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**Update on the development of the Strategic Plan for the
period 2026-2029**

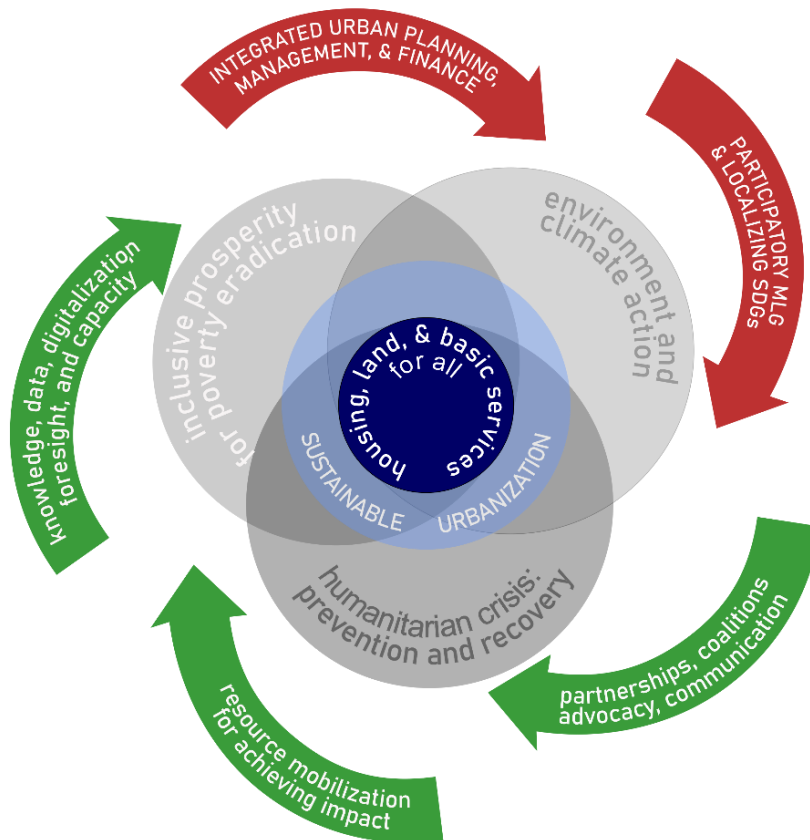
First draft of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029

I. Executive summary

1. The Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat the period of 2026-2029 is shaped by the fact that humanity's present and future is urban. With 55 per cent of global population being urban, expected to rise to 68 per cent, the achievement of the universal and transformative goals and targets as set out in the 2030 Agenda, and other global agreements, is directly tied to the way in which we plan, manage and govern our cities and human settlements.
2. In this context, the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for 2026-2029 responds to global challenges as three impact areas which echo the domains of change of the strategic plan 2020 – 2025:
 - a) equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication,
 - b) prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction in the context of humanitarian crisis, and
 - c) environment and climate action.
3. The plan introduces a strategic focus for 2026 – 2029: adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, including the urgent transformation of informal settlements and slums. This integrated focus is a powerful tool, directly or indirectly, to deliver progress in the three impact areas.
4. The expected global impact is that more people in cities and human settlements, especially vulnerable groups, including people living in informal settlements and slums, and those affected by humanitarian crises and climate impacts, prosper and have their lives transformed through increased access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.
5. Five means of implementation enable UN-Habitat to attain the expected impact and outcomes:

- a) integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance;
 - b) participatory multi-level governance and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - c) knowledge, data, digitalization, and capacity development;
 - d) partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication;
 - e) effective resource mobilization.
6. Within the strategic focus, the effects in all impact areas on people’s lives are realized through the means of implementation. The outcomes are delivered through outputs of the annual work programme.

i. Key elements of the strategic plan



II. Introduction

A. UN-Habitat’s mandates

7. UN-Habitat is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote adequate shelter for all and is a focal point for sustainable urbanization and human settlements. UN-Habitat's mandate derives from the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976, and the subsequent Resolution by the United Nations General Assembly in 1977 to establish the Commission on Human Settlements and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, with the terms of reference defining “the following subject areas¹:

¹ A/RES/32/162, 1977

- a) Settlement policies and strategies;
 - b) Settlement planning;
 - c) Institutions and management;
 - d) Shelter, infrastructure and services;
 - e) Land;
 - f) Public participation”.
8. Since then, the mandates of the Centre evolved, a major milestone being 2002, when the Centre was transformed to the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), to serve as the focal point for human settlements and for the coordination of human settlements activities within the United Nations system, with reference to the above Resolution and the Istanbul Declaration adopted at the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in 1996, focusing on “the fields of adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements development”². These two fields remain at the core of UN-Habitat’s mandate, with many additions by multiple decisions of the Member States of the United Nations. The fields were reformulated and expanded by the United Nations General Assembly when mandating the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016³, reaffirming the role and expertise of UN-Habitat as a focal point for housing and sustainable urban development within the United Nations system.
9. UN-Habitat’s mandate has evolved over time together with the gradual transition of the world’s population to become majority urban today. In 1976, at the time of the Vancouver Declaration being adopted, the primary concern was the condition of human settlements and its impact on the quality of life amidst a growing global population. When the Habitat Agenda was adopted in 1996, the commitment was to adequate shelter and sustainable human settlements in “an urbanizing world”. In 2007, for the first time, more people lived in urban than in rural areas tipping the scales irreversibly. The New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016 therefore fully embraced the arrival of an urban era, recognising urbanization as one of the twenty first century’s most transformative trends and a powerful tool for sustainable development. With 55 per cent of global population being urban and set to rise to 68 per cent by 2050, UN-Habitat’s mandate is ever more critical as the attainment of global development outcomes becomes increasingly tied to the way in which we plan, build, manage and govern our cities and human settlements.

