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Adequate housing for all





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A woman in a red sari with a white floral pattern and a red headscarf is smiling and holding a black plastic bowl. A man in a blue shirt and a colorful turban is bending over, working with a pile of sand. The background shows a brick wall and some wooden structures.

URBAN ACTION IS...

ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL HOUSING CRISIS

We are living in a time of a global housing crisis. More than 2.8 billion people around the world face some form of housing inadequacy – including 1.1 billion people in informal settlements and slums, deprived of adequate living standards and constrained in their development opportunities.

Climate change, conflicts and natural disasters continue to displace millions of people, forcing them to leave homes in search of safety, stability, and better living conditions. The global housing crisis is no longer just about housing – it is a wake-up call for action. We must rethink urban policies, land use, legislation and financing to prioritize housing and basic services as key drivers of climate action and sustainable development.

In 2024, UN-Habitat continued to lead global efforts to address the housing crisis and advance sustainable urban development. Together with partners, governments, and cities, we promoted inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities for all, attaining several significant milestones. The Pact for the Future and its commitments – to ensure universal access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, support developing countries in building resilient and sustainable cities, and strengthen the UN's engagement with local and regional governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda – provided further impetus for our work.

Our global operations have delivered tangible benefits to communities, providing vital technical assistance across regions. In Cuba, we helped rebuild homes destroyed by hurricanes; in Somalia, we strengthened the government's capacity to manage urban growth; and in Iran, we offered expert guidance on building safe health facilities – among other impactful initiatives.

We advanced global advocacy and mobilization through the World Urban Forum (WUF), which UN-Habitat convenes. WUF has become one of the largest and most impactful coalitions to advance sustainable urban development and housing. The twelfth session of the Forum (WUF12), hosted in Cairo in collaboration with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, centred on the theme "It all starts at home: Local actions for sustainable cities and communities". The Cairo Call to Action, adopted at the close of WUF12, reaffirmed the global commitment to ensuring access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, while emphasizing the urgent need to transform informal settlements and slums.

We also convened the inaugural meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All – the only global multilateral body dedicated to housing. Held at our headquarters in Nairobi, this forum brought together governments, financial institutions, housing experts and grassroots organizations to assess progress and identify solutions for ensuring access to adequate housing for all.

As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, UN-Habitat will prioritize housing, land, and basic services in its Strategic Plan 2026–2029. We will continue to advocate for housing in global agendas and, together with UN DESA, lead the second Secretary-General's report on homelessness, advancing shared definitions and stronger data for better policy. Through our ongoing support to governments, we will help expand access to affordable housing and improve living conditions in informal settlements.

Housing is more than shelter – it is the foundation for dignity and resilience. Together, we must ensure that everyone, everywhere, has a place to call home.



Anacláudia Rossbach

Executive Director, UN-Habitat





URBAN ACTION IS...
**PUTTING
HOUSING AT
THE CENTRE OF
THE SDGS**

Adequate housing as a human right

Adequate housing is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of adequate living. Realizing its seven components – security of tenure, access to basic services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, cultural adequacy, and convenient location – helps prevent and address urban challenges like unaffordability, displacement and growing informal settlements by fostering equity, social inclusion, access to opportunities, and improved quality of life in rapidly evolving cities.

Driving change through the Pact for the Future

Adopted at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, the Pact for the Future underscores the need to ensure universal access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing, while supporting developing countries in building resilient and sustainable cities. As part of its commitments, the Pact calls upon the UN Secretary-General to strengthen the UN's engagement with local and regional governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda. UN-Habitat is leading these efforts, advocating for the central role of cities in global decision-making and fostering closer collaboration with local governments.

Enhancing multilevel collaboration through the Secretary-General's Advisory Group

The UN Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments provided key inputs into the Pact for the Future, aiming to enhance multilevel collaboration and strengthen the UN's engagement with local and regional authorities. The Group's recommendations focused on formalizing governments' role within UN processes, promoting inclusive multilateralism, and aligning local actions with global SDGs.

“We need more urgent action and greater investment to provide affordable housing to all – alongside access to electricity, water, sanitation, transport, and other basic services.”

António Guterres

United Nations Secretary-General



Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat (left), and Edna Elena Vega Rangel, President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly (right), interact with participants at the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All. 9 December 2024, Nairobi, Kenya. Photo: UN-Habitat/Peter Ndolo



Revitalizing the New Urban Agenda

UN-Habitat led global efforts to monitor the New Urban Agenda, which included revising the reporting strategy and the Guidelines for Reporting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda, launching an e-learning series, and hosting sessions at the World Urban Forum and the Africa Urban Forum. Additionally, we renovated the New Urban Agenda Platform and developed a roadmap to reinvigorate momentum for the New Urban Agenda leading up to 2026.

Accelerating global efforts on adequate housing

The inaugural session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, the first of its kind, was convened by UN-Habitat in Nairobi. The session called for intensified global efforts to ensure safe, sustainable, and affordable housing for all. Over 200 experts from governments, civil society, and the private sector emphasized the importance of integrated housing policies, innovative financing mechanisms, data-driven solutions, and strengthened global partnerships to address the housing crisis.

Advancing housing and the transformation of slums and informal settlements

The resolutions adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2023 continue to advance multiple areas of work, including adequate housing and the transformation of informal settlements and slums, under two resolutions. Resolution UNHA2/7 establishes the first global intergovernmental forum on housing, enabling Member States to assess progress and address challenges through multilateral cooperation. Resolution UNHA2/2 advances slum transformation through 10 key actions, including integrated urban policies, sustainable livelihoods, child-responsive initiatives, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

SDGs 2024 report: Key findings

UN-Habitat participated in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, emphasizing the role of cities and local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, over 1.1 billion people live in slums and informal settlements, highlighting a growing housing crisis, especially in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Rapid urbanization is outpacing infrastructure, leading to sprawl, air pollution, and inadequate transport and public spaces. Urgent action is needed to build sustainable cities with affordable housing, efficient mobility, and essential services for all.

Aerial view of flood-affected villages nearby the Jamuna River in Northern Bangladesh.
Photo: Shutterstock.com/Abdul Momin

URBAN ACTION IS...

