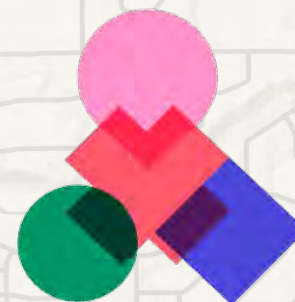




THE INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY CHARTER

for Urban and Territorial
Development to Deliver the
New Urban Agenda

*Habitat Professionals Forum
World Urban Forum 2024
Cairo-Egypt*



This International Charter for Participatory Planning and Development has been prepared by the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU), Territoire Europe and The Bartlett, UCL on behalf of the Habitat Professionals Forum, with support from the Association of Urbanistic Jurisprudence (AUJ-CJUR), the Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization (CSU) and the Eastern Regional Organization for Planning & Human Settlements (EAROPH).

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The need for this Charter in urban and territorial development is identified in key Proposition 3 in the UN-Habitat Professionals Forum's (HPF's) Roadmap to a Just and Regenerative Recovery that was launched at the World Urban Forum in September 2022.



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Foreword

This International Charter for Participatory Urban and Territorial Development (the International Participatory Charter) is based on our shared understanding that it is the right of all peoples not only to take part directly in shaping the decisions that their governments take, but also for them to have direct agency in shaping their urban environments and territories, building consensus and co-creating solutions to address common challenges. In doing so participation promotes democratic, transparent, trusted and accountable governance in support of and in addition to representative democratic processes.

The preparation of this International Participatory Charter has been driven by the need to tackle the unacceptable territorial inequalities that exist across communities, cultures and geographies in terms of social conditions, economic opportunities, and exposure to human-created and natural threats. The voices of disadvantaged and threatened peoples must be heard if the planning, design, and management of change is to give hope for a more equitable, just, and regenerative world.

The work by the Habitat Professionals Forum (HPF, the UN's association of Built Environment Professions) in preparing this International Participatory Charter has taken place on ancestral Indigenous lands that span the globe, including the territory of the confederations of Indigenous Peoples and First Nations on all continents.

Therefore in particular we acknowledge these Peoples, their elders past, present and emerging and their unceded connection to these territories, and their custodianship as an act of truth and reconciliation. We respect the integral role that Indigenous Peoples have in planning and managing the land, waters and seas for the well-being of their people, families, communities, and Nature.

We acknowledge the harmful impacts that the development of urban habitats and corresponding policy and governance schemes have had on Indigenous Peoples and other equity-deprived groups, and their environments. We acknowledge and actively embrace the responsibility of all - professionals, civil society and business as well as national and local governments - to be agents of positive change, in partnership with and support for those same communities.

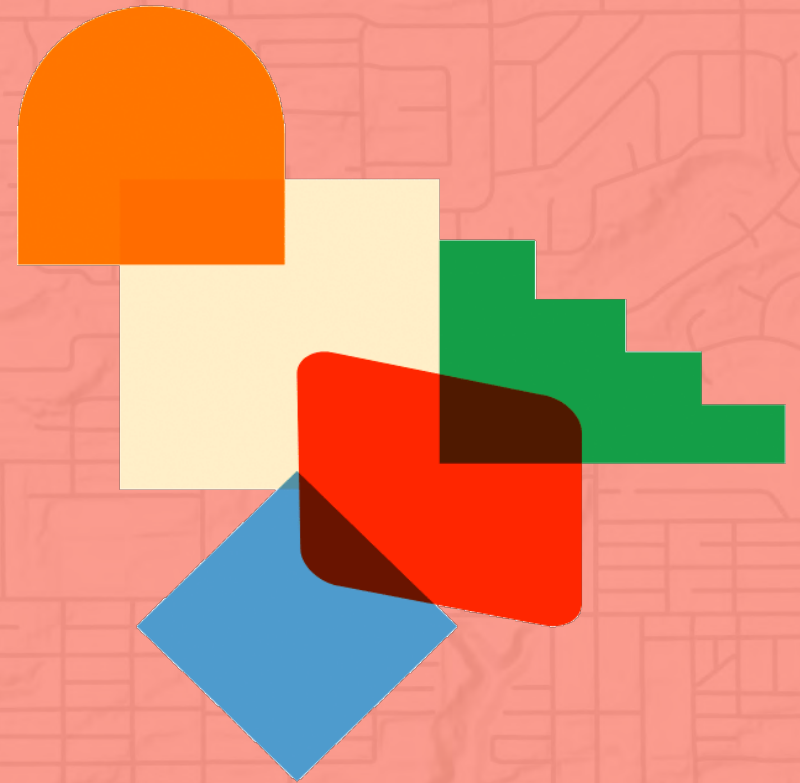
The 'doomsday clock' is ticking. This International Participatory Charter is prepared in the context of global radical uncertainty. There is an urgent need for tactical urbanism combined with medium-long term initiatives that progressively transform institutions and practices in order to launch fast-track, small-scale, low-cost and short-term initiatives.