B. Framing the strategic plan for the period of 2026-2029

10. The strategic plan for the period of 2026-2029 is defined based on key lessons learned from UN-Habitat’s work programme implementation but also responds to the most pressing global challenges of today where the agency is best placed to respond. Reflecting on the strategic plan for the period of 2020-2025 and on lessons learned from its implementation and evaluations, the 2026-2029 plan builds on the former plan but refines the approach with a clear focus.

² A/RES/56/206; with ref. to A/CONF.165/14, para 222

³ A/RES/67/216; and A/RES/71/235

11. The 2026-2029 plan ensures continuity of UN-Habitat’s strategic planning by rearticulating the current domains of change as impact areas and refines the themes as priority challenges to global society, as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.
12. It follows the lessons learned from the mid-term evaluation of the strategic plan for the period of 2020-2025 by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) which recognized key strengths and gaps that provide valuable future direction. It emphasized that:
 - a) weak strategic prioritization hindered a focused implementation of the Strategic Plan by UN-Habitat⁴;
 - b) several areas of UN-Habitat work were not sufficiently captured in the Strategic Plan, including: housing and slum upgrading, among other⁵;
 - c) the United Nations Habitat Assembly second session adopted ten resolutions on a wide variety of issues related to the strategic plan’s Domains of Change, but UN-Habitat was challenged to implement them effectively⁶;
 - d) The results framework prioritized individual projects over broader strategic goals, hindering the ability to assess the entity's overall contribution to sustainable urbanization⁷.
13. The evaluation called for a simpler structure with more straightforward language, drawing inspiration also from the strategies of other United Nations entities.
14. The key elements presented in this plan serve the following purposes, principles and flow.
15. The purposes of the strategic plan are:
 - a) to articulate the global challenges and strategic focus for 2026-2029;
 - b) to identify UN-Habitat’s added value to address these global challenges; and,
 - c) to guide the work of UN-Habitat, including the annual work programme and allocation of core resources.
16. To fulfil these purposes, the five guiding principles for the strategic plan are to be:
 - a) ambitious, relevant, and responsive;
 - b) focused on impact and prioritized;
 - c) flexible and adaptable to specific contexts;
 - d) evidence- and knowledge-based; and,
 - e) manageable, realistic, effective, and measurable.
17. The flow of the plan is based on a sequenced process to:
 - a) articulate global challenges to be addressed;
 - b) delineate areas where impact must be achieved to address the global challenges;
 - c) determine the strategic focus to achieve the expected global impact on which UN-Habitat’s work has an indirect influence;

⁴ Evaluation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, OIOS 2024; Summary

⁵ Ibidem, page 12

⁶ Ibidem, page 15

⁷ Ibidem, page 17

- d) select the means of implementation and outcomes to influence the results (outputs) more directly.

III. Global challenges to be addressed

18. The global housing crisis is the main challenge to which UN-Habitat's strategic plan 2026-2029 responds given both the magnitude and urgency of it. An estimated 2.8 billion people worldwide are affected by different forms of housing inadequacy, a number that is expected to grow due to increasing urbanization and economic pressures, among other drivers⁸. The plight of 1.1 billion people living in informal settlements and slums⁹, and over 300 million homeless people, calls for urgent and effective collective action. As recognised by the second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, the right to adequate housing, as derived from the right to an adequate standard of living, is not realized for many throughout the world, and in most countries the disparity between housing costs and income levels has grown while access to finance is constrained¹⁰.
19. The global housing crisis must be seen in a broader context of poverty and inequality. As of 2023, over 700 million people - roughly 9 per cent of the global population - still live below the international poverty line (less than \$2.15 a day), while moderate poverty, affecting those living on less than \$3.65 a day, impacts more than 1.8 billion people worldwide¹¹. A significant proportion of global poverty is urban especially when increasing the poverty threshold to \$6.85 a day¹². While urban areas generate 80 per cent of the world's GDP, the economic benefits are not evenly distributed¹³. Disadvantaged groups and marginalized communities often face disproportionate barriers to securing equitable opportunities for prosperity.
20. This crisis is compounded by the accelerating impact of climate change, which could force an estimated 216 million people to migrate within their own countries by 2050 due to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other climate-related factors¹⁴. Unplanned urbanization and inadequate housing increase global greenhouse gas emissions, with cities responsible for 70 per cent of these emissions and more than 2 billion tons of waste annually¹⁵. Cities face the brunt of climate exposure with 92 per cent of people settled in low elevation coastal zones living in urban centres. More than 2 billion people currently living in cities could be exposed to an additional temperature increase of at least 0.5 degrees Celsius by 2040¹⁶. Informal settlements, where infrastructure is inadequate, experience the harshest impacts of climate change while having the least capacity to recover. Furthermore, 99 per cent of the world's urban population live in areas that do not meet the new WHO guidelines on air quality¹⁷. The

