning of UN-Habitat within the broader landscape of actors, based on a better understanding of our value added and comparative advantage.

UN-Habitat also increased its focus after the internal midterm review in 2021 and release of the Secretary-General's **Our Common Agenda** on three policy priority areas and two drivers for sustainable urban development. These are anchored in the 4 domains of change of the Strategic Plan and are allowing the Programme to focus its activities to achieve greater impact in priority areas, creating better integrated solutions, while creating co-benefits across the 12 outcome areas of the Strategic Plan

Dhaka, Bangladesh
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Impact per Domain of Change of the Strategic Plan

Domain of Change 1: Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum

Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility, and public space

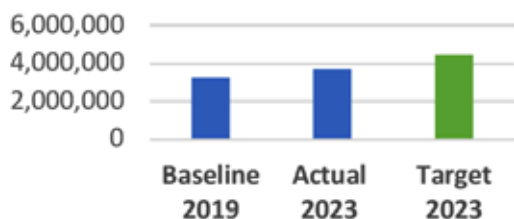
Urban Basic Services

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Total population with access to basic services in partner cities

Baseline 2019: 3.25 million

Actual 2023 (Q2): 3.7 million people in slums and informal settlements in 45 countries with access to basic services (cumulative)

Target 2023: 4.45 million



30 more water and sanitation operators, serving more than 61 million end users, are building capacity for improved services thanks to water operators partnerships.⁵ These cost-effective, solidarity-based peer partnerships are strengthening the capacity of these utilities to sustainably improve their performance, access and manage finance for infrastructure, and deliver on the human rights to water and sanitation.⁶

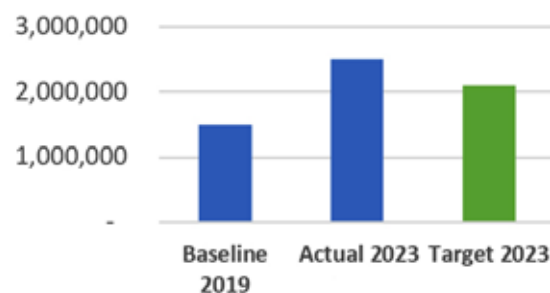
Public space

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Total population in partner cities with access to open public space

Baseline 2019: 1.5 million

Actual 2023: 2.5 million have been given access to 137 safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces in 90 cities, designed and upgraded through UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme

Target 2023: 2.1 million



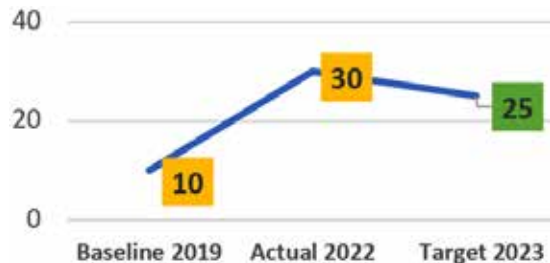
Mobility

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Number of partner cities implementing policies that promote sustainable urban mobility

Baseline 2019: 10

Actual 2022: 30 cities were supported to improve their urban mobility systems by providing technical assistance on public transport planning, street design, and non-motorized transport, electrification, or digitalization of transport, out of which 10 cities were supported with the implementation of pilot projects impacting on 212,589.⁷

Target 2023: 25



5 61 million beneficiaries estimated to have access to basic services.

6 30 local sanitation operators providing more inclusive sanitation services through water operator partnerships.

7 In 2021, UN-Habitat supported more than 20 cities in their efforts to improve their urban mobility systems by providing technical assistance on public transport planning, street design, and non-motorized transport, electrification, or digitalization of transport.

Increased and secure access to land and adequate and affordable housing

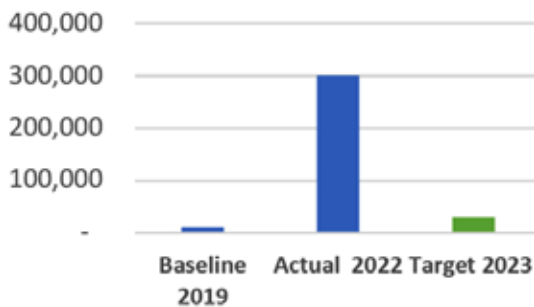
Land

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of households with secure tenure rights to land with officially recognized documentation in partner cities

Baseline 2019: 12, 043

Actual 2022: Over 300,000 households in 6 countries supported by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) programme have had their socio-economic and spatial data collected, recorded, and made available to authorities/decision-makers. Data gathering exercises have been demand-driven and were conducted by the communities themselves, thereby strengthening their participation and influence within land administration and management processes.⁸

Target 2023: 30,000



53 institutions in the land sector had institutionalized inclusive, fit-for-purpose, and gender responsive land tools and approaches in the implementation of their land policies, programmes, and practices.

