



UN-HABITAT

Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All

Intersessional Thematic Meeting on Housing Informality

Land Housing and Shelter Section, UN-Habitat

Date: 26 June 2025

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Introduction

Adequate Housing at the centre of UN-Habitat mandate since its establishment.

Housing crisis: 1.1 billion people live in slums or informal settlements; 1.6 billion face housing affordability constraints; over 300 million are homeless

Habitat Assembly Resolution 2/7: Establishment of OEWG on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H) and a Knowledge Platform on Housing

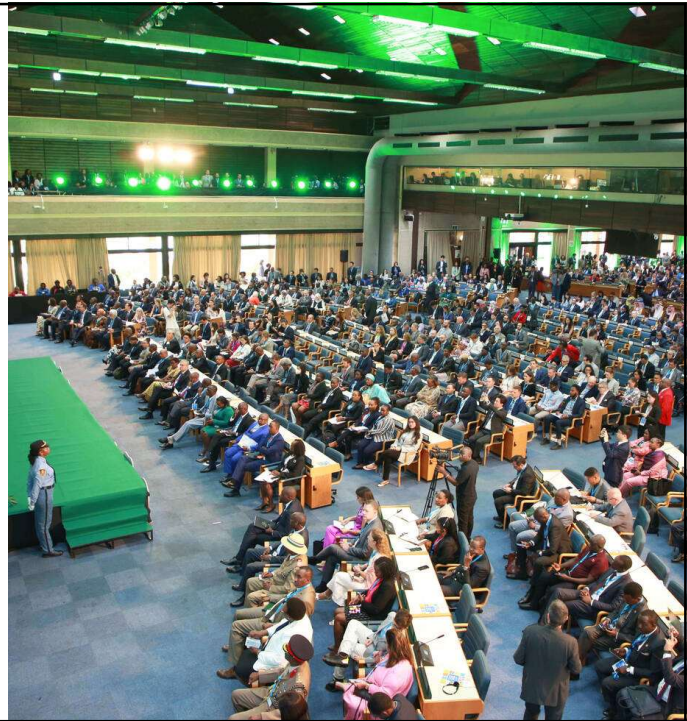
Housing, land and basic services at the core of the new **UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2026-2029**

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Open Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H)

- **OEWG-H1: 9–11 December 2024**
- **2025 Roadmap by Co-Chairs France and Kenya**
- **Expert Group Meetings**
- **Intersessional thematic meetings**
 - Housing Finance (24th June)
 - Tenure Security (25th June)
 - **Informal Settlements (26th June)**
 - Social Housing (27th June)
 - Sustainability (16th September)
 - Definitions (17th September)
 - Monitoring framework (18th September)
- **OEWG-H2: Nairobi, 22–23 October 2025**



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Open Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H)

Objectives:

Develop robust, peer-reviewed, and Member State-endorsed set of guidelines to accelerate the achievement of safe, sustainable, adequate, and affordable housing for all.

These policy recommendations will be submitted to the third United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2029.

Countries to share and use emerging recommendations

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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Framing the discussion

Human Right to Adequate Housing:

- Recognized in international human rights law: Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) - adopted by UNGA in 1948, and,
- Article 11.1 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)2 of 1966
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 11 recognizes sustainable cities as a key driver for sustainable development: Target 11.1

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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Framing the discussion: Housing Informality

- **Housing Informality** refers to the broad concept of housing development and occupation that *occurs outside the formal legal, regulatory, and planning frameworks*
- Housing informality emerges as a rational response to the failure of formal land and housing systems to provide access to adequate housing.
- Informal housing is characterized by:
 - Lack of legal documentation of land or rental tenure,
 - Non-compliance with building and planning regulations, and
 - Informal basic service provisions.

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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Framing the discussion: Informal Settlements

- **Informal settlements** are an *agglomeration of informal housing collectively affecting residents living in the area*
- Informal settlements offer economic opportunities, employment, and livelihood support. Their **flexible construction** practices, strong community networks, and adaptability to changes provide valuable insights for affordable housing solutions
- Informal Settlements are characterized by:
 - High proportion of informal housing
 - Inadequate provision of infrastructure & services
 - Poor physical environmental living conditions,
 - High prices paid for necessities

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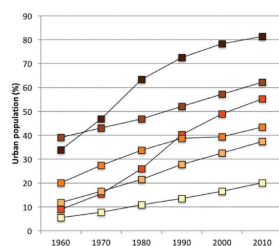
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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Framing the discussion: Informality Drivers