⁸ UN-Habitat (2023). Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet 2023: SDG 11 Synthesis Report

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ HSP/HA.2/Res.7

¹¹ World Bank (2023). Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2023: Correcting Course. World Bank Group

¹² World Bank (2024) Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report: Pathways Out of the Polycrisis

¹³ UN-Habitat (2022). World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities

¹⁴ World Bank (2021). Groundswell Report: Acting on Internal Climate Migration

¹⁵ UNEP (2021). Cities and Climate Change: A Global Perspective on Emissions

¹⁶ UN-Habitat (2024). World Cities Report 2024. Cities and Climate Action

¹⁷ Ibidem

loss of biodiversity - with around 1 million species at risk of extinction - further threatens the sustainability of ecosystems that support urban and rural livelihoods¹⁸. Urban sprawl, largely driven by unsustainable consumption of land for housing, has led to a 2.5 per cent decline in urban population densities globally from 2000 to 2020¹⁹, which further exacerbates the erosion of biodiversity and ecosystems while increasing spatial inequalities.

21. Furthermore, there is a growing convergence of crises impacting urban areas. Natural and human-caused disasters, such as floods and fires, destroy housing and infrastructure, especially acute in cities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities. By 2050, climate change may force up to 158 million more women and girls into extreme poverty, 16 million more than men and boys²⁰. Disasters cause \$300 billion in damages to infrastructure globally each year, with cities accounting for a significant portion of this loss²¹. Their effects exacerbate existing inequalities and place immense pressure on urban systems, particularly in informal settlements, where infrastructure is often poor. The growing prevalence of conflict has displaced over 100 million people, causing severe hardship for refugees and internally displaced persons. It worsens housing shortages and strains efforts to create stable living environments, as more than 60 per cent of the displaced seek refuge, livelihood opportunities and access to services in cities and human settlements²², often disrupting social cohesion and intensifying informality when migration is unmanaged.

IV. Impact areas to address the challenges

22. The expected global impact is that more people in cities and human settlements, especially vulnerable groups, including people living in informal settlements and slums, and those affected by humanitarian crises and climate impacts, prosper and have their lives transformed through increased access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

A. UN-Habitat's role in seeking the expected global impact

23. As repeatedly acknowledged at the United Nations Conferences related to Human Settlements, notably in the Vancouver Declaration (1976), Habitat Agenda (1996), and New Urban Agenda (2016), effective human settlement strategies are essential for promoting inclusion, social equity and economic growth, and human settlements are inseparable from national development²³. The transformative potential of urbanization lies in its ability to address spatial and social inequality, foster economic opportunities for all, create access to essential services without discrimination or exclusion, and build resilient communities across

¹⁸ UN IPBES (2019). Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

¹⁹ UN-Habitat (2023). Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet 2023: SDG 11 Synthesis Report

²⁰ UN Women and UNDESA (2024). Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024

²¹ World Bank (2019). Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity.

²² UNHCR (2023). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022

²³ This is underpinned by the following statements of the Vancouver Declaration (A/CONF.70/15: Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I): “*The goals of settlement policies are inseparable from the goals of every sector of social and economic life. The solutions to the problems of human settlements must therefore be conceived as an integral part of the development process of individual nations and the world community*” (p.4); *National policies for economic and social development can no longer afford to neglect or minimize the role of human settlements*” (p.13); “*Human settlement policies can be powerful tools for the more equitable distribution of income and opportunities*” (p.15)

the rural-urban continuum. Specifically, for the period of 2026-2029, UN-Habitat will focus on the tremendous opportunity to address the following impact areas through adequate housing, land and basic services and the transformation of informal settlements and slums, as well as equitable access to land rights as a matter of urgency.

24. Guided by the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, UN-Habitat's approach is people-centred and anchored in international human rights standards, while promoting youth engagement, gender equality and women's empowerment at all stages, in line with the United Nations Habitat Assembly Resolution on Achieving gender equality through the work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements²⁴. A human rights-based, gender and age-transformative approach ensures urban development prioritizes inclusivity, equity, and resilience for all, especially women and girls, children and youth, and marginalized groups. Without this approach, urban growth risks perpetuating inequality and exclusion, undermining the sustainability of cities and human settlements and the well-being of their inhabitants.
25. While other entities in the United Nations system lead on addressing global challenges related to poverty eradication, crises emerging from climate change, disasters and conflict, and the environment, UN-Habitat makes a unique contribution to addressing the urban and territorial dimensions of these global challenges by providing guidance and support to the Member States and other actors on harnessing the transformative potential of sustainable urbanization. This contribution is guided by United Nations System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development, which defines the role of UN-Habitat in the promotion of sustainable urban development²⁵ within the UN system through a collaborative implementation framework, building on existing structures/processes²⁶.
26. UN-Habitat continues to partner with UN entities at various scales to advance the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, and the targets of other SDGs that have urban dimensions. At the global level, UN-Habitat collaborates within the UN system as a partner and contributor to legislative and inter-agency mechanisms, as well as the follow up and review of global agendas and action frameworks, including the Pact for the Future. Through established mechanisms such as the Regional Sustainable Development Forums and the Regional collaborative Platform, UN-Habitat actively coordinates with UN actors at the regional scale. At national and sub-national levels, UN-Habitat participates in UN country teams and contributes to UN Sustainable Development Frameworks to support the urban dimension of national development priorities.

