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**Implementation of the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2024 and the implementation of its subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and UN-Habitat engagement in countries, territories and areas affected by conflicts and disasters**

## **Highlights of normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat for the period January–June 2024\*\***

**Information complementing the report of the Executive Director on normative and operational activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including updates on the Nepal and Jordan country programmes, urban crisis prevention, and response initiatives and activities for the period January–June 2024 (HSP/EB.2024/19)**

### **I. Activities towards implementation of the strategic plan 2020–2025**

1. Under **Subprogramme 1**, ‘Reduced spatial inequality and poverty’, and through the Flagship Programme ‘Inclusive Communities, Thriving Cities’, technical assistance for urban development, transformation and regeneration policies, plans and programmes, and resource mobilization, was provided to national and local governments from 11 countries – Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Cuba, Brazil, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia. The programme established collaborations with organizations such as the International Olympics Committee (IOC), UNESCO and UN Tourism, to leverage sports, culture and sustainable tourism to mobilize resources and develop solutions for reduced spatial inequality. The programme also works with private sector entities, research institutions, and local, regional and national governments. Through in-house and external collaborations, five normative outputs were developed (i.e., ‘Urban Regeneration for Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals’, the ‘Atlas of Urban Regeneration’, the Capacity Development and Training modules, the ‘Nature-based Solutions in Urban Transformation’, and the ‘Spatial Inclusion Trends Report’). The Our City Plans campaign advanced data monitoring on SDG 11.3.2.
2. UN-Habitat expanded its offer on legislative tools and guidance, with the finalisation of the ‘Policy Brief on Legislation, Governance and Finance of Public Spaces’; the ‘SDG Legal Checklist’ - which law makers, implementing officials and/or urban practitioners can use to ensure legislative

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\*\* The present document has not been formally edited.

alignment with sustainable urban development; and the international benchmarking study of laws and spatial planning regulations from different administrative levels, developed through the Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building (ISCB) project in Vietnam. Further, technical support was provided to review Lesotho's second draft of the National Housing Bill, and to draft "Model Law for Africa on Sustainable Urban Development".

3. Regarding access to basic services, UN-Habitat's water and sanitation projects reached 83,000 people, extending services in Lao PDR and Tanzania. Moreover, 722 water and sanitation service providers, community groups and water and sanitation sector stakeholders benefitted from capacity-building support, through training and water operators' partnerships across 21 countries.

4. UN-Habitat has been supporting projects in 27 cities across 18 countries on mobility. Most revolve around road safety and transport modal integration, complemented by enhanced policy frameworks and design guidelines. Concrete improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure are being undertaken in Kenya – with the redesign of streets in Nairobi and the development of a "safe route to school" programme; in Nigeria – for the National Cycling Master Plan; and in Afghanistan, with the National Safety Action Plan and the Urban Street Design Manual. A policy guide, "Mainstreaming road safety in national development and transport planning processes in Africa", was finalized and disseminated among African governments.

5. On housing, in addition to updates pertaining to resolution 2/7 (see document HSB/EB.2024/20) UN-Habitat supported the preparation of the Global Forum on Buildings and Constructions, organized in March 2024 by the French Government, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (Global ABC). UN-Habitat ensured that the Declaration de Chaillot, endorsed by 70 governments, recognizes the urgent need to place adequate housing at the center of global climate action.

6. UN-Habitat continued facilitating the International Mayors Council on Homelessness, a new initiative co-led with the Ruff Institute of Global Homelessness at DePaul University. Bringing together mayors and elected leaders from 12 cities across three continents, the Council serves as a platform for addressing the urgent global challenge of homelessness.

7. Further, UN-Habitat is paving the way for issues of land, homelessness, housing exclusion and deprivation, and transformation of informal settlements and slums, to be at the forefront of the World Social Summit in 2025.

8. On the transformation of informal settlements and slums, in addition to resolution implementation details provided in HSP/EB.2024/20 for resolution 2/2, UN-Habitat has developed the Transformative Action Design Toolkit and has mobilised the SADC governments towards a sub-regional strategy, and the Informality Taskforce of Cities Alliance was mobilised for local implementation of the resolution against the Global Action Plan.

9. The GLTN Programme Phase 4 (2024-2027), is increasing tenure security in informal and customary areas, applying GLTN tools and approaches. An Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on 'Transforming Land Rights and Climate Justice through a Women-Led Renegotiated New Social Contract' was held in Quezon city, in the Philippines, bringing together 20 representatives from Madagascar, the Philippines, Ireland, Australia, Bangladesh, United Kingdom, Tanzania, India, France, Kenya, and the United States of America.

