



Local action  
in a time  
of crises

ACTION PLAN





UN-HABITAT

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URBAN ACTION IS...

**LEAVING NO  
ONE AND  
NO PLACE  
BEHIND**



In an era besieged by crises, the pace towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals seems to falter, leaving more communities and places behind. As inequalities deepen, both between and within nations, the social fabric frays, threatening stability worldwide.

Cities and their leaders stand on the front line of these challenges, confronting issues ranging from climate change to conflict and economic instability. They are not just affected by these crises but are integral to their solutions. With urban areas accounting for over 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and playing a significant role in energy consumption and hosting post-disaster displacements, the imperative for urban transformation is undeniable.

The traditional paradigms of urban development no longer fit the complexities of today's world. We need a new approach to planning, building, and managing cities. With more than 70 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product coming from urban areas and over 65 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals reliant on local decision-making, cities hold immense power in driving progress. However, challenges persist. The global housing crisis is one of them, with an estimated need for 96,000 affordable housing units daily to meet demand by 2030.

In 2023, recognizing the need for action, the second United Nations Habitat Assembly reaffirmed the commitment to adequate housing as a fundamental human right and a platform for rebuilding fractured social contracts. Through the adoption of resolutions aimed at transforming informal settlements, accelerating localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, preserving urban biodiversity, and crafting guidelines for people-centred smart cities, Member States signalled a collective resolve to revitalizing sustainable development.

The nexus between urbanization and climate change has come into sharper focus, too. At COP28, UN-Habitat and its partners mobilized a coalition to place the urban agenda at the forefront of climate negotiations. The message was clear: urbanization and local action must be central to future climate agendas.

Looking ahead, the UN Summit of the Future will be a key moment for charting our course. It is not merely a forum for discussion but a catalyst for concrete action. UN-Habitat works with Member States to integrate the perspectives of local and regional governments into the summit's agenda and outcome documents. This message will be further amplified at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum which has as its theme 'It all starts at home: Local actions for sustainable cities and communities.'

Our future is undeniably urban, and the time for action is now. By strengthening the voices of cities in global discourse and driving change on the ground, we lay the groundwork for a more equitable and sustainable world.

“



**Michal Mlynár**

**United Nations Assistant  
Secretary-General and Acting  
Executive Director of UN-Habitat**







# URBAN ACTION IS... SCALING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

UN-Habitat is playing a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to accelerate the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key reports and intergovernmental processes in 2023 highlighted progress in implementing the New Urban Agenda and emphasized the need to accelerate implementation further.



## What is the New Urban Agenda?

The New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016, represents a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future – one in which all people have equal rights and access to the benefits and opportunities that cities and human settlements can offer and in which the international community reconsiders the urban systems and physical form of our urban spaces to achieve this.

## Why is the New Urban Agenda key to sustainable development?

The New Urban Agenda recognizes the correlation between good urbanization and development. It underlines the linkages between good urbanization and job creation, livelihood opportunities, and improved quality of life, which highlights its connection to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

## The world is off track: SDG 11 report

Halfway into the implementation period of the 2030 Agenda, UN-Habitat's 2023 global assessment report *Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet* details progress made towards achieving SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. The report found that the world is far from reaching the targets of SDG 11 and that it will fail to do so without critical interventions from urban actors across the globe.

**“Cities are engines of economic growth and innovation that hold the key to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. They are also on the frontlines of today’s complex challenges, from the climate crisis to growing inequalities and political polarization.”**

**António Guterres**

United Nations Secretary-General







SG DESA

Executive Director  
UN-Habitat

President  
Kenya

President of  
Assembly

Vice President  
Botswana

Director General  
UNEP

Central  
African Republic

Israel



## Resolutions adopted at United Nations Habitat Assembly

Under the theme 'A sustainable urban future through inclusive and effective multilateralism: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in times of global crises,' the second United Nations Habitat Assembly, which took place in June 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya, adopted a historical resolution on [affordable housing for all](#). Member States agreed to renew their call to prioritize adequate housing and view housing as a human right for the first time since 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted.

### The United Nations Habitat Assembly adopted nine other resolutions on:

- International guidelines on people-centred smart cities
- Accelerating transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030
- World Cleanup Day
- Biodiverse and resilient cities
- Enhancing the interlinkage between urbanization and climate change resilience
- Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Urban planning and sustainable infrastructure
- Creation of a human settlements resilience framework
- Equitable financing and effective monitoring of the implementation of resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly

## Spearheading climate action commitments at COP28

In 2023, UN-Habitat hosted the second Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP28, which was attended by over 1,000 participants including 60 ministers and vice-ministers, mayors, multilateral development banks, and community organizations.

UN-Habitat co-chaired the first Local Climate Action Summit, which highlighted the critical role of multilevel climate action and culminated in the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) pledge, signed by 71 national governments committing to include multilevel action in COP28 outcomes and to collaborate with non-state actors for the 2025 revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

UN-Habitat co-convened the Multilevel Climate Action and Urbanization Pavilion, gathering over 2,000 participants to bolster global efforts in addressing urban-focused climate challenges. These interventions lay the groundwork for robust collaboration in 2024 and beyond, crucial for advancing urban climate resilience and sustainability in the face of rapid urbanization.

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

In October 2023, the United Nations 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. UN-Habitat is the Secretariat of the Advisory Group.

Over a one-year period, the Advisory Group will meet with the Secretary-General to inform on the dimensions of local and regional governments in preparation of the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024.

