



## PRESS RELEASE

### Tackling the global housing crisis: United Nations Habitat Assembly opens with urgent call to action

**Nairobi, 29 May 2025** – The resumed second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly officially opened today at the UN-Habitat Headquarters in Nairobi with a clear and urgent message: the global housing crisis demands immediate and coordinated action.

At the official opening press conference, the President of the Habitat Assembly, the Government of Kenya as host country, and UN-Habitat Executive Director Anacláudia Rossbach addressed the media, outlining the central focus of the Assembly and the path forward. They emphasized the critical role of adequate housing, secure land tenure, and access to basic services in achieving peace, climate resilience, and social equity.

“We are living through a global housing crisis that is worsening by the day. Nearly 3 billion people lack access to adequate housing, secure land, and even the most basic services like water and sanitation. If left unaddressed, this crisis constitutes a humanitarian emergency,” said Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

The United Nations Habitat Assembly, a global decision-making body on sustainable urbanization composed of 193 countries, is meeting to consider the adoption of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029. The new plan focuses on advancing adequate housing, secure land tenure, and basic services – especially in informal settlements and slums – as part of a global response to the housing crisis, and reflecting the priorities of the Pact for the Future, which underscored the need to ensure universal access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, while supporting developing countries in building resilient, inclusive, and sustainable cities.

The Assembly’s High-level Dialogue on Adequate Housing, which will take place in the afternoon of the first day, will provide Member States with a platform to shape a coordinated and ambitious response to the housing crisis.





According to UN-Habitat estimates, currently over 1.1 billion people globally live in slums or informal settlements and over 300 million experience absolute homelessness.

Speaking on behalf of the host country, Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry for Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development of Kenya, underscored the importance of housing in achieving sustainable development and affirmed its commitment to UN-Habitat and sustainable urban development at large. “Across the world, housing needs outpace the supply. Millions of people live without shelter and in unsafe conditions. The housing challenge is not just an infrastructure challenge, it is one of equity, dignity, and rights. It is a crisis that we must confront collectively and now,” she said. “Kenya looks forward to the implementation of UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2026–2029 to bring about real change.”

Enrique Javier Ochoa Martínez, President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, urged Member States to translate discussions into concrete commitments, emphasizing the need for the UN system to create effective policies and mobilize resources: “In times of polarization, it is incumbent on the UN system to deliver a conducive policy framework and to mobilize the resources that will enable cities and communities to provide adequate and sustainable housing, bridging territorial inequities and ensuring the inclusion of all citizens, including by addressing gender inequalities.”

In response to this global housing crisis, the draft UN-Habitat Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2029 places adequate housing, land, and basic services – including transformation of informal settlements and slums – at the centre of its agenda. This integrated approach supports three global impact areas: inclusive prosperity, climate and environment action, and resilience and recovery.

At its second session in 2023, the United Nations Habitat Assembly adopted two resolutions – one on Adequate Housing for All, and another on Accelerating the Transformation of Informal Settlements. The housing resolution reaffirmed the right to adequate housing, called for a holistic and rights-based approach, and established an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing, which met for the first time in December 2024. It initiated the creation of a publicly accessible adequate housing platform to consolidate data, share knowledge, and guide evidence-based policymaking.





The resumed second session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly is expected to adopt the new Strategic Plan that will guide the work of the organization in the next four years, from 2026 to 2029.

### About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](https://unhabitat.org) or follow us on social media @UNHABITAT.

### Photos

The media may access photos from the Assembly at [this link](#).

### Media contact for more information

Media Team

UN-Habitat

[unhabitat-media@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-media@un.org)

