



Summary Report of the Ministerial/High-Level Luncheon on the Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda

“Charting the Way Forward: Delivering on the Promise of the New Urban Agenda from the Midterm Review”

16 July 2026 | United Nations Headquarters, New York

1. Overview

On 16 July 2026, the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of UN-Habitat, Sustainable Urbanization and the New Urban Agenda, Poland and Zimbabwe, together with Kenya and UN-Habitat, jointly hosted a Ministerial/High-Level Luncheon on the margins of the General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda. The luncheon brought together approximately 200 participants including ministers, other senior government representatives, mayors and local government leaders, United Nations entities, civil society, youth, academia and other partners in small-table discussions focused on key priorities for accelerating implementation of the New Urban Agenda through 2036.

The meeting heard opening remarks from the Permanent Representatives of Poland – H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski, Zimbabwe – H. E. Mr. Taonga Mushayavanhu and Kenya – H.E. Mr. Erastus Ekitela Lokaale, and from the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach. The hosts framed the luncheon around the central challenge of moving from commitments to implementation in the second decade of the New Urban Agenda, with emphasis on practical action, partnerships and investment; the centrality of cities to sustainable development; and the need for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable urban development.

A keynote address was delivered by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, who underscored that sustainable urbanization is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensuring that no place and no one is left behind.

Discussions addressed adequate and affordable housing, financing, climate and disaster resilience, multilevel governance, integrated urban planning, informal settlement upgrading, urban recovery and displacement, data and digital transformation and related implementation priorities. The main feature of the luncheon was a series of facilitated roundtable discussions. Each table identified

concrete actions to accelerate implementation, strengthen financing and governance systems, build partnerships for delivery at scale, and keep housing, resilience, climate action and inclusion at the centre of urban transformation. This synthesis captures areas of convergence and priority recommendations.

2. Overarching messages

The principal challenge for the second decade of the New Urban Agenda is moving from commitments and policy frameworks to implementation at scale. Participants emphasized that many solutions are known, but delivery remains constrained by insufficient and poorly targeted finance, weak local capacity, fragmented governance, inadequate data and approaches that do not sufficiently reflect local realities. The priority is therefore to build better-connected delivery systems rather than pursue stand-alone interventions.

Adequate housing emerged as a central entry point. Housing policy beyond a narrow focus on constructing units towards an integrated, rights-based approach linking housing with dignity, social inclusion, resilience and access to employment, transport, education, health, sanitation and public space. Participants also underscored the importance of human rights and gender equality, including addressing barriers faced by women and girls in accessing land, inheritance, housing and safe and inclusive public spaces. Affordability measures must be accompanied by action on land, construction costs, regulation and supply; otherwise, demand-side support can be absorbed by higher process.

Local and regional governments and communities are essential implementation partners. Responsibilities must be matched by adequate and predictable resources, technical capacity, data and access to finance, while communities should shape interventions from the outset. This is particularly important in informal settlements, high-risk areas and displacement contexts, where local trust, social networks and lived experience are critical to sustainable outcomes.

Urban must become more locally accessible, better targets and more responsive to actual risk. Participants highlighted greater mobilization of domestic, international and private capital through blended finance, guarantees, local capital markets and public-private partnerships. Better local data and risk-sharing can reduce overstated perceptions of risk, while financing frameworks should cover maintenance and resilience of existing infrastructure, as well as new investment.

Urban resilience and recovery require a shift from reaction to prevention and anticipatory action, including risk-informed land-use planning, stronger building standards, resilient retrofitting, early warning systems and pre-disaster investment. Urban recovery should address the underlying drivers of vulnerability and displacement through integrated approaches that connect housing, land use, basic services, public space and climate resilience.

Better urban data is also needed, but data and technology should respond to defined policy problems rather than drive them; local and community data should more systematically inform national statistics and decision-making.