Housing

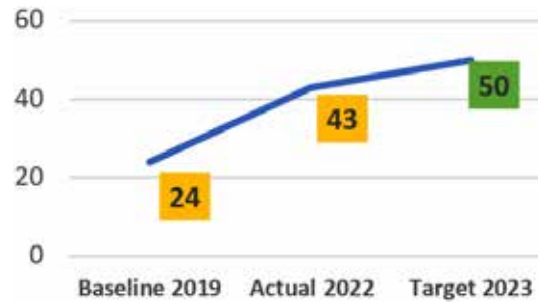
Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner cities implementing innovative financing partnerships for slum upgrading and low-cost housing

Baseline 2019: 24

Actual 2022: 43 countries formulated and implemented improved housing policies based on technical advice from UN-Habitat.

Target 2023: 50

Slum upgrading implementation and strategic policy interventions were supported in 190 cities in 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean,



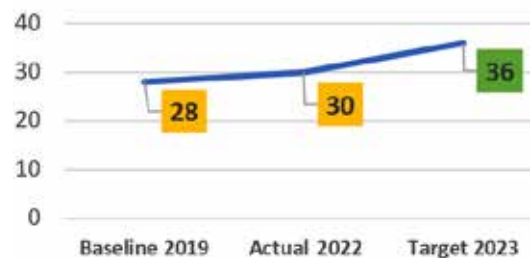
and the Pacific. Five million slum dwellers benefited from UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme with over 800,000 benefiting from improved tenure security (2008–2021).

Strategic Plan Results Framework Indicator:
Number of partner countries implementing frameworks or programmes preventing unlawful forced eviction

Baseline 2019: 28

Actual 2023: 30 countries prevented forced evictions through support from UN-Habitat in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁹

Target 2023: 36



Urban Planning

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of people in partner cities living in areas that have a statutory plan¹⁰

Baseline 2019: 99.4 million

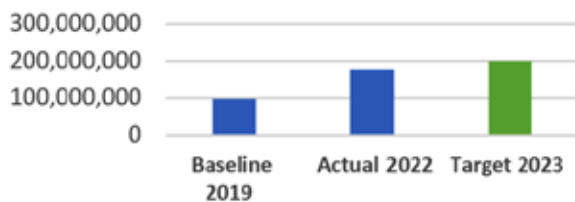
Actual 2022: 175 million

Target 2023: 200 million

⁸ 102,000 households (459,200 people) in 17 countries benefited from improved tenure security and 33 cities implemented urban and territorial renewal and regeneration initiatives.

⁹ Not among the 20 prioritized core indicators of the Strategic Plan Results Framework.

¹⁰ Not among the 20 prioritized core indicators of the Strategic Plan Results Framework.



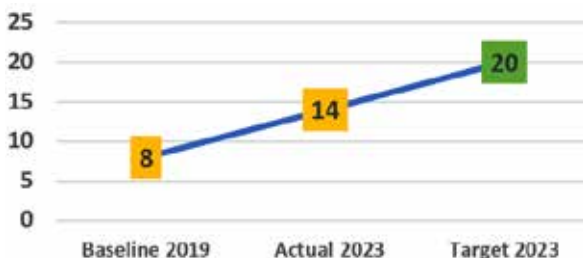
Effective settlement growth and regeneration

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
 Number of partner cities that have implemented inclusive urban regeneration initiatives in line with UN Habitat regeneration guidelines

Baseline 2019: 8

Actual 2023 (Q2): 14 additional partner cities are now implementing urban and territorial renewal and regeneration initiatives that preserve and protect both natural heritage and tangible and intangible cultural heritage

