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Consideration of the outcomes of expert group and intersessional meetings, including draft recommendations, and of global events

Outcomes of the expert group meetings, intersessional meetings and activities

Addendum

Summary of proposed recommendations**

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present addendum summarizes the draft recommendations and other substantive outcomes placed before the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H) at its third session. It is issued as an addendum to the report of the Executive Director on the outcomes of the expert group meetings, intersessional meetings and activities (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2).

2. The content summarized below were developed on the basis of expert consultations and technical inputs contributed through the work of the Working Group, and were considered by Member States at intersessional meetings held during the reporting period and previous cycles.

3. Further information and supporting material are provided in the corresponding background papers: HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/INF/1 on the definition of homelessness, HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/INF/2 on housing sustainability and resilience, and HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/INF/3 on integrated housing policies.

* HSP/OEWG-H.2026/1.

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

II. Definition of homelessness

A. Introduction

Relevance of addressing homelessness

4. Homelessness is a global challenge requiring increased attention and coordinated action. While the scale cannot yet be reliably estimated globally, available evidence points to its association with unaffordable housing, poverty and inequality, forced displacement and evictions, conflict, climate-related hazards and disasters, discrimination, violence, and gaps in social protection. Thus, homelessness and informal settlements are distinct but complementary manifestations of severe housing deprivation and systemic failures of housing systems. Further, its impacts extend beyond the loss of housing itself, affecting access to services, livelihoods, education and health, as well as people's safety, dignity and participation in social and economic life.

Limitations of current approaches and objectives

5. Homelessness is defined, measured, and addressed differently across countries and cities. The absence of an internationally agreed reference definition limits visibility, evidence, comparability, attention and resource allocation; underrepresents less visible and dynamic situations; and constrains understanding of pathways into and out of homelessness. A shared framework would enable benchmarking while preserving national flexibility and support evidence-based, prevention-oriented policies.

Typologies of Homelessness

6. Based on the proposed homelessness definition, four typologies are identified to support the adaptation and operationalisation of national and local definitions.

Minimum core typologies

(a) **Being without accommodation**: people sleeping in open or roofed spaces not intended for habitation, or in forms of transport.

(b) **Staying in temporary or crisis accommodation**: people in emergency accommodation, homeless hostels, temporary accommodation or refuges, where accommodation is provided for protection but not intended as stable or permanent.

Extended context-specific typologies

(c) **People living in severely inadequate or insecure accommodation in the absence of reasonable alternatives:** including temporarily staying with others, living under threat, using commercial accommodation as housing, squatting, or living in unsafe or non-standard housing. The boundary between homelessness and other forms of housing deprivation and non-standard housing varies across context and cannot be determined by the physical condition of accommodation alone. Homelessness and informal settlement conditions may therefore overlap but should not be treated as equivalent. Factors such as the stability and security of the housing situation, the availability of reasonable alternatives, opportunities to establish and progressively improve a home, social and community connections, and people's agency, ability to remain or leave, as well as housing trajectories can support determining whether a particular situation constitutes homelessness.

(d) **People at imminent risk of homelessness**: including those facing imminent housing loss or exiting institutions without secure housing options.

Progressive application

7. Countries and cities should initially map definitions and data against Categories 1 and 2 and progressively include Categories 3 and 4. Data should be reported by typology, clearly identifying coverage, reference periods and data sources.

Consideration on monitoring, disaggregation and evidence

8. Monitoring should strengthen regularity, inclusiveness and interpretability; capture hidden homelessness, disaggregation and intersectionality, duration, recurrence and trajectories; and improve coordination among relevant actors. Its purpose is to improve the availability, coverage, comparability and policy relevance of evidence on homelessness.

B. Proposed definition of homelessness

9. Homelessness refers to situations in which individuals and households lack access to adequate housing resulting in the inability to live with dignity, establish a home, maintain social relations, and enjoy connected rights such as education and health.