ADVANCING A BETTER FUTURE THROUGH ADEQUATE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION

Our challenge

In 2024, cities and communities continued to face multiple challenges. UN-Habitat's work, across thematic areas of its Strategic Plan 2020–2025, contributes to addressing these issues.



318 million

people across the globe are homeless. That's nearly the entire population of the United States of America without a home. Additionally, one in four people live in conditions which harm their health, safety and prosperity.



14%

of urban residents and 40% of rural area residents lack access to safely managed drinking water globally. If residents without safe drinking water formed a country, it would be the largest country in the world.



1.1 billion

people live in slums or informal settlements, 90% of whom reside in Africa and Asia. If you lined up all these people shoulder to shoulder, they would circle the earth nearly 30 times. Consequently, slums and informal settlements remain a major challenge for sustainable urban development.



2 out of 5

people globally lack safely managed sanitation services, which is more than twice the population of the entire United States of America. Safely managed sanitation is fundamental to human development and often used as a measure for progress in the fight against poverty, disease, and premature death.



96,000

new housing units need to be built per day to meet adequate housing needs by 2030. We would need to construct one home every second of the day to meet this demand. Without proactive measures, the housing deficit will exacerbate urban inequality, forcing millions into informal settlements and slums.



2 billion

urban residents are projected to experience significant temperature increases by 2040. If you took the 100 largest cities in the world, every single person living in them would be dealing with significantly hotter conditions. This is expected to strain urban infrastructure, increase energy demands and increase health risks.

Photo: UN-Habitat



Our impact

As a result of our interventions, millions of lives have been improved.



237 million

people indirectly benefited from improved urban planning and management processes, as 74 cities adopted inclusive mechanisms to engage civil society in decision-making



64 countries

were supported by UN-Habitat to advance national-level urban policies, out of 162+ countries which reported having such policies, creating more inclusive, sustainable, and well-planned cities



205,000

people in slums and informal settlements in 27 cities across 19 countries were supported in accessing basic services, giving them access to services such as water, sanitation and clean energy



27 countries

were supported in collecting SDG data and implementing the globally harmonized approach to defining cities and human settlements, enabling better policy decisions to improve living conditions



98,000+

households gained more secure land tenure through improved documentation, helping to foster peace and prosperity in their communities



68,000 more

people now have access to public transport and sustainable mobility options as a result of UN-Habitat's interventions, enhancing economic opportunities, improving quality of life and reducing inequality

Agnes Nguku, a beneficiary of the "Go Blue" project by UNEP and UN-Habitat – which supports sustainable livelihoods and marine conservation in Kenya's coastal counties – stands outside her homestead in Chakaleri, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.
Photo: UNEP

Our focus

We work to achieve universal access to adequate housing, strengthen resilience to crises, advance climate action and environmental sustainability in cities, and support localization, multilevel governance and local finance to drive progress across the four thematic areas of our Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

These policy areas are anchored
in the thematic areas of
**UN-Habitat's Strategic
Plan 2020-2025**

1

Reducing inequality

- Increased and equal access to basic services, sustainable mobility, and public space
- Increased and secure access to land and adequate and affordable housing
- Effective settlement growth and regeneration

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Promoting prosperity

- Improved special connectivity and productivity
- Increased and equitably-distributed locally-generated revenues
- Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations

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3

Acting for climate and nature

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality
- Improved resource efficiency and protection of ecological assets
- Effective adaptation of communities and infrastructure to climate change

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4

Responding to crises

- Enhanced social integration and inclusive communities
- Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons
- Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure

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Reducing inequality



Our Impact in 2024

Inequality deepens poverty, limits access to essential services and exacerbates sociopolitical tensions, threatening sustainable development and economic progress. In 2024, UN-Habitat reduced inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum through these achievements, among others:



70,000+

people across 14 cities gained access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces



316,000

people benefitted from improved water and sanitation services



14 cities

and 2 countries adopted strategies towards ending homelessness and ensuring sustainable access to adequate housing for all



Photo: Shutterstock.com/arindambanerjee



Africa

In 2024, UN-Habitat rehabilitated water initiatives in Nigeria, benefiting over 250,000 people. In Somaliland, we completed the construction of a semi-aerobic landfill to enhance sustainable waste management practices. In Kenya, UN-Habitat supported the creation of a Material Recovery Facility (MRF), designed to generate 100 job opportunities for youth. Additionally, UN-Habitat launched the revised Ghana Housing Profile, offering an in-depth analysis of the country's urban housing sector.

Asia and the Pacific

UN-Habitat significantly improved access to clean water for 25,000 households and more than 250 schools in informal settlements in Yangon, Myanmar. We supported the registration of nearly 20,000 land-insecure households in Nepal and published guidance on reducing landlessness in the country.

Arab States

UN-Habitat launched a regional housing programme, which supports nine countries and aims to advance evidence-based housing strategies, restore conflict-affected housing, provide essential WASH services to vulnerable groups and improve access to inclusive and community-driven public spaces. This programme is one of several initiatives to address spatial inequalities and poverty in the Arab region, with an emphasis on housing, basic services and urban regeneration.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In the Mesoamerica subregion, UN-Habitat strengthened 76 national and local institutions through over 75 programmes, instruments, laws, and strategies for urban development. In collaboration with local governments and partners, UN-Habitat developed 10 municipal urban development programmes and 25 SDG reports in Mexico on SDG progress, a land management law in Cuba, and 9 Integrated Urban Operations in Cuba and Central America. These efforts promoted inclusion and participatory governance, and benefited over 400,000 people with a focus on vulnerable groups.





Children share their perspective on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Parque Augusta in São Paulo – one of eight parks selected to receive management plans under the “Viva o Verde SP” initiative. Promoting popular participation is a key goal of the programme, a partnership between UN-Habitat and the City of São Paulo to foster more inclusive and sustainable urban green spaces. 24 April 2024, São Paulo, Brazil. Photo: UN-Habitat/Guilherme Justino

How green spaces in São Paulo are becoming more inclusive

Growing up in São Paulo, Brazil, Rafaela Moreira de Freitas always cherished the green havens she found amidst the concrete jungle, but that happens less frequently these days.