## BEAM by UNITAC

The United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC), a collaboration between UN-Habitat, UN-OICT, and Hafen City University, supported by the German Federal Foreign Office, focuses on digital solutions for urban challenges. In 2023, it expanded BEAM (Buildings & Establishment Automated Mapper), a tool initially used in eThekweni, South Africa, to eight new cities in Central America: Belize City, Guatemala City, San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Managua, San José, Panama City, and Santo Domingo. BEAM monitors informal settlements, aiding data-driven policies and actions for sustainable cities, aligning with the SDG target on ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrading slums.

URBAN ACTION IS...

# CREATING A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

The challenges facing the world's cities are complex and interrelated. UN-Habitat approaches these issues through an integrated way of working.







# Bridging the gap

Central to the relevance and impact of UN-Habitat's work is an interactive relationship between normative and operational work at national and subnational levels.

UN-Habitat provides effective solutions that deliver impact across the thematic areas of its strategic plan. In 2023, of 110 sampled projects, more than half contributed in an integrated way across at least three thematic areas of the strategic plan.

## In 2023, cities and communities continued to face multiple challenges:

**318M**

**people globally experienced homelessness**

due to the unaffordability, unsustainability and exclusiveness of the housing sector. Access to housing is a precondition for access to employment, education, health and social services.

**1.1B**

**people lived in slums and informal settlements,**

limiting their access to services and opportunities, and impacting their quality of life. Since 2020, an additional 200 million people have lived in slums.



# 2.2B

**people lacked safely managed drinking water services,**

a primary cause of water contamination and water-borne diseases. Urban water distribution and sanitation systems are often derelict and unable to cope with the growing demographics. Paradoxically, low-income urban dwellers pay high prices for water, sometimes up to 50 times the price paid by higher income groups.

# 2.8B

**people were affected by housing inadequacy,**

including those who live in highly deprived conditions in slums and those who experience homelessness. To meet the growing housing demand in 2030, UN-Habitat estimates 96,000 new housing units are needed every day.

# 3.5B

**people lacked safely managed sanitation services.**

In densely populated areas, the absence of proper sanitation facilities almost inevitably leads to massive pollution and contamination of available water resources.

# To address these challenges, UN-Habitat prioritizes four policy areas







## These policy areas are anchored in the thematic areas of **UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

### Reducing inequality

- Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility, and public space
- Increased and secure access to land and adequate and affordable housing
- Effective settlement growth and regeneration

### Promoting prosperity

- Improved special connectivity and productivity
- Increased and equitably-distributed locally-generated revenues
- Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations

### Acting for climate and nature

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality
- Improved resource efficiency and protection of ecological assets
- Effective adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change

### Responding to crises

- Enhanced social integration and inclusive communities
- Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons
- Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure



# Our impact

**958,000**

people benefited from improved connectivity and green mobility, including support to start-ups and rapid bus transit in 10 cities globally



**280,000+**

people in poor and vulnerable communities gained increased access to basic services and sustainable mobility



**230+**

laws from 9 countries were updated in the UrbanLex, UN-Habitat's free global database that aims to improve access to the legislation regulating the urban environment, bringing the total to 2,500+ legal instruments



**36**

urban observatories were certified and onboarded to the Global Urban Observatory Network and are actively contributing towards local SDGs/New Urban Agenda data production and enhancing use of data for decision-making processes and investments





# 88,000+

households in partner countries have increased secure tenure rights to land documentation



# 162

countries reported having national-level urban policies. Countries supported by UN-Habitat in 2023 include Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Cameroon, Comoros, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mozambique, Nigeria (state-level), Paraguay, and Senegal



# 1,500

cities from 187 countries have reported data on at least 3 SDG 11 indicators, which facilitated upgrading of these 3 indicators from Tier II to I in 2023, with support from UN-Habitat



# 129

countries included urban content in Nationally Determined Contributions



# 15

local and regional authorities and 5 national authorities started implementing and/or aligning their local urban monitoring frameworks and data to the Global Urban Monitoring Framework to streamline their monitoring processes and include traditionally excluded groups in urban development plans



# 25

countries were supported in collecting data on SDGs and implementing the globally harmonized approach to defining cities and human settlements endorsed by the UN statistical commission in 2020, through UN-Habitat, UNFPA, and UNICEF





# URBAN ACTION IS... **REDUCING INEQUALITY**

To reduce inequality between and within communities and tackle poverty, UN-Habitat promotes:

Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility, and accessible and safe public spaces

Increased and secure access to land, adequate and affordable housing

Effective human settlement growth and regeneration

## Our Impact in 2023

### Rehabilitated

40 public spaces globally which are being enjoyed by

**395,000**

individuals, offering safe and inclusive environments for all



### Supported

**24 partner cities**

in implementing urban and territorial renewal and regeneration initiatives



### Conducted

participatory slum upgrading interventions in Madagascar, which benefited

**27,000**

residents by improving their living conditions



### Supported

community development and access to basic social services such as road maintenance and collection of household waste for

**1,310**

people from vulnerable areas in Côte d'Ivoire



### Strengthened

housing, land, and property rights for

**39,518**

people in Afghanistan



### Supported

water and sanitation operators in

**13 countries**

to improve operational capacities





## From wastelands to public parks

In Yemen, despite efforts by local authorities in the Kamilo area, the community grappled with a swamp for over 25 years. Samiah Muarshid, a mother of four young children, often worried about health risks due to the swamp, such as the spread of disease. Her children frequently fell ill, straining the family's finances.

To support the community, UN-Habitat removed solid waste, filled the swamp, established a rainwater drainage system, and constructed a children's park and small garden.

"It's been months since either of my children had to miss school due to illness. I can't express how much of a relief it is to see them healthy and able to play outside safely," Samiah said.