Target 2023: 20



Domain of Change 2: Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions

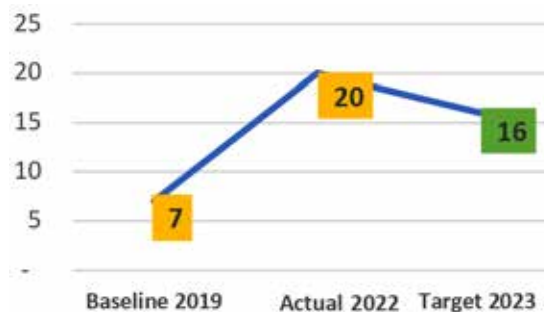
Improved spatial connectivity and productivity of cities and regions

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
 Number of partner countries with a national urban policy or regional development plans that align with the UN-Habitat guidelines.¹¹

Baseline 2019: 7

Actual 2022: 20 countries have been supported in the development of their National Urban Policies. These policies have enhanced the participation of stakeholders in urban issues, helped define a shared national urban vision, and integrated and coordinated cross-sectoral policies and mechanisms among and across different levels of governments

Target 2023: 16



750 cities have utilized the capacity of the City Prosperity Initiative (CPI) to guide decision-making by establishing linkages between data, knowledge, and policy actions.

564 cities are already interacting with and are on course of fully implementing the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF) or SDG Cities.

29 local and regional governments have received technical support in the development of their Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). Voluntary Local Reviews enable the achievement of enhanced inclusive economic development by guiding the local and regional governments on the localization of the SDGs.

Increased and equitably distributed locally generated revenues

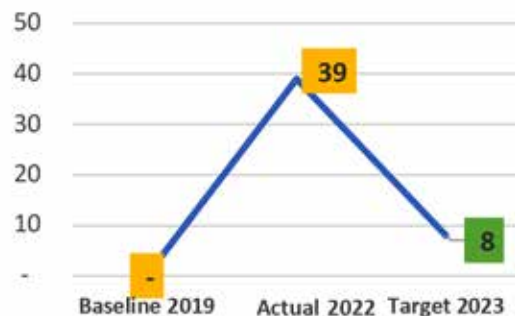
Locally generated revenues

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
 Number of partner subnational authorities with increased local per capita revenue generation

Baseline 2019: 0

Actual 2022: More than 39 partner cities implemented strategies for improved urban and municipal finance.

Target 2023: 8



¹¹ Formerly 2.1b in the Strategic Plan Results Framework.

USD 49 million was generated in cities in the self-declared autonomous region of Somaliland and in Somali cities. The revenue enabled improved delivery of basic urban services through increased budgetary allocation to infrastructure development.

The City Investment Facility secured six new implementing partners and established a feasibility fund. Together with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the facility secured a EUR 150 million loan to boost local financing for sustainable urban development.

Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations for urban development

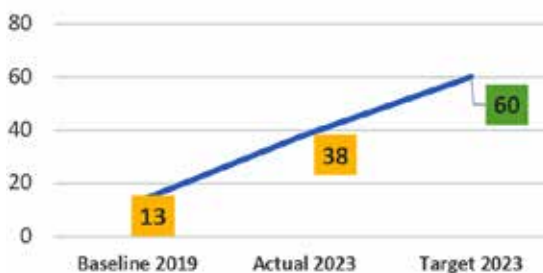
Frontier technologies

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner national and local authorities that have adopted policies and strategies to make use of frontier technologies and urban innovations to improve social inclusion, urban environment, resilience, and quality of life

Baseline 2019: 13

Actual 2023: The development and adoption of people-centred frontier technologies and innovations is key to ensuring equitable and sustainable urban futures. 38 local governments adopted people-centred smart city strategies and benefited from innovations addressing the digital divide.

Target 2023: 60



Domain of Change 3: Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality

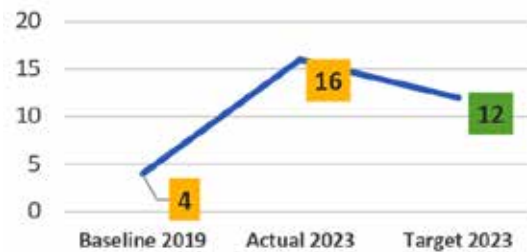
Air quality

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner national and subnational authorities that have developed and are implementing clean air action plans¹²

Baseline 2019: 4

Actual 2023: 16 cities improved city climate action planning, including enacting legal frameworks for low-emission development strategies through greenhouse gas inventories and climate risk and vulnerability assessments