Rafaela, who has a rare physical disability called spinocerebellar ataxia – which leads to balance impairments among other challenges – finds that the parks she once roamed freely are no longer accessible to her.

“Few parks have accessible playgrounds. The accessible restrooms are often locked ... There’s no staff member who can communicate using sign language. These are the types of experiences that we go through,” Rafaela said. “They may seem trivial, but it saddens me because we are equal citizens, we pay the same taxes, we have equal rights to the city.”

Recognizing the importance of inclusive public spaces, UN-Habitat and the Municipal Secretariat of Green and the Environment (SVMA) of the São Paulo municipality launched the Viva o Verde SP initiative to evaluate and improve the accessibility of parks in São Paulo.

Researchers used a public space assessment tool to evaluate 100 parks in São Paulo and spoke with nearly 5,000 participants to identify intervention priorities and publish a report on accessibility of public spaces in the city.

“

Every day, we fight not to allow ourselves to be diminished, to show that we know what we are talking about. When someone is willing to truly listen to us, we see how active listening changes their perspective.

Joana Darc Rosalvo,
Mother of Vitoria who suffers from spastic cerebral palsy

Promoting prosperity

Our Impact in 2024

Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions is essential to advancing sustainable urbanization and the realization of the SDGs. In 2024, UN-Habitat promoted prosperity through key achievements, including:



5,700,000+

people live in areas in which
UN-Habitat has developed
urban plans



17 Voluntary

Local Reviews were published
globally and 3 were developed by
local and regional governments



20 cities

piloted strategies, plans and projects to
inform the development of the International
Guidelines on People-centred Smart Cities



Photo: Shutterstock.com/Ronnachai Palas



Africa

UN-Habitat promoted prosperity in African cities through the provision of technical support to local and national governments in 6 countries. In 2024, we developed a regional spatial framework in Ethiopia and Guinea-Bissau, developed land-sea planning guidelines in Kenya, and launched the 2024–2029 Bosaso City Strategy in Somalia, all which increased the capacity of governments in managing urban growth.

Asia and the Pacific

In 2024, UN-Habitat and the Government of Cambodia produced a comprehensive national assessment on people-centred smart city solutions, setting out guidance for local governments. We also published the Future Cities Advisory Outlook 2024, sharing insights on digital support for urban governance in China. In addition, urban governance was the focus of the 7th International High-Level Forum on Sustainable Urban Development, held in China.


Arab States

UN-Habitat supported eight local governments in developing and implementing Voluntary Local Reviews to assess their progress in achieving the SDGs. UN-Habitat and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) launched the Arab Mayors Academy to equip city leaders with essential tools to tackle key urban challenges. We also supported local authorities and unions of municipalities across the region in building their capacity to improve planning processes and strengthen socioeconomic functions.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In partnership with the city of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, UN-Habitat implemented urban policies to address sociospatial inequalities and support the 2030 Agenda. UN-Habitat utilized participatory methodologies in 139 urban areas designated for social housing and development, known as ZEIS (Specific Areas of Social Interest), which generated key data, leading to the launch of the Citizenship Observatory Platform. In Alagoas, Brazil, UN-Habitat led initiatives to strengthen public management, including a policy evaluation course and workshops on smart cities and tourism.





Participants in a participatory workshop map their *tabancas* – paths, boundaries, landmarks, schools, and homes – as part of efforts to resolve land conflicts and plan for the future of Quicet, Guinea-Bissau. Photo: UN-Habitat/Raquel Guidolin

Resolving land disputes: Advancing peace and prosperity in Pelundo, Guinea-Bissau

For residents of Pelundo, located in western Guinea-Bissau, near the Atlantic Ocean, land is everything. Secure land tenure encourages investing in farming and infrastructure – backbones of sustainable development. It promotes better land management, provides security, and fuels economic development.

Pelundo, comprising 5 villages, or *tabancas*, with a total population of 6,500 people, faced long-standing land conflict due to tensions over territorial boundaries, preventing residents from living peacefully and prosperously on their land.

In response, UN-Habitat, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Peace Building Funds (PBF), embarked on the “Peace and Inclusive Land Management in the Regions of Oio, Biombo and Cacheu” project to support the community in establishing pathways to peace and development.

The project facilitated a participatory territorial planning process for local development which led to demarcated land and the distribution of land titles. UN-Habitat also held capacity-building sessions for residents, brigade participants, and local authorities, focused on land rights and non-violent communication, to foster unity and sustainability of the project's outcomes.

The project culminated in the development of a guidebook detailing the community's experience, which institutionalized the process to replicate and scale this solution across other communities experiencing land disputes. Through utilizing an inclusive and participatory process, Pelundo demonstrates to communities worldwide that a sustainable path towards peace and prosperity is within reach.

“

From what I can see at the moment, [UN-Habitat and FAO] are creating peace, unity.

Walter Cá, a community resident

Acting for climate change and nature

Our Impact in 2024

Through acting for climate and nature, UN-Habitat works to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities and communities. In 2024, the following key achievements helped address the multiple effects of climate change:



44,500+

people from Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic benefited from climate change adaptation actions identified through a master planning process



5 integrated

urban climate action plans were initiated, which focus on most vulnerable communities



13 City

Resilience Frameworks for Action were under different stages of development in Sub-Saharan Africa, with work still ongoing to strengthen urban resilience



Photo: Shutterstock.com/Sopotnicki



Africa

UN-Habitat supported a total of 6 cities in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria in building their infrastructure capacity towards climate resilience. We also supported a total of 4 cities in strengthening climate resilience in Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique, which directly impacted over 350,000 urban dwellers. In addition, we developed guidelines and training materials to support municipalities in incorporating climate adaptation into national policies.

Asia and the Pacific

UN-Habitat improved the living conditions of residents in climate-impacted areas through key interventions. In Mongolia, we reinforced and enhanced embankments in informal settlements, helping to reduce the risk of winter flooding. In Cambodia, we introduced road drainage systems to alleviate monsoon flooding, benefiting nearly 110,000 residents and market vendors. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, UN-Habitat strengthened 2 towns and 23 areas with resilience action plans and supported 2 districts in developing critical water infrastructure. Additionally, we supported four provinces in the Philippines to incorporate climate budgets in their development plans.