A framework was proposed in the [Roadmap to a Just and Regenerative Recovery](#) launched by the 2022 Habitat Professionals Forum at the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland, in support of the principles set out in the [International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning](#). Participation is central to these International Guidelines.

This Charter therefore sets out the Principles and Articles that support the International Guidelines. It is supported by supplementary documents with a Toolbox for Bridging the Democratic Deficits in participatory Planning, and Case Studies that demonstrate these Principles and Articles.

The application of this Charter will progress Urban and Territorial Planning 'reform' that is required globally. The International Participatory Charter prepared by the HPF is to be adopted by its members individually. The Charter is also being promoted by the HPF for adoption by public, private and civil organizations engaged in urban and regional development, and where possible integrated into the regulatory regimes in the individual countries. ([Link](#) for updates).

A: Needs, Outcomes, & Principles



1. The Need for the Charter: Embedding Human Rights in Urban and Territorial Development

The Challenges

Urban and territorial development is a Common Good that is shared by all, and impacts on the fundamental right to an adequate standard of living and a decent life, enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is also recognised in Articles 2, 3 and 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

There is an overriding imperative to tackle the unacceptable territorial inequalities that exist across communities, cultures, and geographies in terms of social conditions, economic opportunities and exposure to human-created and natural threats, and the current global [trajectories](#) with:

- a. Inexorable urban growth: A further 2.5 billion people living in urban areas by 2050.
- b. Increasing numbers without basic services, safe water, adequate food, adequate housing, shelter and sustained cultures and landscapes.
- c. The need to effectively and meaningfully engage the 1.2 billion young persons globally.

These challenges of urbanisation are compounded by crises related to migration and climate change and planning responses which involve the displacement of the most vulnerable communities.

Participation of those who are affected by these challenges can result in more sensitive planning. They must have a role and their voices must be heard if we aspire for a more equitable world in the face of the [Obstacles to Progress](#). The challenge of participation for fragmented marginalised groups, such as informal transport operators or low-income women, is especially so in the cities in the Global South. Methods need to shift from one-off exercises to ongoing and open processes, responsive to marginalized and excluded groups and to modern technologies.

Article 25 UDHR

As a corollary, there is a consequential right for collective participation in decisions that impact this Common Good, also recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in particular Article 25. This needs to be delivered through the construction of social contracts about the agreements, rules, and norms, decided collectively, that will define the shared future, the common ideals, and the resolution of problems faced in urban, rural, remote and/or Indigenous communities

Article 25 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The Right to Participate exists, regardless of social or residency status, age, gender or limitations, and location or those who might benefit from human development. This Right exists regardless of status in formal, informal, urban, rural or indigenous settlements. Elected authorities in exercising their administrative functions of urban and territorial planning and development only exercise power delegated to them by the people and communities. It is also the responsibility of professionals, as well as governments, to be agents and facilitators of positive change, in partnership with those same communities.

Interconnected Rights

Participatory processes must therefore involve all sectors, interests, and people, regardless of settlement type, as part of a [Legal Framework for Urban Social Justice](#) and including the [European Charter of Participatory Democracy](#) in Spatial Planning (ECTP-CEU, 2015), in accord with [UDHR](#) Article 25/86.

The lack of such effective civic participation represents a democratic deficit. Participation processes are critical in urban and settlement planning irrespective of the prevailing form of government and democratic institution. Even ostensibly democratic countries can fall short of fulfilling the principles of participatory democracy in their practices or access to financial and expert resources, especially in highly centralised forms of government or unstable political situations.

The processes of effective participation bring together the following interconnected rights to secure a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and to protect and safeguard the cultural and natural heritage, necessary for the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation:

- Right to transparency and access to information
- Right of audience
- Right to compliance with the essential formalities of the legal systems and security
- Right to deliberative consultation and engagement
- Right to freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly and association
- Right to a standard of living that is required to live with well-being, health and dignity and sustain the natural and cultural heritage
- Right to access to justice

2. The Outcomes of the Participatory Processes of the Charter

Participatory rights and practices in urban and territorial development promoted through this Charter will harness local knowledge, experience and expertise for social benefit in the planning and development of cities and settlements. It will help deliver a range of outcomes especially those related SDGs 11 and 16 and the New Urban Agenda through Legal Rights for human settlements that enshrine the rights to life, health, food, water, access to services and opportunities, security, adequate housing and shelter.