²⁴ HSP/HA.1/Res.4

²⁵ “Sustainable urban development can be defined as the spatial manifestation of urban development processes that creates a built environment with norms, institutions and governance systems enabling individuals, households and societies to maximize their potential, optimize a vast range of services so that homes and dynamic neighbourhoods, cities and towns are planned, built, renewed and consolidated restraining adverse impacts on the environment while safeguarding the quality of life, needs and livelihood of its present and future populations.” (UN-Habitat input to post-2015 UN development agenda)

²⁶ United Nations System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development; endorsed by A/RES/77/173, OP 19

B. Equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication

27. A more prosperous and inclusive society is fostered through properly planned and managed urbanization and the sustainable development of cities and human settlements, by developing infrastructure and institutions that support social inclusion and reduced inequalities, equitable economic growth, and by creating more decent jobs in the formal economy for all. Adequate housing, aside from being a precursor to other essential aspects of social inclusion such as education and health, also serves as an asset creating livelihood opportunities. Well-designed networks of accessible, green and quality public spaces that are accessible to all and free from crime and violence, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence²⁷, are key to promoting inclusive prosperity. These interventions help eradicate poverty and provide a decent quality of life for all, including gender equality and the empowerment of marginalized groups. Prioritizing the needs of marginalized and underserved communities in urban planning and resource allocation is essential.
28. The focus on adequate housing, land and basic services is essential to lay the groundwork of a society where everyone can thrive. When strong, functional, and leaving no one behind, this nexus also prevents the proliferation of informal settlements and slums and reinforces their transformation. The housing sector touches most aspects of a country's economy and interacts with many other sectors, including industry, trade, technology, finance, transport and social development. The recognition of the social function of land is central to guide and finance sustainable urban development. It thus plays a major role in enabling inclusive economic growth and prosperity to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities.
29. UN-Habitat's role in addressing this impact area is to promote equitable and inclusive prosperity for poverty eradication through robust data, policies and practices for better access to adequate housing, in all its aspects, including through access to land, and basic services. UN-Habitat promotes the efficient and equitable use of land to deliver sustainable urban development, including adequate housing, and to maximize security of tenure for the social and economic benefits that this provides, including the protection of dignity. Adequate housing for all cannot be achieved without effective land governance and management and without the provision of adequate basic services. UN-Habitat supports Member States to harness the potential of urbanization to foster more inclusive prosperity, overcome existing spatial and social inequalities and transform the lives of people living in informal settlements and slums.
30. UN-Habitat's expertise encompasses an integrated approach to urban and territorial planning, ensuring that housing, land, and basic services are addressed holistically to advance equitable prosperity and poverty eradication. In line with United Nations Habitat Assembly Resolution on Urban planning and sustainable infrastructure, UN-Habitat provides technical assistance and capacity-building support to countries and cities and other stakeholders in developing and implementing participatory and sustainable integrated urban planning and infrastructure development initiatives²⁸.

²⁷ A/RES/71/256 (New Urban Agenda) OP 100

²⁸ HSP/HA.2/Res.8

C. Prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction in the context of humanitarian crises

31. A shared understanding of the complex impact of converging crises on cities, human settlements, and territories can guide more effective prevention, response and recovery, with particular attention to the most marginalized affected by natural and human-caused disasters and conflict, leading into building back better and resilience strengthening. Better risk assessment and foresight analysis can help anticipate the impact of crises on cities, human settlements and territories, strengthening prevention and resilience.
32. A more cohesive response to displacement across the humanitarian, peace and development nexus can advance solutions from the start during humanitarian response, fully integrated into urban and territorial development strategies while ensuring a human rights and gender-responsive approach and rebuilding the social contract. Adequate housing, land, and access to basic services are central to peace, security and stabilization. Addressing these issues can help provide a framework for a more integrated response with all actors involved, using urban and territorial planning and multi-level governance to localize and enable solutions.
33. As recalled by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in Resolution on Creation of an operational human settlements' resilience framework for early warning, foresight, risk reduction, crisis response, and post-crisis recovery and reconstruction²⁹, UN-Habitat has a key role in assisting national, regional, and local governments in these areas.
34. The expected global impact can be promoted by UN-Habitat, for example, through the agency's engagement in the humanitarian Inter-Agency Standing Committee. UN-Habitat also participates in mechanisms set-up to address the negative impacts of migration and forced displacement on the impacted populations, to ensure coherence across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus and to stabilize fragile settings and sustaining peace, and to promote participatory approaches for all impacted, adding value to the work of lead actors.

D. Environment and climate action

35. The interlinkages between climate change, environmental degradation, and the current global housing crisis create obstacles to both effective climate adaptation and mitigation. Housing and infrastructure provision that encourage urban sprawl and increased reliance on motorised transport lead to traffic congestion, declining green cover, and exacerbate urban emissions. Deficit of adequate housing aggravates the human cost of weather-related disasters and can hinder adaptation to the environmental effects of climate change - such as drought and aridification, wildfires, pollution and floods - on vulnerable territories and communities, especially in informal settlements and slums³⁰.
36. Well-managed urbanization and improved access to adequate housing, including through urban and land-use planning and design, is essential in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change in cities and human settlements across the urban-rural continuum. A shift towards a circular model in the buildings and construction sector and the use of sustainable

²⁹ HSP/HA.2/Res.9

³⁰ UNISDR (2015). The Human Cost of Weather-Related Disasters 1995-2015

building materials is urgent. Urban planning and management that ensure green space retention and expansions offer potential for urban heat mitigation, biodiversity preservation, and enhanced human well-being. Energy-conserving infrastructure, services and effective waste management are critical. Strengthening resilience to climate-related hazards through adequate housing, land and basic services, especially for those most vulnerable, must be at the core of global climate change adaptation efforts.