Arab States

UN-Habitat supported water security in the Arab region – the most water-stressed region in the world – through the deployment of innovative, low-cost and nature-based water solutions. Key projects implemented clean energy solutions in schools and public institutions. UN-Habitat also promoted sustainable waste management and recycling, advanced urban food security and hosted activities to raise awareness on climate resilience.

Latin America and the Caribbean

By mobilizing significant investments to help cities adapt to climate change, the Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor (RISE-UP) project enhanced urban resilience and improved living conditions for vulnerable communities in Colombia and Bolivia. As part of this initiative, UN-Habitat delivered the Multilayered Vulnerability Assessment (MVA) tool to support cities in climate-related decision making. In Brazil, UN-Habitat's Sustainable Urbanization Plan for Izidora helped the city of Belo Horizonte secure USD 42.6 million in federal funding to support environmental protection of local ecosystems while impacting nearly 5,000 families.





UN-Habitat staff and local teachers inspect a newly installed rainwater harvesting tank at a school in Yangon's informal settlements. Part of a community-led initiative to improve water access and resilience, the system provides clean drinking water for students year-round. Photo: UN-Habitat

A sustainable solution to the water crisis in Yangon, Myanmar: Rainwater harvesting in action

Water has become increasingly hard to come by in the informal settlements in Yangon, Myanmar.

As people escape conflict, the city's population has grown rapidly, putting a heavy burden on its infrastructure. With just 6 per cent of homes having access to piped water, most residents depend on costly and unreliable sources to meet their needs, making safe drinking water a luxury.

Thida, a 14-year-old student living in one of Yangon's peri-urban areas, worried daily about the water at school. "Before, we had to bring water from home because the water here was not safe to drink," she recalled.

To make water safe, affordable and accessible for the city's most vulnerable people, UN-Habitat developed rainwater harvesting tanks capable of storing over 150 tons of water. The 10 tanks, installed at schools in the city's informal settlements, collect and filter rainwater, providing a clean supply throughout the year – even during the dry months when water is scarcest.

This solution has been transformative for Thida and nearly 12,000 other students who no longer have to carry water from home or risk drinking from unsafe sources.

Students are reporting improved health and fewer absences, and parents have one less worry amid the challenges of life in an informal settlement.

The project, designed with community and collaboration at its heart, shows how low-tech and cost-effective solutions can support the most vulnerable communities in achieving a healthier, more sustainable future.

“

Now, we can drink the water from the tank. We don't have to worry about getting sick.

Thida, 14-year-old student



Building resilience to crises

Our impact in 2024

As climate risks intensify, it is critical to support cities and towns in building resilience, ensuring they can withstand rising temperatures, extreme weather, and other environmental challenges. In 2024, UN-Habitat contributed to safeguarding communities and livelihoods through the following key achievements:



6,700,000+

internally displaced people across 2 countries benefited from the adoption of a context-specific response to urban migration and displacement



9 cities

continued to implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction



10 local

authorities implemented sustainable and inclusive local safety strategies and approaches





Photo: UN-Habitat/Thayane Massopust

Africa

UN-Habitat improved the social integration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sub-Saharan Africa by constructing 50 houses for displaced female-led households who are vulnerable to climate change and conflict in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, in addition to providing training on resilient construction techniques. In Baidoa, Somalia, we provided on-the-job construction training for labourers and beneficiaries, leading to the construction of 200 houses for IDPs.

Asia and the Pacific

UN-Habitat upgraded community-based infrastructure for over 44,000 IDP and returnee households in Afghanistan, where it also mapped informal settlements to strengthen tenure. We also added guidance on secure tenure in a new resilient settlement planning guide for Pakistan and provided technical guidance on the construction of safe health facilities in Iran and Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Arab States

To address ongoing conflicts in the Arab region and support post-conflict recovery, UN-Habitat continued its efforts in urban recovery and resilience building. We developed an integrated urban recovery framework for Gaza, advanced land rights in the West Bank, supported housing rehabilitation in Iraq, and conducted damage assessments in Lebanon. UN-Habitat advanced legal reforms and tenure security in Yemen and rehabilitated heritage buildings in Lebanon.

Latin America and the Caribbean

UN-Habitat strengthened technical capacities in Cuba to repair over 22,000 homes affected by Hurricane Ian, training over 200 individuals in resilient construction. In Central America and Cuba, 9 Integrated Urban Operations developed over 50 strategic programmes to enhance urban resilience. In the Andean region, the "2024 Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity (ICCS)" project supported refugee and migrant integration across 6 countries, fostering social cohesion through forums on inclusive cities, over 250 cultural and sports events, as well as 110 IntegrHabitat centres (which promote social integration and inclusive neighbourhood transformation).



A UN-Habitat staff oversees carpentry work by Samer Hassan Muhsen and others at the Bab Sinjar Housing Complex in Mosul, Iraq. After years of displacement, Samer is helping rebuild his community through skills gained in a UN-Habitat training programme.
Photo: UN-Habitat/Shehla Alhialy



How dignified housing is bringing hope to displaced families in Mosul, Iraq

After a decade of enduring the hardships of conflict and displacement due to the war against ISIL, Samer Hassan Muhsen, a father of five, returned to his hometown of Mosul, Iraq.

The Muhsen family was one of 324 households who received safe and dignified housing from UN-Habitat and local authorities, enabling them to return and rebuild their lives.

"The Bab Sinjar Housing Complex where I now reside has been a lifeline for families like mine, providing a sustainable solution to the housing crisis caused by the war. It is a symbol of hope for our community," Samer said.

In Iraq, stabilization efforts in the liberated areas have focused on security, restoring basic living conditions, and the empowerment of communities to generate livelihoods.

Home to the city of Mosul, the Ninewa Governorate remains at the forefront of Iraq's displacement crisis, hosting approximately 240,000 of the country's 1.1 million internally displaced persons. Ninewa also faces a housing crisis, shouldering 28 per cent of Iraq's estimated 3 million housing units deficit.

Having secured dignified housing, Samer joined a UN-Habitat carpentry training programme which trained 104 unemployed youth in carpentry, blacksmithing, masonry, whitewashing and solar panel maintenance.