3. Principal thematic messages

Housing, inclusion and informal settlements

Housing strategies should address supply and affordability together, using context-appropriate tools such as public land, subsidies, contributory mortgage mechanisms, rent-to-own models, innovative construction and public-private partnerships. Particular attention should be given to housing affordability and accessibility for young families, alongside planning approaches that support inclusive and family-friendly cities and neighbourhoods. Upgrading, repair, retrofitting and adaptive reuse should complement new construction. In informal settlements, formalization and upgrading should improve tenure security, services and resilience while preserving social networks, livelihoods, culture and community identity; relocation should generally be a last resort.

Multilevel governance, integrated planning and urban recovery

Participants called for stronger coordination across sectors, levels of government and administrative boundaries. Because housing markets, transport, ecosystems and service demand operate across municipal borders, planning should work at metropolitan and territorial scales and be institutionalized beyond electoral cycles. Recovery and displacement responses should address underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities, clarify responsibility-sharing and strengthen anticipatory planning and local capacity. Demographic change, culture, tradition and indigenous and local knowledge should also inform more inclusive and intergenerational urban planning, including the creation of safe, accessible and family-friendly neighbourhoods and public spaces.

Climate resilience

Climate action should prioritize prevention, preparedness and anticipatory investment through early warning and evacuation systems, risk-sensitive land-use planning, locally appropriate building standards, passive cooling, retrofitting and climate-appropriate materials. Grassroots, youth and community organizations are first-line resilience actors whose knowledge should be combined with technical expertise, legislation and public investment.

Finance, data and implementation capacity

The financing challenge concerns not only the volume of capital but the systems through which it reaches urban priorities. Public authorities should set long-term priorities and enabling frameworks, while private and institutional capital can help achieve scale. Reliable risk information, transparent planning, guarantees and stronger project-preparation capacity can lower investment barriers. Data systems should strengthen local collection, comparability and integration into national systems, particularly for informal housing and settlements, with technology serving clearly defined public objectives.

4. Priority recommendations and areas for action

- 1. Place adequate housing at the centre of implementation linking housing with** land, infrastructure, services, mobility, livelihoods, social protection and climate resilience, while addressing supply constraints alongside affordability and promoting inclusive, rights-based and gender-responsive approaches that respond to the needs of women, girls, young families and other groups facing barriers to adequate housing.
- 2. Prioritize upgrading, retrofitting and adaptive reuse alongside new construction**, particularly in informal settlements, preserving community assets and treating relocation as a last resort where feasible.
- 3. Strengthen local and territorial delivery systems**, including predictable finance, technical expertise, project-preparation capacity and planning

arrangements that operate across sectors, levels of government and administrative boundaries.

4. **Mobilize and better target urban finance, using improved risk information**, blended finance, guarantees and stronger local financial systems while ensuring adequate investment in the maintenance and resilience of existing assets.
5. **Mainstream prevention, resilience and recovery into urban development**, through risk-informed planning, early warning, resilient housing and infrastructure, anticipatory investment and stronger community-led preparedness.
6. **Build problem-driven and locally grounded evidence systems**, strengthening public capacity to define data needs, integrating local and community information into national systems and using digital technologies responsibly to support clearly defined urban priorities.

5. Implications for follow-up to the Midterm Review

The Luncheon reinforced that accelerating implementation to 2036 requires greater focus on the quality of delivery systems rather than simply increasing stand-alone initiatives. Policy design matters: housing subsidies require a supply response; urban investment requires more accurate assessment and sharing of risk; infrastructure finance must include maintenance; technology must respond to policy needs; and settlement upgrading must recognize existing social and cultural capital.

Implementation must also become more local without becoming fragmented. Local authorities and communities need resources, capacity, data and meaningful decision-making roles, while national governments and international partners remain essential for enabling frameworks, finance, territorial equity and links to national and global commitments. The second decade of the New Urban Agenda therefore offers an opportunity to move from fragmented projects and pilots towards integrated, durable and locally owned systems of urban delivery, measured by improvements in affordability, tenure security, resilience, access to services, inclusion and quality of life.