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**Implementation of the normative and operational activities of
UN-Habitat, including reporting on its programmatic
activities in 2023 and the implementation of subprogrammes,
flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities**

**Report of the Executive Director on normative and operational
activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme,
including updates on the Inclusive Communities, Thriving
Cities flagship programme, the Sustainable Urban Resilience
for the Next Generation initiative, urban crises prevention and
response initiatives and activities for the period July–December
2023**

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report highlights progress made by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) from July to December 2023 on its Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme, Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation (SURGe) initiative and work on urban crisis situations. Section II provides an update on the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme. Section III presents an update on engagement in and commitments to the SURGe initiative since the previous update to the Executive Board during its third session in 2023. Section IV is an update on the initiatives of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, including Gaza. In addition, the annex to information document HSP/EB.2024/INF/6 presents a preliminary report on the status of the development of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in the Gaza Strip and the annex to information document HSP/EB.2024/INF/7 highlights progress made on selected normative and operational activities during the period July–December 2023 that contributed to each subprogramme of the UN-Habitat strategic plan 2020–2025 and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and other Sustainable Development Goals.

* HSP/EB.2024/1.

II. Update on the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme

2. UN-Habitat launched its Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme during the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Abu Dhabi in 2019 on the theme of “Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities”. The objective of the programme is to promote social and environmental value creation globally by supporting governments and urban actors in building more inclusive, thriving neighbourhoods and communities through integrated urban regeneration.

A. Background

3. In 2019, UN-Habitat began developing an area- and human rights-based approach to urban regeneration. The approach focuses on spatial inclusion – through the reduction of poverty, inequality and vulnerability – and on enhanced prosperity through local socioeconomic development. Placing people at the centre, the programme promotes transformative urban policies, programmes, plans and projects that can improve access to jobs, services, facilities and public space, along with social mixing, access to adequate housing, urban environment, sustainability of urban mobility, safety and the vibrancy of urban cultures.

4. The UN-Habitat integrated approach to urban regeneration also seeks to avoid, mitigate and manage risks associated with urban regeneration and transformation, such as the risks of involuntary relocation, gentrification and spatial discrimination. UN-Habitat advocates a process tailored to the local context, utilizing strategic entry points and socioeconomic potential to ensure that the impact of urban regeneration and transformation reaches neighbourhoods and communities.

5. Alongside relevant like-minded institutions and professionals around the world, UN-Habitat recognizes urban regeneration as one of the most comprehensive and effective tools for promoting more inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable cities while advancing the integrated localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. In view of the growing inequality arising from the enduring effects of climate change, the coronavirus disease pandemic and accelerating urbanization, digitalization and migration, urban regeneration becomes a particularly relevant instrument for addressing diverse challenges at the same time and localizing multiple Sustainable Development Goals. In policies, programmes, projects, meetings, events and publications, Member States such as Israel, Mexico, Morocco, Tunisia, Spain and the United States of America have shared and promoted the positive social and economic impacts of inclusive urban regeneration.

6. The present document reports on the global and country-specific work of UN-Habitat through the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme for the implementation of the UN-Habitat strategic plan. Although the flagship programme is reported *stricto sensu* through strategic plan outcome 1.3 (effective settlements growth and regeneration), it is particularly powerful for integrated delivery of and impact on specific UN-Habitat priorities as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. The present report is intended to enable the Executive Board to discuss further prioritization of the work of UN-Habitat on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration as a tool for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals pursuant to UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/6 on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to establish strong linkages and a mechanism for implementing UN-Habitat Assembly resolutions 2/2 on accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030, 2/7 on adequate housing for all and 2/8 on urban planning and sustainable infrastructure.

B. Normative and operational activities under the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme

8. The Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme is a convening platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration, technical assistance and resource mobilization that promotes inclusive, resilient, safer and healthier urban regeneration, enabling neighbourhoods and communities to become more equal and vibrant. To reach the integrative potential of urban regeneration, the programme brings together different areas of expertise to promote intersectoral collaboration.

9. Within the United Nations system, UN-Habitat is collaborating on inclusive urban regeneration and transformation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Tourism Organization, focusing on the linkages between urban regeneration, natural and cultural heritage,

climate change and disaster risk reduction, mega-events¹ and sustainable tourism. This has created linkages with other areas of work, such as slum upgrading and housing, to provide solutions for the most vulnerable and most deprived in terms of living standards.

