

## SDG Action Segment for Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

27 January 2026, 12.00 – 01.00 PM

ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum

### Organizers

- UN-Habitat
- United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- UNDESA
- Habitat for Humanity
- Stakeholder Group on Ageing (Gray Panthers)
- Local2030 UN Coalition
- Local Authorities Major Group (Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments)

### Background

With a majority of the global population being already urban, and nearly two-thirds of global population growth to 2050 projected to occur in cities, urbanization is a defining transformation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The centrality of SDG 11 as a cornerstone of sustainable development and reinforce the importance of the [New Urban Agenda](#) as an accelerator for the SDGs is therefore evident.

With less than five years remaining to the endline of the 2030 Agenda, progress towards [Sustainable Development Goal 11](#) (SDG 11)—to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, accessible, resilient, and sustainable—is increasingly at risk. Only a limited number of SDG 11 indicators with sufficient global coverage are currently on track, while many targets show stagnation or regression compared to the 2015 baseline. This trend poses a serious threat to the overall achievement of the 2030 Agenda, as the world's development trajectory is now overwhelmingly shaped by what happens in cities, towns, and peri-urban areas.

Of particular concern is the global housing crisis affecting almost 3 billion people globally. With over 1 billion people living in informal settlements and slums, and over 300 million facing homelessness, realizing the vision of SDG 11- to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable- may be elusive by 2030. The interaction of the global housing crisis with other global crises, including the climate, conflict, displacement, and inequality deepens the adverse effects on people and planet. The impacts fall disproportionately on those facing intersecting vulnerabilities— women, older persons, youth, persons with disabilities, informal workers, migrants, and others. Without significant course correction to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums, more urban residents will face precarious living conditions in the coming decade, further intensifying the global housing crisis and weakening resilience to shocks.

Local and regional governments (LRGs) are at the frontline of these dynamics and must be at the centre of efforts to accelerate SDG 11 progress. They play a decisive role in advancing inclusive, rights-based, and people-centred urban development. Yet their ability to act is often constrained by limited financial and capacity gaps, fragmented mandates, among others, and must be deliberately addressed to maximise their role and transformative impact.

Addressing the complexity of SDG 11 further requires systemic, locally led and integrated approaches that link housing, land use, mobility, climate adaptation and mitigation, disaster-risk reduction, digital and geospatial innovation, and public service provision across all types of settlements. It also requires careful management of trade-offs—such as balancing land conversion with compact growth—while leveraging synergies with goals related to climate action, health, energy, water, gender equality, decent work, and economic development. Accelerated progress additionally depends on evidence-based

decision-making, supported by strengthened data systems, updated censuses, integrated geospatial and statistical information.

In this context, partnerships are indispensable. Many of the structural challenges underpinning SDG 11 cannot be addressed by any single actor or sphere of government. Strong multilevel governance and coordinated action across public authorities, civil society, community-led organizations, public service organizations and workers, the private sector, academia, and international organizations are essential to unlock scale, coherence, and impact. Innovative forms of public–private–community collaboration, inclusive financing mechanisms, and participatory governance arrangements are critical to overcoming existing barriers and expanding local capacities for action.

Renewed multilateralism provides a vital enabling framework for this work. The Pact for the Future reaffirmed the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda from the local level upward, recognizing that global goals must be realized through territorially grounded solutions. Platforms such as the Local2030 Coalition demonstrate the potential of large-scale partnership mechanisms to support integrated and holistic approaches to SDG implementation, particularly in addressing interconnected challenges related to climate change, inequality, housing deficits, environmental degradation, disaster risks, and service gaps.

The 2026 review of SDG 11 presents a strategic opportunity to rethink and reset pathways to 2030. The mid-term review of the NUA further presents a means to reshape the next decade of action. UN-Habitat's new Strategic Plan 2026-2029 also places housing, land and basic services at the core.

## **Objectives**

The SDG Action Segments of the 2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum will focus on the theme:

*“Transformative, equitable, innovative, and coordinated action for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGS for a sustainable future for all”* The SDG Action Segment on SDG 11 will specifically aim to:

1. **Identify and showcase transformative partnership models** that expand access to finance for sustainable and resilient urban development, including catalytic and blended finance mechanisms, locally driven investment tools, and approaches that strengthen local public finance systems and fiscal autonomy of local and regional governments.
2. **Highlight effective multilevel and participatory governance**, demonstrating how local authorities, national governments, civil society, community-led groups, public service organizations and workers, the private sector, academia, and international organizations collaborate to improve housing, mobility, public space, cultural rights, basic services, and disaster resilience, while reinforcing territorial cohesion and inclusive decision-making.
3. **Discuss innovations in public–private relations and management models**, including public–private–community partnerships that enhance municipal capacity, strengthen public action toward equality, and support the co-production of public services through both digital and physical infrastructure.
4. **Foster partnerships centred on care, justice, and inclusion**, highlighting integrated territorial approaches, inclusive finance initiatives, and climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that address intersecting vulnerabilities and recognize the central role of local services, social protection systems, and community resilience—particularly in reducing the disproportionate care burden borne by women.
5. **Showcase emerging innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships**, including digital, geospatial, urban–rural, and community-driven models, that offer scalable solutions to the global housing crisis and accelerate sustainable urban development.
6. **Generate policy-relevant, actionable recommendations** to inform the SDG 11 global review at HLPF 2026 and contribute to the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda, with a focus on

scaling successful initiatives, replication across territories, and strengthening long-term monitoring, accountability, and learning.

