

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME



Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities



Rationale

In 75% of cities globally, **spatial inequality**¹ is higher compared to two decades ago. This means that basic urban services, quality public spaces, affordable housing, services and livelihood opportunities are not evenly distributed within these cities. Fragmentation of the urban space frequently manifests in segregation and a concentration of poverty and multiple deprivations in certain areas of the city.

Climate change and environmental hazards amplify such inequalities and the vulnerability of a significant share of the world population. In addition to the 1 billion people living in informal settlements, 600 million people live in inadequate housing. Survey data from 220 cities, in 77 countries, suggests that almost 80 per cent of urban residents do not have convenient access to open public spaces².

People living in areas with less opportunities, normally rely on walking and public transport for their mobility needs. Consequently, if public spaces and transport services are undeveloped, they will have limited access to socio-economic opportunities, health care and leisure. Connecting these places to urban infrastructure, services and life opportunities is essential to fight social exclusion and improve a city's economy, dynamism and social integration.

Such derelict and dysfunctional locations typically host a disproportionately high share of populations experiencing cumulative disadvantages due to their exclusion from prosperity and development opportunities generated by urbanisation.

In 2020, the UN Secretary-Generals' Policy Brief on Covid-19 in an Urban World³ also attention to the role of cities in addressing spatial inequality to specifically guarantee the human-rights to food, water, and healthy environments. In the current context of interrelated crises and new trends, the digital divide reflects another barrier for inclusion in the same way that creates possibilities to meet gaps of spatial fragmentation and promote shared prosperity.

Urban regeneration a key process to promote spatial inclusion and climate action, by improving the social, physical, environmental, and economic conditions of an urban area, and connecting the improvements to the overall city. It has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive and effective processes that governments can adopt to promote more inclusive, resilient, safe, and sustainable cities.

A key to urban regeneration is to preserve, protect and enhance socio-economic assets, natural heritage and tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Building on local assets and strong participation processes, it is able to strengthen the sense of identity, contribute to community 'self-sustaining' regeneration, promote inclusion beyond the intervention area, and enrich urban diversity.

UN-Habitat's comprehensive approach to urban regeneration builds a strong spatial foundation and human rights-based and inclusive processes, placing people at the centre with strong policies to avoid, mitigate and manage risks associated with urban regeneration.

¹ Spatial inequality refers to the concentration of multiple deprivations from social, economic and environmental perspectives in some areas.

² UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019, p. 45

³ A study of urban expansion by UN-Habitat, NYU and Lincoln institute for the period of 1990-2015 shows that urban land consumption rate has grown faster than the urban population growth rate in both developed and developing countries.



Objective

The **Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme** aims promote **spatial inclusion and climate resilience** globally by supporting governments and urban actors to build inclusive, resilient, and integrated processes.

The programme focuses on urban regeneration as a key planning process to transform and develop cities towards a more equitable and sustainable future. Building on the existing assets and features of the local context, inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration process can leverage the social, economic, and environmental value of the community, incubating benefits for the entire city.



Outcomes, initiatives, and results

Together with the other flagship programmes and in collaboration with other UN Agencies and various urban actors, including governments, private sector, community and research organisation, this flagship is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1 Enhanced value and evidence-based knowledge on spatial inclusion and climate action in cities, including data platforms, methodologies and best practices.

Outcome 2 Strengthened global and regional collaboration and learning on inclusive and climate resilient urban regeneration.

Outcome 3 Initiatives and solutions developed and implemented generating social and environmental value through urban regeneration

Outcome 1 is implemented through a variety of initiatives, including:

- a. **Data production, analysis and visualisation** to measure cities' spatial inclusion and climate performance through inequality indicators.
- b. **Methodology and indicators** for developing inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration processes, including guidelines, tools, and monitoring frameworks.
- c. **Research materials on spatial inclusion trends and cities' experiences**, including projects, policies, programmes, campaigns and initiatives that promote urban regeneration.

Outcome 2 is implemented through a variety of initiatives, including:

- a. **Network** of government, private sector, researchers and communities to advance partnerships for urban regeneration
- b. **Global and regional events** and cross-fertilisation activities to promote dialogue, sharing and learning about social and environmental value creation in cities.
- c. **Advocacy campaigns and communication materials** directed to different audiences to raise awareness and leverage participation in urban regeneration.