10. Homelessness encompasses a continuum of living situations, including: (1) being without accommodation; (2) staying in temporary or crisis accommodation; (3) staying in insecure or severely inadequate housing in the absence of reasonable alternatives; and (4) being at imminent risk of homelessness. The first two are core typologies that all countries should include in their definitions and data collection; the latter two are extended typologies that can be progressively included in national and local definitions depending on context and priorities.

11. These situations may be short-term, episodic, recurrent or long-term and people may move between different situations over time.

12. Homelessness often results from extreme poverty, as well as unequal exposure to risk factors, including discrimination, violence, displacement, and other forms of social exclusion. Homelessness is a violation of the right to adequate housing as it reflects the failure of housing and interconnected systems, including land administration, social protection, labour markets, and care systems.

13. People experiencing homelessness must be recognised as right-holders and active agents who draw on personal capacities, social networks, and collective strategies to secure and retain access to housing, livelihoods, and safety, often under conditions of constraint and uncertainty.

III. Housing environmental sustainability and resilience

A. Introduction

14. This section summarizes the key findings and recommendations of the analysis on environmentally sustainable and resilient housing prepared for the OEWG-H.

15. The analysis explores the relationship between housing systems and the natural environment and provides an evidence base for policy recommendations aimed at advancing adequate housing for all that is environmentally sustainable and resilient. Detailed analysis, evidence, case studies and references are contained in document HSP/OEWG-H.2026/INF/2.

16. The analysis draws upon expert consultations and technical inputs contributed through the ongoing work of the OEWG-H.

17. Housing and environmental sustainability are increasingly interdependent policy challenges. More than three billion people currently live in inadequate housing conditions, including more than one billion people living in informal settlements, while demographic growth, rapid urbanization, displacement, conflict and climate change continue to increase global housing needs. At the same time, housing systems are closely linked to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

18. The analysis highlights that environmentally sustainable and resilient housing must be addressed across the entire housing life cycle and across the full housing continuum, including emergency shelter, incremental and self-built housing, social housing and market housing. While major challenges remain, including financing gaps, governance constraints, knowledge and capacity limitations, and the sustainability-affordability gap, the transition towards sustainable and resilient housing systems also represents a significant opportunity to improve living conditions, advance climate action, strengthen resilience and realize the right to adequate housing for all.

19. The recommendations presented below are organized in five thematic areas: (A) Enablers for environmentally sustainable and resilient housing systems; (B) Spatial and urban planning; (C) Housing construction and retrofitting; (D) Incremental housing, informal settlements and collective solutions; and (E) Climate-resilient housing and disaster risk reduction.

B. Proposed recommendations

Enablers for environmentally sustainable and resilient housing systems

20. Advance the housing and climate agenda together. Integrate a rights-based approach into environmental and housing policies to ensure that the right to adequate housing and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment are implemented in a coherent and mutually reinforcing

manner. Strengthen housing governance to foster long-term, cross-sectoral policy implementation across the entire housing continuum.

21. Mobilize and ensure complementarity of diverse financing sources to scale sustainable, resilient and equitable housing systems. Prioritize affordability and long-term financial viability, and ensure that residents of informal settlements, low-income households, marginalized groups and community-based organizations can access public, private and international finance.

22. Strengthen knowledge and societal awareness for sustainable housing. Improve data generation, disaggregation and analysis, and promote behavioural change by increasing the understanding of the benefits of environmental sustainability and resilience through education, professional practice, technical frameworks and public discourse.

23. Build resilient and inclusive local value chains for environmentally sustainable technologies and materials. Support solutions that are adapted to local climates, cultures and economic realities by developing skills, investing in infrastructure, innovation, quality assurance, context-responsive green labelling and certification schemes, performance standards, fiscal and financial incentives, and strategic public procurement.

Spatial and urban planning

24. Deliver environmentally sustainable and resilient housing through inclusive and participatory urban planning that aligns housing and environmental objectives, promotes compact, mixed-use and transit-oriented development, incorporates risk-informed and ecosystem-based approaches, and scales up nature-based solutions.

