



Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group

on Adequate Housing for All

First session

Nairobi, 9–11 December 2024

**Report of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working
Group on Adequate Housing for All on the work of its first
session**

Introduction

1. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All was established pursuant to resolution 2/7 on adequate housing for all, adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat Assembly) at its second session, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 June 2023. In that resolution, the UN-Habitat Assembly decided to establish an 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, and requested the expert working group, subject to the availability of resources: (a) to assess the state of efforts progressively to realize adequate housing for all; (b) to identify policy best practices for the progressive realization of adequate housing and, as appropriate, examples of such best practices and the contexts in which they were developed; (c) to propose a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts; (d) to consider the progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing; (e) to map and evaluate existing multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects; and (f) to report on its recommendations to the Assembly at its third session. In the same resolution, the UN-Habitat Assembly decided that the working group's activities and programme of work would be determined in consultation with the Executive Board.

2. Pursuant to that provision, the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), at its first session of 2024, held in Nairobi from 6 to 8 May 2024, adopted part (c) of decision 2024/3, by which it decided that the first session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All would be held for a duration of three days, from 9 to 11 December 2024, in Nairobi, and decided on the agenda for the session.

3. Accordingly, the first session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group was held at the headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi from 9 to 11 December 2024. The session was held fully in person, with provision for listening online.

I. Opening of the session

4. The first session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Monday, 9 December 2024, by the interim Chair, Edna Elena Vega Rangel (Mexico), President of the UN-Habitat Assembly. She said that the provision of adequate housing for all was an increasingly

urgent social and political concern globally and was fundamental to people's social and economic outcomes and their participation in communities and in society at large.

5. Opening statements were delivered by Anacláudia Marinheiro Centeno Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; José Blanco, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations and former Chair of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly; and Said Athman, Housing Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, Kenya.

6. Welcoming participants, the Executive Director noted that the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would be of strategic importance to the implementation of resolution 2/7 on adequate housing for all and resolution 2/2 on accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030. Those two resolutions were closely connected, as addressing the global housing crisis required action on housing affordability, homelessness and informality, among other issues. The Executive Director further noted that preventing informality required the delivery of adequate housing for all income and social groups. The work of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would also provide valuable inputs to the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026–2029, which would focus on promoting access to housing, land and basic services, and transformation of informal settlements.

7. Mr. Blanco, in his statement, highlighted the significance and timeliness of the current session; while adequate housing was an essential right, it had not received the urgent attention it merited on the international agenda. The convening of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group offered a valuable opportunity to address, in a coherent and sustained manner, the many dimensions of the topic, including the role of housing in post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction and its connection with the rights to education and to health. He drew lessons from the experience of his own country, the Dominican Republic, where the quantity and quality of housing was inadequate to meet the needs of the population, negatively affecting people's quality of life and access to opportunities. The Government had, however, recognized dignified housing as a fundamental human right and had established a national housing strategy aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, with the aim of delivering safe, secure and sustainable human settlements that addressed such issues as affordability; universal access; the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children and those with disabilities; safety and security; the value of green spaces; and the provision of essential services such as electricity and water. The mobilization of adequate resources was necessary to enable developing countries to undertake such initiatives, requiring coordinated action by a variety of stakeholders, including multilateral organizations, international financial institutions and the private sector. In closing, he underscored the important role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of developing countries to achieve adequate housing for all.

8. Mr. Athman thanked UN-Habitat for organizing the session and welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government and the people of Kenya. Kenya was proud to host UN-Habitat at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and was honoured to be the venue for the inaugural session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group. The issue of housing was taking a more central place in the national development agendas of many countries as housing was increasingly recognized not just as a social matter but rather as a broad-ranging issue with economic, political and environmental implications. As the lead sponsor of UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7, Kenya welcomed the current session as a significant step towards its implementation. Kenya had responded with urgency to the accelerating pace of urbanization and climate change by developing an ambitious affordable housing programme with the goal of building 200,000 housing units every year over the following 15 years. Advantageous outcomes of the programme would include the generation of employment throughout the housing value chain; encouragement of economic development; an increase in demand for materials, benefiting the domestic construction industry; and the promotion of asset ownership and associated socioeconomic development among the population. Financing, legislation and multilateral partnerships were essential cornerstones of the programme. With regard to financing, he highlighted the role of the Shelter Afrique Development Bank in mobilizing resources for developing housing initiatives in Africa. Finally, he suggested the establishment of a global housing coalition as a means of engaging major actors to accelerate the implementation of resolution 2/7.

9. The representative of Algeria delivered a statement on behalf of the African States, reaffirming their strong commitment to supporting the present initiative and the broader efforts of UN-Habitat. The creation of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group was a critical step in addressing the urban challenges faced by Africa in the context of the New Urban Agenda. Noting with concern the recent findings that 1 billion people worldwide were living in slums and informal settlements, he said that the situation in Africa was particularly dire, owing to unprecedented rural-to-urban migration, the large percentage of households living in inadequate and unsafe living conditions, and urban growth

that was concentrated in secondary cities lacking basic infrastructure and services. Those challenges exacerbated social and economic inequalities, reinforced poverty, strained resources and created environmental pressures. Despite that acute need, Africa received a low share of global housing assistance compared with other regions. The African States remained deeply concerned about inequities in funding distribution and called for a significant shift in resource allocation towards transformative interventions in Africa, including tackling homelessness, upgrading slums, ensuring affordable and accessible housing, and improving basic services in rural areas. Only through equitable investment could sustainable urban development be achieved. With regard to the report of the Executive Director on the development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts, while the inclusion of key indicators on the availability of services, affordability, accessibility, location and habitability were appreciated, there was a need for additional indicators on access to education and healthcare, which were central to adequate housing, as well as capacity-building indicators for urban policy planning. In addition, the alignment of the framework with Agenda 2063 of the African Union would ensure that it addressed the continent's specific challenges and aspirations. Furthermore, the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group should be integrated into the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 and its programmes of work to address the evolving needs of vulnerable communities effectively. Finally, he emphasized the importance of integrating housing priorities from the African Urban Forum and the World Urban Forum, particularly the Cairo Call to Action of the World Urban Forum at its twelfth session, into the agenda of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group.

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda for the first session

10. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group adopted the following agenda for its first session on the basis of the provisional agenda (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/1) and the annotated provisional agenda (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/1/Add.1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda for the first session;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Terms of reference of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group.
3. State of efforts to progressively realize adequate housing for all.
4. Development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts.
5. Progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing, including addressing homelessness and slums upgrading.
6. Existing multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects.
7. Establishment of a publicly accessible complementary platform that includes summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing.
8. Other matters.
9. Closure of the session.

B. Election of officers

11. Regarding the election of officers, one representative, supported by others, proposed that the present sub-item, as well as sub-item 2 (c) on terms of reference of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, be considered later in the session, given that the current session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group was the first to be held and procedural matters needed to be resolved.

12. The representative of the secretariat said that, in the absence of specific rules of procedure for the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly

would apply, *mutatis mutandis*. The rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly, however, did allow for subsidiary bodies to adopt their own rules of procedure.

13. On that basis, several representatives expressed support for the option whereby the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would adopt its own terms of reference providing for two co-chairs instead of a bureau, rotation on an annual basis and selection with due regard for regional balance. The actual arrangements would be decided later in the session, following consideration of agenda item 7. The representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat would prepare various options for the terms of reference for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group. One representative said that only matters specific to the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group should be included in the terms of reference, while for other matters the rules of procedure of the Assembly would be retained.

14. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group expressed its appreciation to the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly for acting as interim chair while those matters were resolved.

15. Subsequently, the representative of the secretariat introduced the draft terms of reference, as set out in a conference room paper, for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group (see agenda sub-item 2 (c)).

16. Later in the session, in accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly and paragraph 3 of the terms of reference of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group elected the following Member States to serve as its Co-Chairs, starting from the closure of the present session and until their successors were elected: Kenya (African States) and France (Western European and other States).

C. Terms of reference of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group

17. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group decided to move forward with the present sub-item as agreed under agenda sub-item 2 (b).

18. The representative of the secretariat introduced the draft terms of reference, as set out in a conference room paper, for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group.

19. There was some discussion of whether the governance structure of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group should be composed of co-chairs or a bureau. There was, however, alignment on the need for equitable regional representation and the importance of rotation among the regions. Several members stressed the importance of the terms of reference containing provisions to ensure that there was no vacuum in the event that no Member State volunteered to take over as co-chair.

20. Some representatives queried the use of the terms “developing country” and “developed country” and their compatibility with equitable regional representation. A representative of the secretariat explained that the terms referred to the classification of developed and developing regions maintained by the Statistical Commission, which had been updated in May 2022.

21. In response to a proposal to specify in the terms of reference the number of sessions that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would hold and the duration of its work, members expressed the following views: that resolution 2/7 clearly stated that the Executive Board would decide on the timing and the duration of the sessions of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group; that the UN-Habitat Assembly had already decided, in the same resolution, that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would not hold more than one regular session per year, although there was no explicit prohibition of special or extraordinary sessions; and that, although the resolution also stipulated that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group would report its recommendations to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its third session, it did not refer to the status or work of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group after the holding of that session.

22. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group adopted decision OEWG-H/1, by which it adopted its terms of reference. The decision is set out in the annex to the present report.

D. Attendance

23. The session was attended by representatives of the following States members of the UN-Habitat Assembly: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali,

Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

24. The session was also attended by the following observer that is a member of specialized agencies of the United Nations: State of Palestine.

