



UN-HABITAT

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

Intersessional Thematic Meeting on Social Housing

Land Housing and Shelter Section, UN-Habitat

Date: 27 June 2025

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Housekeeping

- **English, Arabic, French and Spanish** 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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Introduction

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

Housing crisis: 2.8 billion face housing inadequacy, including 1.1 billion people living in slums or informal settlements and over 300 million experiencing homelessness.

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

Resolution 2/2: Accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030

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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Social Housing Framing the discussion

What we mean by social housing

The definition of what constitutes social housing varies significantly between countries.

key features include:

1. **Costs** are generally set below formal market rates and are often linked to incomes or to the costs of acquiring a dwelling.
2. **Owned or managed by** government bodies, non-profit or limited-profit organizations.
3. **Allocation** is typically based on criteria such as need, including income level, occupation, vulnerability.
4. Its **core purpose** is to address housing inequality, promote social inclusion, and support marginalised groups.
5. Designed to preserve **long-term affordability**

Core Functions:

- Promote social cohesion and stability, strengthen gender equality
- Ensure spatial justice
- Moderate housing markets and strengthen macroeconomic stability
- Enhance climate and health resilience
- Support economic and livelihood security

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Social Housing

Institutional, regulatory and financial setups, and regional trends

- **Governance models:** Vary from centralised to decentralised or mixed.
- **Regulatory frameworks:** Define eligibility, rent setting, tenant rights, and allocation; inclusive models promote social mix.
- **Financial tools:** Include public investment, capital grants, subsidies, tax incentives, land-based instruments, and cooperative finance.

Regional Trends:

- **Europe:** Some countries maintain strong public/cooperative stock; other have seen (mass) privatisation.
- **North America:** U.S. relies demand-side support; Canada blends co-ops and municipal housing.
- **Latin America:** Brazil and Uruguay lead with cooperative and state-led models; integration with self-built housing is growing.
- **Africa:** Limited but expanding; South Africa and Ethiopia have state-led programmes; Côte d'Ivoire explores rent-to-own.
- **Asia:** Singapore's public housing is a global model; China is reintroducing affordable rentals.
- **MENA:** Homeownership-focused; public rental housing is rare and under-resourced.

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Social Housing

Key challenges and trends

Challenges:

- **Privatisation and shrinking sizes:** Leading to concentrated disadvantage, and social stigma.
- **Governance gaps:** Fragmented mandates and lack of transparency.
- **Financial strain:** Inadequate funding, especially, for maintenance and renovation.
- **Spatial inequality:** Peripheral sites due to land price and scarcity.
- **Lack of reliable and disaggregated data:** Impacting planning, allocation and evaluation.
- **Cultural inadequacy:** Standardized designs ignoring local contexts and cultural specificity of tenants.
- **Demographic shift:** Need for adaptable spaces

Trends:

- **Community-led and cooperative models:** Resident-driven cooperatives and mutual aid.
- **Strategic land use:** Land banking, value capture, and public land use.
- **Municipal leadership:** Cities integrating social housing with urban policy.
- **Cross-sectoral integration:** Linking social housing with health, transport, and gender equity.
- **Design innovation:** Modular, adaptive, and sustainable housing solutions.

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SOCIAL HOUSING

Strengthen governance, coordination and policy coherence

Effective governance of social housing depends on long-term strategies, clear mandates, and institutional capacity to implement and coordinate across levels of government. Dedicated agencies, political commitment, and tenant involvement are key to ensuring accountability and sustained delivery, while adaptable regulatory frameworks allow for context-sensitive and inclusive models.

PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Develop **strategic frameworks** and mandates for social housing that ensure continuity, clarify responsibilities, and reflect housing system dynamics.
2. Strengthen the **institutional set-up** for coordinated, accountable and sustained delivery and maintenance of social housing through the creation of **dedicated agencies, capacity-building efforts** and facilitating inclusive models of delivery and management.
3. Build **regulatory capacity and oversight frameworks** to ensure quality, accountability and tenant participation.

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SOCIAL HOUSING

Strengthen data systems and public accountability

Reliable data and monitoring tools are essential to assess demand, guide resource allocation, and evaluate the performance of social housing systems. Transparent governance and resident participation strengthen accountability, while evaluating return on public investment is key to demonstrating the long-term value of social housing as infrastructure.

PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Develop **data infrastructure to guide evidence-based planning** through disaggregated needs assessment and integrated housing and spatial data systems.
2. Institutionalise **inclusive and regular performance evaluation and transparent reporting** of commons indicators to strengthen public accountability.
3. **Demonstrate the public value** of social housing by measuring social, economic and environmental outcomes.

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SOCIAL HOUSING

Facilitate access to land and spatial equity for social housing

Land policy strongly shapes the accessibility and sustainability of social housing. Densifying within consolidated urban areas reduces infrastructure costs and improves service access. Local governments play a central role through land-use planning, while tools such as zoning incentives, land banks, and public land allocation help secure well-located land for social housing. Integrating land policy with mobility and infrastructure planning supports more inclusive and connected communities.

PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Integrate social housing into **land policy** and governance to expand access to well-located and affordable land by mobilising strategic public land use, land banking, land value sharing.
2. Align social housing with **infrastructure and spatial planning** to support connected and inclusive communities.

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SOCIAL HOUSING

Ensure sustainable financing of social housing

Financing social housing (both in the delivery and maintenance) requires a stable and diverse mix of instruments aligned with public goals.

PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Mobilise **long-term and diversified finance** through **closed-circuit funding models** to support the **full lifecycle of social housing, retain public investments and prioritise reinvestment** in the system.
2. Align capital flows with public goals through accountable **financial intermediaries** and public-interest oversight.
3. **Expand support for community-led, cooperatives and mutual-help models** through dedicated financing and support.

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SOCIAL HOUSING

Design for livelihoods, inclusion and sustainability

Social housing should be inclusive and adaptable, responding to diverse household needs, cultural contexts, and demographic shifts. Design approaches that allow for flexibility, accessibility, and integration with livelihoods and services can improve long-term sustainability and support social cohesion.

PROPOSED DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish **inclusive standards** and design frameworks that promote accessibility, energy efficiency and adaptability to different life stages and household types.
2. Promote **cultural adequacy and social cohesion** through participatory design processes and supported technical assistance.
3. Support **livelihood and economic inclusion** by adapting legal and design frameworks to local realities.

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Way forward

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Display your innovative solutions on the global stage

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Way forward

- September intersessional thematic online meetings:

Sustainability: 16th September 2025

Definitions: 17th September 2025

Monitoring framework: 18th September 2025

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

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

- **Second session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H2)**, Nairobi from 22 to 23 October 2025

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 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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THE NEW
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CITIES AND
COMMUNITIES