25. Reduce environmental and housing pressures stemming from rapid and uncoordinated urban expansion through compact urban development and integrated, sustainable territorial planning. This includes promoting polycentric growth, strengthening urban-rural linkages, optimizing the use of existing urban assets, regenerating brownfield and greyfield sites, reusing vacant and underutilized buildings, and discouraging unnecessary demolitions.

Housing construction and retrofitting

26. Embed environmental sustainability and resilience standards across housing construction and retrofit. This requires advancing context-responsive building codes that adopt a whole life cycle approach, integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation, circular construction principles and healthy indoor environments, and coupling regulatory frameworks with fiscal incentives, capacity development, and enforcement and monitoring systems.

27. Establish dedicated environmental and resilience frameworks for affordable housing across both the supply and demand sides of the market. This includes setting minimum performance standards adapted to local contexts, prioritizing well-located land, and embedding whole life cycle criteria into procurement and financing.

28. Accelerate the large-scale, equitable and inclusive retrofitting of existing housing stock, including informal settlements. Enhance structural safety, energy and water efficiency, climate and disaster resilience, and healthy indoor environments, while embedding safeguards for affordability, social inclusion and tenure security.

29. Embed circular economy principles across housing and construction systems. Promote design for longevity, adaptability and disassembly, scale up reuse and recycling practices, and foster business models that minimize resource extraction, waste generation and negative environmental externalities across the building life cycle.

Incremental housing, informal settlements and collective solutions

30. Support environmentally sustainable and resilient incremental and self-built housing by strengthening tenure security and enabling homeowner- and community-led construction and upgrading through flexible regulation, technical assistance and finance.

31. Integrate environmental sustainability and resilience into informal settlement upgrading. This includes participatory, multiscale and multisectoral interventions, nature-based solutions and care-centred approaches.

32. Recognize and support collective housing solutions, including community-led housing and housing cooperatives, as integral components of sustainable housing systems. Acknowledge their

contribution to environmental sustainability, resilience, social cohesion and cultural vitality, and embed them in national policy, financing and planning frameworks.

Climate-resilient housing and disaster risk reduction

33. Shift from reactive crisis response to proactive climate risk governance. Institutionalize disaster risk reduction across housing systems and urban planning, and establish early warning and preparedness frameworks, with particular attention to the most vulnerable areas and informal settlements.

34. Ensure that post-disaster and post-conflict housing reconstruction advances environmental sustainability, climate resilience and tenure security. Approach the full spectrum of shelter and housing interventions, from emergency shelter to repair and reconstruction, as interconnected components of an inclusive, rights-based recovery process.

35. Consider rights-based planned relocation as a last-resort climate adaptation measure. For communities in areas where climate risks cannot be adequately mitigated in situ, ensure that relocation processes are voluntary, participatory and inclusive and grounded in human rights principles, while safeguarding livelihoods, cultural ties and tenure security.

IV. Integrated national housing policies

A. Introduction

36. This document summarizes the key findings and recommendations of the analysis on Integrated National Housing Policies prepared for the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H). This workstream acts as a chapeau for wider OEWG-H recommendations, helping to frame the sector specific findings. Making the case for integration, this workstream draws together the interconnecting thematics, policy instruments and sectors which make up the housing policy system. Detailed analysis, evidence, country examples and references are provided in documents HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/INF/3.

37. The analysis draws upon and benefits from expert consultations, technical inputs and intersessional meetings contributed through the ongoing work of the OEWG-H.

38. The analysis recognizes that most countries have some form of housing policy, whether explicit or implicit. The key recommendation emerging from this paper therefore recognizes that neither a singular housing policy nor numerous disaggregated housing policies are, in themselves, sufficient to deliver a coherent approach to addressing adequate housing across a country. Instead, this paper recommends moving to deliberate policy frameworks that intentionally and progressively promote coherence within and across (a) policies internal to the housing sector (b) broader national social, economic and environmental policies and (c) international rights and development goals, throughout the entire country.

39. 3.4 billion people lack access to adequate housing, and the number of forcibly displaced people has doubled in the last decade. There is now global recognition of the scale, complexity and acute nature of the global housing crisis. With progress on housing underpinning progress across the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty reduction, economic opportunity, health, climate action and social cohesion, there is an urgent need for integrated policy approaches to reduce duplication, strengthen investment efficiency and ensure no group is left behind.