The delivery of these rights depends upon adopting actions in the Charter in order to deliver the following outcomes of participatory democracy in urban and territorial development.

- **Promoting effective democracy** through embedding local knowledge and experience and data into policy-making processes, by increasing transparency within decision-making processes and by enabling decision-makers to be better understood and therefore more accountable and strengthening legal frameworks.
- **Promoting social justice, equity, and inclusivity** by ensuring that the voices of marginalised and vulnerable groups and communities are heard, especially those who have been systemically and historically excluded from decision-making processes.
- **Enabling decisions to be better informed contextually** and more creative and innovative by drawing on the greater diversity of perspectives, ideas, experiences and data in the planning, design and management of urban and territorial plans, programmes and projects. Such genuine participation enables the co-creation of solutions and harnesses the ability of people to influence the actions and investments that shape their cities and regions.
- **Enhancing the legitimacy, acceptability, and deliverability** of policies, programmes and projects, by creating consensus and accountability of governments, facilitating the localised resolution of potential sources of dispute and conflict, and by increasing the local understanding of wider issues and opportunities.
- **Increasing the attractiveness for investment** by providing confidence in the longer term stability and commitment to decisions.
- **Empowering local communities to take on responsibilities, to initiate and implement change** and reduce the sole dependence on authorities, thereby building and maintaining social and civic capital and enhancing the place identity, cultural landscapes and local spirit which motivates local communities to participate and build capacity to engage in future and wider participatory processes.

3. The Participatory Principles for Urban & Territorial Development

Foundational Principles

The foundational principles for Participatory Democracy in Urban and Territorial Development are to ensure equal rights with dignity for all human beings, respect for Mother Earth, and accessible processes at all stages that involve all.

- **Principle 1: Human Rights with dignity.** People's participation in shaping the future of their communities flows from the inviolable right of all humans to be treated with dignity.
- **Principle 2: Ecological respect.** Democratic processes that engage diverse interests align with the goal of ensuring harmony, sustainability, and resilience between natural and human environments.
- **Principle 3: Open participatory processes.** Participatory democracy depends on people's voices being heard and participating in processes that are accessible, inclusive, meaningful, and transparent.

Outcome-Oriented Action Principles

Embedding of participatory democracy must be a societal (as well as legal) norm, expressed through three outcome-oriented principles.

- **Principle 4: Delivery on rights to engage.** Participation needs to be embedded throughout plan and project life-cycles (design, implementation, evaluation, iteration), at varying scales and in diverse forms, with legal mechanisms to guarantee their effectiveness.
- **Principle 5: Priority actions for recovery.** Participatory action should be targeted at those places where there is greatest and most immediate need.

- **Principle 6: Transformative change.** Participatory planning can drive long-term change and be part of transformed behaviours and beneficial outcomes

Context-Sensitive Action

Participatory processes must be sensitive to the diversity of geographies, professional practices, political and cultural norms, and priorities for action.

- **Principle 7: Removing Barriers:** Diverse statutory & non-statutory processes must be used to reduce the complexity and potential barriers to community and stakeholder engagement. This is in addition to statutory administrative mechanisms and supported by diverse professionals.
- **Principle 8: Multiple intersecting identities and lived experiences** such as race, gender and poverty matter, and need to be embraced and accounted for, including forms of expertise and lived experience that have historically been marginalised. This requires respect for the plurality of communities and stakeholders.
- **Principle 9: Consideration of structural and institutional difference** in the level of available resources, information, and organisations of governance and their vulnerabilities must be built into determining and implementing participatory arrangements. This is particularly important regarding the distinct procedural and resourcing implications for engagement between formal / informal settlements.

Evolving Knowledge

The international diversity of politico-legal institutions and Indigenous and first nation practices requires: a set of inclusionary principles; content that is accessible and multi-lingual; and formats that encourage dialogue and knowledge exchange. There must be openness through dialogue and knowledge exchange for diverse contributions and insights which are open to new contributions and insights. With a **concern** for the fact that 90% of future urban growth will be in countries with limited professional resources, international and local knowledge exchange is needed through the development of trusted platforms, education and training, and dissemination of best practice. This includes the UN-Habitat online [Database of Best Practice](#), as a means of engagement, which must be maintained and made more accessible.

