



**UNITED
NATIONS**

HSP/EB.2024/CRP.9



UN-HABITAT

**United Nations
Human Settlements
Programme**

Distr.: General
4 December 2024
English only

**Executive Board of the United Nations
Human Settlements Programme
Second session of 2024
Nairobi, 4–6 December 2024
Item 7 of the provisional agenda***

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

Efforts to reconstruct human settlements in Ukraine affected by war

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The report is in response to Decision 2024/2 of UN-Habitat's Executive Board which in paragraph 7. *Requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on other urban crises, upon request by affected Member States and members of specialized agencies of the United Nations system; and to the related Note Verbale of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine requesting, dated 27 August 2024, requesting a report on the "status of the developments of the efforts to reconstruct the human settlements in Ukraine that were affected by the war"*.

II. Scope of the report

2. This report is based on the current situation on the ground. The war in the Ukraine is ongoing with no durable ceasefire reached¹. The report uses data available as of 30 November 2024.

3. The report is based on the activities that UN-Habitat is undertaking to support urban recovery in Ukraine upon request of its Executive Board in March 2022 and by the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine in July 2022. As a response, UN-Habitat deployed a first scoping mission to Ukraine from 2 to 14 October 2022 which resulted into a Ukraine Country Programme Framework.

4. UN-Habitat recruited its first personnel in Ukraine in June 2023 and established its office in Kyiv, which was officially launched in May 2024, during the mission of the Acting Executive Director of UN-Habitat. The report refers to the ongoing inter-related projects: '*Towards Inclusive and Resilient Urban Recovery in Ukraine*', '*Just Transition: Digital Tools and Capacity for Inclusive,*

* HSP/EB.2024/14/Rev.1

¹ As of 30 November 2024.

Smart and Resilient Urban Recovery in Ukraine and *'Strengthening the Capacities of three Ukrainian Water and Sanitation Service Providers through Water Operators' Partnerships*'.

5. The report provides a brief overview of the impact of the war on human settlements in Ukraine, UN-Habitat's contribution to urban recovery in Ukraine and the way forward.

III. Assessing the impact of the war on the human settlements in Ukraine

6. A detailed assessment of the impact of the war on the human settlements in Ukraine is fundamental to guide recovery and reconstruction efforts. To do so, it is first important to summarize the main urban challenges in Ukraine pre-war as the starting point, as the current war is aggravating pre-existing challenges.

7. The most recent Ukraine Urbanization Review (2015) by the World Bank and UN-Habitat's Ukraine Country Programme Framework (2022) give a good overview of the urban challenges in Ukraine. Further information on war-induced damages along with recovery and reconstruction needs can be found in the Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3) for Ukraine, launched in February 2024 by the World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, and the United Nations. Elements important for this report and the way forward are summarized below in section B.

A. Urbanization trends in Ukraine pre-war

1. Urbanization trends in Ukraine

8. Key data on population and urbanization pre-war:

(a) Ukraine has experienced a significant population decline since its independence in 1991, when it stood at 52 million. By 2014, it had decreased to 46 million and just before the full-scale invasion, it stood at 44 million. Today, Ukraine's population is estimated to have dropped to 38 million.²

(b) Ukraine's population was rapidly declining at a rate of 0,59% prewar, but not uniformly among regions.³ The sharp decline is linked to prewar trends like rapid aging, extremely low fertility rates (below replacement levels since 1990), out-migration and a high death rate.⁴ There is significant variation across the country- the Eastern region was experiencing a sharper decline compared to the slower decline in the West and a few cities, including Kyiv, that continued to grow.

(c) Ukraine continued to urbanize, with around 70% of the population living in urban areas.⁵

9. Social and economic challenges have contributed to disproportionate urban transformations across regions and to a growing gap between rural and urban areas.

(a) More than 80% of the cities have experienced population decline, but shrinking cities are disproportionately concentrated in the East. The Eastern and Southern regions, highly urbanised at the time of the fall of the Soviet Union, have shown slower urbanisation rates since 2000. The rural population has migrated to urban areas at greater rates in the Western and Central regions, resulting in greater relative growth of urban production in the West.⁶

(b) Despite an important role of the Eastern Region in the economy, the Western and Central regions have been much more dynamic. Looking at the correlation between growing economic activities in cities and lower decline of population, 68% of cities that are declining in economic activities have experienced sharper population decline. This affects smaller cities (averaging 50,000 inhabitants), which are concentrated in the Eastern and Southern regions and to a lesser extent in the Central region.⁷

² <https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/Line/804>

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/UA>

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=UA>

⁶ Ukraine Urbanization Review, World Bank, 2015

⁷ Ukraine Urbanization Review, World Bank, 2015

2. An urban system highly influenced by its origins in the Soviet System

10. The consequences of Ukraine's urban development policies implemented during the Soviet and transition period continue to affect the country and prevent its urban system from achieving its full potential.