Outcome 3 is implemented through a variety of initiatives, including:

- a. **Technical support** in urban regeneration initiatives (policies, projects, plans and programmes) through capacity and project development.
- b. **Catalytic projects** through short-term interventions in partner cities to prepare for the inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration.
- c. **Fundraising and financial investments** through grants and multi-partner initiatives to localise SDGs, creating inclusive and climate resilient communities.



Key Asks

The experience of adopting and implementing urban regeneration initiatives in over 50 cities and the multi-level and multi-sector discussions enabled the identification of good practices and challenges to advance spatial inclusion and urban regeneration globally. The common lessons are that urban regeneration, as a key tool to promote inclusion, i.) needs to be built on qualitative, reliable and comparable data and evidence; ii) requires involvement of communities in all phases of urban regeneration processes should be further strengthened with sound institutional framework and cross-sector collaboration iii) is a powerful tool to reduce inequality and revert poverty trends.

Therefore, the priority actions for the Flagship are:

Spatial Inclusion Platform

A platform measuring cities' spatial inclusion and climate performance through inequality indicators.

Barriers: spatial inclusion requires providing affordable necessities such as housing, water and sanitation as well as access to job opportunity, leisure and wellbeing. Lack of geographical knowledge on how the inequality and inclusion rates are changing over time is a barrier to distribute resources and to revert inequality patterns.

Description: the tool will measure the impact and co-benefits of urban regeneration initiatives implemented based on the environmental and social value creation. This tool will use an Indicators Framework for including spatial inclusion, health, and environmental social governance principles to assess value created by the project and its impact.

Impact: The tool will not only enable the evaluation and spatialization of the impacts after a project completion, but also provide a benchmark that will guide projects in the development and monitoring phases. Neighbourhoods that successfully implement urban regeneration processes and create social. Additionally, the platform will also support the monitoring of the SDGs implementation and catalyse investment to where it is most needed.

Guidelines for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Regeneration

Guided urban regeneration processes customised according to the leading stakeholder

Barriers: Although urban regeneration is an ongoing process as cities continue to be shaped and transformed, there are no guidelines nor accountability at the global level to ensure that urban regeneration is inclusive. This means that there is also no accountability or monitoring at the global level on possible risks of exclusion and eviction.

Description: The series of guidelines will provide a customised guided process according to the leading stakeholder. It aims to support the different sectors to actively participate in the process of urban regeneration. Identification of enabling mechanisms needed for each type of stakeholder to take the lead in promoting inclusive processes is essential to foster inclusion and avoid negative impact of interventions. The guidelines will include tested tools and methods to support implementation of collaborative process. The development of the series of guidelines will follow the work initiated with the Guidelines for Community-led.

Impact: The of guidelines will not further strengthen and encourage the involvement of communities in all phases of the urban regeneration process. This can promote the 'self-regeneration' of urban areas, increasing social and economic sustainability and stakeholder buy-in.

Urban Regeneration Initiatives

Scope and vision of the process for partner countries, regions and cities

Barriers: To reduce spatial inequalities and eradicate poverty, planned urban growth must be accompanied by effective urban regeneration. Such efforts would also offer the benefit of preserving cultural heritage and helping to build a sense of identity and belonging in cities.

Description: The Flagship aims to develop national, regional and local urban regeneration initiatives (policies, plans, project and programmes) globally. From city-wide urban regeneration plans to capacity development activities, the initiatives will apply tested tools and methods comprised in the guidelines to foster inclusive and sustainable processes.

Impact: The initiatives will create mechanisms for the participatory urban regeneration process to succeed in the long-term, catalysing private sector investment towards social and environmental value creation, community-led processes, and strong institutions.



UN-Habitat's comparative advantage

UN-Habitat intends to change the trajectory of urban transformation processes worldwide by supporting principles and capacities for inclusive urban regeneration. UN-Habitat's inclusive and sustainable approach to urban regeneration is unique because:

1. It has a strong spatial foundation, which complements the focus of partners on economic revitalization.
2. A city-wide strategic planning-led approach to urban regeneration to make the benefits accrued from

connecting and integrating the city through urban regeneration schemes serve the wider needs of the city and not only an area-based improvement.

3. Human-Rights based approach – No one else has yet put people at the centre with a strong policy to avoid, mitigate and manage risks of regeneration (evictions, displacement, compensation, loss of livelihoods, gentrification, coercive actions by state, resettlement) and deduce recommendations for rights holders and duty bearers affected by regeneration schemes.



