



ONU-HABITAT

Urban Regeneration in the context of UN-Habitat's Flagship Programme 'Inclusive Communities – Thriving Cities'

CLARIFICATION NOTE

Ad-hoc Working Group Meeting of the Executive Board – 9 October 2024

Addressing Poverty and Growing Inequality

GLOBAL TREND

Inequality within countries and cities has grown⁴ driven by technological advancements, globalization, and unequal access to opportunities.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

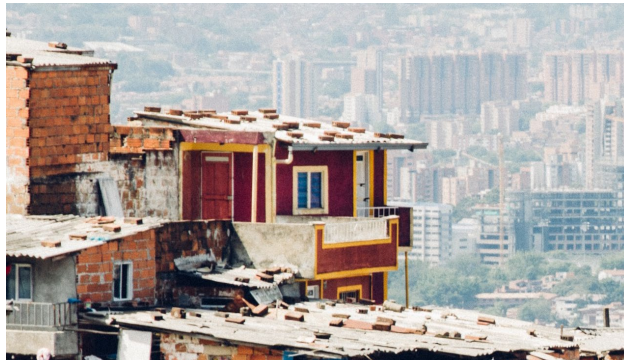
Governments worldwide are implementing **policies, programmes and projects** to address multifaceted challenges of national, regional and urban inequality. These efforts vary in scale and approach.



Policies at different levels: redistributive measures, housing policies, social welfare, multi-level governance, etc.



Transformation processes and interventions: large, medium and small-scale and tailored to the context (e.g., revitalization, renewal, regeneration)



Understanding Urban Regeneration

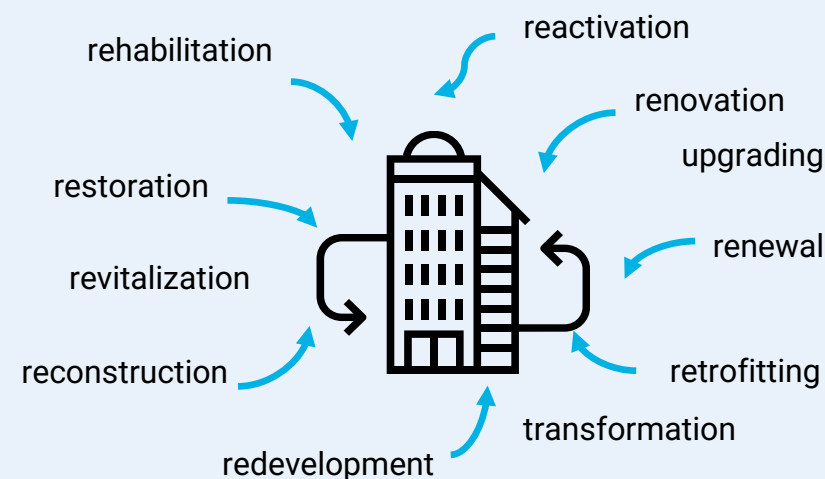
CONCEPT

Urban regeneration has been defined in literature as a **comprehensive, area-based⁹ and multi-agent** collaborative **planning process** that improves the **physical, environmental and socio-economic** conditions of an urban area and links the generated benefits to the wider urban fabric of the city¹⁰.

Urban Regeneration Related Concepts

Globally, the term urban “regeneration” has evolved over time and across regions¹¹. The use varies according to the context/language.

- **France:** Renovation (linked to "Programme National de la Rénovation Urbaine").
- **Nigeria, Kenya, India:** Focus on infrastructure improvements and sustainable practices.
- **UK:** Term often refers to urban renewal, differing from past North American approaches.



Urban Regeneration Entries and Thematic Focus

Integrated urban regeneration processes encompass various strategies and have different entry points, according to the specific needs of an urban area.

Involves three key urban assets¹⁵:



Land

planning regeneration of under-utilized land (e.g., brownfields) requires strategic land-use planning and zoning regulations.



Community

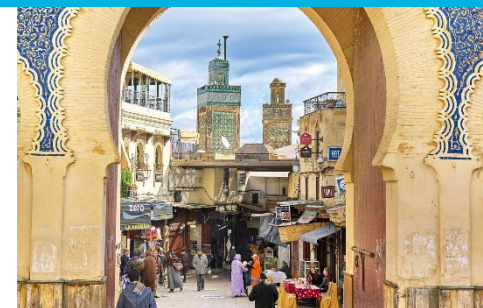
community participation is essential to inform decision-making and align urban interventions with local needs.