11. Ukraine possesses a highly mono-functional cities system. Many cities were developed around a core industry, to which economic performance and employment are dependent on. Due to narrow economic specialization, mono-functional cities are highly vulnerable and unprepared to the economic changes and industry restructuring that followed Ukraine's independence. This will require a stronger focus on urban and territorial regeneration.

12. Before the war, service provision of utilities and infrastructure across all regions was irregular and had low coverage rates. For example:

(a) The estimated coverage of solid waste management was only 79 percent.

(b) The maintenance rate of public green spaces reached only 50%.

(c) Urban areas faced a deficit of 500 cemeteries.⁸

(d) Access to centralized piped water supply was estimated to be at 70%, and access to centralized wastewater collection and treatment services at around 50%. 10 million people lacked access to safely managed water services.⁹

13. Ukraine's housing market is characterized by high homeownership rates that limit the development of an accessible rental market.

(a) There is a substantial 'grey market' of undocumented rental arrangements featuring insecure landlord/tenancy rights as well as tax evasion.

(b) The very limited rental market as well as significant price differentials across the regions of Ukraine influence internal migration and encourage out-migration, already pre-war, that in turn contributed to a further declining population.

3. From a centralised to a decentralised territorial management system

14. Up to 2014, Ukraine was facing challenges on urban policies.

(a) Ukraine's centralised planning system was not sufficiently flexible to respond to market conditions and to be an effective tool in developing the system of cities and urban areas. Centralised development of master plans and zoning plans resulted in increased costs, lack of efficiency and disconnect with local realities.

(b) Ukraine's centralised planning system lacked transparency and did not promote public participation.

(c) Existing urban plans remained for the most part aligned with national growth policies, and so proposed expansions of housing and economic activity across all cities despite different local contexts.

15. Since 2014, Ukraine has pursued a decentralisation reform that is still ongoing and that has been delayed by the war.

(a) The reform resulted in the amalgamation of the existing 11,518 municipalities (*hromadas*) into 1,469 municipalities, with extended competences, in line with the European Charter of Local-Self Governance, such as healthcare, education, social care, energy/water access and public transport.

(b) The regional level is administered by districts (*raions*) and regions (*oblasts*), which representatives are appointed by the national Government, whereas representatives of municipalities are elected. The exact competencies of *raions* and *oblasts* remain unclear.

(c) The reform foresaw the assignment of resources to municipalities to deliver the services related to their new mandate. The resources include the assignment of a 60% share of personal income and property tax.

⁸ Ukraine Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3), World Bank, European Commission, United Nations, February 2022-December 2023, p.159

⁹ Ibid p.153

16. The smaller and newly formed *hromadas*, still need capacity development support to fully deliver on their new mandate, in particular in relation to urban planning.

4. Spatial planning in Ukraine

17. Prior to the conflict, a range of tools became available to local authorities to support planning processes. Legislation adopted by the Parliament in June 2020 (Law #711-IX) introduced ‘*comprehensive development plans*’ to primary support land use and spatial planning by *hromadas* after amalgamation and introducing ‘*Integrated Urban Development Concepts*’ as informal planning tools.

B. Current impact of the war on urban areas in Ukraine

1. Large-scale destruction

18. As of December 2023, the total cost of reconstruction and recovery amounts to USD 486 billion, which is approximately 2.8 times the estimated nominal GDP of Ukraine for 2023.¹⁰

(a) The highest reconstruction needs are in housing (17% of the total), followed by transport (15%), commerce and industry (14%), agriculture (12%), energy (10%), social protection and livelihoods (9%), and explosive hazard management (7%)

(b) Over 10% of the housing stock is either damaged or destroyed and close to 2 million households are affected. As of December 2023, the total cost of damage to the housing sector is estimated to be USD 55.9 billion. Recovery and reconstruction investment priorities for 2024 in the housing sector were estimated at USD 2.1 billion. The scale of damage in this sector is exacerbating the already existing shortage of adequate, affordable, and safe housing in Ukraine.