40. Recognizing that countries face different housing challenges, the analysis does not propose a single model for integration. Instead, it supports countries in identifying contextually relevant entry points and pathways, whether through thematic priorities, temporal moments, institutional legacies or capacity restraints.

41. The analysis proposes a framework for integration built around four interconnected dimensions: vertical integration across levels of government and stakeholders; horizontal integration across housing and housing-adjacent sectors; spatial integration linking housing with infrastructure, services and opportunities; and temporal integration connecting across time and policy cycles.

42. The recommendations presented below are organized into four focus areas: (1) Towards Integrated National Housing Policies; (2) Recognizing housing as a foundation for social, economic and environmental progress; (3) Components of integration: horizontal, vertical, spatial, temporal; and (4) Inclusive Integration.

B. Proposed recommendations

Towards Integrated National Housing Policies

43. **Adopt a systems approach to housing.** Governments should progressively move towards Integrated National Housing Policies by adopting a systems approach that recognizes housing as part of a wider ecosystem comprising of actors and domains incl. institutions, markets, communities, levels of governance, land systems, infrastructure, finance, and construction materials and technologies.

44. **Identify context-specific pathways and entry points based on policy priorities and diagnosis of urgent housing challenges, existing institutional arrangements and capacities.** Governments should recognize that there is no single pathway towards policy integration, but that several context-appropriate entry points may help anchor, kickstart and strengthen the process. The process to arrive at the entry points and pathways should be evidence based; participatory and recurring - with consultations across stakeholders; transparent and promote trust, to ensure that the pathways and outcomes identified are fair and just.

45. **Integrate policies to encompass the full spectrum of housing sectors and delivery models.** No single housing or tenure model can adequately address the diverse housing needs found within and across countries. Integrated National Housing Policies should encompass the full continuum of tenure systems and delivery models, including public, private, formal, informal, rental, ownership, cooperative and community- led housing.

46. **Engage strategically with the private sector. Neither government nor private sector can provide adequate housing alone.** Integrated National Housing policies should therefore acknowledge the role of private sector actors in housing provision and maintenance, rebalancing the roles of the public, private and community sectors. Governments should establish appropriate incentives and strong regulations to curb speculation and align private sector activity with housing policy objectives.

Recognizing housing as a foundation for social, economic and environmental progress

47. Introduction: Governments should recognise and use integrated housing policies as a vehicle to achieve sustainable development and contribute to relevant international commitments, including on housing rights, Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Governments should seek an appropriate balance between policies supplying housing and enabling housing investments with those aimed at enhancing socio-economic opportunities that allow people to access housing while safeguarding the environment, promoting housing's social and economic roles.

48. **Position housing policy as a core component of social policy**. Housing is both a social outcome and a foundational determinant of health, wellbeing, inclusion and human development. As social progress is shaped by the interaction of housing systems with social protection systems, access to public services, labour market participation, and wider social policies, Integrated National Housing Policies should align these. Focus should be placed across three dimensions (i) support to the housing habitat, including access to urban services, coexistence in new housing developments and condominium administration; (ii) intersectorality for development and social inclusion, through coordination with social and economic services in the field; and (iii) strengthening of social capital by promoting the active participation and mobilization of residents.

49. **Utilize housing's value as a productive economic asset**. Housing systems are both a social good and a productive asset for national economies. Governments should recognize housing as economic infrastructure within its fiscal system that supports poverty reduction, growth, employment, entrepreneurship, productivity, labour mobility and prosperity. Integrated National Housing Policies should align housing investment with wider economic development strategies and leverage housing finance, land and fiscal instruments to expand access across diverse tenure types and socio-economic groups. Governments should also safeguard the social function of housing by curbing practices that undermine affordability, accessibility and long-term housing outcomes.