10. The flagship programme is also uniquely positioned as a vehicle for collaboration with other UN-Habitat flagship programmes, including:

(a) The Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor flagship programme – working on conjunctions between urban regeneration, slums and climate, and the delivery of adaptation, mitigation and resource efficiency for climate action through vertical climate funds and other donor projects;

(b) The Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the Positive Impact of Urban Migration flagship programme – working on conjunctions between urban regeneration and migration and the capacity to respond to migration through inclusive urban regeneration;

(c) The Sustainable Development Goal Cities flagship programme – addressing conjunctions between urban regeneration, the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities and the development of a portfolio of municipal projects that localize the Sustainable Development Goals through urban regeneration.

11. Since its inception, results-driven normative and operational partnerships have also been established between the flagship programme and the following stakeholder groups:

(a) Governments: to build capacity and provide technical assistance for strategy formulation and implementation;

(b) The private sector and investors: to develop inclusive business models, benchmarks and methodologies and facilitate public–private people-centred collaboration;

(c) Community groups: to provide capacity-building, technical assistance and tools for community-led urban regeneration initiatives;

(d) Research institutions: to co-develop normative and technical guidelines, tools, reports and training materials.

12. In relation to the 2030 Agenda, the flagship programme provides an integrative multiscale, multi-stakeholder process and tool for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the New Urban Agenda. In relation to Sustainable Development Goals localization and the Sustainable Development Goal Cities flagship programme, urban regeneration makes it possible to capture the extra value generated through urban transformation to finance improved quality of life, overcoming inequalities. Urban regeneration interventions have demonstrated a simultaneous positive impact for 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 45 of the 169 Sustainable Development Goal targets.

13. Paragraphs 38 and 52 of the New Urban Agenda highlight the specific interlinkages between urban regeneration and renewal and the provision of basic infrastructure and services, prevention of sprawl and marginalization, improvement of social participation, and integration of natural and cultural heritage.

14. Regarding the resolutions approved by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session, urban regeneration supports the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, slum transformation, housing, biodiversity and resilience, climate change and urban planning and infrastructure. This positions the flagship programme as an effective vehicle for the implementation of the related resolutions.

15. Within the UN-Habitat strategic plan, the flagship programme contributes to the delivery of subprogramme 1 on reduced spatial inequality and poverty. It has established strong linkages between the subprogramme's components on services, mobility, public space, land, slum transformation and affordable housing and effective urban growth, which are delivered through inclusive urban regeneration. The flagship programme also connects with subprogramme 2 on enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions, linking to spatial connectivity and productivity, local economic development and people-centred smart cities. The linkages with subprogrammes 3 (strengthened climate action and improved urban environment) and 4 (effective urban crisis prevention and

¹ Mega-events are ambulatory occasions of a fixed duration that attract a large number of visitors, have a large mediated reach, come with large costs, and have large impacts on the built environment and population. The Olympic Games, World Cup football tournaments, world expositions, sessions of conferences of parties and sessions of the World Urban Forum are examples of mega-events. (See Martin Müller (2015), "What makes an event a mega-event? Definitions and sizes", *Leisure Studies*, 34:6, 627–642.)

response), as well as flagship programmes 3 (RISE-UP: Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor) and 4 (Inclusive Cities: Enhancing Positive Impacts of Urban Migration), become evident through the contributions of inclusive urban regeneration to the outcomes of greenhouse gas emissions reduction, improved air quality, resource efficiency, protection of ecological assets and adaptation, and to the socioeconomic components that link with migration and disaster risk reduction. Given the confluence of three determinant factors in the nature of the programme, namely an integrative and multisectoral scope, multi-partner implementation and a lack of funding predictability, a partner collaboration framework was established to facilitate the programme's focus and advancement towards a clear objective with outcomes, outputs and activities. The objective is to promote social and environmental value creation globally by supporting governments and urban actors in building more inclusive, thriving neighbourhoods and communities through urban regeneration, and the outcomes are as follows:

- (a) Outcome 1: enhanced knowledge and evidence-based data on inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration, including data analysis and monitoring and knowledge on spatial inclusion, vulnerability and urban regeneration;
- (b) Outcome 2: strengthened global and regional collaboration on and capacity for inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration, including networks and partnerships, events, capacity development, advocacy and campaigns;
- (c) Outcome 3: initiatives and solutions implemented to generate social and environmental value through urban regeneration, including technical assistance in urban regeneration and global initiatives for inclusive urban transformation.