Samer now puts his newly acquired skills to practice through working for local construction partners. His sights are set on opening his own business in the future and training young displaced people to work alongside him to rebuild their beloved community.

“

Now it is my turn to contribute to the recovery of the city so that more families like mine can safely return

Samer, Returnee to Mosul

Lessons learned

The mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2020–2025 concluded that the Plan successfully set ambitious goals and provided a clear, relevant vision for guiding UN-Habitat's work. The four domains of change were found to be highly relevant in addressing stakeholder priorities and have proven valuable as both programming and advocacy tools. However, some areas of impact faced challenges, particularly due to funding and resource constraints.

The evaluation offered six key recommendations, which focus on strengthening field operations, ensuring the long-term sustainability of results, and enhancing the localization and results management framework of the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it emphasized the importance of leveraging UN-Habitat's expertise to address critical urban data and knowledge gaps to drive future success.

In the regions, the implementation of the Plan led to stronger coordination between different levels of government and sectors, advancing the recognition of adequate housing as a human right. It also brought together government actors, civil society, the private sector, and communities, resulting in improvements to informal settlements. These changes have primarily benefited women, children, older adults, and migrants – groups that are often vulnerable to discrimination in urban areas. The Plan's focus on collaboration with all stakeholders, particularly those who have traditionally been excluded, has helped integrate historically marginalized groups into territorial planning, a progress highly appreciated by our partners.

Finally, the implementation of the Plan has strengthened collaboration between UN-Habitat and Member States. Many countries have shown their support by increasing voluntary contributions or hosting country offices, further deepening our partnership and commitment to sustainable urban development.



Photo: UN-Habitat/Kirsten Milhahn



URBAN ACTION IS...

UNITING FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION



A person with dark hair in a braided style is seen from behind, looking out over a sprawling cityscape. The person is wearing a dark blue t-shirt with logos. The background shows a dense urban area with mountains in the distance under a clear sky.

Photo: UN-Habitat/David Morais

UN COOPERATION

UN-Habitat champions adequate housing and sustainable urbanization at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), highlighting the cross-cutting relevance of SDG 11 across all Sustainable Development Goals and global agendas. We convene key events including the Local and Regional Governments Forum, Voluntary Local and Subnational Review Days, the Local2030 Coalition Special Event, and the annual meeting of the Partnership Platform on Localizing the SDGs.

At the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt, the Cairo Call to Action was adopted, presenting key messages and proposed solutions to pressing urban challenges. Ten Resident Coordinators (RCs) took part, showcasing their role in accelerating SDG implementation at the local level and forging strategic partnerships.

The One UN Roundtable at WUF12, co-hosted by UN-Habitat and the UN Development Coordination Office, featured RCs as panellists and concluded with draft recommendations on closing the financing gap for local development through stronger collaboration across government levels and with multilateral development banks.

UN-Habitat also supports governments hosting large refugee populations by working with UNHCR and the World Bank to implement an integrated human settlements approach, launched at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. We remain active in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, collaborating with humanitarian partners – particularly the Norwegian Refugee Council – on housing, land and property. In advancing the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, we work closely with UNDP, IOM, and other UN entities to support the transition from humanitarian aid to long-term development.

BUILDING COALITIONS

Addressing key urban challenges at the World Urban Forum

The twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12), co-organized by UN-Habitat and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was the largest and most inclusive Forum to date, with over 25,000 participants from 182 countries and 659 events.

Through the theme “It all starts at home: Local actions for sustainable cities and communities,” WUF12 addressed key urban challenges including affordable housing, climate change, localizing finance, digital inclusivity, post-conflict reconstruction, and partnerships.

The Forum culminated in three complementary outcome documents: The Cairo Call to Action, which provides a framework and roadmap to drive local actions in advancing sustainable urban development; the WUF12 Report, which presents an overview of the programme, participation and strategic highlights; and WUF12 Perspectives – a new publication that analyses and synthesizes the key discussions from the Forum, capturing the voices and insights of its participants.

**WUF12's insights will inform
UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan
2026–2029 and contribute
to global discussions at
the United Nations Habitat
Assembly in 2025.**



Participants exit a press conference at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt.
Photo: UN-Habitat/Khaled Ali

Strengthening global networks through the World Urban Campaign

The UN-Habitat World Urban Campaign (WUC) fostered collaboration among 16 urban stakeholder groups including universities, research institutions, professional organizations, civil society groups and grassroots networks. As part of its efforts, WUC co-organized 30 Urban Thinkers Campuses under the theme “Housing Matters”, bringing together approximately 5,600 participants. The campaign also expanded its global reach by welcoming 41 new partners, increasing its network to 366 organizations and institutions worldwide.

Shaping sustainable cities through Urban October

Each October, UN-Habitat encourages individuals, organizations, national and local governments, universities, NGOs and community groups committed to sustainable urbanization to hold or participate in activities, events and discussions.

Urban October activities in 2024:

193

Urban October events were celebrated globally, including 38 World Cities Day events and 26 World Habitat Day Events

130

cities hosted events

3,000+

participants from 214 cities in 55 countries attended the global observance of World Cities Day

17,900+

online viewers tuned in as part of the global observances of World Cities Day and World Habitat Day

Recognizing global innovators through the Scroll of Honour Award

In 2024, UN-Habitat received 127 nominations and recognized 5 winners for embodying best practices and innovative approaches contributing to sustainable cities and communities. UN-Habitat's Scroll of Honour Award recognizes initiatives that made outstanding contributions to improve human settlements, provide housing, address the challenges faced by people living in poverty or displacement and enhance the quality of urban life. The Award aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly emphasizing Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Since 1989, the Award has recognized 192 initiatives worldwide.

A pan-African vision for sustainable urbanization

The inaugural Africa Urban Forum, hosted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the leadership of the African Union as the convener and the Ethiopian Government as the host, brought together 2,314 participants from all 54 African countries, including 21 ministers and deputy ministers, and more than 20 mayors and governors. The Urban Expo featured 39 exhibitors, and over 63 sessions were held. The Forum concluded with the release of the Africa Urban Forum Declaration, aimed at charting a continental approach towards developing sustainable human settlements. The Forum was organized with technical assistance from UN-Habitat and UNECA.