50. **Enhance resilience of housing in the face of climate change**. Housing systems are significant consumers of land, materials, energy and infrastructure, while also being highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risks. Environmental sustainability and resilience standards should be embedded from the outset of planning and construction processes, and action should be taken to finance and enable regeneration, retrofit and in-situ upgrading to make housing more sustainable, reduce pollution, emissions and enhance resilience to flooding, heat, landslides and other climate-induced disasters.

Components of integration: horizontal, vertical, spatial, temporal

51. **Integrate housing horizontally across policy domains and frameworks.** Housing policies should be designed and assessed against the full range of dimensions that constitute adequate housing, recognizing that progress in one dimension should not come at the expense of another. Integrated National Housing Policies should be aligned with national development strategies, national urban policies, economic development frameworks climate and environmental strategies, social protection systems, infrastructure plans, and spatial planning instruments. It is important to ensure coherence across the full range of housing policy instruments, including legislation, regulations, institutions, strategies, plans, programmes and financing mechanisms.

52. **Integrate housing vertically, by connecting housing management and delivery across levels of governments and to non-governmental stakeholders.** Governments should integrate housing vertically by strengthening coordination, collaboration and accountability across all levels of government and with non-governmental stakeholders. Local and regional governments need to be fully integrated into the formulation, implementation and monitoring of Integrated National Housing Policies, ensuring that their responsibilities are met by adequate capacities and funding. Meaningful participation by civil society organizations, housing cooperatives, community groups, residents' associations and other housing stakeholders throughout the housing policy cycle is critical for integrated housing policy. It is important to invest in the institutional, technical and staff capacities required to implement integrated housing policies effectively.

53. **Integrate housing spatially, by connecting housing to services, infrastructure, amenities and opportunities.** Governments should integrate housing policy with urban planning and city development strategies to reduce segregation and promote proximity-based planning that increases access to services. Housing challenges often vary considerably within countries, particularly between metropolitan, urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and housing policy hence the need to integrate these varying challenges and opportunities in coherent frameworks.

54. **Integrate housing temporally, by connecting housing across time, policy cycles and attuned to future need.** Governments should integrate housing temporally by linking immediate housing needs with long-term planning and maintenance, implementation and adaptation processes. It is important to establish robust systems for collecting, managing and analysing data, to inform reliable housing diagnostics to assess housing needs, monitor progress, identify gaps and inform policy decisions. Integrated National Housing policies need to be responsive to anticipated long-term projections related to urbanization, ageing populations, climate change, migration, changing household structures and evolving housing needs. It is important to recognize that successful housing policy requires long-term commitment and sustained investment.

Inclusive integration

55. Introduction: Governments should ensure that Integrated National Housing Policies respond to the needs, rights and aspirations of all individuals and groups within society, recognizing the diversity of housing needs across the full population spectrum. This includes particular attention to supporting recovery and reconstruction in the context of displacement, conflict- and disaster-affected contexts.

56. **Reflect the realities of informality**. Informal housing provision and informal livelihoods constitutes a significant component of countries worldwide, particularly in developing countries. Integrated National Housing Policies should support approaches that reflect the realities of informality and prioritize approaches that progressively improve housing adequacy, security and living conditions while minimizing displacement. Governments should support in-situ settlement upgrading and measures including incremental construction, incremental and innovative financing, tenure regularization and simplified building codes to enable informal actors and minimize relocation.

57. **Support housing recovery and reconstruction in conflict- and disaster-affected contexts**. Housing systems and supply are often severely disrupted by conflict and disasters. Governments should integrate housing recovery and reconstruction within broader national housing systems recognizing that rebuilding after conflict and/or disasters is a long-term process, essential to building-back communities and societies. Efforts must be aligned with wider housing priorities, developed with affected communities and coordinated with access to infrastructure, services and livelihoods to support resilient and inclusive recovery.

58. **Protect vulnerable communities from discrimination and displacement**. Integrated National Housing policies should provide specific protections for populations in vulnerable situations, including protection against forced evictions, discrimination and housing insecurity. Particular attention should be given to addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, slum and informal-settlement dwellers, people experiencing homelessness, workers, smallholder farmers and fishers, refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of migration status.