37. In the area of environment and climate action UN-Habitat adds value to the efforts of the multi-lateral system by supporting their work through the dimension of people-centred urban planning. It adds value by mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning and management, as requested by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in its Resolution on Biodiverse and resilient cities³¹. This value includes support to subnational authorities who have a key role in implementing policies to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects, including through risk assessments and early warning systems. To scale up impact in cooperation with relevant partners, UN-Habitat, as requested in the United Nations Habitat Assembly Resolution on Enhancing the interlinkage between urbanization and climate change resilience, must continue efforts to support Member States and other key actors in productively leveraging this interlinkage³².

V. Our strategic focus

38. To achieve the expected global impact across all impact areas above, urbanization, with 68 per cent of the global population projected to live in cities by 2050³³, presents both a challenge and a significant opportunity for achieving sustainable development. When guided by proper spatial planning, managed and developed sustainably, cities and human settlements can drive innovative solutions to address housing shortages. For that, they need adequate infrastructure and effective institutions, that underpin productive and equitable economies, leaving no one behind.
39. However, without strategic planning, synergetic investment, and coherent implementation, urbanization exacerbates existing inequalities, overburdens infrastructure, and increases vulnerabilities to climate and environmental risks. Addressing the global housing crisis and global challenges related to poverty, climate change and humanitarian crises is key to ensuring that cities and human settlements evolve into sustainable, equitable and resilient spaces and communities where no one is left behind.
40. An integrated focus on adequate housing, land and basic services and the transformation of informal settlements and slums is a powerful tool to deliver impact, directly or indirectly, in the three impact areas above. Several United Nations entities work in these impact areas, and UN-Habitat coordinates with them to respond to related challenges from a distinct perspective, as the agency is uniquely positioned to guide how territories are planned and managed, and how people and services are housed.

³¹ HSP/HA.2/Res.4

³² HSP/HA.2/Res.5

³³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision (ST/ESA/SER.A/420). New York: United Nations.

41. Therefore, and within the broader vision of sustainable urbanization, UN-Habitat will focus on access to adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, including the urgent transformation of informal settlements and slums. This focus will maximize our added value from 2026 to 2029. Building on the resolutions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly on Adequate housing for all³⁴ and on Accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums³⁵ and on Action 6 of the Pact for the Future³⁶, it returns housing to the centre of our work.

ii: *The seven aspects of adequate housing*³⁷



42. Access to adequate housing, as a fundamental human right, is a cornerstone of a new social contract, crucial to fostering inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development. Due to its multi-faceted and cross-sectoral nature, adequate housing has shown its potential as the engine of inclusive and sustainable urbanization with linkages to most of the other SDGs – particularly to end poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG 1), reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG 10), and to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5). Many of the SDGs cannot be achieved if people do not have adequate housing.

iii: *Housing at the centre of sustainable and inclusive development*



43. The New Urban Agenda elevates housing as a fundamental means to enable economic development and poverty eradication. Housing is most importantly about providing good quality homes for all, with all the associated social and economic benefits, and should not be viewed just as a physical structure or commodity to be bought and sold, alongside the important social and ecological functions of land. Housing is essential for health, education,

³⁴ HSP/HA.2/Res.7

³⁵ HSP/HA.2/Res.2

³⁶ A/RES/79/1, Action 6 (c): “Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and support developing countries to plan and implement just, safe, healthy, accessible, resilient and sustainable cities”

³⁷ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [General comment no. 4: The right to adequate housing, 13 December 1991.](#)

dignity, safety, and social inclusion, as recognized in earlier global frameworks including the Istanbul Declaration and Habitat Agenda³⁸ of 1996. Proximity of basic services such as hospitals and schools is at the heart of adequate housing. Adequate housing underpins secure access to services, employment, and urban life, enhancing social cohesion and well-being. Secure housing and land tenure are particularly vital for women and girls, increasing their independence, eradicate poverty, and protecting against exploitation and violence. The prioritization of the right to adequate housing in local, national and global frameworks is key to ensure dignity and empowerment for all and as a pillar of social protection³⁹.

44. The transformation of informal settlements and slums is equally vital yet even more urgent. In 2022, 24.8 per cent of the global urban population lived in slums or informal settlements, equivalent to 1.12 billion people⁴⁰. This figure is expected to reach 3 billion by 2050 if no effective action to prevent the proliferation of slums and informal settlements is taken. As acknowledged by Member States, Sustainable Development Goal indicator 11.1.1 – “reduce the proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing” – is one of nine indicators whose implementation has regressed globally, stressing the need for more concerted efforts to meet the target by 2030⁴¹. Meanwhile, slum dwellers are members of our communities who should be equal in rights and dignity, and who play important cultural, economic and social roles.
45. The strategic focus is in line with the core areas of UN-Habitat’s mandate and its unique position as the United Nations focal point for adequate housing, sustainable urbanization and human settlements⁴², adding value to the work of other entities by concentrating on the territorial dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and multi-level governance⁴³.