25. The session was also attended by a number of other observers. The full list of participants is set out in document HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/7.

III. State of efforts to progressively realize adequate housing for all

26. In considering the item, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had before it the report of the Executive Director on the state of efforts to progressively realize adequate housing for all (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/3) and the results of the preliminary survey on the state of efforts to progressively realize adequate housing for all (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/2).

27. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that, while there was increasing policy attention to and recognition of housing challenges, that had not been accompanied by sufficient consideration of the social function of shelter, the development of long-term strategies and a framework for action, and commensurate spending. To meet the diverse housing needs of urban populations, it was essential to diversify housing production and delivery mechanisms. Public housing, cost rental schemes, community-led projects and self-help incremental programmes should be supported, alongside private sector initiatives. Housing challenges were often framed as a supply crisis, emphasizing the production of new units through investment, but that approach was not universally relevant. Production without a long-term strategy could lead to mismatched housing needs, poor spatial planning and socioeconomic inequalities. In addition, addressing housing issues must include sustainability considerations in line with long-term urban planning goals and climate targets. Land was a crucial factor that had a direct impact on the quality and stability of housing. More flexible, diverse and inclusive land tenure systems could accommodate diverse housing practices, particularly in informal settlements and slums. In framing the debate on the item, she urged members of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to consider the global analysis from a local perspective, taking into account regional and country-level differences in the context of housing provision, including policy, planning and financial frameworks. It was also important to consider what data were needed to orient public sector and private sector action on housing and to clarify the role of government in coordinating initiatives to overcome bottlenecks in the housing market, including access to finance.

28. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the state of efforts progressively to realize adequate housing for all. She summarized the scale of the challenge, both globally and regionally, and noted key trends and challenges, including (a) rapid urbanization that was outpacing planning, with available data suggesting that land use tripled as population doubled and that cities were expanding up to 3.7 times faster than they densified, leading to sprawl, inefficient land use and informal settlements, which were often the only viable option for low-income groups, in disaster-prone areas; (b) low and decreasing public funding for housing, which had halved in some regions and had not been offset by a shift to demand-side subsidies, leaving supply underfunded; (c) overemphasis on market-driven solutions, which were not always appropriate for people in cash-based and informal economies, and on framing the challenge as primarily a supply shortage; (d) the interplay of crises, including climate change, conflict and displacement; (e) systemic inequalities acting as barriers to housing access; and (f) governance and data gaps. In closing, she drew attention to priorities for future action and possible areas for further research, such as the mapping of various aspects, including domestic interventions; the impact of community-led housing solutions and opportunities to scale them; strategies to balance public and private sector roles in addressing housing challenges; and existing governance mechanisms to examine the preconditions for effective multilevel collaboration.

29. Another representative of the secretariat said that documentation provided under the current agenda item and the presentation identifying trends, challenges and possible ways forward provided a solid basis for the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to discuss actionable priorities on which to focus when undertaking intersessional work.

30. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on housing for all and informal settlements in the region. He said that Latin America and the Caribbean was projected to become the world's most urbanized region by 2050, with 89 per cent of the population living in urban areas, many of them in poverty, which would result in a huge demand for affordable housing units in the coming decades. That challenge necessitated an integrated implementation approach based on five key

components: data collection and analysis; articulation of multilevel policies, strategies and plans; integrated solutions through urban housing projects and interventions; financial structuring for social impact investment; and coalition-building. For each element, he presented working examples, realized with UN-Habitat support, from throughout the region. For example, in Brazil, quick participatory mapping illustrated how a rapid qualitative survey to diagnose the conditions of urban infrastructure and the quality of public services in informal settlements could provide data on the status of informal housing, while a programme in Rio de Janeiro sought to map slum dwellers in the favelas in order to integrate them into the municipal social protection system; the national urban policy of Honduras showed the value of a participatory, multilevel approach; the national urbanism, housing and habitat policy of Paraguay aimed to strengthen the capacities of national and local governments to formulate and implement evidence-based and participatory housing policies and strategies to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11; integrated urban operations in Central America exemplified how a portfolio of programmes could bring complementary benefits, using methodologies that could be adapted to a wide range of contexts; and the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub showed how multi-stakeholder regional coalitions could foster collective action by promoting the exchange of information, encouraging innovative initiatives and managing knowledge through a digital platform. Findings from the studies included the importance of structured data on informal settlements to inform the scaling-up of interventions; the relevance of updating and completing an adequate housing framework; the value of a multidimensional, multilevel investment package, including both public and private investment; the centrality of housing and informal settlements in the social protection agenda; and the impact of interregional exchange and relevant coalitions to support objectives at all levels.

31. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on setting the agenda for a sustainable housing solution for Africa. The continent had experienced rapid urbanization, and projections indicated that 900 million more inhabitants would be moving to cities by 2050, requiring a great expansion in the provision of decent and affordable housing. Participants in the first Africa Urban Forum, held in Addis Ababa from 4 to 6 September 2024, had recognized the need for affordable housing in Africa and had called for the organization of knowledge-sharing activities on affordable and resilient housing delivery, and support from financial institutions and regional development banks to bridge the gap in housing finance. In that regard, regional and international financial institutions, including Shelter Afrique Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the World Bank, were playing a prominent role in supporting housing delivery in Africa, but more needed to be done. UN-Habitat was active in building the technical and institutional capacities of national, subnational and local institutions to guide housing programmes and realize the right to adequate housing, principally through two interconnected components: the development of a comprehensive national housing profile using evidence-based analysis and stakeholder engagement; and updating of the policies and implementation plan of the national housing strategy. Several countries had developed their national housing profiles with assistance from UN-Habitat, including Angola, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. In Ghana, for example, profile development had been assisted by the establishment of a housing-policy task force; the building of capacity and expertise; and multi-stakeholder consultation and public debate to identify problems and set priorities. Outcomes of the Ghana housing profile development exercise had included the establishment of the National Housing Authority; instigation of affordable housing programmes; establishment of a government redevelopment programme to rationalize land-use planning in rapidly urbanizing cities; the creation of an enabling environment for local and international stakeholders and investors; and the instigation of slum upgrading programmes. In other examples from the region, an eco-village resettlement project in Sao Tome and Principe had used a private, public and community partnership model to secure land tenure and integrate housing with land planning, environmental protection and the provision of social amenities; and in Sofala, Mozambique, climate-resilient housing and infrastructure had been built using a combination of incentives, including capacity-building, knowledge dissemination, partnership formulation and legislation. UN-Habitat had been able to add value to the projects through its experience in integrated approaches to housing and urban development.

32. In the ensuing wide-ranging discussion, a number of representatives highlighted the importance, relevance and urgency of the topic and the timeliness of the initiative to convene the present Intergovernmental Expert Working Group session. There was recognition that the challenge of adequate housing provision was faced at all levels – local, national, regional and global – requiring a broad spectrum of varied solutions according to scale and context. Several representatives recognized the important role to be played by UN-Habitat in disseminating information and supporting and guiding actions on the matter. Many confirmed their national commitments to engaging with partners in efforts to combat the housing crisis, which affected all parts of the globe but was more severely felt in certain regions and locations. Several placed the task within the wider context of global commitments, such as Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

33. Several representatives framed the discussion within the wider context of the nature and function of housing. Not only was housing a fundamental human right, it was also a cornerstone of sustainable development, social justice and equity, human dignity and environmental protection, including climate resilience. Decent housing not only comprised physical shelter, it also embraced elements of security, access to basic services, community participation, health and employment. It was vital to the achievement of job security and stable employment, poverty reduction, gender equality and good governance.

34. There was broad recognition of the wide-ranging problems facing urban settlements in general, and housing in particular. The large and growing number of the world's inhabitants without access to decent housing or living in informal settlements was unacceptable. Housing was but one aspect of the many challenges facing urban settlements, including lack of basic services, overstretched and poorly coordinated transport systems, pollution and civil unrest. Rural-urban migration was augmenting the increase in urban populations, leading to rates of urban growth that were often beyond the capabilities of the urban planning mechanisms and policies currently in place. Further, those challenges existed within the global context of increasing environmental degradation, climate change, pollution, poverty and conflict, and could not be solved in isolation from those overriding issues. The complexity of the issue was daunting, and many countries struggled with the logistical challenge of implementing national urban policy at the local level.

35. The issue of adequate housing had a strong regional dimension. In Africa, rapid urbanization and the consequent expansion of slums presented governance problems, leading to insecurity and displacement, and resulted in pollution and deterioration of the environment. One representative mentioned the particular issues confronting small island developing States, which faced the double challenge of climate change and limited access to finance, and were experiencing considerable difficulty in constructing climate-change-resilient housing.

36. Several representatives remarked on the need for more data to delineate the scale and nature of the housing problem, establish baselines against which future progress could be measured and identify priorities in order to guide future action. That in turn required further clarity and precision in definitions and other parameters to enable consistent data-gathering across countries and regions. It was also important to quantify returns (both economic and social) on investment in housing as a means of encouraging the mobilization of financing from various sources. Dedicated observatories and data-gathering modalities were required. The digitalization of urban planning and management systems offered a promising way forward. A representative of the secretariat said that, as mandated, UN-Habitat had been working on the definitions of "slum", "homelessness" and "inadequate housing" as a basis for mapping regional diversity, to help focus the work of UN-Habitat and identify entry points for action.