Target 2023: 12



Improved resource efficiency and protection of ecological assets

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner cities with increased proportion of municipal solid waste received by recovery facilities out of the total municipal solid waste generated

Baseline 2019: 14

Actual 2022: 18

Target 2023: 20

With 303 member cities of the Waste Wise Cities programme and 170 member cities from 42 countries of the African Clean Cities Platform, UN-Habitat is reaching out to 1.2 billion people

¹² Not among the 20 prioritized core indicators of the Strategic Plan Results Framework.



to take action and join forces for a waste-free environment.¹³

The African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP) serves as a platform for knowledge exchange and international cooperation for improved solid waste management in Africa. By 2022, 170 cities and 42 countries had become members of ACCP.

Effective adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change

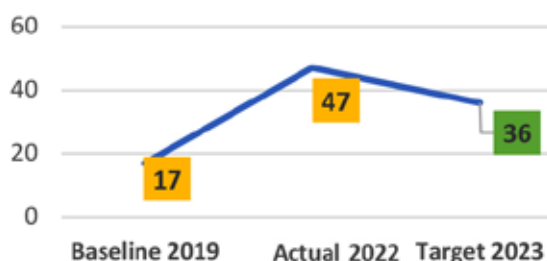
Adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner countries with stronger urban content in national and global climate action frameworks and instruments (in particular in National Determined Contributions (NDCs))

Baseline 2019: 17

Actual 2022: 47 national governments play a pivotal role in accelerating subnational climate action and in providing an enabling environment for urban and local stakeholders to develop and implement new climate commitments.

Target 2023: 36



12,277 beneficiaries have benefited from climate change adaptation actions identified through a master planning process.

UN-Habitat contributed to local authorities responding to specific risks and vulnerabilities such as drought, flooding, and increased urban-rural migration, with 21 distinct resilience action frameworks developed in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor (RISE-UP) programme leverages large-scale investment to build urban adaptation and climate resilience in the global hotspots of vulnerability. The core team provided technical backstopping to regional and country offices. Together, they managed to secure funding for three Adaptation Fund projects worth USD 32 million.

The Adaptation Fund portfolio has grown to over USD 90 million by the end of 2022 supporting climate resilient communities and infrastructure in 16 countries.¹⁴ A hard pipeline of almost USD 60 million would support 10 Member States (6 of which would receive such funding for the first time).

One of the greatest challenges for climate change adaptation is how to build resilience for the more than 3 billion people highly vulnerable to climate change and over 1 billion informal settlements dwellers. 20 cities were supported in the development of nature-based solutions to build climate change resilience, restore, and protect biodiversity, and contribute to sustainable livelihoods and food security. Actions include mangrove forests rehabilitation measures, slope-stabilization, riverbank rehabilitation, and urban flood protection through natural infiltration.

31 cities have so far been supported in implementing climate resilience-building infrastructure projects ranging from flood protection, flood- and drought-resilient water and sanitation systems, safe access roads and evacuation centres, and resilient livelihood support and nature-based solutions.

¹³ The Waste Wise Cities Tool (WaCT) was officially launched in February 2021 and is applied in over 30 cities worldwide by UN-Habitat and partners. WaCT enables cities to collect baseline solid waste data to close data gaps, make evidence-based decisions and action planning, and monitor progress against SDG indicator 11.6.1.

¹⁴ (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Mongolia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Union of Comoros, Pakistan, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka)

Two-thirds of Nationally Determined Contributions now include urban commitments. UN-Habitat provided policy analysis of NDCs globally as well as policy advisory services to 15 countries.

National governments play a pivotal role in accelerating subnational climate action and in providing an enabling environment for urban and local stakeholders to develop and implement new climate commitments. 47 national governments committed to multilevel and cross-sectoral climate action under the COP27 Presidency's Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) Initiative, coordinated by UN-Habitat and facilitated by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability.