(c) Intensified attacks on energy infrastructure beginning in October 2022 caused extensive damage across the country, including to power generation and transmission infrastructure. Estimated war-related revenue losses in the power, gas production, gas transit, coal mining, and fuel oil sectors exceed USD 54 billion. Unreliable access to electricity is highly disruptive to civilian life.

(d) The water and sanitation sector has experienced damage estimated to be almost USD 4 billion. 9.6 million people are estimated to be in need for essential water and sanitation services. Where losses and damage are the largest, resources are directed to implementing emergency solutions and little capacity is available to address medium-term recovery and reconstruction needs.

19. Continued damage to communal infrastructure has further strained the capacity of local governments to service communities, including those displaced.

(a) Municipal service sector damages amount to USD 4.9 billion, affecting primarily district heating (42%), sidewalks and street lighting (19.2%), public spaces and facilities like recreation centers, libraries, cemeteries, urban parks, and public squares (17%)

(b) Over the coming 10 years, municipal service recovery needs are expected to amount to USD 11.4 billion.

(c) Local governments are under increased pressure as they are expected to implement emergency recovery works, ensure continued service delivery to residents and IDPs, create conditions for resilience, and develop comprehensive recovery plans for strategic and coordinated recovery and reconstruction prospects at the local level.

2. Impact of the war on Ukraine demographics and territories

20. The war is exacerbating already critical demographic challenges.

(a) Ukraine’s population has shrunk by 8 million since the full-scale invasion in 2022.¹¹

(b) Birthrates have dropped below 1.0, becoming one of the worst in the world and impeding generation replacement.¹²

(c) The mass displacement of people further aged the nation, as most refugees are women, youth and children. At the start of the war, 13.5 million people (approx. one-third of Ukraine’s population)

¹⁰ Ukraine Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3), World Bank, European Commission, United Nations, February 2022–December 2023, p.16

¹¹ <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/amid-war-ukraine-facing-demographic-crisis>

¹² <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/amid-war-ukraine-facing-demographic-crisis>

were forcibly displaced. As of October 2024, 6.2 million Ukrainians are refugees in other European countries¹³ and 3.6 million have been internally displaced. Coupled with the general pre-existing movement of the population from the eastern part of the country, the war has escalated the pressure on hosting cities in the western regions.

(d) Since February 2022, the number of people with disabilities increased by 300,000. The percentage of IDP families caring for persons with disabilities has risen to 29% in October 2023.¹⁴

(e) The elderly have been disproportionately impacted with many impoverished and unable to meet basic needs. They constitute 25% of Ukraine's population yet account for 35% of the civilians killed in the first year of fighting. They are the largest share of population in areas affected by war, close to the front lines.

(f) The war continues to pose challenges to the education sector's performance. Between February 2022 and December 2023, 13% of the education infrastructure was damaged or destroyed by the war, representing an estimated damage of USD 5.6 billion. Consequently, in-person learning remains disrupted, leading to children and youth experience increased learning loss and mental health issues.

21. The war has further diminished the availability of Ukrainian labor force and expertise, including skilled urban planners and designers, leaving the country with insufficient expertise to meet its urban planning needs and urban reconstruction requirements.

22. Damage is concentrated in Donetska, Kharkivska, Khersonska, Luhanska, Dnipropetrovska and Zaporizka and Kyivska oblasts.¹⁵ Regions closer to the front-line have experienced significant population displacement due to the escalation of hostilities. Urban areas like Kharkiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia are seeing worsening access to critical services such as shelter, water and healthcare.¹⁶ Coupled with the pre-existing population movement from the eastern part of the country, the war has intensified pressure on hosting cities in western regions. These displacement trends and deteriorating conditions are accelerating pre-existing demographic shifts, shaping reconstruction priorities.

3. Recovery and reconstruction of urban areas in Ukraine

23. Despite the ongoing war, the Government of Ukraine has been leading early recovery and reconstruction efforts alongside an ambitious reform and modernization agenda, in line with Ukraine's ambition towards European Union integration.

(a) In 2022, the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the War was established, co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the Office of the President.¹⁷

(b) In June 2022, the Law#2254-IX entered into force, introducing the term '*complex recovery programme*' for regions (*oblasts*) and municipalities (*hromadas*). This law requires regions and municipalities to produce a regional or local programme of restoration of territories, which defines the main spatial, urban planning and socio-economic priorities of the restoration policy and includes a set of measures to ensure the restoration of the territory.