16. The implementation experience so far has proven that the flagship programme, if well managed and informed by sustainable urban planning principles in accordance with the New Urban Agenda, has the potential to deliver social inclusion at the city scale, diversify social structures and land use and increase awareness of the transformative power of urban regeneration. Programme implementation has further demonstrated how urban regeneration can provide an entry point for diversified housing solutions. In addition, it has produced the following substantial progress in the three outcome areas:

- (a) *Normative work – outcome 1:* The programme has produced a first draft of the guidelines for inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration; the spatial inclusion indicators framework; the document on urban regeneration and viruses; the local development agencies white paper; the report on regional trends in spatial inclusion; and the paper on urban regeneration for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The atlas of urban regeneration and the Sustainable Development Goal–environmental, social and governance framework for urban regeneration are being prepared.
- (b) *Networks and partnerships – outcome 2:* The programme team co-organized or participated in various collaboration opportunities and is expanding its networks. An expert group meeting on urban regeneration as a tool for inclusive and sustainable recovery, which was a key event for multidisciplinary knowledge exchange, kickstarted the programme network-building. An external multisectoral reference group on urban regeneration was established with 25 members from various countries, including Australia, Canada, Chile, France, Italy, Spain, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States, and from international technical, educational and government organizations and businesses.
- (c) *Operational activities – outcome 3:* UN-Habitat is providing technical assistance for urban regeneration initiatives being carried out at the country level in collaboration with national and local governments, the private sector, academia and other United Nations entities, such as the Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative in Kenya; the San Nicolas de los Garza 2030 city vision in Mexico; the Green Climate Fund project on enhanced energy efficiency and climate resilience in neighbourhood and communities in Cuba; integral urban operations in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica; participatory urban planning with communities and local authorities in Bossaso, Somalia; and work with Microsoft on Datacentre Community Development Programme in Mexico and Sweden.

17. The following are examples of country-level activities being carried out under the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme to deliver integrated impact through inclusive and sustainable urban regeneration:

- (a) *Reduction of inequality and urban inclusion through urban regeneration – Equity Park in Cancún, Mexico:* The objective is to reverse the existing socio-spatial segregation patterns in the city and use Equity Park to develop, improve and consolidate urban infrastructure and services that can make the urban environment safer and more inclusive, accessible and resilient. Close to 200,000 people live in the sphere of influence of the Equity Park. The scheme includes 16 km of bike lanes and

pedestrian walkways, 61 recreational services (football, volleyball and basketball grounds, skate parks, children's playgrounds, a music school, a martial arts sports centre and open-air stages). Vulnerable communities within the project area were identified and consulted to determine their social and economic needs that could be addressed through urban regeneration, such as by improving access to services and sustainable mobility, tenure security, safety, quality of the built environment, and skills training and employment creation.

(b) *Urban regeneration and housing in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia:* The objective is to develop a socioeconomic strategy and an impact and mitigation strategy for urban regeneration with a specific focus on the vulnerable groups – the majority of the population – and to provide social and economic opportunities for local residents while minimizing the negative effects of relocation and gentrification. The main medium-term effects are the reduction of involuntary relocations, development of social programmes to generate jobs, improved access to health and education, use of heritage as an entry point for generating construction- and rehabilitation-related opportunities and provision of adequate housing in central Riyadh.

(c) *Urban regeneration and nature-based solutions for open and public space in Nairobi, Kenya:* The objective is to develop an integrated socioenvironmental river area regeneration programme that improves safety, housing conditions, infrastructure and services and the environmental quality of Nairobi rivers.

(d) *Urban regeneration for climate change resilience and energy efficiency in Cuba:* The objective is to design strategic frameworks that better address policy gaps and improve sectoral expertise in climate resilience, energy efficiency and regeneration in neighbourhoods and communities of Cuba, including in the housing sector, and to increase the number of potential projects developed by Cuba, as a small island developing State, for submission to the Green Climate Fund.

(e) *Institutional strengthening and capacity-building for sustainable urban regeneration in Viet Nam:* The objective is to support the capacity of national and local governments through training and learning-by-doing during urban regeneration project collaboration and the development of three specific urban regeneration projects.

(f) *Urban regeneration and slum transformation in Central America through integral urban operations:* The objective is to transform four fragile neighbourhoods into environments of sustainable well-being, highlighting the opportunity for regeneration and greater integration with the city and the metropolitan area through integrated interventions that require public-private cooperation.

(g) *Unlocking the social and economic potentials of Kenya's refugee camps through area-based regeneration:* The objective is to promote urban resilience, self-sufficiency and community integration in the area of one of the largest, longest-standing refugee camps in Kenya, the Kakuma-Kalobeyei refugee hosting area, through regeneration that delivers inclusion and livelihoods for the host and refugee communities.