Environment

rehabilitating degraded land near water bodies, former industrial zones, and disaster-prone areas for sustainable regeneration.

**Historic restoration,
preservation and
conservation**



**Environmental
restoration, recovery
and preservation**



**Public space
re-activation**



**Housing, infrastructure
and service provision
rehabilitation**



CLARIFICATION NOTE – Understanding Urban Regeneration

The spectrum of urban regeneration is vast and evolving.



In essence, urban regeneration - as advocated by UN-Habitat - **leverages existing local assets to promote inclusion, sustainability and resilience**, in line with paragraphs 38 and 97 of New Urban Agenda, which **emphasize the need to preserving the cultural and natural heritage and highlighting the role of traditional communities in transformation initiatives.**

NUA 38. We commit ourselves to the sustainable leveraging of **natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible**, in cities and human settlements, as appropriate, **through integrated urban and territorial policies** and adequate investments at the national, **subnational and local levels**, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages [...]

NUA 97. We will promote planned urban extensions and infill, **prioritizing renewal, regeneration and retrofitting of urban areas**, as appropriate, including the upgrading of slums and informal settlements, providing high-quality buildings and public spaces, promoting integrated and participatory approaches involving all relevant stakeholders and inhabitants and **avoiding spatial and socioeconomic segregation and gentrification, while preserving cultural heritage and preventing and containing urban sprawl.**



Way Forward



Opportunity for Addressing Spatial Inequality

- The preparation of the next Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat presents a crucial opportunity to redouble the efforts reduction of spatial inequality and inclusive prosperity, linked to Sub-programmes 1 and 2.

Leveraging Expertise and Connecting Efforts

- The Flagship programme “Inclusive Communities – Thriving Cities” links policy, planning and finance.
- It advances the SDGs in key areas: social inclusion, adequate housing, service delivery, economic development and climate action.

Scaling Impact

- Developing tools adaptable for national, regional and local contexts.
- Strengthening partnerships and providing technical assistance to governments.
- Focus on adequate housing, infrastructure and services in alignment with UN-Habitat’s core mandates and forthcoming Strategic Plan 2026-29.

CLARIFICATION NOTE – Urban Regeneration National Experiences

Durban, South Africa: Warwick Junction Urban Renewal

Focus: Socioeconomic Development

- **Context:** Lack of infrastructure for 20,000 traders at key transport hub.
- **Strategy:** New market area, financial training, health and safety facilities, and establishment of informal trade department.
- **Impact:** Safer environment, increased tourism, increased income.



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Porto Maravilha Revitalisation

Focus: Historical Centre and Port



- **Context:** Underutilized historic port area, lacking adequate infrastructure.
- **Strategy:** Comprehensive revitalization of 500ha with mobility system, cultural sites, new housing and land incentives.
- **Impact:** Boosted tourism, improved urban connectivity, and enhanced community spaces.



CLARIFICATION NOTE – Urban Regeneration UN-Habitat Projects

Cancún, Mexico: Parque de la Equidad

Focus: Public Space

- **Context:** Rapid urbanization generating spatial inequalities.
- **Strategy:** Creation of a 16-km linear park improving infrastructure and services through participatory planning and land-value capture.
- **Impact:** Enhanced public spaces for over 200,000 residents, improved urban equity, and sustainable infrastructure..



SIMBOLOGÍA

- Corredores
- Ciclovía propuesta
- Banqueta propuesta
- Área de preservación natural
- Área de transición
- Vegetación propuesta
- Vegetación existente

Tipologías de espacios

- Conector humano
- Conector natural
- Paisajístico medioambiental
- Paisajístico uso activo
- Dinámico pasivo
- Dinámico activo
- Adjunto servicios

- Comercio s
- Comercio f
- Cerrado mc
- Cerrado co



Nairobi, Kenya: Nairobi Rivers Basin Regeneration

Focus: Environmental resilience



- **Context:** Degraded river systems.
- **Strategy:** 9-goal urban regeneration plan, pilot projects and community participation.
- **Impact:** green spaces, and local economic opportunities enhancing Nairobi's resilience and well-being.

