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**Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group  
on Adequate Housing for All**  
**First session**  
Nairobi, 9–11 December 2024

## **First session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All**

### **Summary by the Chair**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All held its first session from 9 to 11 December 2024, following its establishment by the United Nations Habitat Assembly (UN-Habitat Assembly) on 9 June 2023 through resolution 2/7, “Adequate housing for all”. The UN-Habitat Assembly, in Resolution 2/7, requested the 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”.

2. More than 200 participants took part in the first session, including the President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, ministers and ambassadors, other representatives of Member States and experts on housing from a wide range of partner groups. The session took place in person at the headquarters of UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya.

3. The present summary by the Chair captures the proceedings of the first session, with particular focus on key substantive messages considered by the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group at the session and organized thematically.

#### **II. Chair’s summary of the session**

##### **1. Integrated policy development fostering sustainability, resilience and equity in access to adequate housing**

*Member States highlighted the importance of a series of issues, including:*

- a) Adequate housing is both a human right and a critical means to promote social integration and environmental sustainability;
- b) Adequate housing extends beyond physical shelter, to encompass aspects such as security, participation in community life, and equitable access to basic services;
- c) The recognition of the critical role of integrated land use planning in the achievement of adequate housing that is climate-resilient and well-connected to essential physical and social infrastructure (e.g., health, education and access to jobs).
- d) The need to strengthen dialogue that links housing, climate change and resilience, to foster sustainable and inclusive urban development.
- e) The need of integrating the delivery of new housing units with the repurposing of existing buildings, and regeneration of declining and marginalised areas, acknowledging that policies must extend beyond the sole focus on individual housing units or new unit delivery;

*Member States suggested consideration of the following:*

- f) Inter-sessional ad hoc groups be set up to explore and make recommendations on thematic issues for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Working Group.
- g) The inclusion of diverse non-governmental expertise in inter-sessional activities.

*Member States made several observations on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:*

- h) Exploring the following thematic issues:
  - i. Policy and practice concerning informal settlements;
  - ii. Innovation, sustainable materials and environmental sustainability in housing construction;
  - iii. Integration of resilience and climate change considerations in housing policy;
  - iv. Access to land for housing and social infrastructure;
  - v. Comparable approaches to the definition of slums and informal settlements;
  - vi. Comparable approaches to assessing housing backlogs;
  - vii. The seven elements of adequate housing as outlined in CESCR General Comment No. 4.

## **2. Governance and financial mechanisms**

*Member States highlighted the importance of a series of issues, including:*

- a) The challenge of financing slum transformation and the provision of services in informal and precarious settlements;
- b) Increasing access to financing for social housing as critical to support housing for those on low or informal incomes;
- c) The importance of community investments and savings groups as part of housing financing infrastructure;
- d) Increasing understanding of mechanisms to financially support the informal sector both on the supply and demand side – e.g. access to mortgages for informal workers, but also to self-help and the informal rental market;
- e) The importance of diversify housing tenure and types to ensure responses to diverse needs (including, for example, rental, market, social, self-help);

- f) Finance needs to be complemented by strong public policies and regulatory frameworks to guide investments where they are most needed and to steer action by the private sector and other stakeholders.
- g) *Member States also proposed consideration of the following:* Housing investments should be aligned with a vision of housing as a component of urban planning and socio-economic development, as well as with sustainability goals.
- h) UN-Habitat should continue leveraging its voice within international forums to call for a more equitable distribution of multilateral and bilateral support for adequate housing.

*Member States made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:*

- i) Inter-sessional was activities were recommended to monitor and promote a more coordinated, equitable and sustainable distribution of multilateral and bilateral support for the development and implementation of effective housing policies, programmes and projects.

### **3. Data and monitoring frameworks**

*Member States highlighted the importance of a series of issues, including:*

- a) The challenge of collecting and analysing data and the opportunities emerging from new technologies;
- b) The ongoing need to enhance the availability of data, and the capacity to utilize it effectively for analysing housing demands and assessing the impact of housing programmes, including their social implications;
- c) The relevance of understanding housing adequacy as the starting point for measuring poverty reduction, with an emphasis on improving assessments of housing policy impacts on socio-economic variables to better capture the return on public investments;
- d) The necessity of updating definitions of adequate housing, homelessness, slums and informal settlements to ensure alignment with diverse and contemporary challenges and realities;
- e) The need for a comprehensive understanding of housing stocks and housing needs to inform policy development and resource allocation effectively.
- f) *Member States also recommended consideration of the following:* A participatory and multi-dimensional framework should be established to monitor access to adequate housing.
- g) Any developed global framework should be adaptable at the local level to facilitate policymaking and target setting.
- h) Local authorities should be strengthened in their ability to monitor access to adequate housing.
- i) Any proposed framework for monitoring the achievement of adequate housing for all should not result in the duplication of reporting efforts.
- j) Any indicator developed should be focusing on both urban and rural population, to ensure no-one is left behind.
- k) Access to basic services and public facilities should also capture access to education, employment and health.
- l) Sustainability indicators should incorporate the cost of maintenance and the sustainability and affordability of construction materials.
- m) Any data and reporting framework should incorporate indicators measuring capacity for urban policy planning and inclusivity of the process.