(c) In 2023, the Government of Ukraine disbursed USD 7.2 billion to finance urgent recovery projects in energy, critical and social infrastructure, housing, humanitarian demining as well as for the public sector support.

(d) The Ministry for Communities and Territories Development (or Ministry for Restoration) facilitates the coordination and efficient reconstruction of war-affected regions. However, territorial communities are responsible for developing planning documents, establishing communication with international partners, and implementing restoration projects in the respective territories.

24. In 2023, the Government of Ukraine, with the G7 and the EU, set up the Multi-Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine to support Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction process and to help bridge the gap between needs and resources.¹⁸ International institutions, including Council of Europe Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Bank, actively contribute to the coordination efforts of the platform.

¹³ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/>

¹⁴ Ukraine Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3), World Bank, European Commission, United Nations, February 2022-December 2023,

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁶ <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/>

¹⁷ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/national-council-recovery-ukraine-war/about-national-council-recovery-ukraine-war>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/read_23_383

25. The European Union has proposed a multi-annual instrument, the Ukraine Facility, to support Ukraine between 2024 and 2027. The Ukraine Facility aims at supporting the State's basic needs, recovery, reconstruction and modernization. The overall resources made available for the Facility will be €50 billion.¹⁹ The Government of Ukraine has developed a Ukraine plan linked to the planned Ukraine Facility by the European Union. The Ukraine Plan is a programme of actions and reforms for the period 2024-2027, which includes macro-financial scenarios for recovery, and cross-cutting issues such as European integration, digital transformation, green transition, and regional development.²⁰ The plan's development by the Government of Ukraine is coordinated by the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, in cooperation with representatives of the Ukrainian Parliament, regional and local authorities, private sector, and civil society organisations.

26. The United Nations, in coordination with the Government of Ukraine, have established a flexible Ukraine Community Recovery Fund. It aims at supporting an inclusive, areas-based approach that is in synergy to the early recovery priorities as identified in the UN Transitional Framework (2022-2024).²¹

IV. UN-Habitat's contribution to urban recovery in Ukraine

A. Principles

27. UN-Habitat interventions are undertaken in line with the below principles of action, defined in its Country Programme Framework:

(a) Supporting initiatives led by Ukrainian national and sub-national governments and communities, ensuring full local ownership through participation of civil society, academia and the private sector. UN-Habitat focuses its work on small and medium size hromadas of 100,000 inhabitants or less, which have less capacities and resources and aims to sustain decentralisation gains made so far.

(b) Engaging in area-based approaches across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, through enhanced coordination and collaboration across organisations, including other United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes. UN-Habitat's added value lies into its expertise in analysing and understanding the complexity of urban systems, and in prioritising interventions in the short, medium and longer term.

(c) Strengthening existing approaches and capacities in Ukraine, ensuring transmission of knowledge and skills to partnering organisations, including the Government, Ukrainian planning organisations, academia, the civil society, among others. UN-Habitat builds on and strengthens Ukrainian capacities to support the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine by Ukrainians.

(d) Rebuilding sustainable neighbourhoods and communities through participatory approaches, across all stages of the planning process, with special attention to groups at higher risk of vulnerability, including women, youth, persons with disability, Internally Displaced Persons, Returnees, among others.

B. UN-Habitat's response in Ukraine

1. Overview of UN-Habitat's work in Ukraine

28. UN-Habitat has been engaging in Ukraine in support of the sustainable recovery and reconstruction of Ukrainian urban areas affected by the war, through the following inter-connected areas of work:

(a) **Policy advisory at national level**, for the creation of an enabling environment for urban recovery through the development of an Urban Recovery Framework (URF), based on diagnostics of key areas for urban recovery, including capacities for urban planning and built environment management, regulatory frameworks for recovery and reconstruction planning, housing, Housing, Land and Property rights, multi-level governance systems, smart cities and digital governance, etc.

¹⁹ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine/ukraine-facility_en

²⁰ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine/ukraine-facility_en

²¹ <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/ukr00>

(b) **Technical support in strategic and territorial planning for urban recovery** through a participatory, evidence-based, spatial and integrated approach. The Ukraine Urban Lab, convening expertise from Ukraine and abroad, collaborates with selected local governments and communities to co-develop statutory planning documents, including Comprehensive Recovery Programmes and Integrated Development Concepts.

