



UN-HABITAT

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## PRESS RELEASE

# 2025 Annual Report: Prioritizing housing to build sustainable urban futures

**Nairobi, 26 May 2026** – The UN-Habitat 2025 Annual Report, released today, signals a global shift toward housing-led urban development as a catalyst for sustainable transformation. With the housing gap widening, the report emphasizes that adequate housing is a fundamental human right and the foundation for dignity, equity, and opportunity.

Currently, the world faces staggering challenges: 1.2 billion people live in slums, 318 million are experiencing homelessness, and 1 in 4 people lack access to safely managed drinking water. The report underscores that the global housing crisis is a wake-up call to prioritize housing, land, and basic services as key drivers of climate action and social equity.

“The future of humanity will be shaped in cities,” said Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat. “Housing is at the heart of our sustainable urban future – not only as shelter, but as the foundation for dignity, social and economic inclusion, and equal opportunities.”

Through impact stories across key thematic areas, from showcasing how marginalized communities in Nepal secured land rights to profiling a Zambian community that is turning wastewater into sustainable energy, the report illustrates the impact of global dialogue, evidence-based policymaking, and coordinated action. It demonstrates that when housing is prioritized, cities, and the people who live in them, thrive.

Throughout 2025, UN-Habitat, together with Member States, local and national governments, global partners and donors spearheaded global advocacy and delivered solutions to build inclusive, safe and sustainable cities and communities. UN-Habitat’s impact in 2025 included:

- **2,760,000+ more people** with access to basic services.
- **2.9 million people** in UN-Habitat partner cities with convenient access to open public space.
- **93 Voluntary Local Reviews** developed and published globally, accelerating the process of localizing the SDGs.
- **270,000+** more people that benefited from climate change adaptation actions.
- **93 cities** implementing disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

### Advancing housing on the global agenda

In 2025, UN-Habitat strengthened global advocacy for housing, including co-hosting a High-Level Dialogue on Adequate Housing for All with ECOSOC, bringing together

Member States and global stakeholders to discuss housing as central to the Sustainable Development Goals and coordinating work of the Open-ended Expert Working Group on Housing for All. At COP30, housing was also recognized as a climate priority highlighting its role in resilience and sustainability.

### **Marking five years of global action**

The 2025 report marks the conclusion of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020–2025. Over the last five years, the plan delivered transformative results:

- **41.2 million people** transitioned out of slum-like conditions.
- **53 million people** gained access to improved water and sanitation services.
- **465,000+ households** secured tenure rights to land through improved documentation.
- **64 countries** received support to develop national-level urban policies.

### **Looking ahead: Strategic Plan 2026–2029**

UN-Habitat has pivoted towards its new [Strategic Plan 2026–2029](#), with a focus on long-term, scalable frameworks to advance housing and transform informal settlements and slums, strengthen climate resilience and crises recovery. The agency will continue to advocate for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with housing, land and basic services at the centre.

“Adequate housing is the foundation of sustainable urban transformation, as envisaged in SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda, and is essential to accelerating the 2030 Agenda. Together, we can ensure that no one is left behind as we shape the future of our cities by realizing the right to adequate housing for all,” Rossbach said.

**To view the report in full, please visit:** <https://unhabitat.org/annual-report-2025>

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### **About UN-Habitat**

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity working for sustainable urbanization. With programmes in over 90 countries, it supports policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in urban areas through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](https://unhabitat.org) or follow us on social media @UNHABITAT.

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