VI. Our means of implementation and expected outcomes

46. All means of implementation and outcomes seek the expected global impact and guide the planned results across the three impact areas through the strategic focus. The proposed outcomes are under direct influence of UN-Habitat and pertain to the improved capacity of key partners and actors to deliver sustainable development through the focus on adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

A. Integrated urban and territorial planning, management, investment and finance

47. **Outcome 1:** Effective spatial development policies, plans and legislation promoting the social and ecological function of land for adequate housing, land and basic services.

48. **Outcome 2:** Improved financing frameworks and instruments to catalyze public and private investments for adequate housing, land and basic services for all.

³⁸ A/CONF.165/14: Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

³⁹ Cairo Call to Action, Twelfth session of the World Urban Forum; Action 1

⁴⁰ United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Urban Indicators database, 2024.

⁴¹ HSP/HA.2/Res.2

⁴² Reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its Resolution pertaining to the New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256. A/RES/71/256, OP 165) as well as the United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2023 (HSP/HA.2/HLS.1)

⁴³ A/RES/77/173, Preamble; OP 19, OP 15

49. An integrated approach to urban planning and infrastructure development is central to promoting sustainable development⁴⁴. Long-term urban and territorial planning and design underpins delivery of the positive outcomes of urbanization across social, economic and ecological aspects as envisioned in the New Urban Agenda. Effective urban planning is the backbone of delivering inclusion, resilience, accessibility and sustainability in cities and communities. Land-use planning is fundamental in opening the fiscal space of national and local governments through stable local revenues, especially from land-based finance, to maximise the social and economic functions of land. At the national scale, given the significant impacts of urbanization on national development, spatial planning is essential to improve strategic prioritization and sequencing of investments for coherent territorial development across the rural-urban continuum⁴⁵. This is in turn essential to guide and implement local development plans and achieve their targets.
50. In line with the strategic plan, UN-Habitat will provide normative guidance and technical assistance to partners on participatory, inclusive, and sustainable integrated urban planning and infrastructure development to improve the capacity of all levels of government to coherently plan, manage and implement productive, equitable, inclusive and environmentally sustainable urban development. The agency will promote spatial planning for cohesive economic development and public investment across territories and the urban-rural continuum, strengthening environmentally sensitive economic productivity and social inclusion in the cities, human settlements and territories. This includes planning urban densification, urban extension, renewal and regeneration, efficient and accessible public transport systems, and public and open and green space, and supporting the implementation of plans through coherent territorial investment, underpinned by well-coordinated finance on all levels of governance.

B. Participatory multi-level governance and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals

51. **Outcome:** Effective multi-level governance and accelerated SDG localization for adequate housing, land and basic services for all.

52. The SDGs must be met for all segments of society and leave no one behind, including through the localization of sustainable development⁴⁶. Transforming the global goals into long lasting change at the local level and the collective pursuit of more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient cities and human settlements requires effective localization processes fostering alignment between national frameworks and communities' priorities⁴⁷. National and local governments' capacities to create enabling environments for sustainable development anchored on multi-level governance and policy coherence are thus essential. These environments must focus on advancing cities' transformation for social progress, shared prosperity and environmental protection. SDG localization is the collaborative and impact-oriented approach to transform

⁴⁴ HSP/HA.2/Res.8

⁴⁵ African Union. Africa urban forum on sustainable urbanisation for Africa's transformation. Declaration, Addis Ababa, 4 to 6 September 2024

⁴⁶ A/RES/79/1; Pact for the Future, Action 6

⁴⁷ Cairo Call to Action, Twelfth session of the World Urban Forum; Action 2

governance systems through partnership and coordination, enabling the effective local delivery of the SDGs to meet the needs of cities and local communities.

53. UN-Habitat is requested by the Member States to promote the Localization of the SDGs⁴⁸. Rooted in the localization approach, the agency will leverage its leadership and expertise on sustainable urbanization, data, planning, capacity building and finance to promote city-level transformation and build robust multilevel governance systems through the SDGs. It will work across scales and with platforms, networks, communities of practices, and coalitions of cities, local and regional governments & authorities to connect local and indigenous knowledge, innovations and partners with SDG-related global dialogues and decision-making processes, while offering a convening space for partnership building and joint action for the SDGs.

C. Knowledge, data, digitalization, and capacity development

54. **Outcome:** Improved knowledge and capacities for evidence-based, innovative policies on adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

55. The resolutions of the United Nations Habitat Assembly recognize and call for improvements in data and monitoring of sustainable urbanization. It is urgent to leverage digital technology for a better quality of life in cities and human settlements⁴⁹, while managing the associated risks to ensure an inclusive, open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for all⁵⁰. Participatory data collection and the use of geo-spatial data are crucial in ensuring that data reflects the lived realities of diverse communities, supporting more inclusive and equitable urban planning. Localized data is a pathway to empower communities while enriching the evidence base for monitoring urbanization.
56. In support of effective evidence-based policy formulation and implementation to advance sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat will continue to undertake and lead global monitoring of SDG 11, the New Urban Agenda and the territorial dimensions of other SDGs. It will further continue to provide technical support to Member States and other stakeholders in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat will continue to undertake urban research, intelligence gathering, and data analytics to inform policy making. Stronger communities of practice will be promoted joining the efforts of diverse researchers and practitioners to shape effective solutions for sustainable urban development. Foresight is also important to help manage uncertainty and plan for effective policy action.
57. Through contextualized capacity-building initiatives, UN-Habitat will support key actors in assessing and addressing the capacity gap to support the implementation of, and monitoring and reporting on, the New Urban Agenda and in building national and local capacity to develop public policies and programmes for implementing this strategic plan. These activities are grounded in and geared for action, seeking that knowledge development and practice inform one another. The potential of digital technologies to accelerate sustainable urbanization will be promoted through a people-centred smart cities approach and the international

