

UN-Habitat

Strategic Plan for the Period of 2026-2029

1.0 Overall, the document is well-composed, clear and comprehensive. It focuses on housing as a lens from which basic urban services, land rights and poverty alleviation can be achieved. It builds on the achievements of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan particularly its relations to sustainable urbanisation to achieve the SDGs and other global goals.

2.0 As in item (17), the role and responsibilities of UN-Habitat is clearly defined. It provides “guidance and promote strategic planning, synergetic investments and coherent implementations to prevent urbanization from exacerbating existing inequalities, overburdening infrastructure and increasing vulnerabilities to climate change and environmental risks.” *Clearly the role and responsibilities of member states are also well-articulated. This has been Malaysia’s experience, and its spatial planning and urban development trajectory is a good example of plan-led development.*

3.0 In item (18), the Strategic Plan makes clear that “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, critical role of adequate housing, and urgency to address the issue of informal settlements and slums.” *In the case of Malaysia, we have demonstrated over the last fifty years our commitment to ‘transform’ informal settlements through our public housing programmes. However, the urban renewal act (draft) provides opportunities to upscale, improve and re-develop public and social housing estates to improve the built environment and quality of life of our urban communities.*

4.0 Responding to item (19), it is clear that “At the global level, UN-Habitat collaborates within the United Nations 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.” *Malaysia welcomes the articulation of this specific role as this architecture was set up under the guidance of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat in 2022. This represents a clear articulation of the role of UN-Habitat within the UN System with specific roles for the Programme through is localisation of the SDGs and climate goals.*

5.0 The strategic focus of UN-Habitat in the next four years will be: (item 21): “UN-Habitat will focus on the opportunity to address the global challenges above through adequate housing, land, and basic services for all, including the transformation of informal settlements and slums.” *The theme remains relevant to Malaysia and in many ways, Malaysia is a good example of the achievement of these strategic goals. It’s experience in uplifting both rural and urban communities to bridge the gaps through improving infrastructure, economic opportunities, and quality of life in both areas through multi-governmental agencies including Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), Urban Development Authority (UDA), Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB), 1Malaysia People’s Housing Programme (PRIMA) can be global examples.*

6.0 The Strategic Plan returns housing to the center of UN-Habitat’s work and here housing refers to “tenure security”, “basic services”, “affordability”, “habitability”, “accessibility”, “location” and “cultural adequacy”. *Malaysia’s own experience in building on the distinct land tenure matters as well as other legacies from its colonial history is a good example of the amalgamation of multiple cultural practices in terms of housing into a single national policy and practice in the provision of adequate, accessible and affordable housing in the past 50 years. However, the Strategic Plan allows calls for a review of our own housing policies and practices, mapped against 21st century requirements and expectations.*

7.0 In item (25), “Affordability of housing and access to basic services are universally important, even if the means of improving them might differ in developed and developing countries: from access to housing finance to availability of affordable building materials.” *Here Malaysia supports this well-articulated and balanced statement. Notable is the distinction of ability, resources and financing between developed and developing countries. Upper-middle income countries like Malaysia face significantly different challenges as we transition to a more knowledge centric economy. This defines the supply side of affordability - do we build and price according to the income levels of our citizens instead of allowing for a completely free enterprise model in private housing?*

8.0 Item (26), “Slum dwellers are members of our communities who should be equal in rights and dignity and who play important cultural, economic and social roles. *Here is a rights-based approach in the definition of adequate housing. Malaysia can support this with the caveat that this only applies to Malaysian citizens or that the needs of Malaysians citizens are prioritised.*

9.0 Item (33), defines the role of UN-Habitat working in partnership with member states on poverty eradication through the provision of housing as a basic first step. “It promotes the efficient and equitable use of land to deliver sustainable urban development, including adequate housing, and to maximise the security of tenure for the social and economic benefits that this provides, including the protection of dignity.” *Malaysia housing policy is a global example on how this strategic can be achieved. Here we can champion the Malaysian model in the efficiency of the provision of*

housing (our building industry) and our pro-poor policies (New Economic Policy, New Development Policy and Madani Economy) that we have implemented consistently over half a century.