- **Principle 10: Promoting the sharing of knowledge** demands shared and equal access to knowledge, including harnessing the potential of digital technologies through:
 - Spatial databases linked to data observatories and agreed standards including forecasting, modelling, and monitoring; and
 - An integrated open data framework and linked digital tools with public consultation functions.

B: Purposes, Processes, & Implementation



4. Purposes of Charter

Article 1 - Definition

Public participation processes seek to facilitate and guarantee effective decisions, and minimise conflicts created by competing needs, demands, and concerns through shared understanding. Participation is the means to identify the most pressing needs and aspirations of people, promoting transparent governance, accountability and local democracy. The Charter process promotes co-production and is driven by general common interests.

Article 2 – Aims

Urban and territorial planning and development strategies, plans, policies, legal regulations and programmes have major impacts on people's quality of life and quality of living spaces. They guide and support the choices as to where people live, navigate the world, express their cultural diversity, establish, and access business and employment, and the spatial distribution of public utilities and services. They moreover have implications for public health, ecological integrity, environmental and cultural sustainability, social inclusion and overarching societal well-being.

These strategies, plans, policies, and programmes must be transparent, gender-responsive, human rights-based and effective, in terms of public participation and delivery of appropriate responses to cultural, social, environmental, and economic challenges. The goal of this Charter is to achieve shared ownership and a common acceptance of strategies, plans, policies, and programmes of action through collaborative engagement which will resolve conflicts and achieve a co-produced decision-making that serves all.

Article 3 - Building Trust and Hope for Residents of Informal Settlements

Having regard to the fact that over 1 billion people live in informal settlements and living without power, in fear, uncertainty, and exclusion, building trust between people and agencies through effective public participation empowers people in informal settlements providing them with agency in transforming their future and is therefore critical to providing hope in the future.

Conventional design and infrastructure standards are not necessarily appropriate nor delivered. Upgrading programmes need to step beyond the conventional approach by adopting more participatory approaches through more local community place-based solutions by having regard to the Guidelines in Schedule 1 of this Charter in order to:

- Think beyond only delivering basic infrastructure and upgrading of physical conditions in informal settlements and focus on services and resources which enable sustainable livelihoods, education and training, poverty reduction and psycho-social safety, such as public spaces and facilities;
- Establish trust between regulatory and funding authorities and the community benefitting from the upgrade programme; and
- Enhance awareness of upgrading programmes and available resources in order to activate these pathways and create a better understanding of how to engage with those in authority and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Article 4 - Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Having regard to the historic and ongoing exclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, participatory processes must go beyond the securing of legal rights but provide a voice for those who have too often been harmed, divided, excluded and disempowered, in accord with and in support of the United Nation's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples must be based on reciprocal, inclusive and not transactional relationships, and have regard to the Guidelines in Schedule 2 of this Charter in order to:

- Advance the cause of truth and reconciliation;
- Acknowledge and respect the importance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
- Respect Indigenous cultures, knowledges and histories as guided by Indigenous Peoples;
- Have regard to local circumstances in terms of size; geographical remoteness and isolation, cultural homogeneity in terms of languages, and established rights and institutions;
- Recognise the trans-border territories of Indigenous Peoples and embrace the international dimension of cultural impacts;
- Recognize the plurality of Indigenous voices that exist within spatial territories;
- Acknowledge the growing presence and diversity of Indigenous Peoples living in urban areas.

5. Transformative Participatory Processes

Article 5 – Involvement and Representation

Through the Participatory processes promoted by this Charter, a broad range of interests and needs can be expressed by as wide as possible a range of concerned and affected people. The process must enable participation by each of those impacted by or having an interest in a strategy, plan, policy, or programme of action. Awareness-raising measures involving appropriate groups in civil society should be considered at the outset as a central part of the process. Participatory processes need to be tailored to the specific political, cultural, and social environment challenges and issues. Necessary actions should be taken to compensate where the benchmarking in terms of Schedules 3 & 4 has identified shortfalls in formal institutional participatory planning processes.

Article 6 – Information and Education

The Participatory processes promoted by this Charter imply a full and comprehensive level of information and full access to it at all stages in the formulation of the strategy, plan, policy or programme, from the beginning of the work, presentation of proposals, discourse, and response from the authority. All the participants must be provided with all the necessary information and means of communication in order to ensure the same level of understanding and capacity to contribute. Education and communication should be continuous through the phases of planning, design and implementation.