37. Regarding the solutions to the housing problem, there was consensus that one-size-fits-all measures were inappropriate, given the huge variations in local context and the need for action commensurate with particular settings. There was also recognition of the need to adopt innovative approaches to the complex challenges faced and to share best practices where solutions had demonstrated success. In addition, there was agreement that improving access to adequate housing was not just a matter of supply, but involved qualitative as well as quantitative considerations. As such, a wide range of public interventions and measures were required to meet the various needs of urban populations, within the framework of cohesive national housing policies covering social, economic, cultural, educational and health aspects of urban life. The scale of the housing shortfall required better usage of existing buildings, including disused commercial buildings, as well as the construction of new housing stock. New, innovative construction methods were increasingly available as a means of reducing the cost of housing construction.

38. Different types of housing needs should be catered for, including the rental market and household ownership models. Housing affordability should be aligned with the resources available to low- and middle-income households. Social demographics should also be taken into account, such as the age profile and the presence of displaced persons within the population. In another example, where graduate students or migrant workers formed a large percentage of the urban population, a high proportion of rental accommodation could be required.

39. It was also important to recognize the centrality of land management to the housing issue, and matters of security of land tenure and ownership were crucial aspects of urban planning and policy. The inhabitants concerned should be included in policy formulation to ensure accountability and acceptance among all stakeholders. In line with present-day priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals, environmental and climate change dimensions should also be taken into account

in housing development or upgrading. Energy efficiency was an essential component of all housing development.

40. Dealing with slums and informal settlements was a particularly complex problem, given the human, social, land, economic and cultural dynamics involved. Where possible, the upgrading of existing underserved and socially disadvantaged settlements should be preferred to demolition and resettlement as a means of improving the living conditions of people living in poverty.

41. The scale and complexity of the housing problem required the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and entities bringing their own expertise and added value to the mix. Many of those entities would be operating at the local level under the overall guidance of the national government, with considerable authority delegated to municipalities and local governments. Removing bureaucratic and systemic bottlenecks was crucial. Those involved could include social housing corporations, community organizations, private sector construction companies and service providers, and financing and mortgage institutions. In addition, given the multidimensional nature of the housing problem, entities and organizations from other sectors, such as health, territorial management, environment, water and power supply, and transport, should be involved. Strong national direction was required to enable such a system to function effectively, including through legislation (housing act, affordable rent act), regulation, and policy and strategy formulation. Housing should be an integral element of national strategy development.

42. A representative of an observer organization commented on the value of urban housing practitioners' hubs as multi-stakeholder platforms to support the achievement of the ambitious outcomes called for in UN-Habitat Assembly resolutions 2/2 and 2/7. Experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean demonstrated the value of such hubs, and they had recently undergone expansion in the Middle East and North Africa and were in their formative stages in the Asia-Pacific region and sub-Saharan Africa. The informality task force, formed under the auspices of the Cities Alliance, was another global multi-stakeholder platform bringing together multiple actors to implement slum transformation initiatives. Such collective, people-centred development approaches offered the potential to achieve durable and scalable solutions to the urban housing crisis. Another representative of an observer organization presented information on the work of her organization, saying that it partnered with Member States and UN-Habitat with the goal of achieving decent housing for all, which was a central pillar of equity, human development and poverty reduction. She called for increased prioritization of and resource allocation to adequate and affordable housing to close the significant gap in financial support for housing solutions in emerging and developing country contexts.

43. Particular importance was placed on the matter of financing at all levels, from local housing markets and household access to financing to the technical and resource requirements of local governments and national financial needs to combat the housing crisis. With regard to the international allocation of resources to the housing sector, it was essential that the global community step up efforts to provide innovative financing mechanisms and new models of technical cooperation to support developing countries in addressing the issue of housing. A comprehensive approach was required, integrating finance for housing with infrastructure, transport, public services and employment to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. Alternative investment models such as circular economic models and community investment and savings groups were needed to provide sustainable housing solutions. The European Union-Africa partnership on affordable housing was cited as an exemplary scheme for channelling finance in the direction needed. Other measures viewed as promising included the diversification of the range of financial products on offer and the introduction of instruments and mechanisms to encourage and secure savings and long-term investment in housing. In addition, support for social development projects at the country level, combined with basic service provision projects in rural and intermediary cities, could help to reduce pressure on cities and to preserve the environmental components of housing systems.

44. At the national and subnational levels, it was important to strike a balance between public and private investment, taking into account that solutions driven by market forces or the private sector alone would not ensure equitable development. Policy measures could include tax benefits or subsidies for socially beneficial measures such as affordable housing projects, or social rent policies to assist low-income households. Ensuring decent and affordable housing for those in low-income brackets was a central policy challenge facing all countries, particularly developing countries. Banks and financial institutions were important sources of financing for housing projects, as well as community and household investments. Housing construction processes should consider the use of local, sustainable and affordable materials, benefiting the local economy and increasing employment opportunities. Ready-made housing with standard designs would enable economies of scale to be captured.

45. A representative of an observer organization highlighted two issues that he said were of primary importance to the housing debate. First, forced evictions and property demolitions were counterproductive to sustainable development and threatened the existing stock of housing assets. Principles and guidelines should be developed to monitor and prevent forced evictions, and civil society efforts to partner with local government to combat forced evictions should be promoted. Second, non-speculative forms of housing and tenure systems should be encouraged as socially just and environmentally sustainable alternatives to market-based housing models. As a general principle, communities and civil society actors should be recognized as peers in the development and management of land and housing, as a balance to the negative impacts that could result from a focus on market-led approaches.
46. Another representative of an observer organization said that, while there was an apparent and urgent need for finance for affordable housing across Africa, a key challenge for the financing and development bank sector was the lack of bankable projects across the industry. A flexible approach that considered both the demand and the supply side was required, given the variations in the housing market and in definitions of affordability across the region.
47. A representative of the secretariat, responding to a question about the lack of funding for housing being directed towards Africa, said that, in general, bilateral donors, with a few exceptions, were not prioritizing housing as an issue, hence there was a dearth of targeted, country-focused housing programmes. In addition, one of the largest housing financiers, the European Investment Bank, focused on investment in Europe in accordance with its mandate, somewhat skewing the data on regional funding. In Africa, much of the funding went to housing policy and finance strategies rather than to larger systemic change and housing delivery, which would involve higher levels of funding.
48. Many representatives described actions being taken at the national level within their countries to combat the housing crisis and to encourage the provision of adequate and affordable housing. National efforts and measures to address housing, particularly the provision of adequate and affordable housing, included the creation of housing construction programmes in accordance with long-term targets; the provision of supportive infrastructure, such as improved basic services and transport systems; the enactment of legislation to ensure the security of land tenure; the implementation of social housing programmes; the introduction of measures to improve energy efficiency and green, climate-friendly construction; the digitalization and streamlining of house purchase procedures; and the provision of credit to facilitate access to housing. Representatives cited slum upgrading and refurbishment as a particular priority. Various modalities to stimulate the upgrading of informal settlements were described, including work with the construction market and non-profit organizations and the issuance of titles to secure land tenure, particularly for vulnerable people such as women or those with disabilities.
49. In several cases, human habitat was incorporated as a cross-cutting issue within national strategic planning and policymaking processes. Shelter and housing were often viewed within the context of such principles as inclusiveness, equity and respect for human dignity, giving high priority to vulnerable and marginalized communities, the poor and workers in the informal sector. One representative said that his Government was working in collaboration with local communities, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants in order to integrate traditional knowledge in urban planning. Another representative said that the goal of his Government was to create a just urban transition to cities that were more liveable and inclusive and that provided a high quality of life, including through the provision of adequate housing. Another representative described a new national programme to create integrated, sustainable communities incorporating green spaces, community centres and commercial opportunities.
50. A representative of municipal government said that city administrations and local governments were closer to populations and played a key role in global governance and the achievement of the habitat-related Sustainable Development Goals. Issues related to housing required public policies that were adapted to local specificities, enabling authorities to respond to territorial inequalities and vulnerabilities and to increase the resilience of communities. Cities played an important role as strategic actors in social inclusion, environmental protection, climate-change mitigation and the inclusion of housing in the provision of healthcare and education. Her city aimed to increase the provision of social housing units to cater for vulnerable groups and to make housing more affordable through more economical and environmentally friendly building methods. The challenges faced by her city were common to many large cities; collaboration and the sharing of best practices would assist in the provision of adequate housing globally.
51. A representative of the secretariat summarized the presentations and the discussion under the agenda item. She noted that a diversity of approaches had been suggested by representatives from

different regions, highlighting the need to customize solutions according to context. In order to ensure maximum impact, it was necessary to integrate different sectors and different types of interventions within tailored policy frameworks to ensure effective implementation on the ground. Interventions by several countries had pointed to the necessity of understanding how different strategies fitted within broader housing systems, taking into account which beneficiaries should be prioritized. Consideration should also be given to how best to shift from project-focused interventions to system-level analysis and projections, and eventually to systemic, urban, territorial, socioeconomic and ecological transformation, and how to scale up promising initiatives so that they addressed systemic gaps.

52. Another recurrent theme, she continued, was how to reorient the discussion from supply considerations alone to questions of need and demand. Land management and land-use planning were critical elements of a need-and-demand approach. Other major points covered in the discussion were the importance of: supportive budgetary and fiscal measures that facilitated innovative financing models; integrating climate-change resilience, which was of particular concern to small island developing States; consideration of population movement and migration; capacity-building of local and regional governments to translate national policy into local-level action; knowledge-sharing, the building of connections and analysis with a view to establishing what worked or did not work, and recognition of the linkages and convergences between domestic and international agendas and the work of UN-Habitat; the gathering of qualitative and quantitative information to increase knowledge of the present situation and inform future action; and recognition of the position of housing within other wider agendas, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, climate change, disaster mitigation and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In closing, she sought feedback from the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on the direction of its future work in preparation for reporting to the UN-Habitat Assembly at its third session, in 2029.

53. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group accordingly discussed the way forward on the basis of the documentation provided and the extended discussion of the agenda item. The suggestion that subgroups be formed to discuss thematically the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group in more depth was viewed positively. Thematic options proposed by one representative included policies and practices concerning informal settlements; innovation and sustainable materials in housing construction; integration into housing policies of resilience and climate change considerations; access to land and security of tenure; financing modalities for slum upgrading and housing; and definitions, data gathering and monitoring. Another representative said that it was important to include the voices of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the discussion, given the role they played in implementation at the local level. Another representative said that a basis for further thematic discussion in subgroups could be the seven elements of adequate housing put forward by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment 4 of 1991, namely legal security of tenure; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; location; and cultural adequacy. To those could be added climate-change responsiveness and mechanisms for measurement and monitoring. Another representative said that other themes worthy of consideration within a multifaceted approach were financing, access to land, urban planning and management, resilience, and natural disaster prevention. One representative proposed a step-by-step process, whereby consideration would first be given to the number, make-up, possible schedule and mandate of any proposed subgroups.

54. The Executive Director responded to the issues raised during the discussion and their implications for the future work of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group within the context of the implementation of resolution 2/7 and of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026–2029 and the related work programme, including the normative work of the Programme and its regional activities. She recalled that, in resolution 2/7, the UN-Habitat Assembly had decided to review, at its third session, the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group and to consider its report as a potential basis for guidelines for accelerating progress towards the universal achievement of safe, sustainable, adequate and affordable housing. As such, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group needed to focus its attention on the gathering of information that would best enable it to fulfil its mandate. A useful starting point would be an update of the definition of “slum” and “informal settlement”, given that the present definition used by UN-Habitat was focused on the household rather than the settlement. A fresh approach was needed, taking into account innovation in house construction, sustainability, resilience, ecological footprint and climate-change mitigation. Accessibility and land tenure were critical issues in ensuring the resilience of informal settlements and the provision of adequate housing. Affordability was also of primary importance, not only in terms of construction materials and technologies, but also in terms of land, which was typically one of the most expensive inputs of housing. In general, research was needed into how to reduce the gap between the price of housing and what people could actually afford to pay, for example through technology advancements, subsidies, loans, market regulation and incentives to promote affordable housing.

55. With regard to data-gathering for decision-making, a number of ideas had been put forward during the current session. It was noteworthy that the Cairo Call to Action of the World Urban Forum at its twelfth session called for the promotion of collaborative efforts for the co-production of data and research across relevant stakeholders and for the building of coalitions to empower local actors. The Urban Housing Practitioners Hub and the informality task force had been alluded to as organizational frameworks that could assist in coalition-building, using data and research to generate impact, sharing knowledge and expertise, and promoting action appropriate to the regional context. Leveraging finance for affordable housing projects was another activity requiring collaboration between multiple actors in order to channel funds from the international to the national and local levels, including regional financial institutions, local governments, urban development and housing departments, and civil society and other grass-roots organizations. Regarding the role of UN-Habitat, key aspects included its convening expertise and work with stakeholders to improve the Programme's activities on the ground, and taking stock of the inputs currently available and the additional inputs needed to increase the effectiveness of the international financial architecture.

56. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group took note of the documentation presented under agenda item 3 and the further information provided.

IV. Development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts

57. In considering the item, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had before it the report of the Executive Director on the development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/4) and a review of existing elements and options for the development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/3).

58. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the housing crisis required a comprehensive framework for measuring and monitoring the adequacy of housing. UN-Habitat had, over several decades, carried out foundational work on housing indicators, for example under the Housing Indicators Programme, the United Nations Housing Rights Programme and the Urban Indicators Programme. Those efforts had established key indicators aligned with the UN-Habitat agenda, creating a baseline for global housing monitoring. Nevertheless, a proper framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts was still lacking. While the available global frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, included indicators that could be related to the seven components of adequate housing, coverage of those components remained uneven, with some elements receiving significant emphasis while others remained underexplored. A broader, housing-specific approach was needed to address housing challenges fully.

59. The proposed framework, she continued, complemented the measurement of housing adequacy with the inclusion of several critical dimensions influencing housing outcomes, including context, namely the local and national circumstances that shaped housing challenges; drivers, including such factors as macro-economic conditions, the role of land, urban planning, access to finance, housing stock availability and composition, social protection and conflict; and policies, or the strategies and regulations that had a direct impact on housing adequacy. Consideration of drivers would include recognition of how their influence varied across local contexts and their potential to address the root causes of housing crises. The purpose of the monitoring framework would be to provide a comprehensive view of housing adequacy. In performing that function, it would help to identify gaps in local and national monitoring efforts and would offer adaptability to diverse national and local contexts. The intention was not to add to the reporting burden of countries, but to provide a flexible, overarching structure to organize existing indicators and challenges. The objective of the framework would be to achieve the alignment of housing challenges with actionable policy responses. She invited the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to engage with the framework, consider its key elements and provide direction for future refinement of the framework by the secretariat. Finally, she said that the matter should be considered in relation to the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029, which needed to have robust outcomes that were feasible but sufficiently ambitious, and that could be clearly defined and monitored.

60. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the development of a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts. Following a summary of previous international efforts to monitor housing adequacy, she provided an overview of existing monitoring frameworks that included housing criteria, such as the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda; the New Urban Agenda, which emphasized adequate, safe

and affordable housing, slum reduction and housing rights; and the Global Urban Monitoring Framework, which integrated spatial, non-spatial and qualitative indicators to monitor sustainable urbanization, harmonizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Despite those efforts, many critical housing challenges were not yet addressed in an integrated manner, with gaps apparent at the framework, indicator and systemic levels. The proposed housing monitoring framework was accordingly structured in line with four key elements. First, assessments of housing adequacy would measure that indicator across the seven core components established by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its General Comment 4, with sustainability added, within a flexible framework that prioritized basic needs and was adapted to evolving national contexts. Second, the context in which adequate housing operated provided contextual indicators such as demographics, urbanization and inequality in order to ground assessments of housing adequacy in each country's socioeconomic realities. Third, drivers of housing adequacy involved such factors as economics, urban planning and governance to uncover the root causes of inadequate housing and guide strategic, evidence-based policy development. Fourth, housing policy components offered a qualitative assessment of housing policies, enabling global comparisons, benchmarking and the adoption of best practices by linking policy components to measurable housing outcomes. In conclusion, she presented a summary of the main components of each of the four proposed framework elements.

61. Another representative of the secretariat complemented the presentation with further comments. She said that the discussion under agenda item 3 had made clear the need to address gaps in the monitoring of adequate housing. Nevertheless, there was an opportunity to build on previous efforts and to take advantage of innovative methods and approaches that would enable more efficient data-gathering and data-monitoring. New digital tools included those developed by the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities, based in Hamburg, Germany, which supported local and national governments in developing smart city strategies, and the Building and Establishment Automated Mapper, which enabled the recognition and mapping of informal settlements using satellite imagery. Within that context, the secretariat sought guidance from the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on what might be the necessary preconditions and foundations required to apply a monitoring framework for adequate housing effectively, and what existing practices and mechanisms could be adapted to add value to the framework. Guidance was also sought on various considerations that needed to be taken into account when monitoring adequate housing, including striking the most effective balance between being comprehensive and being selective; between the need for a globally comparative monitoring framework and the equally important need for a contextually adapted and specific approach; and between the application of traditionally established methodologies and the introduction of frontier innovations and technologies for monitoring adequate housing. Data for the purpose of action was a priority, and the secretariat again sought guidance on how to ensure that the monitoring of adequate housing did indeed support actionable interventions in terms of adequate housing policies and programmes, and that impacts and outcomes were properly monitored and tracked.

62. In the ensuing discussion, there was agreement on the importance of the proposed framework. Inadequate knowledge of the housing stock and housing needs greatly compromised the ability of actors to implement targeted programmes for providing adequate and affordable housing. A well-structured framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts was critical to ensuring that interventions addressed the needs of the most vulnerable populations. It was important to recognize that the lack of adequate data was a global problem, affecting both developed and developing countries. One representative said that development of the framework should be inclusive, with the active participation of communities.

63. Regarding the proposed components of the framework, several representatives expressed support for the approach put forward by the secretariat. The focus on key components such as affordability, accessibility and cultural adequacy would ensure that the framework helped to prioritize inclusive human-centred housing solutions. One representative said that the integration of diverse factors enabled a holistic approach to the provision of adequate housing and ensured that housing policies were not only aligned with global standards but were also adaptable to local realities, fostering tailored and impactful interventions that were not purely profit-driven. Another representative said that the indicator on access to basic services should not be limited to people living in informal settlements but should be applicable to the whole of the population. He also stated that the proposals on public housing policy were too restrictive and impractical and he urged the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to propose additions that would address that shortcoming. In addition, reporting on housing policies already existed within the framework of the New Urban Agenda, and it would be useful to check for synergies with existing tools before creating an additional reporting framework.

64. On the use of innovative tools for data-gathering, there was recognition that new digital tools, such as those developed by the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities, could prove very useful in monitoring the status of informal settlements in neighbourhoods and regions, and UN-Habitat was encouraged to further leverage digital technologies for that purpose. One representative cited her country's Observatory for Cities as an example of a tool that could be used to identify priority areas, guide interventions towards the neediest locations and monitor impact. She also supported the gathering of disaggregated data, for example on gender, age, ethnicity and geographical location, to improve the accuracy of monitoring and ensure that no one was left behind. She mentioned the importance of strengthening the technical capacity of local and national governments to implement the available tools.