(c) **Knowledge and capacity building/development**, enhancing spatial planning and provision of urban basic services capacities, as well as urban expertise essential for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, in the public and private sectors and among civil society organisations.

(d) **Development of digital solutions and capacities** for data-informed and participatory recovery planning efforts.

29. UN-Habitat's current work in Ukraine is being funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany - BMZ (11.8 million USD), UNICEF (0.9 million USD), the Government of the Republic of Slovakia (270,000 USD) and the Government of the United States of America (50,000 USD).

30. UN-Habitat's leveraged corporate support with key technical contributions from the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities (UNITAC) and the Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA).

31. UN-Habitat's office in Kyiv is co-located with the UN Resident Coordinator Office and most of the other UN agencies facilitating collaboration across the UN system. To date, the UN-Habitat team is composed of twelve (12) personnel.

32. UN-Habitat activities are being delivered under the umbrella of the United Nations Transitional Framework for Ukraine (TF) 2022-2024²², which is the current the strategic document of the United Nations in Ukraine in support of the Government of Ukraine's response to the economic and social impacts of the full-scale invasion and the war; and with the upcoming United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the period 2025-2029. In addition, UN-Habitat is an active member of the Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery (CPDSR) working group as well as the Data for Solutions task force.

33. UN-Habitat in Ukraine is also participating in sectoral coordination mechanisms set up by the Government of Ukraine in support of aid coordination and reconstruction purpose (sectorial working groups on housing, decentralization/regional development and environment) and in the new Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment analytical process, together with the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank, the European Union, and the other UN agencies, contributing to the chapters on housing, municipal services, transport, telecom and digital as well as water supply and sanitation.

2. Achievements so far

34. UN-Habitat has been collaborating with the Government of Ukraine, through the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development, providing technical assistance in various instances for a sustainable urban recovery, as part of an Urban Recovery Framework for Ukraine. To date, UN-Habitat has been engaging on selected normative areas, including the ongoing reform of the Housing Code of Ukraine, contributing to the drafting of the Law "On the Basic Principles of Housing Policy", as well as the reform of the Urban Development Code led by the Parliament.

35. Moving forward, UN-Habitat will further engage in a national diagnostic of the policy, organisational and capacity environment for urban recovery and reconstruction, with a focus on capacity development and municipal governance, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the existing ecosystem.

36. UN-Habitat's engagement at the national level builds on the experience and knowledge gained on the ground, through the close collaboration with eight municipalities across Ukraine, in support of their recovery efforts. UN-Habitat together with the ministry for Communities and Territories development, selected municipalities from different regions and affected by the war in different ways, to support and demonstrate urban planning recovery responses. These include municipalities in the West of the country, hosting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Truskavets, Drohobych, Stryi), municipalities previously under occupation affected by both physical damages and influxes of IDPs in the Center of Ukraine (Irpin, Borodyanka and Makariv) and municipalities closer to the frontline in the East of Ukraine (Opishnya and Myrhorod), all small and medium size municipalities and de facto less capacitated. In addition, the selection of the municipalities aligns with

²² United Nations in Ukraine Transitional Framework | United Nations in Ukraine

the areas of engagement of the Community Planning for Durable Solutions and Recovery (CPDSR) working group of the UN Country Team, linking UN-Habitat strategic and recovery planning capacities and implementation of capital investments projects by sister Agencies and other organisations.

37. Through the Ukraine Urban Lab, a unique platform of engagement of international and national urban experts, established by UN-Habitat, the partner municipalities are receiving technical assistance to co-develop in a holistic and participatory manner, statutory planning documents, including Comprehensive Recovery Programmes and Integrated Development Concepts, responsive to the needs of bridging immediate, medium and longer-term reconstruction needs. The Ukraine Urban Lab comprises to date experts from UN-Habitat, IMPACT, Restart and Ros3vit with a clear ambition to team-up with national organisations and strengthen urban knowledge and practises at the national and local level. This experience, including lessons learned, feeds back into the national reflection on spatial planning architecture and recovery plan development within the decentralisation process. To date, eight (8) local recovery plans are developed or under development, also feeding the respective regional development analysis and strategies and inter-municipal collaboration around shared services. Co-development of urban recovery plans happens with simultaneous capacity development activities at the local level in sustainable spatial and recovery planning, bankable project development, etc. through dedicated training, peer learning and mentoring mechanisms.