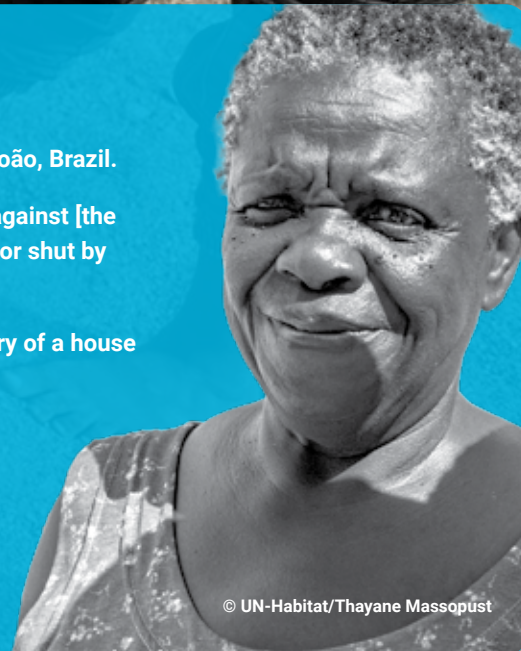
## From a roof to a home

Over 40 years ago, Vera Lucia Jorge chose to live in a barebones house in Vila do João, Brazil.

"I love it here," she said – but her house was falling apart. "We would place a cane against [the window] to hold it closed. If anyone touched it, it would fall. We used to keep the door shut by placing the sofa against it."

Today, the white floor, iron doors, functional windows and running water tell the story of a house that became a home.

Vera's home renovation was made possible by the Social Territories project, a partnership between Rio de Janeiro's municipality and UN-Habitat, which provides data on the most vulnerable residents in Rio's favelas. The project made it possible for the municipality to carry out home improvements focused on the well-being and health of residents.







## Transforming neglected public spaces into community hubs

Like many other cities, Solo, Indonesia, grappled with neglected public spaces, particularly the riverbank of Pepe River, leading to issues of spatial inequity and social disconnection.

Through a collaborative effort involving UN-Habitat, Surakarta City Government, Kota Kita, Urban+ Institute, and Ayo ke Taman, the Rivers as Inclusive Common Space programme transformed the riverbank into a vibrant public space.

Over 6 months, more than 60 residents actively participated in co-designing the space. Now, Mangkubumen Harmony Park benefits over 80 households with its colourful murals, outdoor sports facilities, playground, and accessibility features such as ramps and handrails.

Community members commonly speak about the park being a source of joy. Sri, an elderly woman and local resident spends her mornings in the park, exercising and volunteering to sweep the park grounds to keep it pristine.

“In the past, this space was in poor condition, but now, we feel grateful that our children and grandchildren can play in this park,” Sri said. “It has become a brighter and happier place for the residents.”

According to Iswan Fitradias, Head of Public Housing Technical Implementation Unit, Department of Housing and Human Settlement - Surakarta, this project has influenced the government’s approach to development.

“This pilot project ... has triggered the integration of public space components in the development of the new public housing,” he said.

Together with partners, UN-Habitat has applied this inclusive approach in Egypt, Jordan, Kenya and Peru, equipping participants with digital tools to assess public spaces and implement improvements, leading to the creation of green public spaces, revived parks and enhanced accessibility of public spaces.





## Unlocking peace, solidarity and sustainability through clean water access

In the Godawari municipality of Nepal, reliable access to clean water and sanitation services has been a significant problem over the years.

“There were a lot of drinking water problems in Lele, especially during monsoon season [when] the water gets contaminated. This brought us health hazards through different contagious diseases and epidemics,” said Nirmala Nagarkoti, member of the Water Safety Plan Team, Godawari Pralaya WASH project.

When water is scarce, polluted, too costly or dangerous to access, it can cause tensions and conflicts within communities and countries. Exacerbated by crises such as climate change, armed conflict, and the migration crisis, marginalized communities often bear the brunt of water and sanitation issues.

To tackle these water-related challenges, UN-Habitat’s Global Water Operators

Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) focused on leveraging the expertise of water operators, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing, advocating for better policies, and empowering local communities. In Nepal, this partnership led to clean water and sanitation, along with countless ripple effects.

“The water quality has improved, and it has now been possible to ... [clean] the area as well. It will have a positive impact on our health, too,” said Nirmala, adding that she was relieved the issue has been resolved, after years of neglect.

In 2023, GWOPA supported 19 water and sanitation operators in 13 countries including Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Zambia. Over the past 15 years, GWOPA has led the global Water Operators’ Partnerships movement, supporting 500 utilities in over 70 countries.



# URBAN ACTION IS... **PROMOTING PROSPERITY**

To enhance the shared prosperity of cities and regions, UN-Habitat promotes:

Improved spatial connectivity and productivity

Increased and equitably-distributed, locally-generated revenue

The expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovation

## Our Impact in 2023

Supported  
**16 local governments**

in adopting people-centred smart city strategies to ensure inclusive and sustainable urban development



Supported  
**30 local governments**

in over 10 countries to improve their financial position benefiting more than 500,000 people



Supported  
**9 regional spatial development plans**

which coordinate practices and policies in urban planning, leading to integrated and balanced development



Supported  
**7 cities in Brazil**

to implement participatory approaches to engage the population in integrated and sustainable development, which ensures equitable inclusion for marginalized groups





## Promoting integrated urban development in Colombia

In Colombia, joint efforts between UN-Habitat and the mayor's office of Cartagena strengthened the local government's capacity to transform and improve the city's development. The Cartagena project fostered integrated urban development by updating planning instruments, facilitating citizen participation, and initiating community engagement activities.