Participants walk around the venue of COP29.
Photo: UN-Habitat

Strengthening local action and SDGs through global coalitions

In 2024, multistakeholder coalitions proved essential in driving local impact and reinforcing the role of cities and local actors in global transformation.

The Local2030 Coalition solidified its role as the UN system's platform for advancing SDG localization. Co-led by UN-Habitat, the Coalition brought together 14 UN entities, local and regional governments, civil society, private sector actors, and academia to drive transformative local action aligned with global goals. As one of the 12 UN high-impact initiatives, it worked to scale up solutions to close the financing gap, align national and local planning, and accelerate integrated approaches to the 2030 Agenda. The Coalition partnered with the Joint SDG Fund to finance catalytic initiatives in 29 cities or regions across 29 countries, mobilizing USD 10 million through UN country teams to accelerate the realization of the SDGs. It also formalized four new Local2030 Hubs – dynamic, country-led spaces to coordinate partners and implement solutions. In 2024, the Coalition strengthened global advocacy by partnering with the European Union and the OECD – through platforms such as the EU-UN dialogues and the OECD roundtable – leading to the inclusion of SDG localization into EU recommendations and OECD reports.

Complementing this, through UN-Habitat efforts, the SDG Cities Global Community was launched at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12). The Community is a partner-led network of 127 cities from 32 countries and 232 institutions supporting peer learning, capacity-building, data-informed planning and advocacy to improve urban outcomes and accelerate the realization of the SDGs.

Convening key decision-makers at COP29

At COP29, UN-Habitat reinforced the importance of urban climate action by convening key decision-makers and advancing multilevel collaboration. The Ministerial Meeting on Urbanization and Climate Change brought together over 50 ministers, 100 national delegations and 1,000 participants, driving commitments to integrate urban priorities into climate policies. The Multilevel Action & Urbanization Pavilion hosted over 230 speakers across over 50 events, amplifying city-led solutions and fostering dialogue between urban stakeholders. Slovakia also announced a €5 million commitment to the COP27 SURGe initiative, expanding support for urban resilience.





Young adolescents, parents, and children watch a community film screening during Youth Month in Jacintinho, a low-income neighbourhood in Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil. The screening featured documentaries created by youth from the *grotas* as part of “Digae! – Youth, Communication, and the City,” a UN-Habitat partnership with the Government of Alagoas. Maceió, Brazil, 20 August 2024. Photo: UN-Habitat/Thayane Massopust

ENHANCING CAPACITIES

UN-Habitat builds the capacity of city leaders and institutions to drive sustainable and inclusive urbanization by equipping them with skills, knowledge, and tools. Through partnerships, we deliver training and provide platforms for peer-to-peer exchanges and learning.

Building capacity through accessible education

In 2024, UN-Habitat expanded scalable and accessible learning opportunities by launching four new courses on UN-Habitat's Learn platform. The courses focused on urban finance, urban crisis, monitoring of the New Urban Agenda, and the SDGs. We also strengthened academic partnerships with the University Network Initiative (UNI) to produce the seventh season of the Global Urban Lectures, a free open-source lecture series for academics and professionals, produced in collaboration with the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies at Erasmus University.

Building capacity at the local level

UN-Habitat implemented seven in-person training courses in Asia and West Africa, benefiting more than 100 participants. In West Africa, approximately 70 training materials were produced in English and French. Further, UN-Habitat and sustainable design company Aracadis collaborated on Shelter Academy 2024, held in Poland, bringing together participants from six Ukrainian cities. The three-day capacity building programme addressed critical challenges in the water sector and provided technical assistance on flood resilience, public and green spaces, and digital tools.

LEADING KNOWLEDGE

UN-Habitat produces a range of documents including reports, briefs and guidebooks, in collaboration with other UN entities, civil society, academia and other stakeholders and partners. These reports disseminate data and knowledge, inform policy, and support the agency's mandate of promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities.



Participants explore the Urban Library at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) in Cairo, Egypt. Photo: UN-Habitat/ Khaled Ali

Flagship publications



1. World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action The *World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action* is UN-Habitat's flagship publication, offering crucial insights and practical guidance on the intersection of climate action and urbanization. While cities are at the frontline of climate change, facing extreme weather and environmental effects, they are also significant contributors to global emissions and thus, hold the key to transformative change. The report emphasizes the urgent need for cities to adopt climate-resilient and inclusive urban planning strategies to mitigate risks and protect vulnerable populations.



2. World Smart Cities Outlook 2024: The state of smart cities The *World Smart Cities Outlook 2024* is a new UN-Habitat publication that offers an analysis of the current state of smart cities globally and highlights successes and challenges faced by cities to leverage technology while ensuring equitable access and opportunities. Its recommendations informed the development of the International Guidelines on People-centred Smart Cities.

Top publications

The following reports were the most viewed and downloaded in 2024



1. Urban Content of NDCs: Local climate action explored through in-depth country analyses: 2024 Report* This report analyses urban content and urban climate strategies in 194 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and provides guidance to policymakers and practitioners on how to highlight climate challenges and opportunities in cities and support countries to place cities at the centre of their climate ambition.



2. Shanghai Manual: A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development in the 21st Century - 2023 Annual Report This report shares practical solutions and policy suggestions to help cities navigate pressing urbanization challenges, demonstrating best practices across the core dimensions of economy, society, environment, culture, governance and international cooperation.



3. Future Cities Advisory Outlook 2023: Digital Innovations Empower Urban Net-Zero Carbon Transition While no individual or city can escape the impact of climate change, the third flagship report of UN-Habitat China Future Cities Council (CFCC) delves into how digital innovations – from big data to artificial intelligence – can support cities in achieving net-zero carbon.

*The *World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action*, is our top publication. To avoid repetition, we've highlighted another key publication here, while the second top publication, the *Annual Report 2023: Local action in a time of crises*, is not included in this section.