38. In complement to this work, UNITAC supports digital urban data generation and analysis for evidenced-informed and participatory decision making, aligning project objectives towards localizing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. In particular, UNITAC, in collaboration with Ukraine Urban Lab, contributes to urban profiling, introducing or upgrading digital technologies and innovation to guide and support local recovery planning. Digital tools include analysis and visualization of geospatial data, scenario planning, visualization of urban profiling data and diagnosis, as well as public participation. Dedicated IT applications were devised for instance for improving residential and public building energy efficiency (EnerGIS tool), for fostering public participation in spatial planning (DrawMap tool) or for visualising strategic planning scenarios (Urban Recovery Planning System). The deployment of the tools is, associated with relevant IT assessment activities and relevant training to the partner municipalities.

39. In line with the restoration of urban basic services, UN-Habitat, through the Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) is also supporting the improvement and management capacities of heavily damaged water and sanitation services in Zaporizhzhia Region, notably through peer learning mechanisms and pilot projects. This year, a connection has been made between the support on basic services and the Shelter Academy co-organized by UN-Habitat and Arcadis, to support this technical component, as part of the recovery and improvement of basic urban services.

40. In addition to the Ukraine Recovery Conference and other fora, in partnership with the Ministry of Territories and Communities Development, UN-Habitat curated a number of events on urban recovery in Ukraine at the 12th edition of the World Urban Forum, held in Cairo in November 2024. A large delegation of Ukrainian representatives, from the Ministry, the Parliament, local governments as well as professional organizations, universities and the civil society participated in eleven events, covering a wide range of topics, reflecting the complexity of recovery and reconstruction: housing reform, locally led recovery, capacity development and digitalization. The sessions also provided a platform for members of Ukraine's parliament, national government officials, and local government representatives to share the current state of affairs and strategies for long-term and inclusive urban recovery. The discussions underscored the importance of collaboration and strategic planning in shaping a resilient and sustainable urban future for Ukraine.

C. Lessons Learned and gaps

41. After a year of activities in Ukraine, working closely with Ukrainian counterparts and stakeholders, UN-Habitat identified the following lessons and gaps, and received the following primary requests:

At local level:

- (a) Interventions need to consider multi-scale and more territorial approaches, linking building, neighbourhood, hromada, inter-municipal, sub-regional, regional and national level.
- (b) All levels of government identified inter-hromada collaboration as an effective tool to reducing costs through reaching scale, sharing capacities and basic services and infrastructure (ex. education, health facilities, etc.), as well as promoting integrated territorial approaches.

- (c) The use of spatial analysis and planning is recognised by participating municipalities as a powerful approach to streamline and prioritise short-term and long-term interventions, as opposed to the current focus on lists of projects, and nurture strategic and inter-municipal investments to identify priority interventions in the short term, recovery options in the medium term and reconstruction solutions in the long term.
- (d) Several municipalities expressed interest in further support from UN-Habitat to translate the recovery plans into capital investment planning and development, and effective implementation of projects.

42. Partner municipalities also requested UN-Habitat's support to work on urban planning and design at neighbourhood level, with a focus on public space and infrastructure.

At national level:

- (a) The Government and the private sector recognise the need for developing long term capacities of national/regional/local governments and built environment practitioners beyond the short-term recovery needs. Transformative changes should happen, especially in the formal education sector, to train the next generation of urban planners and architects.
- (b) Coordination of stakeholders in the area of urban recovery and reconstruction planning could be enhanced, overcoming scattered interventions and duplication of efforts at local level, from international and local organisations. The need to better coordinate approaches, share experience and lessons learned to improve the overall quality of interventions, as well as ensure an even distribution of support among Ukrainian municipalities, is to be addressed through strengthened coordination mechanisms and platforms for exchange and live learning.
- (c) Legislations and policies for recovery and reconstruction planning are complex and often challenging to apprehend and implement. There is a need for a more focused legislation and policy environment that further enables local level recovery and reconstruction initiatives, based on a more acute analysis of impact of the war on urban areas, pre/in war urban and demographic trends and existing compendium of laws and policies.
- (d) There is a need to update the General Territorial Planning Scheme of the Ukrainian Territory as the strategic umbrella document at the national level, to new realities, development goals and unfold alignment of territorial and cross-border planning strategies.