This requires that processes are promoted through collective learning where all the participants acquire and share the same level of information and the same level of understanding. Knowledge must therefore be developed collectively and accessible so that a shared understanding can be built between the diverse participants. This informed process needs to be fostered and promoted by planners, developers and decisionmakers.

Article 7 – Operational Rules

Rules of operation for participation must be tailored from one case to another to be responsive to local circumstances and place. Methods and processes must vary in relation to the scope of the plans and projects, the planning level and the populations concerned as well as the local administrative structure.

Nevertheless, a true participatory process cannot be ensured without establishing appropriate robust rules of operation and decision making within the communities involved. The issue of representation is crucial. It is for the competent public authorities to consult in advance in defining the means by which the representation of groups of people or individuals and those that have a real interest in delivering action can engage with the legal procedures, and which recognise and guarantee the right to engage, and require it from administrative or judicial authorities.

Article 8 – Access and Expression

Everyone who is concerned about or affected by development projects or policy must have access to a choice in the means of expression, giving them the opportunity to voice their needs, concerns and issues.

Authorities or other bodies involved in the process must ensure that people are respected, comfortable, safe and free to express their opinions. All people with a potential interest should be encouraged to express and discuss their needs, concerns and ideas in informal, multi-modal, and multi-directional exchanges as well as formal statutory processes. These must be undertaken with the explicit goal of improving active dialogue and a shared understanding of the challenges and in developing common interests and concerns in order to create a common vision and the possibility of the co-conception of planning solutions.

New technologies must be used where they are available, relevant and create added value. They should be fully accessible, meaningful, convenient, and satisfying for the participants. They must be fit for purpose in terms of forms of data and information collection and collation, forms of media and presentation, and use of artificial intelligence (AI). Genuine deliberative and reflective techniques will need to be used to allow participants to express and listen to a variety of perspectives and opinions regarding the issues and challenges at hand, as well as proposed or identified solutions and opportunities that may exist.

Article 9 – Continuity

All the participants are fully enabled and integrally involved throughout from initiation through conception, decision making and implementation to monitoring, evaluation and updating of urban and territorial strategies, plans, policies, legal regulations and programmes.

6. Implementation of Charter

Article 10 – Benchmarking Participatory Practices and Processes

As recognised in SDG11.3.2, a key indicator in implementing the principles of the Charter is the extent to which the democratic nature of the systems and structures that are in place enable regular and direct participation by civil society in urban planning and management. Self-assessment benchmarking by all authorities is therefore key to developing effective participatory practices and processes in urban and territorial development in terms of:

- The general nature of planning and management systems to allow and encourage participation of civil society in plan making, budgeting and monitoring and feedback on the implementation of policies and project, on the criteria in Schedule 3 of this Charter; and
- The specific participatory processes for public and stakeholders involvement, procedures to challenge decisions, feedback mechanisms for oversight and accountability, and budgeting processes, on the criteria in Schedule 4 of this Charter.

Action should be taken to review and adjust systems and processes, through appropriate changes, where benchmarking of established formal institutional arrangements highlights shortfalls in participatory planning processes, having regard to the Guidelines in Schedule 5 of this Charter.

Article 11 – Relevant Experts

All urban professionals with adequate skills and expertise as facilitators have the responsibility for enabling the full representation of participants' arguments and proposals. In emergency recovery processes, for example in disaster recovery, this includes engagement in tactical urbanism, helping people to change public spaces in participatory processes with low costs. Professionals, academia and urban researchers should also provide independent expertise to monitor or audit participatory processes and ensure fairness and compliance with rules and laws whilst being open to experimentation and innovation.

Article 12 – Decision-making Authority

Decision-making authorities at all levels of governance must guarantee and undertake participatory planning as part of their responsibilities and in taking account of the concerns of stakeholders/participants affected by their decisions. This includes all authorities whose decisions about development have an impact on the quality of life. These authorities must possess or be enabled to acquire an understanding of the specific context and issue, communication skills, technical assistance, and time availability, in particular a basic understanding of human rights and gender equality considerations and the rights of children and persons with disability to engage in participatory process...

A public body or authority must be impartial in monitoring and auditing the participatory processes to ensure that they are open, fair, inclusive, and unbiased. Therefore, there should be recourse to an independent appeal process to protect the rights of individuals and communities in the participatory process.

Article 13 – Monitoring of the implementation of the International Participatory Charter

A group of experts, supported by the HPF, in partnership with UN-Habitat and relevant bodies, will assist in the development of, and advise on, the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the Charter. This will also enable the dissemination of experience about best practice and about practices which should be avoided and discouraged.