10. Under the Arab Land Initiative, background papers on land assessment in Iraq, Palestine and Oman have been published. The training guide titled "Women, Land and Peace. Training Guide to Advance Women's Housing Land and Property Rights in Fragile Contexts" was also published. The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, along with the Ministry of Territorial Planning, Urban Planning, Housing, and City Policy, approved hosting the third Arab Land Conference in Rabat, Morocco, in February 2025.

11. In the Jacarezinho favela of Rio de Janeiro, the *Social Territories Programme* successfully identified 216,623 households with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). 6,109 vulnerable families were assisted through health services. In Rio as well, the *Casa Carioca* project provided housing upgrading services, including elderly and disability-friendly renovations.

12. Following the Sustainable Urbanization Plan for Izidora, Brazil, two of its informal settlements, Rosa Leão and Helena Greco, are set to receive funding from the federal government's new Growth Acceleration Program (PAC). These funds will be used to implement public works based on the urbanization plan for Rosa Leão and Helena Greco.

13. UN-Habitat's Andean Countries hub co-implemented a project with the District Habitat Secretariat of Bogotá to enhance interventions in local territories, strengthening neighborhood improvement processes from the perspective of social integration.
14. In Honduras, participatory governance strategies for Integral Urban Operations (IUO) were implemented in several communities. In Villa Guadalupe (San José de Colinas) and Armenta (San Pedro Sula), UN Habitat installed children's playgrounds in public spaces and organized community fairs, collaborating with municipal departments of community development, youth, health, and education.
15. In Egypt, the land readjustment plan of Alhumaidat Area in Qena was approved – expected to accommodate more than 40,000 inhabitants, and the *Strategic Plan for Urban Development for Dahab City* was developed – promoting opportunities for city resilience and green investments. Lastly, an Expert Group Meeting was convened – sparking national conversation on unlocking opportunities for rental housing for all.
16. Within **Subprogramme 2**, 'Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions', UN-Habitat continued to assist governments with local revenue generation, capital investment planning, and mobilization of funding for local action to achieve the SDGs. Under the January to June 2024 period, UN-Habitat supported local governments in Kenya, Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Zambia, Cameroon, and The Kyrgyz Republic with generating their own source revenue, improving local expenditure efficiency, optimizing financial management capacity of authorities and prioritizing infrastructure investments.
17. The *Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts* project finalized the development of the *Mafraq Spatial Profile*, in Jordan. Activities conducted by the team included a comprehensive municipal financial assessment, a city's performance assessment, based on UN-Habitat's *My Neighborhood Guidelines*, and a *Spatial Profile*. The next phase will support the city to prioritize projects that address both immediate needs and long-term aspirations to transform Mafraq's neighborhoods.
18. Under the People-Centred Smart Cities Programme, the innovation team, in collaboration with Unit, CAF (Development Bank for Latin America) and the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, has launched a *Digital Rights Helpdesk* for cities<sup>1</sup>, following the earlier launched *Guide for Mainstreaming Human Rights in the Digital Transformation of Cities*<sup>2</sup>, including pilot-projects towards its implementation in Europe and in Latin America. The Helpdesk is aimed at making technical support more accessible for cities on subjects such as digital transformation, digital human rights, and digital governance. To draft the Guide and design the Helpdesk, an open call to cities was launched, selecting the cities of Niteroi, Brazil, Medellin, Colombia, and Mexico City, Mexico, for the design of a localized human rights roadmap. In Niteroi for example, one of the key priorities was to empower the elderly population in their use of the digital world. The project results are expected to contribute to the development of the International Guidelines on People Centred Smart Cities, a non-binding framework for governments and other actors to develop strategies, policies and regulations in alignment with the people-centred smart cities approach. For additional updates on the implementation of resolution 2/1, please see document HSP/EB.2024/20 and HSP/EB.2024/INF/15
19. UN-Habitat keeps expanding its portfolio on SDG Localization and scaling up the work on *SDG Cities* through the coordination of the SDG Localization and Local Governments Team. The Agency is currently supporting SDG localization processes in 22 countries, including the development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), as part of the SDG Cities Cycle, and of SDG Localization Frameworks, in partnerships with national government counterparts. Three projects funded by the Joint SDG Fund are being initiated in the Kyrgyz Republic, Serbia and Costa Rica. A five-year MoU has been signed with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to launch the Sport and SDG Cities Initiative with the aim of leveraging the potential of sport as a driver of sustainable urban development - with pilot projects planned in Brazil, Ghana, Egypt, and Jordan. In the context of the Italian Presidency of G7, UN-Habitat signed a MoU with the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security to launch the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs aimed at accelerating the development of national frameworks for SDG localization, focusing on Africa. On the normative side, the Action-oriented VLR Methodology is being translated into multiple UN languages, while the SDG Localization Learning Module 2 on Planning for Change with the SDGs was launched in collaboration with UCLG, with the first rollout at the Georgia National Urban Forum. The Local2030 Knowledge

<sup>1</sup> <https://digitalhelpdeskforcities.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://unhabitat.org/mainstreaming-human-rights-in-the-digital-transformation-of-cities-a-guide-for-local-governments>

and Scientific Network has been launched through its national pilots in Jordan and Tunisia to link scientific research and policy making on SDG localization. For additional updates on SDG Localization, please see document HSP/EB.2024/20 on the implementation of resolution 2/6.