*Member States made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:*

- n) An inter-sessional ad hoc group was recommended to refine the proposed data and monitoring framework, including methodological and contextualisation aspects.

#### **4. Opportunities for coalition-building, knowledge exchange and cross-learning**

*Member States highlighted the importance of a series of issues, including:*

- a) Recognizing the value of knowledge, experiences, and successful innovations developed by Member States, which should be systematically documented and shared with the Working Group to inform discussion and decision-making.
- b) Promoting south-south learning to leverage regional expertise and foster tailored, context-specific solutions to housing challenges.
- c) Strengthening peer-to-peer exchanges among practitioners to enhance capacities, share best practices and develop collaborative solutions.
- d) Promoting multilateral and multi-stakeholder collaboration in technical assistance and capacity building efforts, with a particular focus on the reconstruction of housing in post-conflict, post-disaster and climate change-affected contexts.
- e) Leveraging existing platforms to enrich and produce content for the Working Group's discussion and to establish linkages between ongoing initiatives
- f) Underscoring the need for tools, methodology and policy analyses that capture success stories and identify the preconditions for replicating and scaling successful practices.
- g) Highlighting the importance of facilitating information sharing with end-users (including citizens and communities) and therefore their participation in the design of knowledge exchange and cross-learning opportunities.
- h) Leveraging big data, innovation and AI for predictive and impact analysis.

*Member States also proposed consideration of the following:*

- i) Agenda item seven (Housing Platform) should continue in the next regular session to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among members and observers, as well as global practitioners, particularly through inter-sessional engagements.
- j) The platform should enable the formation of coalitions, knowledge exchange, and cooperation among stakeholders, as well as dissemination of comparative data.
- k) The Platform should assist national and local decision-makers in determining the impact of support packages and interventions implemented by other countries or local governments, including potential contact points for follow up and learning.
- l) Thematically, content could be organised along the housing supply chain (access to land, finance, sustainable construction and technologies, different types of housing production mechanisms, community-managed housing, inclusive design for all – particularly gender and age).
- m) The platform should incorporate an integrated understanding of adequate housing, avoiding sectoral approaches.
- n) Capacity development should be a central component of the housing platform to address systemic gaps and empower stakeholders.
- o) A preliminary mapping of capacity gaps suggests focusing on the following key areas:
  - i. Policy design, analysis, and evaluation, particularly for low-income groups.
  - ii. Data collection and analysis, especially at the local level, incorporating qualitative aspects such as needs, aspirations, and satisfaction.

- iii. Effective governance mechanisms and instruments at the national and sub-national levels.
- p) A practitioner's hub approach could be implemented to establish the housing platform, creating a centralised space for expert engagement and innovation sharing.
- q) The Platform and its content should be used to support the implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029.
- r) The establishment of strong curatorship (both in UN-Habitat and gathering stakeholders).

*Member States made the following observation on the possibility of intersessional activities before its next regular session:*

- s) The Platform should facilitate knowledge exchange and cross-learning on:
  - i. Slum transformation policies and their implementation;
  - ii. Social housing models and their implementation in varying contexts;
  - iii. Financial and regulatory mechanisms for the delivery of all types of housing interventions;
  - iv. Successful community-led housing strategies and guidelines;
  - v. Sustainable and durable solutions in emergency situations.
- t) Continuing the refinement of desk analysis and needs assessment for the establishment of Terms of Reference for the Platform.
- u) Establishment of a curatorship mechanism for the Platform's content.

## Conclusions

Considering all of the above, in my capacity as Chair my proposal is that the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All conducts ad-hoc intersessional activities that consider the list of thematic areas presented below and that are reported back to the Intergovernmental Working Group at its second session. The Co-chairs are encouraged to consult with the Secretariat on the modalities and organisation of ad-hoc intersessional activities.

Ad-hoc intersessional activities should consider the following thematic areas, within the scope of available time and resources:

1. **Data and monitoring** – including definitions (e.g. slums, homelessness), indicators' frameworks, monitor impact for evidence-based policy making, housing profiles, housing observatories, housing affordability, etc.
2. **Financing housing and informal settlements** – including development banks, national banks, taxation and other forms of public funding, developer exactions, financing mechanisms, private-public-partnerships, private housing sector regulatory frameworks, climate financing, access to credit, community investments and savings groups, housing cooperatives, etc.
3. **Innovation, climate resilience, recovery and reconstruction** – including innovative building materials; sustainable and affordable housing construction approaches; energy and water efficiency; green, safe and affordable building technologies; building back better, etc.
4. **Informal settlements** – including upgrading and transformation; prevention; policies and practices; updating the definition, etc.
5. **Land and tenure security** – including availability of serviced land for housing, sustainable land use planning, land rights, protection from forced evictions and exploring alternatives to evictions and relocation, etc.

6. **Diversifying housing options:** regulating rental markets, curbing vacant housing, repurposing, refurbishing, supporting non-market housing including cooperatives and community-led housing, upgrading and regularizing informal settlements, etc.
7. **Affordable and sustainable materials:** including locally sourced and sustainable materials that reduce housing construction costs without compromising quality; promote resource efficiency and circularity; enable scalability in housing projects; and support climate resilience and cultural adequacy, etc.