Article 14 – Rewarding Good Practice

In addition to the promotion of the Charter, the Signatories to it should not only disseminate but also where possible give public acknowledgment to celebrate good practice and encourage exchange of experiences, for example awards of excellence in promoting the International Participatory Charter.

Article 15 – Relationship with other instruments

The provisions of the International Participatory Charter are in line with and directly inspired by the SDGs, New Urban Agenda and HPF Road to Recovery, in addition to the international human rights framework. The implementation of its provisions should be consistent with the goals and objectives of these guiding protocols.

Schedules

Schedule 1

Article 3 Guidelines on Participation in Upgrading Informal Settlements & Slums

Schedule 2

Guidelines on the Implementation of Article 4 for Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Schedule 3

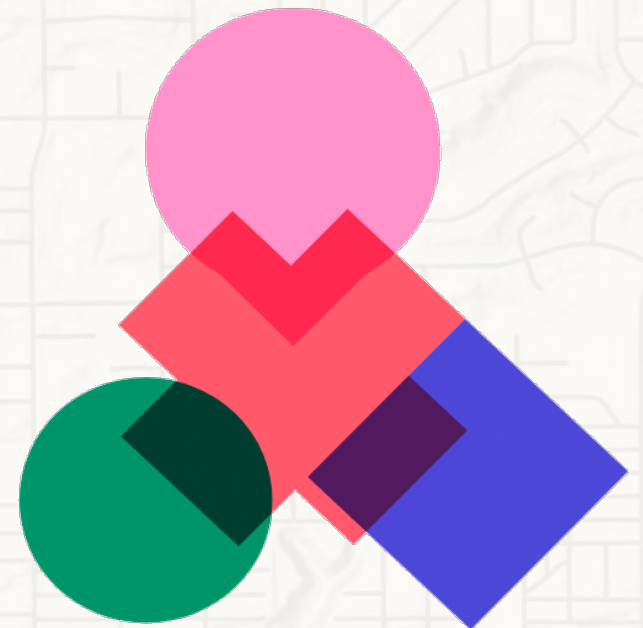
Article 10 General Participatory Benchmarking Guidelines (Based on UN Habitat Survey Method)

Schedule 4

Thematic Participatory Benchmarking Guidelines

Schedule 5

Guidelines for Bridging Democratic Deficits in Participatory Planning of Cities and Settlements



Schedule 1

Guidelines on Article 3 Relating to Participation in Upgrading Informal Settlements and Slums.

The following *Guidelines* identifies the key actions that would support the implementation of Article 3 of the international Participatory Charter:

Identifying Local Leaders the Represent the Diversity of the Community: The role of community leaders is especially critical in informal settlements where self-organization is key. They fill gaps in local governance structures and formal leadership and are crucial for holding all the partners together and act as mobilisers and co-researchers. More than anyone, they should champion the process through dialogue and the many negotiations required with diverse community stakeholders. It is important that the culture of leadership is inclusive, and believes in the right of all women to be heard, which is strengthened where leaders and spokespersons reflect the diversity of the community itself.

Informed Negotiation & Advocacy: The effectiveness of local negotiations and advocacy depends upon identifying the 'poverty penalty' in access to, and quality of, basic services (housing, water, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, and waste collection) which exist between formal and informal areas of cities. In addition to its value for advocacy, measuring the 'poverty penalty' provides the local context for framing policy and programmes of action, not just for the urban poor but also all other marginalized groups having intersectional experiences.

Community Training: Recruiting diverse community residents is an essential step in order to mobilise and scale up action in upgrading informal settlements. They know their communities best and, with training enable their fellow residents and persuade them to engage and participate. The work simply cannot be done without them, but they need to be recruited and supported where possible by training.

Community-led Data Collection and Ownership: Community-led data collection methods such as roundtables, knowledge exchanges, focus groups, provide foundational data for Settlement Profiling including settlement mapping, basic numbering and enumerations, structures, poverty levels, land use, the quality of community services and facilities and service location.

Community-led Co-Planning Processes: The processes for upgrading informal settlements, includes mobilising residents to participate in data collection and planning activities; dialogue and communication on priorities and preferred solutions. This requires a representative approach determined by the community for receiving and disseminating information and engaging in the upgrading process, down to the household level through, for example, training in gathering data, construction and co-developing solutions.

Integrated Co-produced Plans: Guiding principles and planning priorities need to be negotiated with communities, where possible through consortia, for example to minimise demolition, displacement and the fracturing of community networks, and to mitigate residents' vulnerability to environmental risks.