C. Operational model and main outputs

18. The impact of the flagship programme is measured by the number of beneficiaries reached, human and financial resources mobilized, knowledge products developed, partnerships created and initiatives implemented. As of June 2023, UN-Habitat had supported 64 cities in 22 countries in adopting urban regeneration policies, and the programme had developed 15 knowledge and evidence-based data outputs and engaged 60 partners from 32 countries.

19. The programme is operated by a team of five full-time and five part-time experts (one staff member, one seconded staff member and eight consultants) and project teams based in regional and country offices. The portfolio of \$9.6 million as of 2023 relies on the mobilization of earmarked resources. The flagship programme has mobilized resources from national, regional and local governments, bilateral cooperation and the private sector.

D. Way forward

20. UN-Habitat is strengthening the integration of the five flagship programmes and thematic focus areas in order to deliver on the strategic plan for 2020–2025, the current priority themes and the resolutions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its second session.

21. The main focus areas of the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme for the next two years of the strategic plan period are the completion of the advanced drafts of global normative guidance products (described in section II.B. above) and development of the partnership

networks for the programme, with regional hubs, countries and cities that champion the implementation of inclusive, sustainable urban regeneration.

22. The programme is strongly focused on portfolio acquisition, with project proposals in preparation for 12 national and local governments, multilateral and bilateral cooperation, vertical climate funds and foundations. The “Mega-events as catalysers of sustainable urban development” global initiative, a collaboration with the Sustainable Development Goals Cities flagship programme, is aimed at exploiting the opportunities that mega-events present for inclusive, sustainable and resilient urban development.

23. Regarding the priority theme of localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the programme will advance integrated policies and programmes for the localized achievement of 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 45 of the 169 Sustainable Development Goal targets. The flagship programme will serve as a vehicle for placing housing, informal settlement and slum transformation, land and public space at the centre of UN-Habitat’s strategic plan and programming. UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7 on adequate housing for all provides an opportunity to engage housing stakeholders in the flagship programme at the political level and to position housing as an instrument for reducing spatial inequality.

24. Finally, the Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities flagship programme can scale up UN-Habitat contributions to United Nation system work on urban planning and infrastructure, climate action and biodiversity by spatialization, prioritization and execution of city-wide and neighbourhood planning processes that are resilient to climate change.

III. Update on the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation initiative

25. The presidency of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change launched the SURGe initiative, dedicated to connecting the local, national and global levels to coordinate collective climate action and improving collaboration between sectoral initiatives. The SURGe initiative is a response to the realization that current national pledges will not reduce harmful emissions sufficiently to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. It also directly supports ongoing work under subprogramme 3 of the UN-Habitat strategic plan, focusing on multilevel climate action.

26. UN-Habitat was asked by the presidency to implement the SURGe initiative, with facilitation support from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. Through the partner network, five working groups have started work, beginning with identifying the needs for local-level capacity-building, tools and guidance.

A. UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/5 and the development of options and recommendations for implementing the Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation initiative

27. In its resolution 2/5 on enhancing the interlinkages between urbanization and climate change resilience, the UN-Habitat Assembly welcomed the Executive Director’s efforts to launch the SURGe initiative during the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and, in that regard, requested the Executive Director to inform the Executive Board and subsequently develop options and recommendations for operationalizing the SURGe initiative as a meaningful institutional arrangement for the Executive Board to consider.

28. In the same resolution, the UN-Habitat Assembly requested the Executive Director to further enhance the linkage between urbanization and climate change in the work of UN-Habitat in order to contribute to the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, and to continue efforts to mobilize resources and to disseminate information on innovations, good practices and policies relating to climate action and support Member States in that regard. It also encouraged the Executive Director to continue the practice of organizing meetings, including ministerial meetings as appropriate, following the organization of the Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change held in the margins of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

29. Pursuant to those requests, the secretariat developed the three options presented in the subsections below. All three options recognize the SURGe initiative as being: (a) an ongoing

initiative, (b) a partnership initiative; and (c) an initiative that is fully aligned with subprogramme 3 of the UN-Habitat strategic plan. The options differ in terms of the degree to which the SURGe initiative is developed as a delivery platform for subprogramme 3. For option 1, no additional core resources would be required. For option 2, limited core resources would be required, to significantly build up the initiative through project funding and partnership engagement. For option 3, significant core resources of in the range of \$5 million per year would be required, although some would result from internal reprioritization and some from soft earmarked funding, meaning that an additional regular budget allocation would not be absolutely necessary.