20. Regarding **Subprogramme 3**, ‘Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment’, multilevel climate action increasingly provides a key entry point for UN-Habitat’s climate change-related work. UN-Habitat published a technical brief to guide countries towards a stronger integration of urban content in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ahead of the mandatory review at COP30. This guide was launched at the Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2024<sup>3</sup>. In-depth research on the urban content of the NDCs (with a scorecard for all countries) was published and presented at the Climate Change talks in Bonn in June 2024<sup>4</sup>, generating significant interest by Member States. This research well-positions UN-Habitat’s engagement in the UN-wide support initiative for strengthened NDCs and for discussions at the Third Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change at COP29, Baku, November 2024.

21. UN-Habitat continues to support climate change innovation at the city level, for example through the Climate Smart Cities Challenge. In 2024 the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities has gained steam. UN-Habitat participated in the IPCC-60 meeting in January 2024 and the Scoping Meeting for the report in Riga, April 2024, helping to shape the report’s outline. With partners, UN-Habitat is also preparing for the 2024 Innovate4Cities conference in September 2024, which will help address research and practice gaps in the field of Cities and Climate Change. The event will inform the IPCC report as it will guide research in areas with the biggest knowledge gaps.

22. To accelerate country, city and community-level climate action, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific published its regional Climate Change and Urban Environment programme 2024-2030 in line with UNHA Resolution 2/5; the Regional Office for Africa has equally advanced its programme strategy development.<sup>5</sup> A framework agreement for enhanced access to the Green Climate Fund Readiness window has been concluded and the Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor (RISE UP) portfolio has grown to USD 150,000,000. Operating in 19 cities of 9 countries, the RISE UP Flagship Programme is rolling out its multilayered vulnerability assessments globally, developing urban, climate and biodiversity profiles for resilience action planning.

23. The operationalization of the *Sustainable Urban Resilience for the Next Generation* (SURGe) initiative was endorsed at the first Executive Board of 2024. The decision highlights the setting up of a Secretariat, linking SURGe with other initiatives and the provision of technical advisory services to Member States. Resource mobilization is ongoing and has been successful in support for concrete activities, such as the Ministerial Meeting at COP29, but not yet for setting up the secretariat.

24. Under **Subprogramme 4**, ‘Effective urban crisis prevention and response’, and in accordance with the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF), UN-Habitat is continuing to support five countries (Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia). As the fund emphasizes developing solutions for internally displaced persons, particularly in protracted contexts, UN-Habitat is well-positioned to provide expertise and necessary support. With vast experience in planning for displacement, crisis response and human settlement resilience, UN-Habitat has continued to provide valuable and diversified normative and operational support, focusing on territorial and urban planning as drivers of durable solutions. UN-Habitat’s integrated approaches enable IDP solutions to be holistic and inclusive, accounting for all sectors. They result in improved integration, social cohesion and sustainability of proposed solution pathways. UN-Habitat seeks continued support of IDSF with due consideration of lessons learned, including an increased focus on collaboration, empowerment of local leadership and emphasis of the HDP nexus.

25. On the normative side, the first series of the “HLP-Urban Law Tool”, focusing on conflict prevention, was finalized. As one of its cross-cutting foci, the series attends to gender sensitivity and promotes the equal protection of women’s HLP rights in humanitarian settings and women’s tenure security in conflict contexts.

26. In accordance with the Institutional plan, Subprogramme 4 has carried out 4 out of a series of 5 Communities of Practice sessions, focused on mainstreaming solutions to internal displacement, within the organization. The sessions will also act as a basis for a learning package which is being

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<sup>3</sup> UN-Habitat 2024, Local Action for Global Goals: An Opportunity for Enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (the document can be accessed here)

<sup>4</sup> UN-Habitat, UNDP, SDU (2024): Urban Content of NDCs – Local Climate Action Explored through in-depth country analyses, 2024 Report (it can be accessed here)

<sup>5</sup> “Climate Change & Urban Environment Strategy 2024-2030 – Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific” (here)

developed in collaboration with the Capacity Development and Training Unit team and will be shared on UN Habitat Learn.