Schedule 2

Guidelines on the Implementation of Article 4 of The International Participatory Charter on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

The following guidance identifies actions that support the implementation of Article 4:

- Advance truth and reconciliation – encourage learning, understand the influence or past and on-going harms on current realities, promote positive outcomes (e.g. health) through capacity building to enable Indigenous Peoples' and their organisations' self-determination, ensuring equal access to resources, and building reciprocal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, and their organisations.
- Respect Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and histories for example through multiple consultative and approval processes.
- Promote understanding, recording, revitalisation, and enhancement of Indigenous cultural assets, including language, and the landscape, even if they do not currently live there. Where there is Indigenous attachment to the land, and the Indigenous history and heritage embedded in the land, that enriches the wider community and nation.
- Acknowledge and respect the importance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers and the long-established systems and networks for consultation, including respecting local definitions of ownership, control, access, and privacy over knowledge and data.
- Incorporate Indigenous knowledges and experiences into a range of practices, such as land and cultural resources management, community engagement and decision-making, as guided by Indigenous Peoples.
- Build relationships and demonstrate humility and openness - Seek advice and be open to receiving advice. Use appropriate, clear, and plain language in a respectful manner, communicate transparently. Empower people to speak up when there is a perceived risk to safety.
- Improve equity and social justice - acknowledge the on-going role of systemic racism in society and make equity a key objective of engagement.
- Recognise that building trust and improving equity and social justice are ongoing place and context-specific processes, that should not be constrained by project timelines.
- Recognise the trans-border territories of Indigenous Peoples (e.g. the traditional Sami territory between Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden or Blackfoot territories between Canada and USA).
- Embrace the international dimension of cultural impacts, especially arising from climate change by providing an external voice for Indigenous Peoples and Communities in the plan making process on major national developments.

Footnote: This Guidance draws on the growing body of international experience, including the Charters and Treaties that are now emerging, ranging from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Chile, Norway, and the USA.

Schedule 3

Article 3 General Participatory Benchmarking Guidelines.

(Based on SDG11.3.2 Indicator and UN Habitat Survey [Method](#))

Does the system allow and encourage participatory processes through the following?

A: By direct participation of civil society (without intermediaries)	A1: In urban planning and design	A2: In urban budget decision making	A3: In evaluation and feedback on urban management processes			
B: By regular participation of civil society (at every stage of the process, and at least every six months)	B1: In urban planning and design	B2: In urban budget decision making	B3: In evaluation and feedback on urban management processes			
C: By democratic participation, representing a cross-section of society that allows for equal representation of all members of the community with equal rights for participation and voting	C1: In urban planning and design	C2: In urban budget decision making	C3: In evaluation and feedback on urban management processes			
D: By prioritising participation of the marginalised including	D1: Diverse Groups of Women	D2: Young & Older Persons	D3: Low Income Groups	D4: People with Disabilities	D5: All Ethnic Groups	D6: Sexual and Gender Identity Minorities

Schedule 4

Thematic Participatory Benchmarking Guidelines.

(Based on UN Habitat Case Studies [Report](#))

A: Public Participation & Involvement	B: Procedures to Challenge Urban Planning Decisions	C: Feedback Mechanisms & Digital Governance	D: Oversight & Accountability	E: Participatory Budgeting
<p>A1: Non-State actors are effectively involved in urban planning & required to engage and consult at all stages.</p>	<p>B1: The system allows planning decisions to be challenged: through defined procedures, transparent and the decisions are evidence based and not discretionary.</p>	<p>C1: The public can provide feedback on government performance and the quality of urban services, through various mechanisms, including digital platforms.</p>	<p>D1: Rules on conduct of public officials are established and transparent, a code of ethics/ conduct is in place.</p>	<p>E1: Citizens are granted adequate opportunities in budgetary allocation scrutiny and monitoring.</p>
<p>A2: Mechanisms, timeframes and modalities for participation are all clearly established.</p>			<p>D2: The legal framework includes effective anti-corruption laws.</p>	
<p>A3: The public is well informed: citizens have the right to access information and the process is easy, timely and cost-effective.</p>	<p>B2: Special bodies in charge of determining the case, appeal have been established, as well as timeframes and modalities.</p>	<p>C2: The feedback must be taken into consideration with a specific requirement & timeframe for the Government to reply to the feedback provided.</p>	<p>D3: Citizens and/or civil society actions at their disposal to hold public officials and their service providers to account in undertaking their duties.</p>	
<p>A4: Public information is transparent and publicly available in multiple ways.</p>				
<p>A5: Participation processes are informed in that citizens receive training/civic education from the Government.</p>	<p>B3: Timeframes are short to allow the applicant to have a quick resolution of the case and certainty of his or her rights.</p>	<p>C3: Where Internet access is poor, there are alternative mechanisms to collect feedback or / & support from the Government in enhancing access to the Internet.</p>	<p>D4: There is the possibility to create bodies, like "special committees" or other kinds of agencies, used to hold public officials accountable.</p>	
<p>A6: There are specific mechanisms in place to allow for participation of priority groups.</p>				
<p>A7: There are mechanisms for non-State actors to be involved & partner with State actors in delivering services and implementing projects (e.g., public-private & service delivery partnerships).</p>	<p>B4: Costs are accessible or there are support schemes for the poorest people.</p>		<p>D5: There are mechanisms to protect citizens who report improper conduct and corruption, from reprisals.</p>	

