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Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

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**

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution HSP/HA.2/Res.7 of the United Nations Habitat Assembly, which established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H). It provides an overview of the activities of the Working Group during its second year, covering the period from the second session until 11 September 2026. It further presents the main outcomes of that period and the priorities proposed for the work ahead.

2. The second session of the OEWG-H was held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 October 2025. At that session, Azerbaijan and Somalia were elected as Co-Chairs for a period of one year, and the Working Group considered the proposed road map for its work for the period 2025–2029 (HSP/OEWG-H.2025/4). The Co-Chairs subsequently identifying two thematic priority areas for the present cycle, namely housing sustainability and climate resilience and integrated housing policies, together with an additional theme, enabling land management tools for housing provision, for consideration at the fourth session in 2027.

3. A summary of the draft recommendations placed before the Working Group at the present session is set out in the addendum to the present report (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/Add.1). The present report should further be read together with the report of the Executive Director on progress towards the establishment of a housing knowledge platform (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/3), submitted under item 5 of the provisional agenda, and with the proposed resource mobilization strategy (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/4), submitted under item 6.

* HSP/OEWG-H.2026/1.

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

II. Overview of activities in 2026

A. Engagement of Member States and nomination of focal points

4. Engagement of Member States in the work of the OEWG-H deepened considerably during the period under review. As of 9 September 2026, eighty-one (81) Member States had nominated a total of two hundred and nine (209) national focal points and experts, compared with forty-four (44) Member States and eighty-three (83) experts reported at the corresponding stage of the preceding cycle. The nomination of focal points remains the principal channel through which Member States contribute to and shape the substantive work of the Working Group, and the growth recorded reflects both the sustained outreach conducted through the permanent missions in Nairobi and New York and through the regional and country offices of UN-Habitat, including letters from the Executive Director addressed to relevant line ministries in countries that had not yet nominated focal points, as well as the increasing salience of housing on national policy agendas.

5. Sustaining engagement at this level over the remainder of the mandate, including by facilitating the participation of experts and delegates from least developed countries and small island developing States, for whom travel costs may constitute a significant barrier, requires adequate and predictable resources. This requirement is addressed in document HSP/OEWG-H.2026/4.

B. Expert Group Meetings and Intersessional Meetings

6. The Working Group develops its recommendations through an annual cycle combining expert input and Member State consultation. Recommendations are initially developed with technical experts through expert group meetings, further discussed and consolidated with Member States through intersessional meetings, and subsequently submitted for consideration at the formal session of the Working Group. In the present cycle, this approach was applied to integrated housing policies, the new thematic area introduced in 2026, while work initiated during the preceding cycle was further developed where additional thematic dimensions required further consultation. An overview of the expert group and intersessional meetings convened during 2026 is provided in the annex to the present report.

7. An Expert Group Meeting on Integrated National Housing Policies was convened on 15 July 2026. It brought together forty-one (41) attendees, and supported the development of the background research, the case for integration, the refinement of key definitions and the formulation of areas in which recommendations could be developed. The resulting expert input informed the reference document subsequently prepared by the Secretariat for consultation with Member States.

8. An Intersessional Meeting on Integrated National Housing Policies was held on 3 September 2026 in hybrid format, with simultaneous interpretation in the six official languages of the United Nations. A reference document prepared by the Secretariat with expert input was made available online two weeks in advance. Invitations were transmitted by note verbale to all Permanent and Observer Missions in Nairobi and New York, national focal points were also invited directly, and participation was open to accredited organizations and partners. The meeting gathered more than two hundred and twenty (220) participants, including a large number of national delegations, and enabled Member States to review and provide guidance on the recommendations developed with expert input over the preceding months. The resulting draft recommendations are summarized in document HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/Add.1.

9. Work also continued on housing environmental sustainability and resilience. The development of the thematic recommendations began with work undertaken in 2025 under the co-chairmanship of France and Kenya. This included an Expert Group Meeting held on 20 August 2025 as well as two Intersessional Meetings held on 16 September 2025. In 2026, the analysis and recommendations were broadened to strengthen the dimension of environmental resilience. This combined thematic framing formed the basis for a further Intersessional Thematic Meeting, convened on 19 May 2026 both in person, at the venue of the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum in Baku, and online, with interpretation in the six United Nations official languages. The meeting was attended by over one hundred (100) participants. It presented the proposed recommendations and enabled Member States and partners to discuss them and provide guidance on their further development. The resulting draft recommendations are summarized in document HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/Add.1.