V. Way forward

Building on lessons learned, emerging needs and requests for support by Ukrainian counterparts and stakeholders, UN-Habitat, in consultation with the Ukrainian authorities, is proposing to pursue and extend the scope of work as follows:

43. Continuing the development of the Urban Recovery Framework and implementing selected recommendations:

- (a) While the current phase of the project has been focusing on diagnostics of regulations, policies and mechanisms at national level, for urban recovery and reconstruction, it will be important to dive further into more sectorial analysis and technical support to the Government of Ukraine, including on housing, urban development and related code development, inter-hromada cooperation, people-centred smart cities as well as territorial planning at the national level, focused on urban and territorial regeneration.
- (b) UN-Habitat could also provide technical support for the implementation of selected recommendations. This may include:
 - Contributing to the development of the National Urban Policy for Ukraine;
 - Contributing to the update of the new General Territorial Planning Scheme for Ukraine through the development of a national territorial and macroeconomic diagnostic;
 - Enhancing the training of urban practitioners in the long term, through the development of curricula on urban issues and sustainable reconstruction, ensuring their integration into public and private education systems and other relevant sectors.

44. Sustaining and Advancing Municipal Planning and Projects:
- (a) UN-Habitat was requested by partner municipalities, to sustain the collaboration and engage in the next phases of the planning work. This sustained engagement includes support for the development of more detailed planning documentation, the development of capital investment plans, as well as support for identifying funding sources and support the implementation of selected priority projects with partners.
 - (b) There will be a need and opportunity to support the development of sectoral plans such as sustainable mobility plans, and the preparation of capital investment projects including public space development, gender-based responses, disability inclusivity, etc.
 - (c) In addition, UN-Habitat was requested to replicate its work and expand its assistance to additional municipalities requiring local recovery and planning support. The scaled-up recovery planning would target small to medium-size towns and cities (<100,000 people) in the neighbourhood of the current partner municipalities, strengthening territorial approaches and inter-hromada collaboration. UN-Habitat has also been requested to provide spatial planning support to municipalities closer to the frontline.
 - (d) Building on lessons learnt in Ukraine, UN-Habitat could also scale the digital urban recovery planning system to other locations and strengthen the integration of digital tools and data analysis and visualization with UN-Habitat existing methodologies and processes that can support emergency response and urban recovery in Ukraine and beyond.
45. Supporting knowledge exchange and management on spatial planning for recovery.
- (a) While engaging with a variety of Ukrainian organisations in recovery planning activities, UN-Habitat was solicited to help ensure more inclusive coordination of urban recovery and reconstruction initiatives, in support also of monitoring of recovery and reconstruction initiatives. This should allow for analysis and evaluation of good practises and challenges, and enabling optimisation and consistency in the use of resources and assistance capacity.
 - (b) The Ukraine Urban Lab, as a collaborative and convening platform, could further mobilise stakeholders to build a common understanding of recovery planning needs and common approaches, and contribute to the development of systems to monitor, report and share information on ongoing activities including urban recovery planning, capacity development and training, etc. By facilitating the dialogue among stakeholders and extracting lessons learned across all recovery planning experience, the Ukraine Urban Lab would also help facilitate deep dives into emerging issues, provide technical assistance to recovery planning initiatives and act as a repository of common knowledge products and documentation tools. This would also create capacity to expand support to other clusters of municipalities.
 - (c) The Ukraine Urban Lab could also engage in developing detailed methodologies so as to upscaling spatial analysis and planning in support of prioritization of short-term and long-term interventions, and strategic and inter-municipal investments. This would help evidenced-based decision making and leveraging capital investment projects triggered from the Ukraine Facility and other bilateral funds.
46. Supporting additional data collection and analysis to support longer term urban and territorial regeneration strategies:
- (a) UN-Habitat could develop a State of the Ukrainian Cities Report, an adaptation of UN-Habitat's global knowledge product to develop a diagnostic of urbanization in Ukraine, considering pre-war shifts in urbanization trends, decentralization, and war-induced changes in demographics and economic dynamics. This could include recommendations around contextualized urban and territorial regeneration strategies, learning from neighbouring countries.
 - (b) In the same vein, UN-Habitat could also develop a dedicated Housing and Land Management profile that could inform the reconstruction process and provide scenario planning.
47. A broader donor base is needed in support of urban recovery activities as described here. The Government of the Slovak Republic and UN-Habitat signed a Letter of Intent at the 12th World Urban Forum aiming at establishing a Ukraine Urban Support Hub in Košice, Slovakia to leverage regional expertise in support or urban and territorial recovery and development in Ukraine.