The project framework strengthened the city's planning instruments, guided by the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda for the monitoring and implementation of policies and projects aligned with the city's territorial planning plan. To achieve this, 11 forums were held, bringing together more than 400 participants, and 5 workshops were held for community members to co-design public spaces.

## Eliminating violence against women in the West Bank and Gaza

The HAYA programme by UN-Habitat with funding from Canada and in partnership with UNFPA and UN WOMEN aimed to build safe and inclusive communities for women and girls in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by fostering community participation, rehabilitating public spaces, and building municipal capacities. In 2023, the programme rehabilitated 9 public spaces, benefiting 1.18 million people.

Pictured, a group of women enjoy the small outdoor library at Al Diwan Community Garden, in Nablus, Palestine. Tamam Khader, a Nablus resident, said that the Diwan Community Garden is a safe space in the city that is much-needed.

"The garden is a very important space, especially for women in Nablus. I am so happy to see the ideas we shared during the design sessions come to life," she said.



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## Strengthening accessibility and inclusion in the Asia and the Pacific region

The Asia and the Pacific region is home to more than 750 million persons with disabilities who experience multiple and intersecting forms of social, economic, and political exclusion. Often, those with disabilities are not considered as the default intended inhabitants of cities and users of public spaces.

In response, UN-Habitat strengthened the inclusion of persons living with disabilities in fundamental sectors of urban development by enhancing the capacity of policymakers and government officials to strengthen accessibility and inclusion, engaging in cross-country knowledge exchanges, developing e-learning resources and toolkits with disability organizations, and preparing accessibility audits, policy reviews, and recommendation documents.







## Accelerating the localization of Sustainable Development Goals

With a rise in global challenges – from climate change to armed conflicts – the localization of the SDGs emerges as a fundamental necessity, ensuring no one is left behind.

With the 2030 Agenda deadline fast approaching, Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) have become powerful processes for accelerating SDG localization. These reviews are sustainability reports led by local and regional governments which help clarify where territories stand on SDG implementation.

UN-Habitat recognizes VLRs as powerful accelerators in localizing the SDGs and provides partners with technical support to develop VLRs. UN-Habitat also leads the development of cutting-edge research and guidance on VLRs and provides opportunities for peer learning, capacity building and international engagement.

Since 2018, over 260 VLRs involving more than 200 local and regional

governments have been published, with 12 completed in 2023 and 13 underway in 2024.

In 2023, the City of Mwanza launched Tanzania's first-ever Voluntary Local Review. The process, which engaged over 200 stakeholders, assessed SDG progress and generated action-oriented recommendations.

The mayor of Mwanza City, Sima Constantine Sima, stated that the Voluntary Local Review "informs us that urgent global issues are mostly felt at the local level."

"We hope that by sharing Mwanza City's innovations and challenges outlined in the VLR, we will continue to inspire other cities in the country to develop VLRs," Sima said.

And that is precisely what happened. Currently, several other Tanzanian municipalities are replicating the process carried out by Mwanza.



# URBAN ACTION IS... **ACTING FOR CLIMATE AND NATURE**

To strengthen climate action and improve urban environments, UN-Habitat promotes:

Measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality

Solutions for improving resource efficiency and protecting ecological assets

Tools to adapt communities and infrastructure to climate change

## Our Impact in 2023

**Supported  
24 cities**

in enacting legal frameworks for low-emission development strategies, which will reduce their global footprint and ensure cities are building with a sustainable approach



**Enhanced**  
climate change adaptation actions for

**100,052**

beneficiaries from Jordan and Lebanon by promoting sustainable water management practices



**Supported  
32 cities**

in developing nature-based solutions to building climate change resilience, which results in restored and protected biodiversity and contributes to sustainable livelihoods and food security



**Supported  
6 cities**

to develop land-based marine plastic litter action plans in the Philippines to keep public spaces free of litter so they can be enjoyed by the public





## Coastal clean-up in the Philippines

Students and youth leaders in the Philippines engaged in a coastal clean-up drive as part of a workshop focused on the Marine Litter Learning Kit, a tool developed by UN-Habitat through the Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative.

## Developing a sustainable and resilient construction sector in Asia and Africa

Amid the ongoing climate crisis, resource scarcity, and biodiversity loss, ensuring safe, sustainable, affordable and adequate housing for all is a pressing issue, particularly in rapidly growing regions of Asia and Africa.

UN-Habitat supported governments to transform their building and construction sector to be resource-efficient, low-carbon, and climate-resilient.

The Housing Value Assessment Methodology tool was developed, identifying sustainability gaps in housing programmes. More than 230 stakeholders in the building and construction sector in Bangladesh, Ghana and Senegal worked with governments to drive the construction industry towards more resource-efficient and sustainable ways of doing business.





## Integrating climate programme tools in Asia and the Pacific

Rapidly expanding cities in Asia and the Pacific are highly vulnerable to the climate crisis, aggravated by inequitable land governance systems affecting tenure security and climate resilience. In response, UN-Habitat has prioritized integrated land and climate programming to support climate resilience.

In response to floods in Pakistan, UN-Habitat supported communities and sub-national authorities to register land rights and develop climate resilient settlement plans in flood-affected areas, which support the most vulnerable to mitigate and respond to inevitable climate impacts.

In Afghanistan, UN-Habitat has supported residents in informal settlements with integrated land and climate tools. Zainab, who lives in a flood-affected informal settlement in Herat, Afghanistan, described how UN-Habitat's support has impacted her community:

"The flood drainage project solves some of the biggest challenges for the community, such as the stagnant wastewater causing diseases, impassable commuting routes, and most importantly

protection against flooding from the river," she said.

In Afghanistan, more than 130,000 people have benefitted from interventions to secure communal property rights, and plan and construct resilient infrastructure.