Schedule 5

Guidelines for Bridging Democratic Deficits in Participatory Planning of Cities and Settlements.

Participatory processes need to be ongoing, continuous and cross-cutting to the planning process. The mechanisms of participation need to vary and adapt to the context and to the different type of groups and audiences (refer citizen Engagement Guide: Our City Plans methodology). Strategies to bridge the democratic deficits in participatory planning of cities and settlements therefore need to be tailored to the specific political, cultural, and social environment.

The following activities illustrate the range of actions that can be adopted by communities to compensate where the benchmarking of established formal institutional arrangements has highlighted shortfalls in participatory planning processes.

- Educating government and organizations on the wide range of benefits of participatory planning irrespective of political systems in terms of bringing diverse perspectives and local knowledge especially of marginalised and vulnerable groups, and increased acceptance and legitimacy of policies.
- Educating the public about the importance of their involvement in planning decisions can be a long-term strategy. This might involve indirect or tangential methods to spread awareness, depending on the level of repression in the country.
- Leveraging informal networks and respected community leaders can be a way to gather and disseminate opinions. These leaders often have the trust and respect of the people and can be effective in representing community interests.
- Initiating community level planning and/or leverage existing self-organised communities: Communities can organise themselves through for example by village/neighbourhood-level elections or around specific local issues, which can lead to small-scale, but meaningful changes.
- Utilising, cultural and artistic methods to express opinions and engage people of all ages, especially with younger ones, in discussions about planning and development issues.
- Utilising digital platforms to provide space for discussion and planning. While these platforms may be monitored or censored, they can offer a means for people to connect and organise in safer way to express their views without direct confrontation.
- Forming alliances within the government or bureaucracy to promote public participation within the limits of their authority.
- Engagement with NGOs and Civil Society organisations, with more freedom to operate, to act as intermediaries.
- Using public forums and workshops where experts, citizens, and government official discuss urban development plans, providing a platform for public opinion and community needs.
- Participating in international forums or using international advocacy platforms to share expertise and experience in public participation in planning with countries with comparable political environments.

The Habitat Professionals Forum

The *HPF* supports the UN-HABITAT in providing the breadth of expertise and depth of experiences required to implement the UN-Habitat Agenda for sustainable urban development, as set out in the UN Habitat's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

The HPF is the affiliation of international and regional associations whose combined professional expertise is central to promoting and achieving sustainable urban development. Its members are independent, non-profit and non-governmental organisations.



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UN-HABITAT

The International Participatory Charter
for Urban and Territorial Development to
deliver the New Urban Agenda

November 2024

- AdP-Villes en développement
- African Planners Association (APA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association of Urbanistic Jurisprudence (AUJ-CJUR)
- Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA)
- Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP)
- Commonwealth Association of Surveying & Land Economy (CASLE)
- Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization (CSU)
- Eastern Regional Organization for Planning and Human Settlements (EAROPH)
- European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO)
- European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU)
- Global Planners Network (GPN)
- Iberoamerican Federation of Urban Planners (FIU)
- International Association for Urban Development (INTA)
- International Association of World Heritage Professionals (IAWHP)
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC)
- International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)
- International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)
- International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP)
- International Real Estate Federation (FIABCI)
- International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)
- International Society for Urban Health (ISUH)
- International Union of Architects (UIA)
- International Water Association (IWA)
- Metropolitan and Territorial Planning Agencies Global Network (MTPA-gn)
- Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing/Inclusive Cities (WIEGO)

In support of UN-Habitat



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