In Kabul, Afghanistan, Mural Arts activities create job opportunities for graduate students and give a vibrant expression to the city.



Preliminary proposed locations

Spatial inequality is a growing concern not only in the Global South but also in the Global North, because cities in both have challenges and **underutilized resources** in one form or the other. Neglected historical sites in inner cities, polluted natural heritage, dilapidated public housing in monofunctional residential zones, urban sprawl, declining industrial areas and unplanned neighbourhoods in peri-urban areas are shared experiences in cities irrespective of their income classes.

Urban regeneration is relevant in urban contexts where assets are underutilized and opportunities for improvement are available, but interventions will have to respond to the actual gaps in capacity and tools in each context.

The selection of cities will be based on criteria of diversity (across regions), demand for regeneration and the typologies and natures of the areas and communities. In addition, partners, countries and cities will be able to join the programme when engaging in regeneration initiatives as observer, members of the community of practice or peers.

Initially identified countries with strategic interest in urban regeneration: Canada, USA, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, South Africa, Sao Tome e Principe, etc.

Initially identified cities with strategic interest in urban regeneration: Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, Bogotá, Medellín, Quito, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin, Stuttgart, Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Valencia, Paris, Rome, Milan, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Yakutsk, Nur Sultan, Baku, Ganja, Istanbul, Seoul, West Java County, Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur, Hanoi, Cairo, Rabat, Tunis, Nairobi, Mombasa, Accra, Dakar, Dar Es Salam, Zanzibar Town, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Sao Tome, etc.



Partnerships

The Flagship Programme 'Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities' is expanding as urban regeneration gains priority worldwide for the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to achieve concrete impact within communities. The Programme is therefore consolidating a **Global Urban Regeneration Network** to achieve cooperation, knowledge-sharing and local impact, as well as to advance the agenda of inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration.

The Network aims to influence urban regeneration practices to ensure inclusivity and sustainability and framing with the urban policy, planning and governance drivers while promoting the positive impact of transformative investments. Our approach is rooted in robust collaboration and the exchange of expertise from a variety of actors across sectors.

To ensure the Network's continued relevance and impact UN-Habitat collaborates with innovative, experienced, and motivated professionals to collaborate with us, international development partners, national and local **governments; civil society organizations, academia, financing partners, and the private sector partners including real estate companies and other investors.** We believe that this vibrant mix of people, ideas, and resources will help us in our mission of promoting inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration.

Through the Global Urban Regeneration Network, the Programme will scale its impact, providing clear entry-points for other UN System entities and contribute to the coordination of the urban dimension within UN Country Teams and regional coordination mechanisms as part of the UN System-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development. Within the UN system, partnerships with UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UN-Environment and UNIDO will be most significant, in particular the collaboration with UNESCO in urban regeneration in historic urban areas.

BECOME A MEMBER!



Join us in shaping a future of inclusive and sustainable Urban Regeneration, nurturing a Network that thrives on collaboration, learning, and a shared commitment to making our cities better places for everyone.



Phasing and milestones

Urban regeneration requires long-term engagement. The flagship is envisioned to last until at least 2030 in three phases:

- Years 1-4 (2020-23) - Established global norms and monitoring frameworks for urban regeneration and demonstration of the approach through implementing strategic initiatives that build multi-stakeholder partnerships and community action, in 50 cities in all sub-regions globally.
- Years 5-8 (2024-27) - Building Global Network and an enabling institutional environment for urban regeneration policies, legal and financial frameworks, and inclusive governance mechanisms, and scale up implementation to 200 cities.
- Years 9-10 (2028-29) – Refine normative guidance, report on impact of ongoing initiatives and scale up implementation to 250 cities.



Budget

Given the scope of the flagship programme (global, regional, national and local) and the range of activities, it is estimated at \$100 million USD over a period of 10 years to catalyze

a global investment of over \$1 billion USD. UN-Habitat will drive the development, implementation and monitoring of the initiative in conjunction with a wide range of credible and experienced partners.

On average, Outcome 1 would need \$2 million per year and 20 million USD in total, Outcome 2 would absorb \$3 million USD per year and 30 million USD in total and Outcome 3 (with most activities on the ground) would require at least \$5 million per year and 50 million USD in total.

A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
T: +254-20-76263120
E: unhabitat-info@un.org