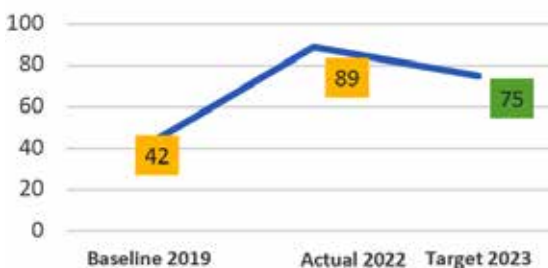
Domain of Change 4: Effective urban crisis prevention and response

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of host communities where migrants, refugees, IDPs and returnees communities are actively engaged in cultural, social, and economic activities in partner cities

Baseline 2019: 42

Actual 2022: 89. In recent years, 5.98 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela have been seeking shelter in cities across Latin America and the Caribbean. Despite the strong commitment of national and local governments to assist these populations in reducing their vulnerabilities and addressing their immediate needs, challenges persist in supporting their integration. 89 community centres in 6 countries facilitated participatory and co-creation processes towards enhanced integration of refugees and migrants and vulnerable host communities at neighbourhood level.

Target 2023: 75



Enhanced social integration and inclusive communities:

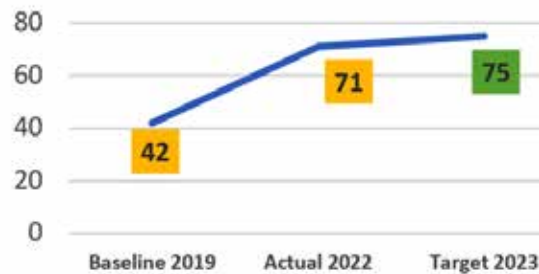
Inclusive communities

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner cities that integrate the concerns of migrants, refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities into their urban planning and management processes

Baseline 2019: 42

Actual 2022: 71 projects with a focus on mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in 262 beneficiary cities in 37 countries, reaching 6.8 million individual beneficiaries

Target 2023: 75



In Zambia, UN-Habitat supported the local integration of around 23,000 former refugees from Angola, Rwanda, and Zambia in two resettlement schemes.

In Afghanistan, UN-Habitat helped more than 18,000 internally displaced persons and returnee households get better tenure security by registering land. Around a quarter of the households were female-headed. For many, this formal land right recognition was a first.

UN-Habitat's immediate response plan to COVID-19 covering 75 projects in 37 countries with USD 32 million raised was rolled out.

640,000 people in the Syria benefited from better living conditions through the implementation of 50 neighbourhoods action plans for the rehabilitation of water, sanitation, and waste management services by municipal authorities and local communities.

The Her City platform provided a digital toolbox to create more inclusive, equal, and sustainable cities and promote the participation of girls and young women in urban planning using innovative digital technologies in 17 cities.

Over 1 million people have directly benefited from 34 COVID-19 projects in 11 countries.

Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons

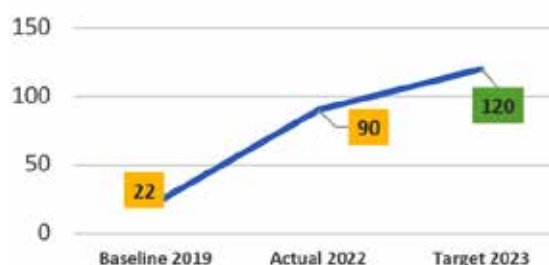
Inclusion of migrants, refugees, IDPs, and returnees

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner countries that are implementing national urban frameworks (policies, laws, spatial development plans) that adopt inclusive urban governance and planning approaches

Baseline 2019: 22

Actual 2022: 90

Target 2023: 120



Participatory planning methodologies and spatial data contribute to increased quality and ownership of local plans and fostering of sustainable urban development. Participatory planning has also enhanced the cohesion between displaced and host communities. 140 cities were supported in applying participatory planning methodologies in 2022.

31 cities were supported in improving access to adequate and affordable housing by migrants through technical assessments and the development of urban strategies on the local governance of migration.

UN-Habitat helped register households of IDPs in Baidoa, Somalia, to improve the provision of social services, extend a new road linking the city to an IDP resettlement site, and support the urban regeneration of an IDP site. Over 55,000 households of displaced communities in 483 sites around the former agricultural centre of Baidoa were registered in 2020.

In Yemen, housing, job opportunities, and vocational training are being provided to over 4,000 people as 600 houses for low-income families are being rehabilitated – helping with social cohesion and economic recovery.

Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure

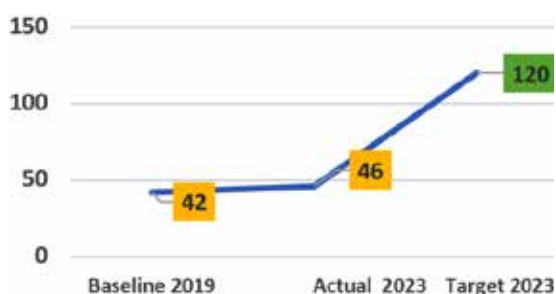
Resilience of the built environment and infrastructure

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator:
Number of partner cities implementing local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Baseline 2019: 42

Actual 2023 (Q2): 46 cities and communities implemented the City Resilience Global Programme and are now better prepared to confront challenges, shocks, and stresses.¹⁵

Target 2023: 120



¹⁵ 11 cities around the world and 33 municipalities in Catalonia, Spain, implemented the City Resilience Global Programme and are now better prepared to confront challenges, shocks and stresses.

After the devastating explosion of the Beirut port in Lebanon, UN-Habitat helped conduct rapid assessments of damage to more than 14,000 buildings to establish an overview of the level of infrastructural repair and safety precautions needed in the Beirut and Bourj Hammoud municipalities.

Resilience action frameworks enable local authorities to respond to specific risks and vulnerabilities such as drought, flooding, and increased urban-rural migration. Five cities in sub-Saharan Africa were supported in developing their Resilience Frameworks for Action using participatory approaches, indirectly benefiting 51,595 people.

In Cambodia, UN-Habitat and the Government of Japan helped people affected by natural disasters through a recovery and resilience-building project that supported the reconstruction and rehabilitation of homes and engaging communities in disaster risk reduction activities, benefiting close to 10,000 people.

The rehabilitation of two neighbourhoods is ongoing in Syria and improved access to basic services is also ongoing in the two cities of Arbin and Nashabeyieh.

Impact per cross-cutting area

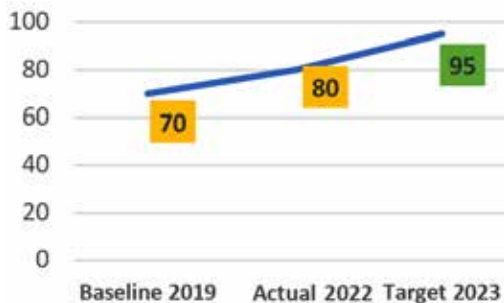
Safety

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Number of partner local authorities that are implementing sustainable and inclusive local safety strategies and approaches

Baseline 2019: 70

Actual 2022: 80 cities globally have been reached through the Global Network on Safer Cities

Target 2023: 95



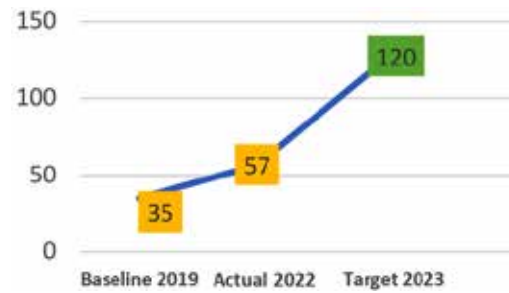
Youth:

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Number of partner cities that are implementing initiatives aimed at child- and youth-friendly cities and spaces

Baseline 2019: 35

Actual 2022: 57

Target 2023: 120



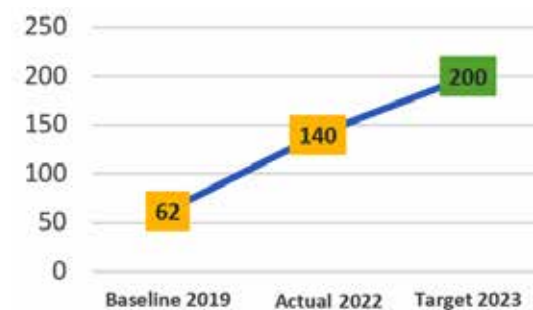
Human rights

Strategic Plan Results Framework indicator: Number of partner cities implementing participatory approaches that ensure the meaningful engagement of all segments of the population in urban management processes

Baseline 2019: 62

Actual 2022: 140 cities were supported in applying participatory planning methodologies in 2022. Participatory planning methodologies and spatial data contribute to increased quality and ownership of local plans and fostering of sustainable urban development. Participatory planning has also enhanced the cohesion between displaced and host communities.

