



**UNITED
NATIONS**

HSP/OEWG-H.2024/CRP.4



**United Nations
Human Settlements
Programme**

Distr.: General
11 December 2024
English only

**Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group
on Adequate Housing for All**
First session
Nairobi, 9–11 December 2024

First session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

Draft summary by the Chair

I. Introduction

1. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All held its first session from 9 to 11 December 2024, following its establishment by the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) on 9 June 2023 through resolution 2/7 on “Adequate housing for all”. The UN-Habitat Assembly, in Resolution 2/7, requested the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to “consider and make recommendations to the Assembly on the development and content of policies for accelerating progress towards the universal achievement of safe, sustainable, adequate and affordable housing”.

2. More than 200 participants took part in the session including the President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, ministers and ambassadors, other representatives of Member States and experts on housing from a wide range of partner groups. The session took place in person at the headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi.

3. The present summary by the Chair captures the proceedings of the session, with particular focus on key substantive messages considered by the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group at the session and organized thematically.

II. Chair’s summary of the session

- 1. Integrated policy development fostering sustainability, resilience and equity in access to adequate housing**

The Intergovernmental Working Group highlighted the importance to Member States of a series of issues, including:

- a) Adequate housing is both a human right and a critical means to promote social integration and environmental sustainability;
- b) Adequate housing extends beyond physical shelter, to encompass aspects such as security, participation in community life, and equitable access to basic services;
- c) The recognition of the critical role of integrated land use planning in achieving adequate housing that is climate-resilient and well-connected to essential physical and social infrastructure (e.g., health, education and access to jobs).
- d) The need to strengthen dialogue that links housing, climate change and resilience, to foster sustainable and inclusive urban development.
- e) The need of integrating the delivery of new housing units with the repurposing of existing buildings, and regeneration of declining and marginalised areas, acknowledging that policies must extend beyond the sole focus on individual housing units or new unit delivery;

The Intergovernmental Working Group recommended that:

- f) Inter-sessional ad hoc groups be set up to consider and make recommendations on thematic issues to be submitted to the Intergovernmental Working Group.
- g) The inclusion of diverse non-governmental expertise in inter-sessional activities.

The Intergovernmental Working Group made several observations on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:

- h) Exploring the following thematic issues:
 - i. Policy and practice concerning informal settlements;
 - ii. Innovation, sustainable materials and environmental sustainability in housing construction;
 - iii. Integration of resilience and climate change considerations in housing policy;
 - iv. Access to land for housing and social infrastructure;
 - v. Comparable approaches to the definition of slums and informal settlements;
 - vi. Comparable approaches to assessing housing backlogs;
 - vii. The seven elements of adequate housing as outlined in CESCR General Comment No. 4.

2. Governance and financial mechanisms

The Intergovernmental Working Group highlighted the importance to Member States of a series of issues, including:

- a) The challenge of financing slum transformation and the provision of services in informal and precarious settlements;
- b) Increasing access to financing for social housing as critical to support housing for those on low or informal incomes;
- c) The importance of community investments and savings groups as part of housing financing infrastructure;
- d) Increasing understanding of mechanisms to financially support the informal sector both on the supply and demand side – e.g. access to mortgages for informal workers, but also to self-help and the informal rental market;

- e) Importance of diversify housing tenures and types to ensure responses to diverse needs (including rental market, social, self-help);
- f) Finance needs to be complemented by strong public policies and regulatory frameworks to guide investments where they are most needed and steer action by private sector.

The Intergovernmental Working Group recommended that:

- g) Housing investments should be aligned with a vision of housing as a component of urban planning and socio-economic development, as well as with sustainability goals.
- h) UN-Habitat continues leveraging its voice within international forums to call for a more equitable distribution of development assistance.

The Intergovernmental Working Group made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:

- i) An inter-sessional ad hoc group was recommended to develop an action plan to coordinate a more equitable and sustainable distribution of development assistance.

3. Data and monitoring frameworks

The Intergovernmental Working Group highlighted the importance to Member States of a series of issues, including:

- a) The challenge of collecting and analysing data and the opportunities emerging from new technologies;
- b) The ongoing need to enhance the availability of data, and the capacity to utilize it effectively for analysing housing demands and assessing the impact of housing programmes, including their social implications;
- c) The relevance of understanding housing adequacy as the starting point for measuring poverty reduction, with an emphasis on improving assessments of housing policy impacts on socio-economic variables to better capture the return on public investments;
- d) The necessity of updating definitions of adequate housing, homelessness, slums and informal settlements to ensure alignment with diverse and contemporary challenges and realities;
- e) The need for a comprehensive understanding of housing stocks and housing needs to inform policy development and resource allocation effectively.

The Intergovernmental Working Group recommended that:

- f) A participatory and multi-dimensional framework should be established to monitor access to adequate housing.
- g) Any developed global framework should be adaptable at the local level to facilitate policymaking and target setting.
- h) Local authorities should be strengthened in their ability to monitor access to adequate housing.
- i) Any proposed framework for monitoring the achievement of adequate housing for all does not result in the duplication of reporting efforts.
- j) Any indicator developed should be focusing on both urban and rural population, to ensure no-one is left behind.
- k) Access to basic services and public facilities should also capture access to education, employment and health.
- l) Sustainability indicators should incorporate the cost of maintenance and the sustainability and affordability of construction materials.