In Nepal, highly-vulnerable, landless, and tenure-insecure families were supported in accessing and registering land with authorities, securing property rights and providing a foundation for climate resilient livelihoods.

Yem Narayan Sharma Pokhrel, Chairperson of the Gadhwara Municipality of Dang in Nepal, explained that marginalized groups – such as the Dalits, indigenous people, and unregistered tenants – are the most impacted.

Given the vulnerability of climate-impacted communities, Yem shared that through collective efforts such as this project, partners can "provide secured tenure of land to the landless and most vulnerable, conservation of land through land use management, and promotion of climate-smart agriculture."



## How cities can pave the way to climate action

While the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, was momentous in driving forward climate commitments from 195 states through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), recent research from UN-Habitat in collaboration with Southern Denmark University and UNDP highlights an opportunity for local governments to better support national and global climate goals.

“In an era marked by the climate crisis, decisive and collective action is crucial,” said Michal Mlynár, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

At the core of the climate crisis is the place of cities as hubs of significant greenhouse gas emissions, while also being vulnerable to the ensuing climate and environmental effects. While cities may be seen as both culprits and victims, they can be saviours, too, by leading on climate action.

To achieve this, UN-Habitat worked with partners to highlight the critical role of

local climate action in advancing the goals of the Paris Agreement. Through UN-Habitat’s publications, a dire picture emerges: while most of the 194 NDCs for which data was available include urban content, only around 27 per cent include strong urban elements.

Despite the pivotal role of cities in both emitting and facing climate impacts, current international frameworks lack mechanisms for meaningful city engagement and implementation. UN-Habitat intervenes by advocating for local climate action, securing a mandate at the second United Nations Habitat Assembly, and facilitating multi-level partnerships at COP28.

The Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change and the Local Climate Action Summit resulted in an outcomes statement emphasizing collective commitment and scaling up climate finance, which Mlynár stated is “a prime opportunity to achieve our climate aspirations through swift multilevel climate action.”



# URBAN ACTION IS... **BUILDING RESILIENCE TO CRISIS**

To support effective urban crisis prevention and response, UN-Habitat promotes:

Programmatic solutions specific to country and regional contexts

A more coherent system-wide response to migrants' needs, from humanitarian assistance to sustainable development solutions

Peaceful integration with host communities

## Our Impact in 2023

Issued

**1,500**

land title deeds in support of integrating displaced communities in urban areas, which provided vulnerable individuals with much-needed rights and security



Supported

**5 countries**

in developing context-specific responses to urban migration to ensure that everyone is included in urban planning



Supported

**10 cities**

in applying participatory planning methodologies to integrate the concerns of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities into their urban planning and management, which created inclusion for vulnerable groups



Reconstructed buildings in Syria, which benefited

**150,000  
people**



Supported

**11 cities**

in implementing the City Resilience Global Programme, which measures and increases resilience to multi-hazard impacts so cities can be better prepared to respond to climate change effects



Conducted

**800**

damage assessments on buildings and infrastructure in earthquake-affected areas in Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, which enhanced the resilience of vulnerable communities





## From camps to integrated communities: Kenya's inclusive approach to urbanization

Community members, pictured, participate in an exercise in a regeneration strategy prioritization workshop in Kakuma Refugee Camp. Kenya ranks among Africa's top refugee-hosting countries, sheltering approximately 700,000 refugees.

UN-Habitat has spearheaded the development of integrated human settlements and municipalities as alternatives to emergency-focused solutions and encampments in Turkana and Garissa – the areas most impacted by crises and displacement.

## Supporting Yazidis return to a place they can call home

Mian and many others were forced to flee to the mountains after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) attacked Yazidi communities in Sinjar, Iraq, in 2014.

Following the end of the conflict, displaced families began to return to their homes, only to find devastation. UN-Habitat's long-term commitment to the region's recovery and better living conditions involves repairing the basic infrastructure network, expanding access to public services and facilities, and delivering approximately 3,000 houses to the most vulnerable families.

In 2023 only, UN-Habitat started the rehabilitation of 250 houses, including Mian and her family's, and the construction of 323 core residences in Sinjar, allowing 3,043 people to return safely, permanently, and sustainably.





A woman with glasses and a UN-Habitat vest is looking at a map during a community meeting. She is wearing a light blue vest with the UN-Habitat logo and the text 'UN HABITAT' on it. The background shows a wall with a mural of a person and a tree. There are other people and materials on a table in front of her.

## Transforming neighbourhoods into more inclusive, safer, and colourful places for all

Across Latin America, the migrant crisis continues to impact lives. Venezuela, in particular, has experienced significant socioeconomic stress, marked by political turmoil, hyperinflation, scarcity of basic goods, and inadequate public services. As a result, around 7 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee their homes in search of a better life.

While migrants struggle integrating into host communities, these communities in Latin America and the Caribbean often face difficulties in providing adequate housing, employment, education, and other basic services.

In response, UN-Habitat and its partners launched the Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity project with a goal to integrate refugees and migrants in host communities through promoting social inclusion.

In 2023, the project spearheaded the transformation of more than 26 public spaces in 10 cities in Latin America and the Caribbean across the following countries: Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

More than 300 people from local communities, refugees, and migrants were at the core of the project, working together to build safe and inclusive places to foster their effective integration. The initiative benefitted 162,000 people including refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons, and locals, all who enjoy improved public spaces which provide an improved environment for social integration.



A photograph of three young boys in a room with a wall made of corrugated metal. They are gathered around a table, looking at a map or a set of papers. The boy on the left is wearing a white t-shirt with a red and blue vertical stripe and a crest, and the word 'spotify' is visible. The boy in the middle is wearing a dark t-shirt and a necklace. The boy on the right is wearing a pink hoodie. The background shows the texture of the corrugated metal wall and a doorway.