65. One representative said that the framework could be effective only if it was clear what was being measured. Further work was therefore necessary to arrive at agreed definitions of key parameters, such as affordability. That presented considerable challenges, given the great variations in what might be considered affordable housing at the individual, local or national level. Various methods were available to calculate affordability, including the residual income approach, and should be further explored. Definitions of location, accessibility and housing space also required further clarification and elucidation. Again, those concepts often varied according to cultural or regional setting, presenting further challenges to definition.

66. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on efforts to establish a global set of housing indicators. An internationally agreed integrated statistical framework for housing was required as a comparison tool for transforming data into actionable insights that would lead to meaningful improvements in housing conditions globally and locally. Housing covered multiple sectors, with economic, social and environmental dimensions. Housing-related indicators were already part of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda or were used by countries at the national level. The aim was to bring all such elements together. He said that UN-Habitat was not alone in its focus on the measurement of adequate housing. The international statistical community was also working to improve the framework for monitoring progress towards adequate housing. The contribution of housing to national economic performance was acknowledged, but it was also clear that a good GDP did not necessarily lead to tangible results for citizens.

67. UN-Habitat, in collaboration with national statistics offices, the Statistics Division, national economic statisticians, local governments, city and urban observatories and other partners, had been working on the selection or development of the minimum, core set of housing indicators to be monitored globally. Possible indicators relating to the adequacy of housing had been grouped according to the seven dimensions of adequate housing and an additional eighth category, namely sustainability. The aim was that, as far as possible, future indicators be measured using existing data, such as data from national surveys and censuses. The gathering of data would require collaboration and partnerships and, where possible, include citizen science. Although the indicators needed to paint a picture at the global level, they also had to connect with national and regional interests and national strategies in terms of housing. The main constraints in measuring the adequacy of housing were likely to be the availability of data and of funding for the implementation of any framework. The representative of the secretariat recalled that, during the discussions under agenda item 3, there had been a popular proposal to form subgroups to discuss thematically the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group in more depth.

68. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives took the floor to underline the importance of creating a monitoring framework that would make it possible to measure the adequacy of housing and the progress being made and to enable efforts to be adjusted as necessary. One of them said that the framework would be useful for the development of public policies and should be used particularly in geographical regions experiencing rapid urbanization.

69. It was noted that policies relating to adequate housing were intrinsically linked to other public policies. One representative said that the indicators would help to monitor not only global efforts to provide adequate housing but also the impact of national-level housing policy implementation. Another representative said that each country should be able to define a number of sub-indicators, with their own measurement techniques, thereby enabling them to tailor the global indicators to their national specificities.

70. Several representatives welcomed the suggested indicators, proposed new ones or raised additional issues. Issues relating to security of tenure included how to protect the rights of renters. Indicators proposed for the availability of services included access to education, health services, sanitation and essential infrastructure, and proximity to jobs. Issues relating to affordability included the question of how to lower building costs without compromising safety. Indicators proposed for

habitability included safety, basic building standards, the absence of unsafe chemicals like asbestos or highly flammable cladding, weatherproofing, good ventilation, the presence of water and sanitation, and energy-efficiency. It was stressed that the indicators of location should apply to both urban and rural areas to ensure that rural areas were not excluded from the measurement elements of the framework. In relation to cultural adequacy, some representatives said that the indicators should not be overly subjective, with one of them noting that she found cultural adequacy difficult to articulate at an international level. Indicators proposed for sustainability related to the sustainability of construction materials and products; building maintenance; green construction; energy-saving; and better planning. Representatives also proposed indicators relating to capacity-building for urban policy planning; territorial planning; and access to employment.

71. One representative proposed the simplification of the dimensions of adequate housing to the three categories of “quantity”, “quality” and “affordability”, while another representative called for clearer definitions of housing-related concepts, especially for the elements of accessibility, affordability and sustainability. A third representative said that, in his country, certain housing-related definitions were enshrined in the law. Several representatives stressed the need to localize the concept of adequacy, as elements such as the cost of housing often varied significantly within each country, depending on the region.

72. One representative said that there was a need to address the tension between housing as a driver of economic development and housing as a human right, in view of concern about the rental market.

73. Several representatives outlined the steps that had been taken at the national level in their countries to improve the adequacy of housing and the monitoring thereof. They spoke of an increased number of housing units and per capita living area; informal settlement renovation and upgrading of slums; improved methods for new construction and the upgrading of existing infrastructure; enactment and revision of legislation, policies, strategies and frameworks; financing schemes, subsidies, grants and low-interest loans; monitoring, through national censuses and other surveys; the alignment of national census data with the national housing information system; national alignment of housing standards; the leveraging of technology and digitization, for example for managing developers’ licences; the development of partnerships at the international level, with the private sector and with non-governmental organizations; and the use of green and energy-efficient technologies to make housing estates more resilient and people-friendly.

74. Several representatives outlined challenges that they were facing in their efforts to measure adequate housing, including limited data availability and difficulties with the quantitative measurement of certain elements, such as accessibility; limited national capacities; lack of standardization of concepts at the national and international level; the fact that a high percentage of social housing was reaching the end of its useful life; and an inadequate State credit and subsidy system. Several representatives also stressed the need for capacity-building and better mechanisms and instruments of governance at the national, subnational, municipal and local levels. On the problem of data collection, one representative suggested a two-stage approach that first prioritized the collection of more general data before moving on, at a second stage, to the collection of more detailed data. That approach would help struggling countries.

75. One representative said that, given the increase in the global population, particularly in certain regions, there was no choice but to increase the overall housing stock. UN-Habitat could therefore help national and local governments to identify their current and future housing needs in terms of the type of housing required, its location and how to address the stigma of social housing. National authorities should be helped to generate or access available data; use innovative modelling approaches; promote public engagement in order to understand not just the needs but also the aspirations of the different community groups; and develop comprehensive and inclusive planning policies.

76. In terms of the next steps, one representative referred to the proposal made during the discussion under item 3 to establish subgroups and proposed that the topic of a monitoring framework be taken up by such a subgroup. He also emphasized the importance of the dissemination of any conclusions of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group.

77. A representative of an observer organization welcomed the emphasis on the measurement of housing adequacy, and stressed that grassroot groups and civil society had strong experience in data collection. He asked how civil society organizations could be involved in the process of data collection and capacity-building, as well as continuing to provide feedback on the proposed framework beyond the current session. He also asked whether there was a possibility of formalizing the engagement of such organizations and how they might harmonize their efforts with the activities of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group.

78. In response, the representative of the secretariat thanked participants for their guidance, noting the view that certain definitions and concepts needed to be clarified and that some aspects, such as cultural adequacy, could be difficult, from an international global perspective, to define and measure. She noted the recommendations to look at other sectoral public policy indicators, such as those related to education and health, to focus on sustainability and climate resilience, and to study the housing-related implications of employment opportunities and economic outcomes. Given the comments and proposals made, she asked whether it was time to revisit the seven dimensions of adequate housing already in place, how that would be done and what consequences it would have. In relation to the territorial dimension, she said that the initiative entitled “Applying the Degree of Urbanization”, in which UN-Habitat, the European Union and other partners had developed a methodology for defining cities, towns and rural areas for international comparison using geospatial methodologies, could be helpful.

79. Also responding to the interventions, the Executive Director said that it was indeed important to ascertain what information could be collected and monitored at the global level. She noted, for example, that not all countries’ statistics offices would be able to use georeferencing. She stressed the importance of alliances, as mentioned by some representatives, suggesting that partnerships with universities and research institutions be explored to improve national and therefore overall capacities.

80. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group took note of the documentation presented under agenda item 4 and the further information provided.

V. Progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing, including addressing homelessness and slums upgrading

81. In considering the item, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had before it the reports of the Executive Director on progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing, including addressing homelessness and slum upgrading (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/5) and on the summary of the progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing, including addressing homelessness and slum upgrading (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/4).

82. In her introductory statement, the Executive Director said that the work of UN-Habitat had shifted since its inception from simply building houses to embracing the overall living environment and seeing housing as central to sustainable urban development. Housing was at the centre of the New Urban Agenda and was critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

83. A representative of the secretariat made a presentation on the progress made in implementing the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing. He first referred to the report entitled “Impact Evaluation of UN-Habitat’s Housing Approach to Adequate, Affordable Housing and Poverty Reduction 2008–2019”, the findings of which included that UN-Habitat policy advice, advocacy, knowledge management, technical support and capacity development and implementation support had contributed to, and been acknowledged by Member States as contributing to, an increase in adequate and affordable housing, poverty reduction, increased political commitment to ensuring adequate housing and greater opportunities to improve the living standards of poor people and ensure their housing rights.

84. On the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025, he said that the greatest amount of funding received by UN-Habitat had been for emergency housing. In terms of regional trends, the Arab States had attracted the greatest funding, with a strong focus on urban governance, financing and planning interventions. The majority of UN-Habitat housing policy interventions had taken place in Africa, which also commanded a considerable funding portfolio. The Latin American and Caribbean region had the largest number of housing projects, but they were small-scale, focusing mainly on policy and regulatory issues. The Asia–Pacific region had seen the greatest number of interventions related to slum upgrading and the provision of basic services. In Europe, projects were largely multi-country in nature.