27. Furthermore, an advanced draft of the framework “Towards Inclusive Solutions to Internal Displacement” in collaboration with IIED has been shared amongst relevant agencies including JIPS, UNHCR, IOM, etc. Following their review and feedback, the final draft will be consolidated.

28. Additional normative and operational updates on Lebanon, the Republic of Syria, the Sahel region, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Mozambique, Iraq, Yemen, and Ukraine are available in document HSP/EB.2024/19.

## II. Activities on gender, human rights and social inclusion

29. UN-Habitat continued to strengthen its integration in the *UN Systemwide Human Rights Mechanisms*, including through engagement with the *Universal Period Review*, thus improving delivery as One UN. As a Steering Group member of the *Human Rights Go Local Conference*, UN-Habitat promoted participatory approaches for cities to develop human rights action plans. UN-Habitat's tools and approaches continued to support partners towards sustainable urban development for all.

30. UN-Habitat identified its first gender champion, promoting the teams creating gender transformative impact. Winners were the Mozambique Country Team for their gender-transformative approach to housing and the Palestine<sup>6</sup> Country Team for contributing to institutionalizing participatory urban planning for women.

31. UN-Habitat expanded its youth-led emergency response model to include the response to the flooding in Nairobi in June. Working with local youth-led agencies and Slum Dwellers International, UN-Habitat supports a two-prong response of direct community emergency support, and gathering baseline data on flooding impact, using this to plan and build back better. The Government of Canada through its Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) supported both initiatives through direct funding to the community partners.

32. UN-Habitat focused on engaging youth in local governance and the localization of the SDGs. Working with key partners such as Fondation Botnar, two programmes were initiated – the Young Gamechangers Initiative (YGI) and Youth 2030 Cities. YGI aims to enhance health and wellbeing among young people by actively involving them in urban governance, designing inclusive public spaces, and encouraging their participation through digital platforms. Youth 2030 Cities seeks to empower youth and youth-led organizations by enhancing their capacity to influence urban planning, participate in local governance, and contribute to the localization of the SDGs.

33. UN-Habitat collaborated with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) on a global initiative on *Resilient and Inclusive Cities* as part of the *2025 Global Disability Summit*. UN-Habitat participated in events focused on the rights of persons with disabilities, including a ‘Smart Cities: Enhancing Urban Design and Mobility for All’ event organized by Fundación ONCE and promoted by the European Accessibility (AccessibleEU) Resource Centre, leading to additional collaboration with AccessibleEU.

## III. Technical support and collaboration on data and knowledge

34. UN-Habitat with the support of the European Commission and other partners continued supporting countries to apply the global urban, city and rural definition commonly referred to as ‘degree of urbanization’ (DEGURBA) methodology. By June 2024, the initiative implemented in collaboration with UNFPA and UNICEF has reached 83 countries covering around 1,265 cities. In addition, UN-Habitat has worked closely with the UN Population Division to produce new estimates for the next edition of the World Population Prospects in alignment with the DEGURBA methodology.

35. Following the development of index trackers, UN-Habitat’s *Quality-of-Life* initiative, supported by the *Quality-of-Life* Program Centre of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has reached its piloting phase, with implementation in Vancouver, Canada; Queretaro, Mexico; Nis, Serbia; Madinah,

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<sup>6</sup> The terminology employed in this document and its annexes, including but not limited to the terms “State of Palestine”, “Palestine”, “Government”, “country” and “national”, is without prejudice to the status of Palestine and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT): the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip as recognized by the United Nations.

Saudi Arabia; Logan, Australia; Quito, Ecuador; Kampala, Uganda; Bhubaneswar, India; Puna'auia, Tahiti; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and, Udon Thani, Thailand. It is designed to be a globally relevant and locally applicable index to monitor the quality of life in cities.

36. UN-Habitat, in partnership with Economist Impact, is advancing the *Urban Performance Index* initiative to guide urban policy and investment while filling gaps in urban monitoring. The pilot phase, completed in Tijuana, Mombasa, Toronto, Lisbon, and Dhaka, produced key findings, and three digital stories connecting pilot data with urban achievements and human impact. This work has generated significant online attention, with over 5.5 million social media impressions and nearly 130,000 visits in the first month.

37. UN-Habitat continues to support countries to apply the *Global Urban Monitoring Framework* and has reached 94 cities in 46 countries as of June 2024. New data from this initiative is available to inform the drafting of the *2024 World Cities Report of UN-Habitat* and various Voluntary Local Reviews.

38. The *World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action* is being finalized with a wide range of partners, following an extensive peer-review process and an Expert Group Meeting, which took place in April 2024. This report utilizes new data and provides a greater understanding of ways in which urban areas from different contexts can take effective action towards achieving the Paris Agreement and build resilience across multiple dimensions. The report will be launched during the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum slated for Cairo, Egypt in November 2024.

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