1. The lack of affordable housing & land inaccessibility

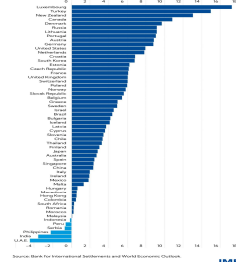


2. Rapid Urbanization and Population Growth

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Through the roof

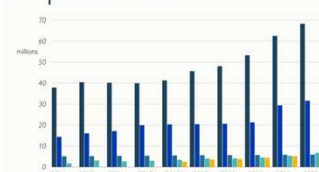
Households in 2014 more than 50% in 23 countries out of the 60 countries in the IMF's Global House Price Index for 2020 (indicator or factor are not present in target)



3. Increasing commodification of the housing sector



GLOBAL TRENDS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT, end of 2014 - end of 2023



4. Migration and displacement



5. Legal-Political Exclusion and Discrimination



6. Cultural Preferences

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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Regional Variations of Housing Informality

The patterns and drivers of housing informality vary significantly around the world, manifesting in different regions as:

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

- unregulated densification (illegal construction and property extension)
- home conversions or sub-partitions and hidden apartments
- homeless encampments and undocumented migrant housing

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- self-built settlements on unregistered land
- frequently evolving into slums and informal settlements due to unregulated construction, overcrowding, and a lack of services

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

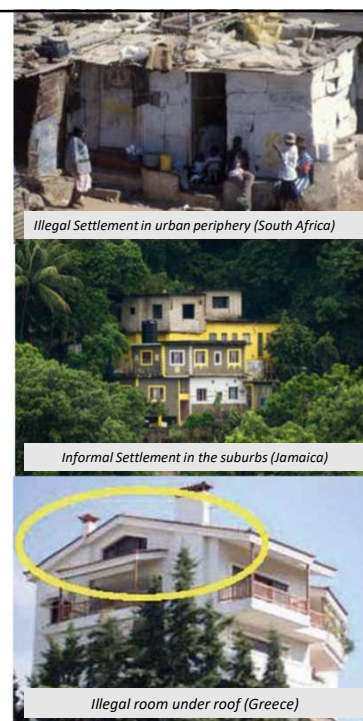
- self-built housing on unregulated lands
- progressive regularization of tenure and housing permits

ARAB STATES

- unplanned urban expansions
- illegal subdivisions on the urban periphery

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- dense slums
- squatter settlements
- peri-urban sprawl



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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Global and Regional Estimates of Informal Settlements and Slums

Slums and informal settlements represent the most acute manifestations of housing informality, where enforcement informality allows unregulated growth, resulting in severe access, equality, and health challenges.

Currently, 1.1 billion people live in urban slums and informal settlements, with children accounting for an estimated 350 to 500 million of this population.

This trend is **particularly pronounced in least developed countries**, where over 60% of urban dwellers live in informal settlements, and the number of slum dwellers has increased by 50% in the past decade due to rapid urban growth.

UN Regions	Urban population living in slums or informal settlements (thousands)		Proportion of urban population living in slums or informal settlement (%)	
	2010	2022	2010	2022
Sub-Saharan Africa	174,946	265,385	57.3	53.6
Central and Southern Asia	302,697	334,418	51.7	42.9
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	326,680	362,630	28.8	24.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	102,279	93,416	21.8	16.9
Western Asia and Northern Africa	65,881	61,727	25.2	17.8
Oceania	362	358	15.5	12.2
Northern America and Europe	7,651	5,759	0.9	0.7
Australia and New Zealand	16	8	0.1	0.0
World	980,512	1,123,702	27.3	24.8
Landlocked				
Developing Countries	55,425	73,828	50.4	46.6
Least Developed Countries	159,657	244,383	63.9	60.9
Small-Islands				
Developing States	7,569	8,923	20.1	19.9

Source: UN-Habitat, SDG 11.1

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HOUSING INFORMALITY Recommendations

Two-Track Approach:

1. Provide affordable alternatives to informal Housing:

The most effective and cost-efficient way to curb the expansion of housing informality is to *radically scale up the availability of formal, affordable, and adequate* housing options to meet the growing demand for affordable housing.