85. At the country level, country offices had encountered various limitations on their ability to measure the impact of their housing projects, including the absence of longitudinal data on impact or sustainability; budget constraints; inadequate capacity to turn shorter-term projects into longer-term programmes; and a lack of “whole-of-house” approach. UN-Habitat needed to shift from project to systemic interventions, combining data, policy and practice; expand its whole-of-house approach to the different types of housing interventions and their classifications; use its convening power to work with others to increase impact; review the impact of its housing policy interventions on the 40 per cent

of the urban population with the lowest income; make a stronger connection between housing projects and domestic programmes and funding; and take into consideration the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group regarding how to adjust its programmatic work when finalizing the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029.

86. Following on from the two presentations made under agenda item 3 on the Latin American and Caribbean region and the African region, four presentations were made on UN-Habitat work in the Arab States, in the Asia-Pacific States, in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and in the Western European and other States.

87. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the work of UN-Habitat in the Arab States. She noted that 66 per cent of the population of the region lived in urban areas; there were economic and social disparities; the region was heavily affected by conflict and climate change; basic services in urban areas were inadequate; and governance systems were limited.

88. She grouped housing needs in the Arab region into three categories: serviced land and new housing projects; urban regeneration; and post-crisis reconstruction and rehabilitation. There was a need to study closely the needs on both the supply and the demand side to ensure the right responses and to make sure that all the relevant stakeholders were included in the dialogue on housing production and decision-making. There was also a need to work further on innovative finance mechanisms and accurate targeting, especially in relation to social housing and subsidy issues.

89. The UN-Habitat approach to adequate housing in the Arab region took a three-pronged approach, focusing on data-driven policies and strategies; tools and enabling mechanisms; and project implementation and housing provision. Regarding data, for example, the office had worked with a number of countries to support the establishment of urban observatories for data collection and analysis, and had conducted damage assessments in conflict-affected areas. It had also worked with a number of countries on profiling their housing sector or updating their housing strategy. It had produced a glossary to standardize terminology related to informal settlements, which had provided an entry point into work on housing upgrading and regeneration in Egypt. Work on tools and enabling mechanisms had been mostly delivered through capacity-building, including in negotiations for local governments to mobilize greater resources, and knowledge-sharing, for example through the Arab Land Initiative. The office had also worked on various tools related to housing provision, such as property registration systems and land-based financing instruments. In terms of project implementation and housing provision, the office had supported various Governments in the region in the provision of housing units. Examples included Iraq and Yemen, where it had provided support to the Government in rehabilitating housing units for thousands of people. Capacity-building and training for local actors were built into such initiatives.

90. She sought the support of Member States in the Arab region in encouraging their housing and other sectoral ministries to engage in the Regional Housing Strategies Programme, which was aimed at supporting the development of inclusive, knowledge-driven and human rights-based housing policies. To date, nine countries had joined the initiative. The main takeaways from the initiative thus far were that the requisite data and information were not always available, so survey and other methods had been used; partnerships needed to be strengthened; and the issue of housing needed to be looked at more broadly, taking into account, for example, elements related to service availability.

91. In closing, she said that, although the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council had made significant strides in terms of land and property registration systems, elsewhere in the Arab region there was a need to work further on land-registration and land-management issues.

92. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the work of UN-Habitat in the Asia-Pacific region. She said that the region was experiencing rapid urbanization, but the development of housing and infrastructure was not keeping pace, leading to a surge in informal settlements. The countries of the region were highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and had many large coastal cities that were extremely vulnerable to hydrological risks, which disproportionately affected those in informal housing. Furthermore, economic disparities were pronounced, with access to adequate housing and essential services difficult for low-income segments of society, giving rise to social unrest. There was a growing need for integrated governance and effective policy implementation at the local and regional levels.

93. Despite the common trends, an outstanding characteristic of the region was its diversity, especially in terms of GDP. Furthermore, some countries were affected by conflict or environmental disasters, and some were housing refugees and displaced populations and faced an acute shortage of safe housing. The regional office had designed programmes and projects attentive to those differences. In high-income developed countries, the affordability of housing was a major challenge. In

middle-income countries, the quality of housing was a challenge. That said, housing quality was a concern for low-income people in every country, both developed and developing.

94. The common characteristics of UN-Habitat housing projects in the Asia-Pacific region were the use of a methodology called the people's process, which placed people's needs and rights, their knowledge and their involvement at the heart of urban development; the principle of building back better and reconstructing housing in a resilient way; a gender-sensitive approach through the participation and empowerment of women; the use of local construction methods and materials; and capacity-building, for example through training in construction methods.

95. Examples of projects undertaken according to those principles included reconstruction after natural disasters in Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka; post-conflict reconstruction in the Philippines, which had also involved the digital mapping and registration of tenants' rights, thereby contributing to clarification of legal tenure, and in Afghanistan; preventive measures, climate-change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and slum upgrading through enhanced public-service provision in Myanmar in a private sector partnership. The regional office was also supporting the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in implementing the Association's sustainable urbanization strategy, by promoting research and advocacy initiatives on housing.

96. She said that, based on the experience of implementing the programme of work in the region, the provision of adequate housing required better data for the design of evidence-based interventions and for tracking progress; cross-sectional cooperation among housing, public works, urban development, finance and social welfare ministries; private sector engagement; and the mainstreaming of the issues of climate change and gender into housing policies.

97. Following the presentations, several representatives shared their countries' experience of providing adequate and affordable housing and a better quality of life in urban areas, which included subsidized housing, either for rental or ownership; incentives for the private sector to invest in the development of housing for people with low incomes; public-private partnerships; the use of vacant housing stock to accommodate people with low incomes; subsidies to lower the interest rate on bank loans for people with low and middle incomes; support for community-led projects with government-provided equipment, training and loans through saving schemes; direct support for housing operators; improvements to infrastructure in informal areas and slums; regeneration and repair of heritage cities; the development of policies for the creation of green spaces and sports facilities; and social housing for women and young people.

98. A number of representatives also spoke of their country's partnerships with, support for and exchange of experience, expertise and good practice with other States to assist them in implementing housing programmes, for example to improve underequipped neighbourhoods; in building social housing; in crafting a master housing plan for the capital city; in undertaking study visits; and in organizing international events.

99. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the work of UN-Habitat in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, a region facing a similar legacy of rapid and mass privatization and liberalization of the housing system. She said that the challenges in the region related to rapid urbanization, with quite severe levels of urban sprawl; ageing infrastructure in cities; housing affordability; rising inequality; legislative and policy gaps; migration and displacement; and extreme temperatures and energy-inefficient systems for cooling and heating. The trends in the region included the planning of new and "smarter" cities by many Governments; renewed interest in urban regeneration and rehabilitation, such as the upgrading of housing stock; retrofitting and the improvement of energy efficiency; inclusive urban planning to address marginalized groups; smart financing mechanisms; adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change; increased use of technology; and integration of the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals when considering housing interventions.

100. UN-Habitat had just started expanding its activities in the region, and therefore programmatic activities were in their early stages. It provided technical support to countries for their policy discourse on urbanization in relation to housing; the improvement of their institutional set-ups; capacity development; and partnerships. It also engaged in regional collaboration, including with other United Nations bodies, such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe, and related forums. The United Nations Development Account was a capacity development instrument that helped to bring together different countries on common issues, with UN-Habitat focusing on four thematic areas: air quality and nature-based solutions, working with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Tajikistan; voluntary local reviews, helping cities in

Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Tajikistan; urban mobility, working with cities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia; and support for housing in a regional programme that encompassed Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan. Furthermore, with the Economic Commission for Europe, UN-Habitat had been working on housing profiles that also embraced land and urban development dimensions, in Armenia in 2024, with plans for Montenegro in 2025 and Uzbekistan in 2026.

101. She highlighted four country examples of UN-Habitat support for housing and urban development, namely in Azerbaijan, at the national level, including on the national urbanization policy, and at the regional or global levels, including in relation to the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change hosted in Baku; in Georgia, on a special development concept and a white paper to inform policy discussions on housing in the country; in Serbia, on the revision of the national housing strategy; and in Ukraine, on urban reconstruction efforts, enhanced access to data, recovery focusing on the sustainable development of neighbourhoods and cities, capacity development, particularly in terms of urban planning and design, and digital solutions.

102. She also drew attention to the side event that had been organized at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Cairo in November, on building relationships and strengthening local housing governance in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The session had brought together representatives of Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and the European Investment Bank to discuss housing issues in the region.

103. In closing, she said that UN-Habitat support for the region would continue, taking the form of advocacy in relation to affordable, inclusive, climate-resilient housing and innovative financing models; technical support for data collection and monitoring, the development of policies and strategies, and capacity development; and the promotion of partnerships and regional collaboration.

104. Another representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the work of UN-Habitat in the Western European and other States. In terms of the main trends in the region, he spoke of the rising cost of housing as a proportion of people's income. In Europe, housing costs had risen by an average of 48 per cent between 2010 and 2022. Such difficulties were disproportionately affecting renters in the private rental market. Energy poverty was a relatively widespread trend, with people unable to keep their homes warm, a situation exacerbated by ageing energy infrastructure. The underuse of housing stock was a big challenge, with an estimated 33 per cent of Europeans living in underoccupied spaces. There were concerns over sustainability as new development outpaced renovation, and although there was fairly substantial regional investment in energy efficiency, it was predominantly focused on new construction rather than on the renovation and improvement of existing housing. Furthermore, homelessness was an increasing challenge.

105. He outlined the housing tenure composition in the region, with home ownership accounting for two-thirds of cases, followed by renting. An average of 31 per cent of the population of the European Union was in rental housing, with a lower proportion in North America. The third type of tenure was social and cooperative housing, which stood at an average of 11 per cent within the European Union and 5 per cent in Canada.