Target 2023: 200



Cityscape on the mountains over Mediterranean sea, Cinque Terre, Italian ©Shutterstock



The Domains of Change were mirrored in the UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development approved by the Chief Executives Board of the United Nations. This greatly facilitated a broader mobilization of the UN system in support of sustainable urbanization and created much stronger strategic partnerships between UN-Habitat and other UN entities.

CHAPTER

18

UN-HABITAT IN NUMBERS

Resources raised (2018-2023)

USD 1 billion
raised in cumulative funding
across various funds

USD 79.7 million
raised from regular budget and
Foundation non-earmarked

USD 972.5 million
raised from extra-budgetary resources

Strategic Plan (2020-2023)

USD 676 million
raised to support the implementation of
the Strategic Plan

Performance in 2023

In 2023 (as of 15 December),
UN-Habitat acquired

USD 155.1 million,
surpassing the total budget approved in the
Work Programme and Budget of UN-Habitat for
the year 2023 by **USD 2.2 million** (one per cent)

Regular Budget:

USD 13.6 million,
exhibiting slight growth attributed to the
approval of seven additional regular budget post

Foundation non-earmarked fund:

USD 4.4 million,
exceeding the approved budget for the year
2023 (USD 3 million) by over **1.4 million**

UN-Habitat received non-earmarked contributions
from **29 Member States** this year, marking the
highest count between 2020 and 2023

Operations

- **3 liaison offices** (New York, Geneva, Bangkok)
- **4 regional offices** (Nairobi, Cairo, Rio de Janeiro, Fukuoka)
- Present in **93 countries**
- Active projects in **600 cities**

National Urban Forums (2018-2023)

- **18** in the Africa region
- **10** in the Asia and the Pacific region
- **8** in the Latin America and the Caribbean region
- **8** in the Eastern Europe region
- **5** in the Western Europe and Others region
- **4** in the Arab States region

Regional urban forums convened (2018-2023)

- Latin American States
- Asia and the Pacific Urban Forum
- Caribbean Urban Forum
- Organization of Turkic States Urban Forum

National Urban Policies

- **162 countries** have some version of a national urban policy
- UN-Habitat provides support in **60 countries** to develop national urban policies
- UN-Habitat provides support in **22 countries** in the Commonwealth of Nations to develop national urban policies

Executive Director (2018-2023)

- **2,100** bilateral meetings
- **69 missions** to all regions (51 countries)

CHAPTER 19

UN-HABITAT 2024 ROADMAP

15-19 January

**World Economic Forum
annual meeting**

Davos, Switzerland

6-8 May

**First session of the Executive Board for
the year 2024**

Presentation of the draft work plan for 2025 and
presentation and discussion of the Strategic
Plan 2026-2029 outline

Nairobi, Kenya

2-4 June

World Cities Summit

Theme: Inclusive and resilient future

Singapore

8-17 July

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable
Development**

Presentation on the work on multilateralism
and housing and how this work contributes to
eradicating poverty and building sustainable
and resilient cities and communities

New York City, USA

10-28 September

79th session of the UN General Assembly

High-level political debates at UNGA 79 will
start on 24 September 2024

New York City, USA

22-23 September

Summit of the Future

Theme: **Multilateral solutions for a better
tomorrow**

Events will be held to represent cities and
showcase local action in the multilateral
arena. UN-Habitat prioritizes housing and
housing policies integrated with health, income,
education, and access to basic services as the
new social contract to address inequality.

New York City, USA

September

Africa Urban Forum

Theme: TBC

Location: TBC

7 October

World Habitat Day

Theme: **Engaging youth to create a better
urban future**

Queretaro, Mexico

31 October

World Cities Day

Theme: **Youth leading climate and local action
for cities**

Location: TBC

4-8 November

**Twelfth session of the World Urban
Forum (WUF12)**

Theme: **It all starts at home: local action for
sustainable cities and communities**

Cairo, Egypt

11-24 November

**Third Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization
and Climate Change at COP29**

Baku, Azerbaijan

November

**Launch of the State of the World Cities
Report 2024**

Theme: TBC (on cities and climate action)

November 2024

**Second session of the Executive Board
for the year 2024**

Presentation of final work programme for 2025
and presentation and further discussion on the
draft Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Nairobi, Kenya





BUILDING BRIDGES

Executive Director's Report
(2018–2023)



UN-HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
unhabitat-info@un.org

   @UNHABITAT

www.unhabitat.org