2. Upgrade Informal Housing in Informal Settlements/Slums:

Addressing housing informality in informal settlements requires action on three fronts: **improving individual housing units** and **transforming the statutory and regulatory conditions that generate informality, including urban planning frameworks, infrastructure provision, basic services, and security of tenure.**

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HOUSING INFORMALITY Recommendations

Track 1: Provide affordable alternatives to informal Housing

- **Expand affordable housing supply** through public and private sector collaboration by increasing the availability of affordable, quality housing options to reduce the demand for informal housing.
- **Make affordable serviced land available for housing** through strategic land management to ensure low-income households can access well-located land with basic services to build formal housing
- **Integrate housing within inclusive urban planning frameworks** to promote inclusive zoning and compact development, while preventing the spread of underserved and disconnected peripheral informal settlements.

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HOUSING INFORMALITY

Recommendations

Track 2: Upgrade Informal Housing in Informal Settlements

- **Land Regularization and Readjustment:** Enact inclusive and legally backed land regularization and readjustment frameworks to secure tenure rights and enable long-term investment in housing and services.
- **Improvement of basic urban services infrastructure** in informal settlements to ensure equitable access to essential urban services and enhance habitability
- **Upgrading of Informal Housing Structures:** Institutionalize support for incremental upgrading of housing structures to empower households to improve their homes affordably and progressively

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Expert Discussant

Renu Khosla,
Executive Director
CURE India



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Moderated Discussion

Raf Tuts,
Director
Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat



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Housekeeping

- **English, Arabic and Russian** interpretation available
- **Mute your microphones** when not speaking
- **Raise your hand** to request the floor
- Keep your interventions to **3 – 4 minutes**
- **Introduce** yourself with name, role, organisation and country before speaking
- **Camera on** when speaking (if possible)
- **Use the chat** (English or Arabic) or email h4all@un.org

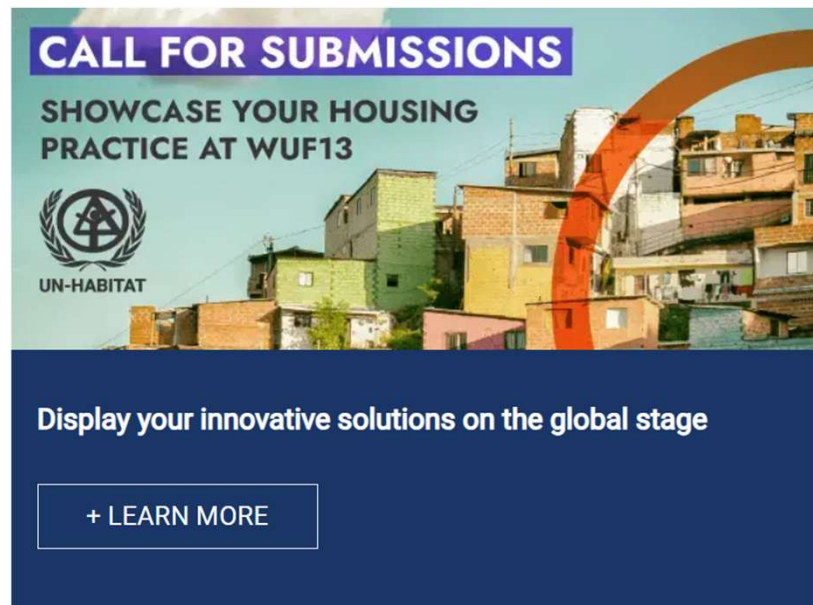
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Way forward

[UN-Habitat - A Better Urban Future | UN-Habitat](#)

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Way forward

- Next sessions of intersessional thematic online meetings
 - **Tenure Security** (25th June)
 - **Informal Settlements** (26th June)
 - **Social Housing** (27th June)
- September intersessional thematic online meetings:
 - Sustainability:** 16th September 2025
 - Definitions:** 17th September 2025
 - Monitoring framework:** 18th September 2025
- **Second session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H2), Nairobi from 22 to 23 October 2025**

10:00-13:00 EAT (English, Russian, Arabic)

16:00-19:00 EAT (English, French, Spanish, Arabic)

Register to attend on GEMS ([UN-Habitat GEMS](#) | [UN-Habitat GEMS](#))

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Way forward

- Inputs from intersessional meetings will be compiled into a **final draft analysis and set of recommendations**.
- Documents will be made available in preparation for the second **Session of the Open-Ended Working Group**, taking place on 22-23 October 2025
- At the OEWG-H2, member states, accredited organisations and nominated experts will have another opportunity to **comment, review and approve recommendations**, which will then constitute part of the recommendations presented to the Habitat Assembly 1 in 2029
- At the OEWG-H2 **new Co-chairs** will be elected; a **new roadmap** will be prepared, shaping the work of the OEWG-H in the years ahead.

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Thank You!

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