## Strengthening climate resilience for internally displaced persons in Mozambique

One of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate change, Mozambique, has experienced climate effects such as cyclones and flooding, which are expected to increase in frequency and intensity. Coupled with armed conflict in northern Mozambique, this has led to the internal displacement of over 1 million people.

On 24 February 2023, Cyclone Freddy hit Mozambique, causing heavy rains and flooding in the country's central and southern regions. Soon after, on 11 March 2023, the cyclone made its second landfall in the country, causing enormous damage and loss of livelihoods.

Prior to the cyclones, UN-Habitat supported the reconstruction of public services, including 910 classrooms, 12 public buildings, 12 livelihood infrastructures, and 22 resilient housing solutions, which reached 650,000 beneficiaries in the districts of Buzi, Dondo, and Nhamatanda.

Many of these reconstructed and rehabilitated spaces have provided life-saving support for people in Mozambique amid extreme weather events. During a storm in Zambezia, schools made climate-resilient with the technical assistance of UN-Habitat sheltered thousands of people.

"Our school served as a safe shelter for our village," recalled Abel Vieira Aide, Director of Lugela Primary School in Namacura Village, Zambezia Province. "When we received the information about the cyclone through the local disaster risk management committees, we left the school's door open so that everyone could come in."

UN-Habitat's interventions, which include strengthening institutional and technical capacity, policy development, developing resilient housing and social infrastructure, and initiating community involvement, have enhanced urban mitigation to natural disasters and armed conflicts while providing greater social integration of internally displaced persons.



URBAN ACTION IS...

# UNITING FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY







# COMING TOGETHER

UN-Habitat facilitated several global events in 2023 bringing together key stakeholders around the world to explore approaches and propose solutions to address urban crises, scale the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and create a better urban future for all.





## World Urban Campaign

In 2023, the UN-Habitat World Urban Campaign (WUC) championed cities and communities as drivers of progress. WUC fostered collaboration among urban stakeholders from 16 constituency groups, including universities, research institutions, professional organizations, civil society groups, and grassroots networks.

The campaign facilitated 32 Urban Thinkers Campuses on the theme 'The City We Need Now!' involving approximately 5,100 participants who generated recommendations and advocated for solutions to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

The campaign welcomed 60 new partners, expanding its network to 320 organizations and networks worldwide. During COP28, UN-Habitat and WUC partners launched a two-year thematic campaign titled 'Housing Matters' to advocate for housing as a fundamental need and right that shapes our environment, well-being, and the future of our planet.

## Urban October

In 2023, Urban October engaged the international community in discussions and activities on resilient urban economies and financing sustainable urban futures for all. Over 555 events were organized worldwide.

The city of Baku in Azerbaijan hosted the global observance of World Habitat Day 2023 under the theme 'Resilient Urban Economies: Cities as drivers of growth and recovery.' Over 750 people from 28 countries attended the event in person and online. UN-Habitat showcased some of the tools available to cities for financing sustainable urban development, including the Cities Investment Facility and the Rapid Own Source Revenue Analysis (ROSRA) tool.

The Municipality of Üsküdar in Istanbul, Türkiye, hosted the global observance of World Cities Day 2023 under the theme 'Financing sustainable urban future for all.' Over 1,000 participants representing 221 countries attended the event in person and online. Leaders of sovereign wealth funds, development finance institutions, the private sector, and government representatives explored tools and mechanisms to bridge the urban investment gap and discussed strategies that national and local governments can adopt to move towards a circular economy.

## UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour Award

UN-Habitat's Scroll of Honour award recognizes initiatives and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to sustainable urbanization and improving the quality of urban life. Out of over 80 nominations, 5 winners were awarded, and 4 special citations were announced in 2023.

The winning candidates were examples of best practice initiatives and achievements contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 11.

The Scroll of Honour award winners are:

**Assembleia de Moradores** for creating development solutions for residents by facilitating relations between the City of Braga, the municipal housing company, and social housing beneficiaries in Braga, Portugal.

**Dubai Municipality** for establishing and implementing a programme dealing with waste material from the hospitality industry in Dubai.

**EcoVironment** for tackling plastic pollution and its detrimental impact on the urban environment in Sierra Leone.

**Fundación Pro Empleo Productivo** for developing training programmes that promote job creation and improve economic productivity in cities in Mexico.

**Fundo Imobiliário Comunitário para Aluguel** for fighting housing speculation and gentrification in central areas of three major cities in Brazil.



# DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE

UN-Habitat produces reports, briefs, guidebooks and more in collaboration with other UN entities, civil society, academia, United Cities and Local Governments, and other stakeholders and partners. These reports disseminate data and knowledge, inform policy, and support the agency's mandate of promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities.





## Top publications in 2023

The following reports were the most viewed and downloaded in 2023 (of over 300,000 downloads of UN-Habitat publications in 2023). Visit UN-Habitat's website to access the documents in full.



### 1. *Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet*

**Planet:** This report shows that the world is off track in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. It outlines the immense opportunities and innovations which can move us closer to meeting the goal.



### 2. *Future Cities and New Economy, Carbon Neutrality Driven by Green Innovations*

**Neutrality Driven by Green Innovations:** This special issue stresses the critical role of cities in tackling climate change and achieving carbon neutrality. The report indicates the need to invest in innovation to improve and broaden sets of solutions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.



### 3. *Global Report on Sanitation and Wastewater Management in Cities and Human Settlements*

**Settlements:** Drawing from literature and data from cities across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, this report underlines the scale of the challenge in strengthening wastewater and faecal sludge management at the global level.