B. Overview of options

30. Option 1 is to operationalize the SURGe initiative as part of the ongoing work under subprogramme 3. The salient features of option 1 are as follows:

(a) It is assumed that UN-Habitat would provide limited SURGe initiative coordination in support of the broader partnership. Existing partnerships, networks and projects would be leveraged for SURGe operationalization. In particular, engagement with the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) for Climate Action, launched at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action would support the SURGe initiative.

(b) In terms of priorities, emphasis would be placed on partnerships in support of multilevel climate action and strengthening the normative work around the urban content of the nationally determined contributions. Light support would be provided to the five sectoral-track working groups as long as they were self-sufficient.

(c) Under option 1, it would not be possible to provide institutional support to the SURGe Global Alliance or the five track working groups. There would not be any advocacy or communications support, nor would it be possible to strengthen capacity for integrated urban climate action or project development that contributes to national and local SURGe efforts.

(d) In terms of funding, no additional core resources would be sought unless the strategic plan for 2026–2029 provides for project funding and leveraging of partnerships, working within existing means.

31. Option 2 is to develop the SURGe initiative as an entry point for accelerated climate action. The salient features of options 2 are as follows:

(a) This option builds on option 1 and supports stronger collaboration with additional partnerships encompassing the members of the SURGe Global Alliance, coordinated by a dedicated secretariat. The partners would advance the multilevel climate action work collectively.

(b) UN-Habitat would support the coordination and monitoring of the five track working groups and the development of a SURGe website as a means of showcasing best practices and opportunities for collaboration. The SURGe initiative would also be developed as an opportunity to strengthen UN-Habitat's climate-related work in accordance with the SURGe work packages. The SURGe initiative would further support the Conference of the Parties presidencies in the organization of the ministerial meetings on urbanization and climate change.

(c) In terms of priorities, UN-Habitat, using the urban content of nationally determined contribution analysis as an entry point, would support Member States by accelerating the development of project proposals that contribute to SURGe efforts (supporting national capacity development and city-level roll-out). Project funding could be provided by local or national partners or international development or climate finance, among other sources. A network of country-level SURGe focal points would be supported by capacity-building through peer learning.

(d) Under option 2, SURGe would remain an initiative with significant potential to develop into a platform for taking global multilevel climate action and providing direct services to Member States through the mobilization of partnerships and project funding; however, the initiative would fall short of the ambitions initially set out by the presidency of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

(e) With regard to funding, option 2 would require core funding of \$1 million per year, with an emphasis on soft earmarked funding, covering additional staff in headquarters, one focal point in each of the Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, and workshop and communications cost. It is expected that under this option, \$50 million of additional project funding would be leveraged over six years in support of Member States.

32. Option 3 is to have the SURGe initiative provide internal coherence for UN-Habitat's climate work, accelerate the provision of support to Member States and cities and act as a coordination platform. The salient features of option 3 are as follows:

(a) This option would enable a full integration of the SURGe initiative across UN-Habitat, including coherence between thematic sections at headquarters, in particular those aligned with the five sector working tracks and the key cross-cutting themes of SURGe, as well as in regional and country offices. The SURGe initiative would be used as a mechanism for accelerating the implementation of all elements of UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/5.

(b) In terms of priorities, in addition to accelerating implementation relative to options 1 and 2, option 3 would emphasize additional support for Member States and priority cities to build up multilevel climate action, including policy and planning support, as well as project identification and development. Regional-level support would build technical advisory capacity and provide knowledge management and shared learning opportunities. At the global level, the SURGe secretariat would provide a regular report to the ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate change and other relevant events.

(c) With regard to funding, option 3 would require \$5 million per year of core funding. A significant portion would come from internal reassignments but additional core resources would be needed. It is expected that under this option, \$500 million of additional project funding would be leveraged over six years in support of Member States.

IV. Update on urban crisis prevention and response initiatives

A. Progress in institutional and normative support for partners

33. In response to the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and as requested by the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, UN-Habitat published its global institutional plan on solutions to internal displacement in June 2023. The institutional plan allowed the development of a whole-of-house approach to solutions for internally displaced people in urban areas, with a focus on sustainability, scalability and transformability, in accordance with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

34. In September 2023, UN-Habitat published a guide to mainstreaming migration and displacement into national urban policy, aimed at supporting national governments, local authorities and other stakeholders in preparing a comprehensive road map for developing an integrated approach to urban migration and displacement.