⁴⁸ HSP/HA.2/Res.6

⁴⁹ HSP/HA.2/Res.1

⁵⁰ A/RES/79/1; Pact for the Future, Annex 1: Global Digital Compact

guidelines for this⁵¹. UN-Habitat will further strengthen its normative work by better integrating efforts on the global scale and in regions and countries, leading to a greater impact on the ground.

D. Partnerships, coalitions, advocacy and communication

58. **Outcome:** Increased collaboration and awareness among relevant stakeholders for achieving adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

59. The magnitude and interconnected nature of urban development challenges and opportunities requires stronger collaboration for progress. Therefore, to seek impact at scale and to reinforce the role of adequate housing, land, and basic services as a key driver of sustainable development globally, implementation will involve building and advancing global coalitions that foster and strengthen partnerships, leveraging the expertise and resources of diverse key actors in sustainable urban development.

60. UN-Habitat will strengthen its partnerships and stakeholder collaboration by actively engaging its advisory groups and by prioritizing strategic coalitions. Additional attention will be given to partnerships with other United Nations entities, at the global and country levels, seeking to include the themes highlighted in the strategic focus of this plan, where relevant, in Common Country Assessments and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. By advocating for sustainable urbanization and development, UN-Habitat will build on its convening power and partnership platforms, including the World Urban Forum organized and convened by UN-Habitat pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 18/5 of the Commission on Human Settlements on International cooperation and the review of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Habitat Agenda⁵², the New Urban Agenda Platform, as well as World Habitat Day and World Cities Day as major observances during Urban October. UN-Habitat's active participation in UN conferences and summits aiming to address global challenges - including climate change, financial, social and humanitarian issues - will further promote the importance of sustainable urban development within these global discussions. Special attention will be given to empowering marginalized groups⁵³ by equitably addressing human rights, gender, children, youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

61. UN-Habitat will focus its communication on the strategic focus and expected global impact of the strategic plan, utilizing a comprehensive approach that spans conventional and social media, digital platforms, and a wide array of multimedia content. UN-Habitat will enhance its global presence and influence, ensuring that its work is relevant and accessible across a diverse range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and urban practitioners and communities. UN-Habitat will adopt a multi-tiered approach drawing on the strength of

⁵¹ HSP/HA.2/Res.1

⁵² A/56/8; see also Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Governing Council of UN-Habitat relevant to the World Urban Forum (HSP/WUF/12/INF/2)

⁵³ References to "marginalized groups" include all genders, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples, as outlined in part in the New Urban Agenda, which recognizes the need to give particular attention to addressing multiple forms of discrimination faced by, inter alia, the aforementioned groups in sustainable urban development processes and decision-making.

partnerships at different geographical scales, amplifying the organization’s strategic focus by showcasing and tracking the expected global impact. This approach will foster a dynamic, action-oriented dialogue, inspiring local solutions that drive global sustainable urban development. The diverse voices, expertise and capacities will reinforce productive stakeholder engagement, e.g., in communities of practice, expert advice, sharing experiences and best practices, and making scientific contributions to discussions.

E. Effective resource mobilization

62. **Outcome:** Increased and predictable resources for UN-Habitat and its partners for promoting adequate housing, land, and basic services for all.

63. Achieving sustainable urban development requires mobilizing substantial financial resources to provide more adequate housing and sustainable infrastructure, including mobility, energy, water, and waste management⁵⁴. Among the SDGs, SDG 11 faces significant funding shortfalls. Scaling up financing efforts is critical to achieving the targets for housing, public services, and urban resilience, necessitating increased efforts to mobilize resources for sustainable urbanization⁵⁵.

64. Guided by this strategic plan, UN-Habitat will mobilize greater, diversified, and more predictable resources for its work, including the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly⁵⁶. This will draw on the UN funding compact and the commitments therein for mutual action by both Member States and United Nations entities to support the SDGs. UN-Habitat will leverage its existing capacities, intelligence and mechanisms for resource mobilization aligned to Member States priorities. It will employ new and innovative approaches to broaden and deepen donor engagement, while also scaling partnerships with International Financial Institutions to leverage resources and expertise.

65. Through the programmatic means of implementation and their outcomes, resource mobilization will enable partners and key actors globally and locally to access more resources to implement programmes delivering on adequate housing for all on the ground, seeking the expected global impact as articulated above. This engagement, in turn, will help to mobilize resources for the work of the Member States themselves, especially in response to the demand in developing countries and countries most in need. Beyond traditional donors, UN-Habitat will closely collaborate with multilateral development banks and international financial institutions⁵⁷ and the private sector.