### **Expected Outcomes**

1. **Consolidated evidence-based insights and political messages** on strengthening multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships for sustainable urban development, covering adequate housing, inclusive basic services, sustainable mobility, climate resilience, disaster-risk reduction, and integrated territorial governance.
2. **Targeted messages for the SDG 11 global review at HLPF 2026** summarizing priority gaps, emerging challenges, and concrete accelerated actions needed to fast-track progress on SDG 11.
3. Strengthened **momentum, alignment, and partnership opportunities** among governments, local and regional authorities, civil society, the private sector, and the UN system to mobilize financing, data, innovation, and expertise in support of inclusive, resilient, and people-centred cities and human settlements.

### **Follow-up processes**

1. **Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) on SDG 11**, supporting technical dialogue, knowledge exchange, and preparation for intergovernmental reviews, with the involvement of all governmental and non-governmental key stakeholders
2. **Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)**, including the Quadrennial Report of the Secretary-General and the High Level meeting of the UN General Assembly 16-17 July 2026 on the NUA.
3. The **13th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13)**, as the global platform for cities, local governments, and stakeholders to share urban solutions and advance commitments.
4. The **High-level Political Forum (HLPF)** review of SDG 11 in 2026, where key messages and recommendations from this Segment will contribute to the evidence base and policy discussions.

### **Programme**

**Moderator: Ms. Edlam Abera Yemeru**, Director (a.i.), Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division, UN-Habitat

| Time                | Item  |
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| 12:00 –<br>12:05 PM | <b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Representative of Poland or Malawi (TBC)</li></ul>   |
| 12:05 –<br>12:45 PM | <b>Panel Discussion Proposed Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>UNDRR</b> – Ms Toni-Shae Freckleton, Chief, New York Liaison Office</li><li>○ <b>Local Authorities (Major Group)</b>: Prof. Eckart Würzner, Mayor of Heidelberg (Germany) and current Chair of the UN Forum of Mayors</li><li>○ <b>Representative of Stakeholder Group on Ageing (Gray Panthers)</b>: Mr Jack Kupferman</li><li>○ <b>Habitat for Humanity</b> – Ms. Maria Carrizosa, Associate Director for Global Housing Policy</li><li>○ <b>Member of Independent Group Scientists appointed by the UN Secretary-General, GSDR 2027</b>- Prof. Vanesa Castan Broto – Professor of Climate Urbanism, University of Sheffield</li><li>○ <b>Lincoln Institute of Land Policy</b>: Mr. Solomon Greene, Executive Director, Land and Communities.</li></ul> |

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| <p><i>Suggested Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you see as the most <b>significant opportunities for accelerating progress on SDG 11?</b></li> <li>• In the context of a worsening global housing crisis, how does <b>housing intersect with the SDG 11</b> targets in your area of expertise, and how can these interlinkages with public spaces, transport, public service provision, resilience, and land use be leveraged to accelerate progress?</li> <li>• What are solutions and practices are delivering impact for the <b>transformation of informal settlements and slums?</b> What forms of <b>multi-stakeholder partnerships</b> have proven most effective in delivering integrated urban solutions for housing, mobility, climate resilience, and basic services, and how can these be scaled across different contexts? From your perspective, what <b>one or two partnership driven actions should governments and cities prioritize in the next five years</b> to fast-track SDG 11?</li> <li>• <b>Local and regional governments</b> play a central role in delivering SDG 11, and localisation is key to achieve the SDGs more broadly. How can this be transformed for impact at scale?</li> <li>• How can partnerships <b>better integrate care and justice</b> into housing, mobility, climate action, and public services, and what role should local services and social protection systems play in advancing inclusive and resilient cities?</li> <li>• How are <b>participatory planning and decision-making processes</b> improving outcomes in housing, mobility, public space, and basic services? What role do <b>community-led organizations and informal actors</b> play in shaping inclusive urban development, and how can their knowledge be better recognized and institutionalized?</li> <li>• What <b>financing models</b>, whether public, private, blended, or community based, show the greatest promise for expanding adequate housing, upgrading informal settlements, and supporting sustainable urban development in low-resource settings?</li> <li>• With only 5 years of implementation remaining for SDG 11, what are the <b>priority accelerators</b> of progress?</li> </ul> | <p><b>12:45 – 01:00 PM</b></p> <p><b>Q&amp;A, Wrap-up and Key Messages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moderator</li> </ul> |
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### Additional Information

For more information on the 2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, please visit:

<https://sdgs.un.org/events>

For questions regarding the SDG 11 Action Segment, please contact the organizers at:

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