35. An agency-wide community of practice on forced displacement has been set up to fast track the exchange of good practices and scale programme development support with respect to internally displaced people. The community of practice includes the five countries (Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia) where joint programmes with other United Nations entities have been accepted by the newly established Internal Displacement Solutions Fund.

36. As part of UN-Habitat's commitments, an informal task force has been set up with United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations, and United Cities and Local Governments to develop a conceptual framework for urban forced displacement solutions with the support of the International Institute for Environment and Development. The framework will provide guidance on "dos and don'ts" and on key components that need to be part of programming to deliver solutions that are sustainable, scalable and transformational. Key components identified so far are integrated urban planning, land tenure, access to public services, financing and social inclusion. An expert group meeting will take place in March 2024.

37. At the Global Refugee Forum, held in Geneva in December 2023, UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees co-led the preparation and adoption of two multi-stakeholder pledges: one on housing, land and property and the other calling for investment in integrated climate-resilient, sustainable human settlements for refugees and host communities. UN-Habitat furthermore contributed to three pledges: the United Nations common pledge 2.0, a pledge on localization, and a pledge in response to a call for local action spearheaded by local governments. With the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank, UN-Habitat is now exploring, with an initial focus on Africa, how to further support Governments in joining the pledge and adopting the human settlements approach in managing long-term refugee presence. That effort will build on ongoing work by the three entities, such as their joint programming in Kenya.

B. Progress in the provision of support to countries experiencing crisis

38. As requested by the Executive Board, UN-Habitat has stepped up its engagement in countries affected by crisis, including those newly affected by conflict and disaster. UN-Habitat continues to support crisis response and recovery in Syria following the devastating earthquake that hit the region in February 2023. It has deployed a surge mission to Derna, Libya, following the catastrophic floods of September 2023, to provide guidance on urban recovery and is seconding a staff member to the International Organization for Migration to participate in a joint response. UN-Habitat has also responded to the earthquake that struck Herat Province in Afghanistan in October 2023.

39. UN-Habitat has begun operations in Ukraine with the establishment of an urban lab in Kyiv, in partnership with local and international organizations, with the aim of supporting urban recovery efforts in the country. Activities will focus on three areas: support to recovery planning; capacity-building to strengthen urban recovery capacity and knowledge at all levels (local, regional and national); and support to relevant policymaking. UN-Habitat has started work in Borodyanka and Makariv and is finalizing the selection of additional municipalities to which support will be provided for participatory, sustainable and green recovery planning, underpinned by the use of digital solutions. UN-Habitat is actively engaged in the durable solutions working group set up by the United Nations to support community recovery efforts.

40. In response to the Executive Board's request at its third session of 2023, in decision 2023/B, UN-Habitat deployed a mission to explore how to support the development of its response to the acute crisis in the Gaza Strip and to collect inputs for the preparation of a comprehensive, up-to-date report on the status of efforts to reconstruct human settlements in the Gaza Strip. The mission team met with relevant actors in Cairo and Amman. Granting by the relevant Israeli authorities of a visa to access the State of Palestine is still pending. The meetings planned for East Jerusalem and Ramallah were ultimately conducted remotely from Cairo. A visit to the Gaza Strip itself was not planned at the time, owing to the active status of the war and the United Nations focus on an acute humanitarian response.

41. Owing to the ongoing nature of the war and the impossibility of conducting any field-based assessments, only a preliminary report is possible at this point. The preliminary report (HSP/EB.2024/INF/6) sets out the scope and limitations of the report, what is needed and what is already happening in terms of assessing the impact of the war on human settlements in the Gaza Strip, calling for a focus on neighbourhood functionality; summarizes principles derived from lessons learned from previous reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip and relevant examples from elsewhere; sets out pathways from emergency response to recovery and reconstruction, taking into account the immense scale of the damage and the uncertainty of when and how the war will end; and proposes next steps. All will be informed by the feedback received from relevant stakeholders and the realities on the ground.

42. UN-Habitat contributed to the interim rapid damage and needs assessment conducted jointly by the World Bank Group, the United Nations and the European Union in February 2024. Building on that, UN-Habitat is advocating for and working on the collection of disaggregated data neighbourhood by neighbourhood, which will facilitate an area-based approach to response prioritization. The assessment includes an analysis of the typology of buildings in each neighbourhood and the level of the damage to buildings, infrastructure and services, based on which interventions can be prioritized to restore functionality and fast-track return and recovery whenever possible.