VII. Our implementation and monitoring

A. Proposed implementation approach

66. The overall quadrennial implementation plan will provide general guidance to implementation, thus bridging the strategic plan to the annual work programme and budget. Global action plans for each mean of implementation will be developed as required to work

⁵⁴ Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)

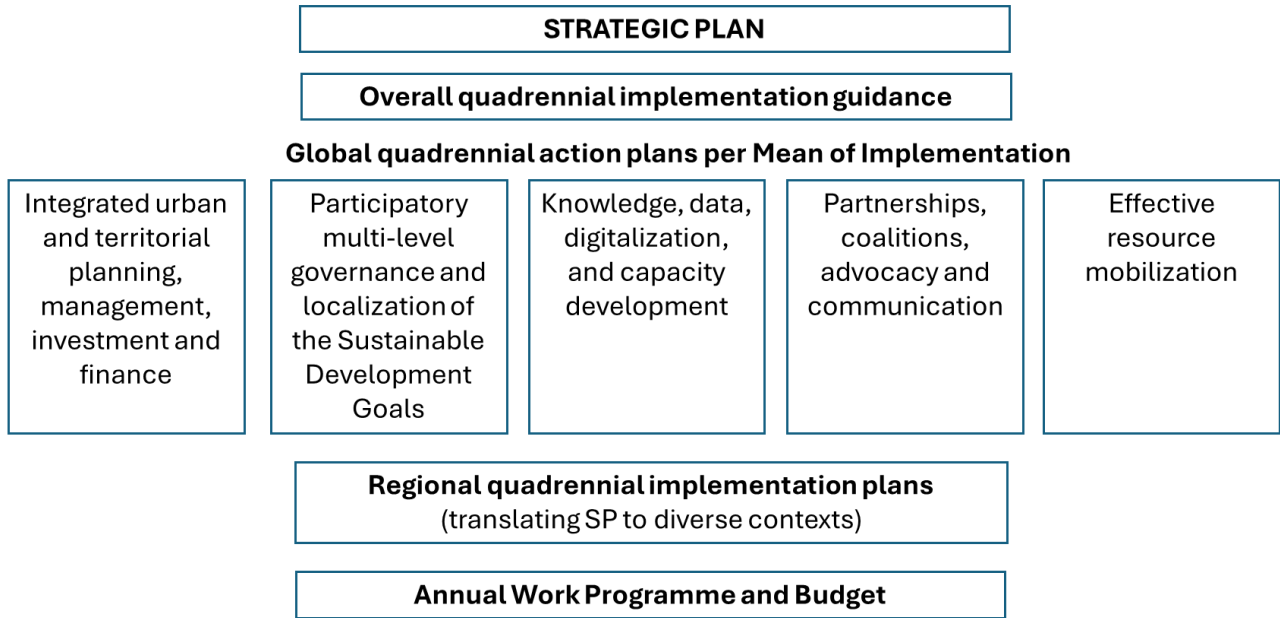
⁵⁵ UN-Habitat. (2023). Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet 2023: SDG 11 Synthesis Report

⁵⁶ HSP/HA.2/Res.10

⁵⁷ A/RES/77/173 OP20

towards expected outcomes. Regional implementation plans will be considered, tailoring the outcomes to specific contexts.

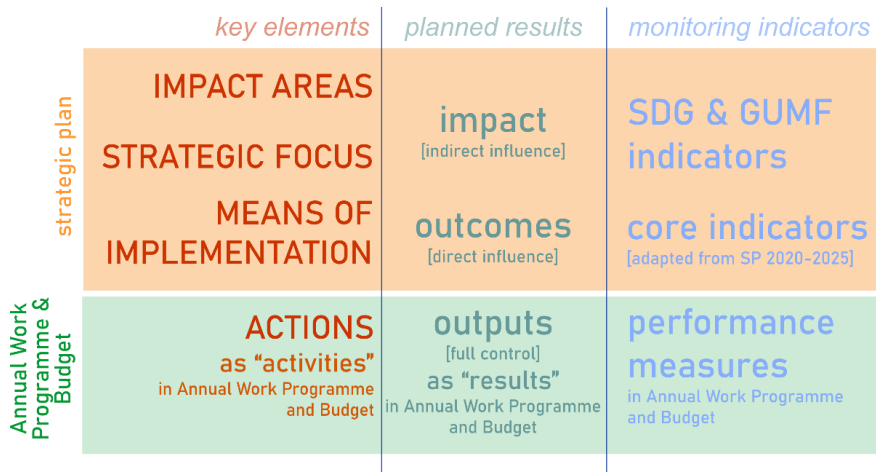
iv: *Proposed implementation documents*



B. Monitoring implementation

67. The monitoring framework draws upon several existing practices and will be structured in a similar hierarchy as the key elements of the strategic plan: the expected global impact will be monitored through relevant indicators of the SDGs and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework; outcomes will be monitored through adapting core indicators of the strategic plan 2020-2025. Outputs/results will be monitored through the performance measures as defined in the annual work programme and budget. The annual work programme and budget incorporates the outputs, presented as results, as well as the activities required.

v: *Key elements, planned results, and monitoring indicators*



VIII. Next steps

68. The Secretariat will continue its support to the development of the strategic plan by continuing the consultative process, engaging with Member States in structured dialogues in both dedicated retreats and meetings of the ad hoc working group on programmatic, budgetary and administrative matters. The concluding retreat for Member States is planned in January 2025.