

# SDG 11 Global Report 2026

## Key facts and messages



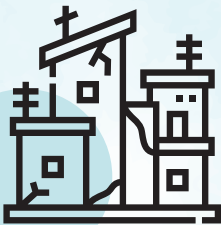
**United  
Nations**





# Key facts





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**More than 1.16 billion people lived in slums and informal settlements in 2024.** This is over 130 million more than in 2015 and forms part of a wider housing crisis, with at least 3 billion people worldwide living in inadequate housing.

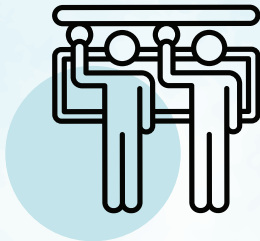


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**Housing affordability pressures are rising worldwide.**

Nearly half of all households worldwide spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, while the global house-price-to-income ratio rose from 9.3 in 2010 to 11.2 in 2023.



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**Public transport access is improving, but remains far from universal.** In 414 cities across 126 countries, convenient access to public transport rose from 53.2 per cent in 2020 to 61.5 per cent in 2025. Yet around 4 in 10 urban residents still lack convenient access.



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**Cities are using land more efficiently, but outward growth still dominates.** Across 781 cities in 123 countries, land consumption is now more closely aligned with population growth than in earlier decades, but outward built-up growth still averaged 4.3 per cent annually between 2000 and 2025 – around six times the rate of infill growth.



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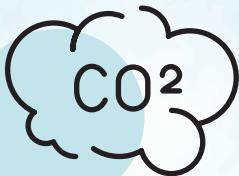
**Municipal waste collection shows tentative progress, but remains deeply unequal.** Repeated city observations suggest modest improvements in collection coverage, which averaged 90.4 per cent in the latest sample. However, the data are not balanced enough for strong global trend claims, and coverage ranges from more than 95 per cent in some regions to 58.4 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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**Disaster mortality has declined, but disaster impacts remain high.** Between 2015 and 2024, disasters caused an average of 41,023 deaths annually and affected 123 million people each year.



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**Urban air pollution remains far above safe levels.** In 2023, average global PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations reached 26  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , about five times the WHO air quality guideline value. After declining between 2010 and 2020, global progress has largely plateaued.



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**Less than half of urban residents have convenient access to open public space.** Across 412 sampled cities in 127 countries, access fell from around 48.0 per cent in 2020 to 45.9 per cent in 2025, while urban green space per capita fell from around 57m<sup>2</sup> in 1990 to 28m<sup>2</sup> in 2025.



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**Heritage reporting has tripled, but investment remains low in many countries.** The number of countries reporting data on cultural and natural heritage expenditure rose from 30 in 2020 to 92 in the latest survey, yet more than a third of reporting countries spent less than 10 PPP dollars per person on heritage in 2024 or the latest available year.

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**National urban policy and resilience frameworks are expanding.** Forty countries now have national urban policies or regional development plans meeting all three SDG 11.a.1 qualifiers, while 141 countries have national disaster risk reduction strategies and 116 countries report aligned local strategies.



# Key Messages





**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES

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**SDG 11 progress is visible, but still too slow and uneven.**

Gains in public transport access, municipal waste collection, urban policy and resilience planning show that progress is possible, but improvements are not yet keeping pace with rapid urban growth or reaching all communities equally.



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**Adequate housing is the foundation for sustainable cities and communities.**

Housing shapes progress across SDG 11, from transport, public space and urban planning to disaster risk reduction, environmental quality, health and access to opportunity.

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**The housing crisis is also a crisis of exclusion.**

The people most affected by inadequate housing often face overlapping barriers linked to income, age, disability, tenure status, displacement, informality, migration, gender, ethnicity or Indigenous identity.

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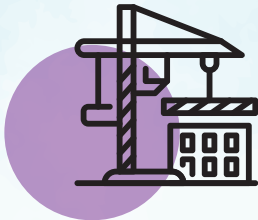


**Transforming slums and informal settlements requires in-situ, co-produced upgrading.**

Upgrading should improve housing, tenure security, basic services, transport, public space and resilience without displacement, with residents treated as co-producers of solutions rather than passive beneficiaries.

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**Planned low-rise development is driving outward growth, not informal settlements.**

Across sampled cities, low-rise development is the largest driver of outward growth, underscoring the need for compact, connected and inclusive urban form.



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**Disaster impacts are increasingly prevalent in national SDG reporting.**

In recent Voluntary National Reviews, disaster impacts became the most referenced SDG 11 theme across most regions and income groups, reflecting growing concern over climate-related hazards, losses, displacement and infrastructure disruption.



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**Resilience planning is expanding, but prevention must go further.**

More countries and cities have disaster risk reduction strategies, but plans need to translate into safer housing, risk-informed land use, resilient infrastructure and stronger local preparedness.

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## The quality of the urban environment remains deeply unequal.

Poor air quality, weak waste systems, limited public space and inadequate services continue to affect low-income and underserved communities most directly, shaping health, safety and quality of life.



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**Local governments need the finance and capacity to deliver.**

Cities are expected to manage growth, deliver services, reduce risk and improve environmental quality, but many lack the fiscal space and technical capacity needed to act at scale.

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## **Urban data systems need urgent and sustained investment.**

Globally representative data are often too infrequent to guide fast-moving urban decisions, while disaggregated data on women, children, persons with disabilities, informal settlements and neighbourhood-level inequalities remain limited. Stronger funding, partnerships and responsible use of new technologies are needed so data support action, not only reporting.



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