WHERE WE WORK



OFFICE PRESENCE

Afghanistan
Angola
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Belgium
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Cabo Verde
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
China
Colombia
Comoros
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Egypt
Ethiopia

Germany
Ghana
Guinea-Bissau
India
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Kosovo*
Kuwait
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Lebanon
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania

Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
Nepal
Nigeria
Pakistan
Philippines
Russian Federation
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Sudan
Spain
Sri Lanka

State of Palestine
Sudan
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
Thailand
The Gambia
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
Ukraine
United States of America
Viet Nam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe



COUNTRY OPERATIONS

Argentina	Cuba	Kyrgyz Republic	Serbia
Armenia	Dominican Republic	Libya	Solomon Islands
Bangladesh	Ecuador	Malaysia	South Africa
Belize	El Salvador	Moldova	Tajikistan
Bolivia	Fiji	Nicaragua	Tanzania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Gabon	Niger	Trinidad and Tobago
Botswana	Georgia	Oman	Turkmenistan
Central African Republic	Guatemala	Panama	United Arab Emirates
Chad	Honduras	Paraguay	Uzbekistan
Congo (Republic of the Congo)	Indonesia	Peru	
Costa Rica	Kazakhstan	Rwanda	

*Any reference to Kosovo in UN documents and UN websites, whether to the territory, institutions or population, is to be understood in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo. Kosovo is therefore not listed as a country.

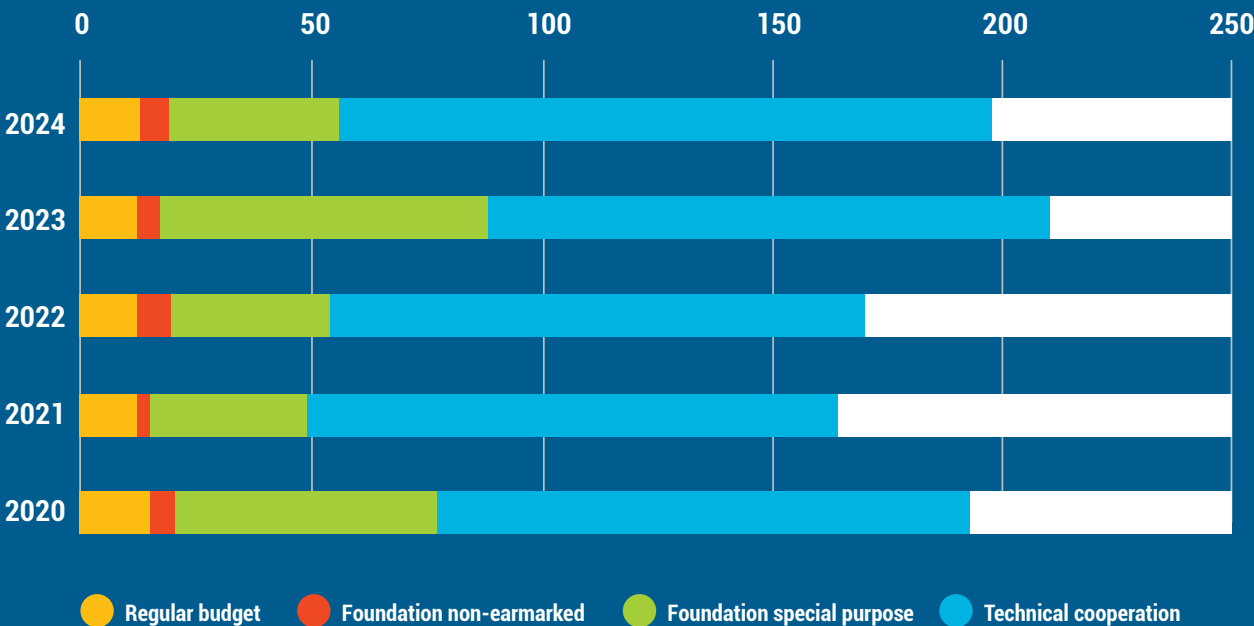
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

BASE MAP Map, No. 4170 Rev. 19 UNITED NATIONS - October 2020 Office of Information and Communications Technology | Geospatial Information Section
The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UN-Habitat.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

In 2024, UN-Habitat remains a USD 200 million-sized organization. Of this amount, approximately 7 per cent came from the UN Secretariat's regular budget allocation, while 93 per cent consisted of direct contributions from donors and partners to the Organization's extrabudgetary funds. UN-Habitat extends its gratitude to all donors for their continued support.

Contributions to UN-Habitat 2020–2024 (million USD)



Note: Contributions refer to the full value of a grant as recognized at the time of signing the contribution agreement or donor commitment, and do not include other revenue sources.

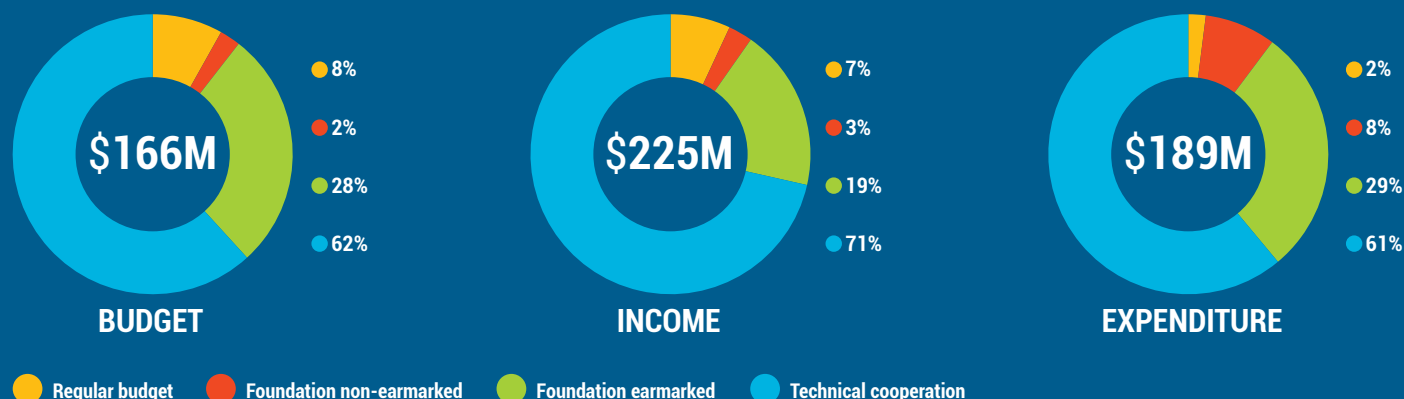
Earmarked contributions

A total of USD 173 million was mobilized and earmarked for UN-Habitat's projects, supporting both its global normative programmes and technical cooperation on the ground. This reflects sustained and strong demand for UN-Habitat's expertise, knowledge and interventions in addressing global sustainable urban development challenges. Of the total funds mobilized, 60 per cent came from Member States, while the remaining 40 per cent was contributed by other donors, including intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies and the private sector.