- m) Any data and reporting framework should incorporate indicators measuring capacity for urban policy planning and inclusivity of the process.

The Intergovernmental Working Group made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:

- n) An inter-sessional ad hoc group was recommended to refine the proposed data and monitoring framework, including methodological and contextualisation aspects.

4. Opportunities for coalition-building, knowledge exchange and cross-learning

The Intergovernmental Working Group highlighted the importance to Member States of a series of issues, including:

- a) Recognizing the value of knowledge, experiences, and successful innovations developed by Member States, which should be systematically documented and shared with the Working Group to inform discussion and decision-making.
- b) Promoting south-south learning as a means to leverage regional expertise and foster tailored, context-specific solutions to housing challenges.
- c) Strengthening peer-to-peer exchanges among practitioners to enhance capacities, share best practices and develop collaborative solutions.
- d) Promoting multilateral and multi-stakeholder collaboration in technical assistance and capacity building efforts, with a particular focus on the reconstruction of housing in post-conflict, post-disaster and climate change-affected contexts.
- e) Leveraging existing platforms to enrich and produce content for the Working Group's discussion and to establish linkages between ongoing initiatives
- f) Underscoring the need for tools, methodology and policy analyses that capture success stories and identify the preconditions for replicating and scaling successful practices.
- g) Highlighting the importance of facilitating information sharing with end-users (including citizens and communities) and therefore their participation in the design of knowledge exchange and cross-learning opportunities.
- h) Leveraging big data, innovation and AI for predictive and impact analysis.

The Intergovernmental Working Group recommended that:

- i) Agenda item seven (Housing Platform) should continue in the next regular session to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among members and observers, as well as global practitioners, particularly through inter-sessional engagements.
- j) The platform should enable the formation of coalitions, knowledge exchange, and cooperation among stakeholders, as well as dissemination of comparative data.
- k) The Platform should assist national and local decision-makers in determining the impact of support packages and interventions implemented by other countries or local governments, including potential contact points for follow up and learning.
- l) Thematically, content could be organised along the housing supply chain (access to land, finance, sustainable construction and technologies, different types of housing production mechanisms, community-managed housing, inclusive design for all – particularly gender and age).
- m) The platform should incorporate an integrated understanding of adequate housing, avoiding sectoral approaches.

- n) Capacity development should be a central component of the housing platform to address systemic gaps and empower stakeholders.
- o) A preliminary mapping of capacity gaps suggests focusing on the following key areas:
 - i. Policy design, analysis, and evaluation, particularly for low-income groups.
 - ii. Data collection and analysis, especially at the local level, incorporating qualitative aspects such as needs, aspirations, and satisfaction.
 - iii. Effective governance mechanisms and instruments at the national and sub-national levels.
- p) A practitioner's hub approach could be implemented to establish the housing platform, creating a centralised space for expert engagement and innovation sharing.
- q) The Platform and its content should be used to support the implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029.
- r) The establishment of strong curatorship (both in UN-Habitat and gathering stakeholders).

The Intergovernmental Working Group made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:

- s) The Platform should facilitate knowledge exchange and cross-learning on:
 - i. Slum transformation policies and their implementation
 - ii. Social housing models and their implementation in varying contexts
 - iii. Financial and regulatory mechanisms for the delivery of all types of housing intervention
 - iv. Successful community-led housing strategies and guidelines,
 - v. Sustainable and durable solutions in emergency situations.
- t) Continuing the refinement of desk analysis and needs assessment for the establishment of Terms of Reference for the Platform.
- u) Establishment of a curatorship mechanism for the Platform's content.

Conclusions

Considering all of the above, in my capacity as chair my proposal is that the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All establishes an ad-hoc intersessional working group that considers the list of thematic areas presented below and reports back to the Intergovernmental Working Group at its second session. The Co-chairs are requested to consult with the Secretariat on the modalities and organisation of the activities of the Ad-Hoc intersessional working group.

The Ad-Hoc intersessional working group is requested to consider the following thematic areas within the scope of available time and resources:

1. **Data and monitoring** – including definitions, indicators' frameworks, monitor impact for evidence-based policy making, housing profiles, housing observatories, housing markets, housing affordability, etc.
2. **Financing housing and informal settlements** – including IDBs, national banks, financing mechanisms, private-public-partnerships, private housing sector regulatory frameworks, climate financing, access to credit, community investments and savings groups, housing cooperatives, etc.

3. **Innovation, climate resilience, recovery and reconstruction** – including innovative building materials; sustainable and affordable housing construction approaches; energy and water efficiency; green, safe and affordable building technologies; building back better, etc.
4. **Informal settlements** – including upgrading and transformation; prevention; policies and practices; updating the definition, etc.
5. **Land and tenure security** – including availability of serviced land for housing, sustainable land use planning, land markets, protection from forced evictions, etc.
6. **Diversifying housing options:** regulating rental markets, curbing vacant housing, repurposing, refurbishing, upgrading and regularizing informal settlements, etc.
7. **Affordable and sustainable materials:** including cost-effective, locally sourced, and sustainable materials that reduce housing construction costs without compromising quality; promote resource efficiency; enable scalability in housing projects; and support climate resilience and cultural appropriateness, etc.