### 4. *Managing smart city governance: A playbook for local and regional governments*

**A playbook for local and regional governments:** This playbook and its recommendations aim to help develop effective, inclusive, and sustainable governance practices for urban digital transformations through implementing smart city initiatives.

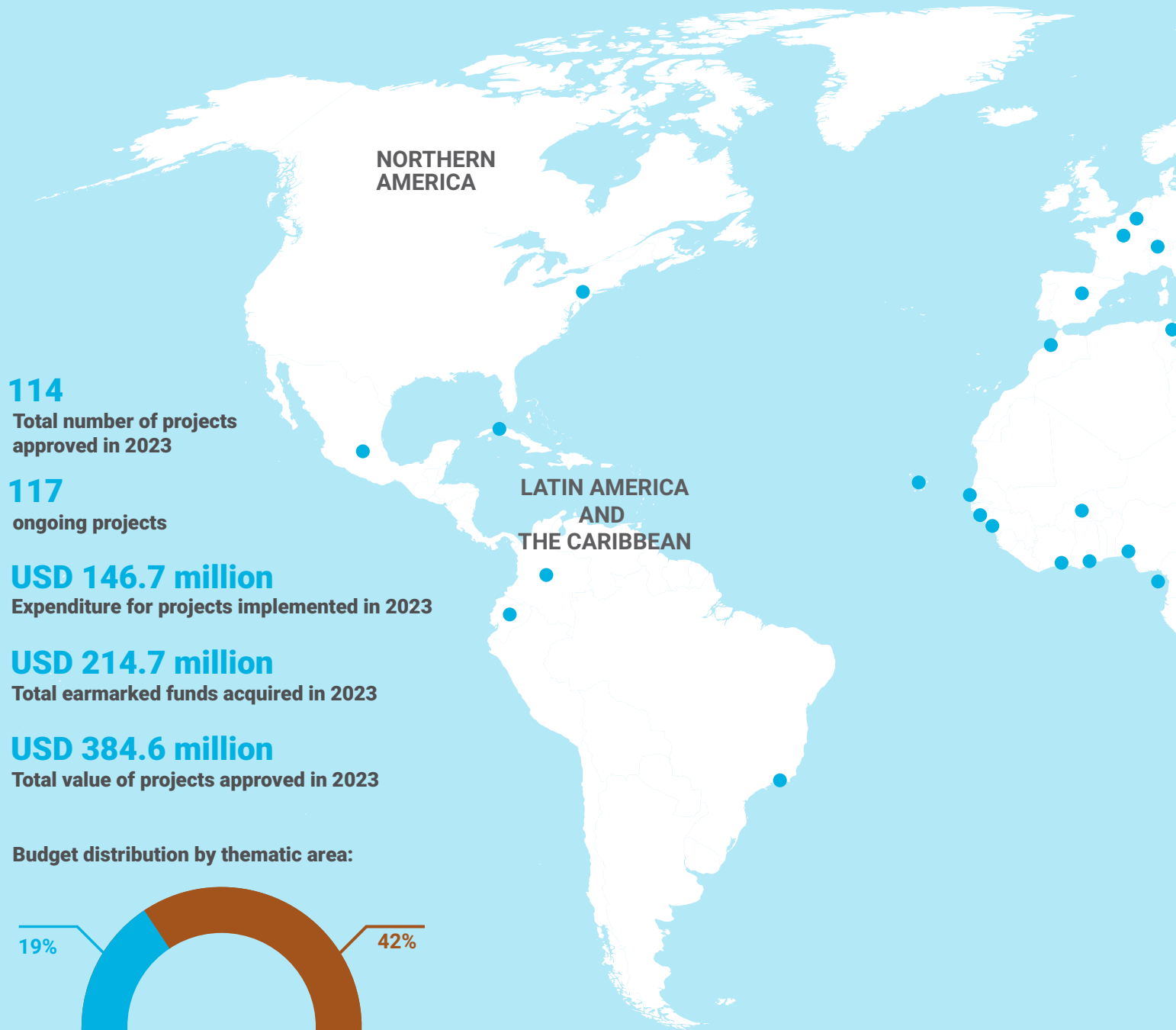


### 5. *The State of Arab Cities Report 2022*

This report covers various issues that characterize the Arab region, presents the state of urbanization in the region, including key drivers and urbanization trends, explores a selection of major challenges and opportunities, and presents the need for a paradigm shift in urban infrastructure.



# ON THE MAP



**114**

Total number of projects approved in 2023

**117**

ongoing projects

**USD 146.7 million**

Expenditure for projects implemented in 2023

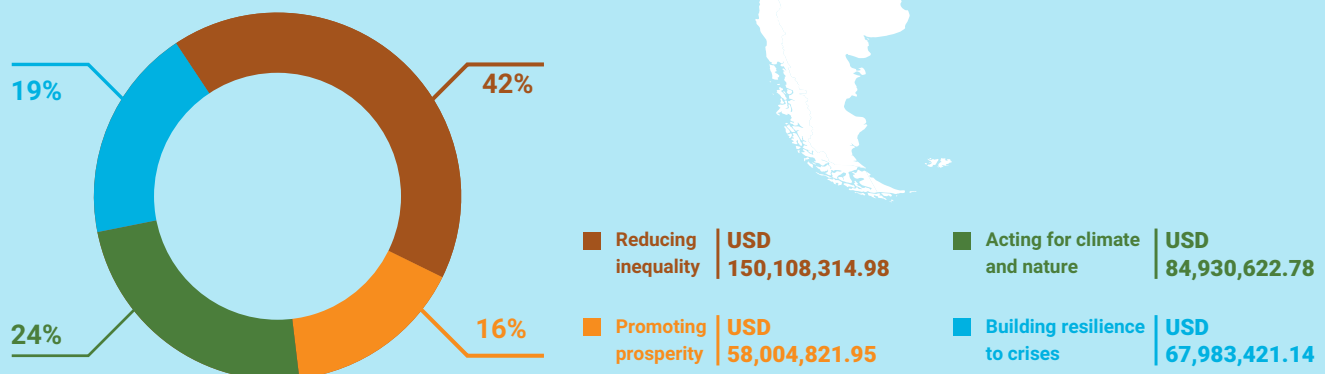
**USD 214.7 million**

Total earmarked funds acquired in 2023

**USD 384.6 million**

Total value of projects approved in 2023

Budget distribution by thematic area:



\*Any reference to Kosovo in UN documents and UN websites, whether to the territory, institutions or population, is to be understood in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo. Kosovo is therefore not listed as a country.

\*\*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.





## UN-HABITAT'S GLOBAL PRESENCE

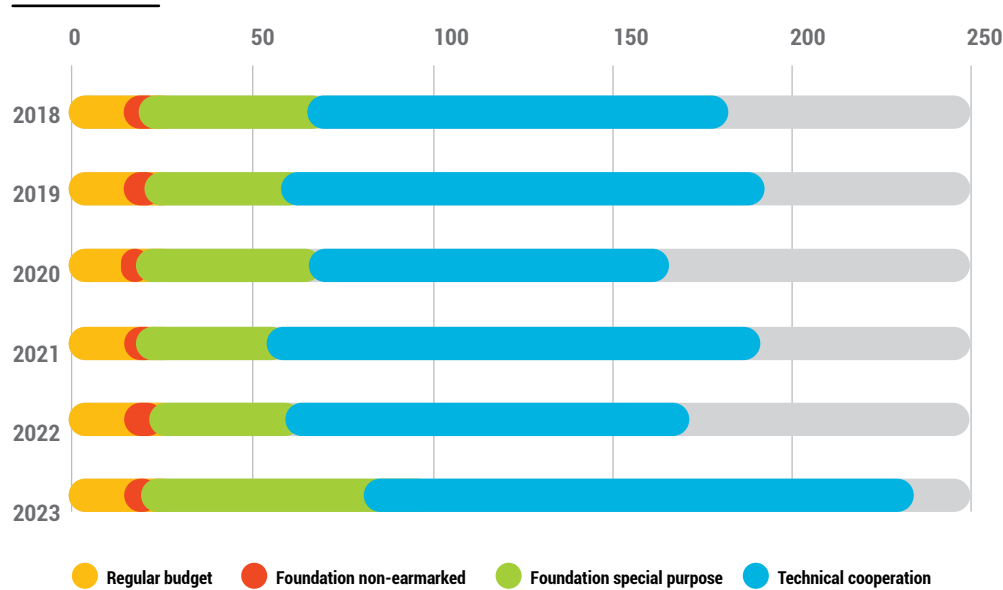
Afghanistan	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kenya	Nepal	Sudan
Azerbaijan	Egypt	Kosovo*	Nigeria	Switzerland
Bahrain	Ethiopia	Kuwait	Pakistan	Syrian Arab Republic
Belgium	Germany	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Philippines	Thailand
Brazil	Ghana	Lebanon	Russian Federation	Tunisia
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Madagascar	Rwanda	Uganda
Cabo Verde	Guinea-Bissau	Malawi	Sao Tome and Principe	Ukraine
Cambodia	India	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	United Republic of Tanzania
Cameroon	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mongolia	Senegal	United States of America
China	Iraq	Morocco	Somalia	Viet Nam
Colombia	Japan	Mozambique	Spain	Yemen
Comoros	Jordan	Myanmar	Sri Lanka	Zambia
Côte d'Ivoire			State of Palestine	



# MADE POSSIBLE BY

In 2023, UN-Habitat mobilized resources amounting to USD 233.8 million, showing a healthy growth in financial commitments from donors to UN-Habitat’s mandates. A significant portion of the grants signed in 2023 are multi-year commitments, which will contribute to the work carried out in 2024 and beyond.

Contributions to UN-Habitat 2018-2023 (million USD)



## Earmarked contributions

Out of 100 donors, 52 are non-Member States, encompassing 12 UN agencies and 40 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, 48 per cent of the contributions originate from entities within the Western Europe and Other States group, followed by 30 per cent from global entities and 13 per cent from the Asia and the Pacific group.



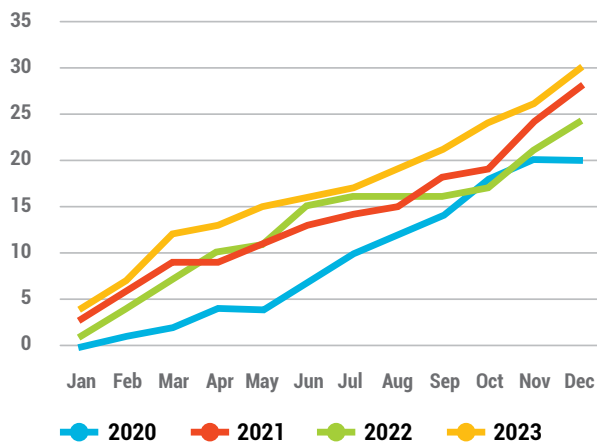


## Core contributions

Together with the austerity measures on expenses and budget control, 2023 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 30 Member States in 2023, marking the highest count since 2015. This signals a modest expansion of the donor base for core resources – a pivotal element of the resource mobilization strategy.

## Member States contributions







UN-HABITAT

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**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN  
SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME**

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