Core contributions

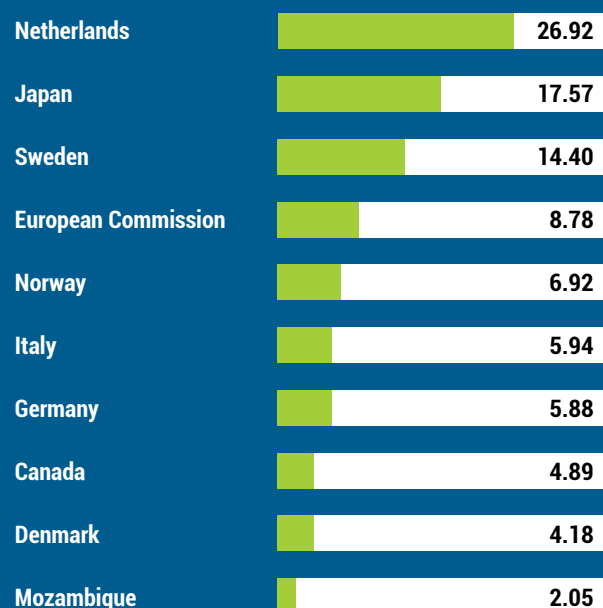
UN-Habitat's core resources consist of its regular budget allocation and Foundation non-earmarked funding. In 2024, the Organization received USD 5.8 million in non-earmarked contributions from 28 Member States, with a total revenue of USD 6.3 million, marking the second highest amount recorded between 2020 and 2024. While representing only 3 per cent of UN-Habitat's total contributions, Foundation non-earmarked funding is essential for ensuring consistency in the implementation of UN-Habitat's mandate and programmes to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements.

Financial summary (by funding source)

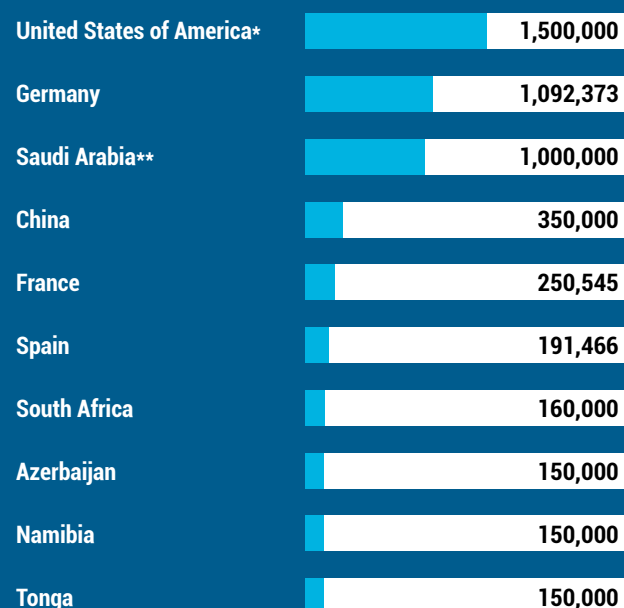


Note: The above do not include other revenues and expenditures such as programme support, end-of-service and post-retirement benefits, and intersegment elimination.

Top 10 donors (earmarked) Amount (million USD)



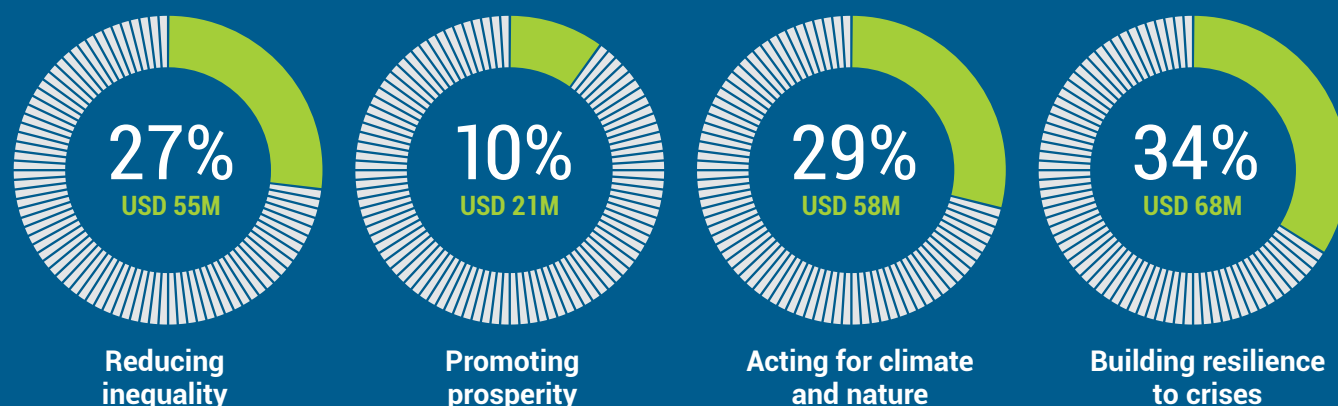
Top 10 donors (non-earmarked) Amount (USD)



* USD 100,000 of the total contribution received from the United States corresponds to the portion previously withheld from its pledge for the 2023 fiscal year.

** The contribution received from Saudi Arabia covers the period from 2020 to 2023.

Budget allocation (by thematic area):



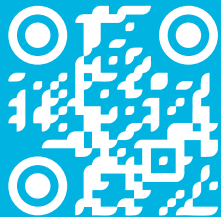


UN-HABITAT

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