106. The policy responses to the trends identified included an increase in the supply of affordable housing; greater investment in energy efficiency; homelessness prevention efforts; and urban planning and redistribution, including in relation to land, property and service taxes and how energy and transport costs fed into housing costs. Furthermore, housing had been added to the European Union agenda for the first time in 2024.

107. UN-Habitat had a strong collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe, including through the Housing 2030 initiative and its repository of best practices, voluntary local reviews, national housing profiles and urban development reviews. It also contributed to a wide range of other initiatives, such as the annual report entitled "State of European Cities", and, through the office in Brussels, collaborated with the European Commission.

108. In the ensuing discussion, one representative provided further detail of her country's collaboration with UN-Habitat, which, she said, had yielded significant results, including the organization of national urban forums and the hosting of events to mark World Habitat Day. The collaboration with UN-Habitat had furthermore been pivotal in the country's post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Government was implementing programmes to improve housing affordability and accessibility for a wider segment of the population, including people with disabilities. To that end, a State housing development agency had been established. She underscored the link between urbanization and climate change and drew attention to the initiatives that had been launched

during the third ministerial meeting on urbanization and climate held during the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, namely the multisectoral actions pathways to resilient and healthy cities initiative, and the continuity coalition for climate and health, which was aimed at the creation of synergies between meetings of the World Economic Forum and sessions of the Conference of the Parties.

109. Another representative pointed out that his country had the largest number of social housing units in Europe in absolute terms, although that did not translate into the greatest percentage of such housing units at the national level. He also reiterated his country's commitment to combating homelessness and to the work of the Economic Commission for Europe and the European Union on housing. He noted that a European Commissioner for housing had just been appointed.

110. Following the conclusion of all the presentations on the UN-Habitat programme of work related to adequate housing, a representative of the secretariat sought guidance from the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on a number of the issues that had arisen in the review of progress made. He asked how the normative and operational approach to ensuring adequate housing could be strengthened and more focused for the development of the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029; how successful initiatives could be replicated and scaled up to address systemic data gaps more effectively; what criteria should guide the framing, classification and prioritization of interventions to maximize the impact on target populations, particularly the 40 per cent of the urban population with the lowest income; how more regional balance could be achieved; what working in coalitions would entail and how UN-Habitat could use such coalitions with other organizations to scale up its impact; what kind of partnerships could help UN-Habitat measure its long-term impact; how UN-Habitat interventions could be better linked with existing national and international investments, and how UN-Habitat could effectively partner with the private sector in that regard; and how the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group could support efforts to advance work on homelessness, including the development of a global definition thereof and the scaling up of effective approaches to reduce its prevalence.

111. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group took note of the documentation presented under agenda item 5 and the further information provided.

VI. Existing multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects

112. In considering the item, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had before it the report of the Executive Director on existing multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/6) and a survey of existing multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/5).

113. In her introductory statement, the Executive Director said that housing was not generally a priority in the multilateral and bilateral development sector and recalled that the largest amount of international funding allocated to housing was rather in higher-income regions with lower demographic growth rates. A consistent approach to international development housing programmes was lacking globally, and the majority of interventions in low-income countries were focused on market-enabling approaches, so projects remained a challenge for the international financial community.

114. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation, reiterating that housing was not generally a priority in the international development sector. Multilateral institutions were the most involved, contributing some \$49.7 billion of the approximately \$54.6 billion allocated between 2019 and 2023. Multilateral institutions tended to distribute funding across all the different types of housing intervention, whereas bilateral institutions demonstrated a preference for housing provision strategies and market-enabling interventions, especially housing finance.

115. In terms of the types of project in each region, Africa was heavily focused on projects that provided support for housing policy and the facilitation of housing finance. The region had the lowest overall per capita funding for people with the lowest incomes. In the Arab States, there was equal emphasis on housing finance and on market-rate and affordable housing, often with some level of State subsidy, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of migration. In the Asia-Pacific region, facilitation of housing finance was also prominent, followed by emergency housing, owing mainly to natural disasters but also to conflict, both of which were prevalent in the region. There were some small projects on direct housing delivery, but not much funding was available to support diversified

and comprehensive housing systems. In Europe, almost all of the funds were devoted to housing provision, particularly public and social housing. Europe was also the region with the greatest funding for the poorest populations. Latin America and the Caribbean had a long history of self-help and rehabilitation projects.

116. In general, housing interventions tended to come as a corollary to other types of intervention, and there was no consistent approach globally to international development programmes relating to housing, including in terms of considering needs and linking demand and supply. There was a heavy focus in most regions on market-enabling strategies, which was positive in itself but made it difficult to reach the poorest in society. There was generally insufficient emphasis on target 10.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which sought to ensure that income growth among the poorest 40 per cent of the population in every country was more rapid than the national average.

117. On the basis of those findings, several areas for possible further research had been identified, related to the review and expansion of the classification of housing intervention types; analysis of the impact, on the population in need, of the different housing approaches funded; review of domestic programmes and their comparison with international development funding, including to see how they could be mutually complementary and supportive; and consideration of how frequently to update the information on multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects.

118. In the ensuing discussion, a representative of an observer organization said that his region had longstanding experience in developing social housing, which was a means of guaranteeing security of tenure without ownership while also ensuring the most efficient allocation to society by prioritizing the people who were the most in need. The financing approach was focused on supply and not on demand, as housing was a good that was limited by nature because there was a limited supply of well-located buildable land. Supporting demand and not supply eventually led to inflated markets. His institution therefore lent money to providers of affordable public social or cooperative housing, who provided housing not at market prices and through market rules, but to the people who needed it. He offered to share his region's experience with others. Another representative stressed the importance of developing a diversified supply of housing to meet needs, respond to economic changes and mitigate the risk of exclusion. A third representative expressed the view that housing was not an asset to be used for financial gain and it was not the role of governments to make housing an asset for anyone. In fact, the financial crisis had shown that making housing an asset was very risky. Furthermore, countries that relied on housing as an asset weakened the bond between the Government and the people, because they were less reliant on other social protection mechanisms.

119. Representatives also stressed the need to focus on the local level. One representative said that it was important to draw a clear link between the policies defined at the national level and local specificities and needs when drawing up local development plans and frameworks. A representative of an observer organization underlined the crucial role of municipalities and local governments in the provision of housing because housing was a local issue, and said that there was a need for a concerted effort in building the capacity of municipalities to engage with development partners.

120. Several representatives stressed the need to bring more equity into international finance, with one urging multilateral and bilateral institutions to allocate greater resources to housing provision, policies and programmes in low-income countries where demographic growth was significant. Another representative highlighted the pressing need to find a way of ensuring that people with informal sources of income were able to access some form of financing from banks.

121. A representative of an observer organization said that her organization had analysed data from the Creditor Reporting System of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, on flows of overseas development assistance to housing programmes and components of housing development. The analysis had shown that less than 1 per cent of overseas development assistance from States in the Group of Seven went to housing. As housing was not a distinct sector within overseas development assistance, it was extremely difficult to track progress. She also said that there was an outdated understanding of informal settlements and slums in terms of their definition and related policies categorized under "low-cost housing". Such policies frequently focused on slum clearance, which often simply displaced people and their vibrant socioeconomic networks without addressing the root causes of the housing inadequacy. She urged donor countries to prioritize the needs of those in informal settlements and slums and to ensure that housing solutions were people-centred and inclusive of people's unique needs through access to diverse housing and tenure options.

122. One representative proposed that UN-Habitat use its privileged position to raise awareness of the disparity in international financing for housing in international forums, such as the World Economic Forum and the General Assembly.

123. A number of representatives spoke about the green transition and the opportunity to use the fields of construction and housing to strengthen resilience in the face of climate change. One of them stressed the need to encourage the development of housing policies that limited urban sprawl and prevented impingement on natural areas and spaces, and to promote low-energy housing. A representative of an observer organization said that, despite the huge potential that existed, one of the main challenges was access to climate-financing opportunities and the development of bankable projects. He said that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group needed a clearer idea of what was required to ensure the development of bankable, green, affordable housing projects in the future.

124. Several representatives drew attention to their efforts to improve the provision of housing either in their own countries or in terms of cooperation with, or the provision of development assistance for, other countries. Those efforts included the provision of grants; humanitarian aid for post-disaster reconstruction; land reform to reduce land tenure conflict, make housing ownership more secure and facilitate the acquisition of land units; the development of an updated framework for the regeneration of the urban environment; the construction of housing units on empty housing plots; the construction of housing units to be rented with a future option to buy; the provision of financing solutions, such as subsidies for low-interest loans and mortgages and the combination of subsidies with private investment; partnerships between the public and private sectors to mobilize additional resources; and the establishment of a fund to support the development of sustainable housing policies through market studies and recommendations.

125. The Open-end Intergovernmental Expert Working Group took note of the documentation presented under agenda item 6 and the further information provided.

VII. Establishment of a publicly accessible complementary platform that includes summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing

126. In considering the item, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had before it the report of the Executive Director on the establishment of a publicly accessible, complementary platform that included summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/7) and the preliminary needs assessment survey on the establishment of a publicly accessible, complementary platform that included summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing (HSP/OEWG-H.2024/INF/6).

127. Introducing the item, the Executive Director said that the proposed platform was intended not just as a stand-alone website that was a mere technological repository of data, but rather as a genuine platform for stakeholder engagement, including meetings, exchange of information, debates and webinars, as well as an online space where data, experiences, practices and research could be uploaded and easily accessed. In developing the platform, the secretariat had carried out research on existing platforms, including the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub that had been discussed under agenda item 3.

128. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the establishment of a publicly accessible, complementary platform that included summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing. The mandate for the initiative was derived from UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7, in which the Assembly had requested the Executive Director to assess available platforms and resources that provided data and tools to national and local authorities or governments and other key stakeholders related to achieving access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing; to create a publicly accessible, complementary platform that included summaries of the most recently available data on the provision of adequate housing and summarized relevant policies, case studies, tools and best practices that could be provided and used by Member States and others; and to provide any other information that the Executive Director might deem relevant to the universal achievement of adequate housing for all. The objectives of the platform would include ensuring support for decision-making; collaboration and facilitation of coalition-building; learning, to drive thematic discussions and capacity-building; and transparency, through enhanced mapping of partners and initiatives. To guide the development of the platform, information had been sought through desk research on existing resources and key gaps, and a needs assessment had been carried out with non-governmental partners and would be enlarged to Member States and additional key stakeholders through a questionnaire. The survey of existing platforms had identified a number of gaps, including

lack of integrated data and tools; lack of disaggregated data; limited integration of community-led data initiatives; lack of metrics on sustainability; limited integration of innovative technologies; and weak visibility of global and regional actors and initiatives. There was potential to create a more integrated global platform that included interactive features, capacity-building elements, collaborative spaces and thematic learning, including sharing of best practices. Finally, the representative of the secretariat outlined the proposed approach for implementation responding to budgetary constraints, which included initial roll-out through the development of core features; scaling up through the gradual integration of other elements, such as workshops and artificial-intelligence-driven functionalities; and ongoing updates through regular data additions and iterative improvements.

129. In the ensuing discussion, representatives welcomed the establishment of the proposed platform, which, they said, would constitute a valuable resource for the gathering and storage of information, as well as a range of other functions, and which would be crucial for the implementation of resolution 2/7. It was important that the platform not only produce content but also that it ensure its dissemination and accessibility, and function as a connecting point for everyone working in the field of human settlements. One representative said that it would be useful to include a point of contact for the source of information or research, so that they could be contacted for more in-depth discussion of the matter at hand. Another representative suggested that the housing supply chain could be a good basis for the categorization of the information on the platform, progressing from land management to housing finance, then to sustainable construction technology and housing materials, to tools and mechanisms for housing development (including public-private partnerships and best practices for public housing), to sustainable community management, and finally to inclusive housing for all populations. Another representative said that it was important to ensure that the methodology for posting material on the platform was straightforward.

130. A number of potential applications of the platform were highlighted during the discussion. It would be a useful resource for elaborating the indicators discussed under agenda item 4, as well as a source of information for the development of the new strategic plan of UN-Habitat. More generally, the platform could be a means of raising awareness of the role and activities of UN-Habitat. Key functions could include hosting existing methodologies and tools at the global level as a means of knowledge-sharing; reporting on and monitoring public policies; acting as a repository of information on public housing policies to assist other countries in the development of their own policies; and promoting knowledge and raising awareness of housing issues in all sectors. The platform could also facilitate the creation of coalitions and stimulate cooperation and dialogue among stakeholders, given that all stakeholders would have access to relevant recent data under the platform, and could support integrated data-gathering activities at the local level. By enabling stakeholders to track and assess the impact of policy action in the field of housing, the platform would promote transparency and accountability of government entities. It could also function as a means of advocacy, promoting the urban settlements agenda in a funding environment where there was intense competition for resources, and providing information that would facilitate decision-making by public and private entities on funding priorities, both nationally and internationally.

131. A representative of an observer organization commented that the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub, which had been mentioned by the Executive Director, could inform the development of the UN-Habitat platform. The Urban Housing Practitioners Hub, he said, was not just a repository of information but also a dynamic model that hosted a series of laboratories wherein stakeholders and experts could communicate and share ideas in order to resolve a particular housing issue. It also hosted webinars and podcasts on various housing-related themes. Another representative of an observer organization said that his organization was committed to equitable partnerships and viewed the proposed platform as a key entry point for all stakeholders, including those whose voices were typically excluded from decision-making, to engage in collaboration on housing-related matters. A representative of a municipal government presented information on the South African National Strategic Hub, which aimed to harness data as a crucial strategic asset to enhance governance, operational efficiency and service delivery in local government, including in the area of adequate housing.

132. Responding to the issues raised, the Executive Director thanked participants for their comments and inputs, which, she said, would greatly assist in building a platform that was truly interactive and functioned as a workplace for the global urban community. Some innovative ideas had been presented, such as the suggestion that the platform could assist in monitoring the new strategic plan of UN-Habitat. Of basic importance was the role of the proposed platform as a venue for lively peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas, from the local to the international level. The development of the platform was an urgent priority, given the current global housing crisis and the need to avoid a recurrence of the situation that had arisen during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, when the lack of affordable and adequate housing had significantly exacerbated the health crisis. In that

context, it was crucial to use coalitions of practitioners to accelerate the gathering of data and the identification of best practices within a global platform that could be applied at the local level in different country contexts. It was also important to establish linkages with existing repositories of information, using the capacity of UN-Habitat to create spaces for exchange of data and information so that policymakers had a wide evidence foundation on which to base their decisions. At the next stage, the secretariat would consider the inputs of the current discussion in further refining and developing the platform.

133. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group took note of the documentation presented under agenda item 7 and the further information provided.

VIII. Other matters

A. Dates of the second regular session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

134. There was a short discussion on the proposed dates of the second session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, which were set out in a conference room paper. One representative noted that one of the proposals, namely the week of 24 to 28 November 2025, was not ideal, as it was immediately prior to the holding of the seventh meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme in preparation for the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

135. Given, however, that in paragraph 7 of its resolution 2/7 the UN-Habitat Assembly had decided that the Executive Board would decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, and in view of time constraints that would not allow for an in-depth discussion at the current session, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group did not consider the matter further.

B. Draft summary, by the Chair, of the first session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

136. The Chair introduced the draft summary, by the Chair, of the first session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, which was set out in a conference room paper.

137. Many representatives thanked both the Chair and those who had supported her in preparing the document. While noting that it was not a document to be negotiated by the participants in the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, a number of representatives nevertheless made comments with the aim of ensuring its accuracy.

138. It was noted that, during the session, observations and recommendations had been by individual Member States, yet the draft summary gave the impression that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had reached consensus on the points contained in the draft summary.

139. A number of representatives said that they did not agree with the description of one of the desired intersessional activities, which read “the development of an action plan to coordinate more equitable and sustainable distribution of development assistance”, and said that the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group should concentrate on housing and on multilateral and bilateral support for the development of policies, programmes and projects on housing. Another representative was of the view that the intersessional process should be an informal process, which would prove more flexible for the participants, the Co-Chairs and the secretariat.

140. Some other representatives sought clarification of the process to be followed in terms of intersessional activities, given that a chair’s summary did not carry the weight of a decision by the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group. Another representative recalled that, according to paragraph 2 of resolution 2/7, the Working Group’s activities and programme of work were to be determined in consultation with the Executive Board.

141. Clarifying the way forward, a representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat had taken note of all the comments and suggestions made during the first session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group and that the Chair’s summary would be taken up by the newly elected Co-Chairs in their endeavour to determine the next steps. The Intergovernmental Expert Working Group could submit further comments on the Chair’s summary if it so desired. One representative said that due consideration should be given to whether a chair’s summary was the most appropriate type of

outcome document for the second session of the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group or whether a negotiated text would be most appropriate for carrying the process forward.

142. Thanking the representatives for their comments and suggestions, the Executive Director said that, although the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group had not sought to reach consensus on the scope of its future work, she considered that there was good alignment in terms of the thematic areas that should be addressed. The discussions had revealed a sense of urgency and showed the importance that all Member States attributed to the subject of housing. She underlined the need for resources additional to those currently provided by Member States to enable the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group to identify solutions to the challenges faced.

IX. Closure of the session

143. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the session closed at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 11 December 2024.

Annex

Decision OEWG-H/1: Terms of reference of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All established by the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Recalling paragraph 1 of UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7 of 9 June 2023 on adequate housing for all, in which the Assembly decided to establish an 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,

Recalling also paragraph 4 of the same resolution, in which the UN-Habitat Assembly decided that the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group could adopt terms of reference with respect to its work and functions, particularly for matters not addressed by the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly, which are to apply, mutatis mutandis, where the terms of reference are silent,

The Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All decides to adopt its terms of reference, as set out in the annex to the present decision.

Annex to decision OEWG-H/1

Terms of reference of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

A. Application of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly

1. The rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, except as otherwise provided for in these terms of reference.
2. These terms of reference specifically vary and supersede:
 - (a) Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly on the election of a bureau;
 - (b) Rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly on the functions of a bureau;
 - (c) Rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly on the terms of office of a bureau.

B. Officers

3. During the final meeting of each of its sessions, the Intergovernmental Expert Working Group shall elect two co-chairs on a rotational basis from different regional groups.
4. The Co-Chairs shall begin their terms of office at the closure of the session at which they are elected and shall remain in office until the closure of the next session at which an election for co-chairs is concluded.
5. If one Co-Chair cannot preside over a session or any part thereof, the other Co-Chair shall preside over the proceedings.
6. If a Member State resigns from the office of Co-Chair, another Member State from the same region shall be designated by the region to fill the vacancy.

C. Duration of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

7. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All shall not hold more than six regular sessions, including the first session.