10.0 *As the world is now facing more challenges, conflicts and natural disasters, we can support the strengthening of UN-Habitat's role within the UN emergency standing committee (IASC). Malaysia can support this as stated in item (36): "Working across the whole cycle allows UN-Habitat to help integrate humanitarian and development efforts and leverage its comparative advantages as called for as in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, adopted in 2024."*

11.0 *Items (39) and (40) are on climate change and the role of urbanisation as a basis for localising the climate goals. Again, this function of UN-Habitat in this area that resulted in the Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change and Urbanisation (COP27,28&29) as well as World Clean Up Day (2024) and International Zero Waste Day (2023). Item (39) "A 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 people in vulnerable situations, especially in informal settlements and slums. (Item 40) A shift towards a circular model in the buildings and construction sector and the use of sustainable building materials is urgent to reduce the carbon imprint of construction. Malaysia stands ready to share its multi-agencies approach in developing green buildings, low carbon cities and sustainable construction practices to reduce environmental impact.*

12.0 *(Item 42) highlights the importance of aligning the mandate of UN-Habitat's line ministries with that of climate (NRES for Malaysia) as well as rural development (Ministry of Rural and Regional Development) to close the loop between the urban rural continuum. "Additionally, UN-Habitat enriches the efforts of the United Nations system by addressing the urban and territorial dimensions of key issues, such as water resource planning and management across the rural-urban continuum." Malaysia's National Spatial Plan provides a comprehensive framework to guide the country's overall development by defining spatial strategies for urban and rural areas, to achieve balance and sustainable growth across the nation. The plan also addresses climate change, sustainable urban development, bio-diversity, food security, green technology and inclusive development between urban and rural areas.*

13.0 *With regards to outcome and measurement of implementation, item (45) is once again aligned with Malaysia's impact indicators and measurements. "Outcomes constitute a distinct level in the hierarchy of the results chain:*

- a) *impact at the top, where we have only indirect influence: what occurs in people's lives;*
- b) *outcomes in the middle, where we have a more direct influence: what we help our partners to do better; and*

c) outputs at the bottom, where we have full control: deliverables of our work. This hierarchy of results will be monitored through corresponding levels of indicators.

14.0 *On the role of integrated planning, Malaysia can support item (49) “Effective urban planning is the backbone of delivering inclusion, resilience, accessibility and sustainability in cities and communities. “And item (51) UN-Habitat will provide normative guidance and technical assistance to Member States and other partners on participatory, inclusive, and sustainable integrated evidence-based 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.” Malaysia’s urban planning development plan system has roadmaps align to the SDGs and UN-Habitat’s normative guidelines, demonstrating its commitment to achieve the SDGs.*

15.0 *(Item 54) “The Sustainable Development Goals must be met for all segments of society and leave no one behind, including through the localization of sustainable development”. Malaysia fully supports the importance of localising the global goals, its Malaysia SDG Cities program has encouraged cities to align its local policies and execute plans, programs and solution to address local issues that contribute to the global goals.*

16.0 *(Item 59) “To leverage digital technology for a better quality of life in cities and human settlements.” Malaysia fully supports the importance of digitalisation that is instrumental to change our lives, where technology will be at the core of this transformation of businesses and society. Malaysia’s Connectivity for All program will ensure digital connectivity to every corner of the nation and this has also assisted small home-based entrepreneurs and young people. And Malaysia’s smart city initiative uses technology to address urban issues and improve quality of life. The goal is to create cities that are more sustainable, safe, and inclusive.*

16.0 Finally, Malaysia welcomes efforts on diversification on the mobilisation of resources (a trend introduced by ED Maimunah during her tenure where 93% of the entire USD 1 billion budget was earmarked that resulted in two years of surpluses). “Guided by this strategic plan, UN-Habitat will mobilise greater, diversified, and more predictable resources for its work, including the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly.”

**Prepared by
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