10. The May and September meetings meant that two intersessional meetings were convened in 2026, both in hybrid format, for the first time in the Working Group’s cycle. This approach broadened opportunities for participation beyond those able to attend meetings physically and supported more

inclusive engagement by Member States and other stakeholders in the substantive work of the Working Group.

11. The remaining thematic areas developed through the preceding cycle followed different paths in 2026. The definition of homelessness, developed through the 2025 expert and intersessional process and further informed by guidance received at the second session, is submitted to the present session for consideration (see HSP/OEWG-H.2026/2/Add.1). Work on the definition of informal settlements is continuing and will be taken forward through further consultation, as set out in section IV.A below.

C. Global events at which the OEWG-H was represented

12. The Roadmap for the work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group for the period 2025–2029 (HSP/OEWG-H.2025/4) foresees systematic interaction with global and regional processes, so that the recommendations of the Working Group are contextualized and gain political momentum. The period under review was marked by a significant increase in the visibility of adequate housing across multilateral processes.

13. The second Africa Urban Forum, held in Nairobi from 8 to 10 April 2026, provided an opportunity in the cycle to engage African Member States and partners on the work of the OEWG-H. A dedicated session on 9 April, entitled "Advancing Adequate Housing for All: Global Policy Progress and African Perspectives on the OEWG-H", presented the outcomes of the second session and the thematic priorities for 2026, and gathered regional perspectives to inform the ongoing work towards the third session. Discussions highlighted the need to reflect regional and local contexts in housing policies, strengthen alignment between the recommendations of the Working Group and national housing policies and urban strategies, and address housing finance constraints in informal markets.

14. The thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, convened in Baku from 17 to 22 May 2026 under the theme "Housing the World: Safe and Resilient Cities and Communities", was the principal such occasion. It was the largest Forum held to date, gathering some 58,000 participants from 176 countries, and concluded with the adoption of the Baku Call to Action, comprising fifteen stakeholder-driven recommendations which place housing finance, multilevel governance and the articulation between housing and climate action among the foremost priorities. The Forum also provided the opportunity for a series of engagements with Member States, local and regional governments and partners and, alongside the Intersessional Thematic Meeting of the Intergovernmental Open-Ended Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All (OEWG-H) on housing environmental sustainability and resilience, for a dedicated information session on the OEWG-H, presenting its mandate, progress and 2026 priorities.

15. The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, held in New York on 16 and 17 July 2026, culminated in the adoption of the Political Declaration to renew commitment and accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/80/L.89). The Declaration places adequate housing at the centre of efforts to accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda and calls upon Member States to integrate the recommendations of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All into its implementation, while strengthening support for the Working Group and its follow-up, including through predictable funding and technical and in-kind contributions.

16. Two further engagements are foreseen before the close of the present cycle. A diplomatic briefing entitled "Ten Years after Quito: Advancing the Global Housing Agenda through Resolution 2/7" will be held on 24 September 2026 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on the margins of the eighty-first session of the General Assembly. Convened by the Co-Chairs together with the former Co-Chairs, France and Kenya, and with the support of the Secretariat, it will present resolution 2/7 and the Working Group to Permanent Missions in the perspective of the ten-year review of the New Urban Agenda, encourage the designation of national focal points by Member States that have not yet done so, and inform Member States of the resource mobilization strategy ahead of its consideration at the present session. An event is also foreseen at the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Türkiye, addressing the recommendations of the Working Group on housing sustainability and climate resilience.

D. Institutional arrangements, resource mobilization and partnerships

17. During the period under review, UN-Habitat put in place dedicated internal Secretariat arrangements to support the Working Group. Under the strategic direction of the Executive Director and drawing on the Leadership Team of UN-Habitat, these arrangements operate year-round and are organized around three functions: (a) diplomacy and political affairs, including liaison with the Co-Chairs, agenda, protocol, and high-level invitations; (b) advocacy, operations and communications, covering stakeholder engagement, conference arrangements, registration and logistics, and media and multimedia services; and (c) substantive content, developed through thematic workstream leads and working groups constituted for each theme. Coordination and quality assurance are exercised by the Office of the Executive Director. These internal arrangements are intended to provide continuity and coordination in the support provided by UN-Habitat to the Working Group, while relying on staff and capacities across the Programme.

18. Work was undertaken to mobilize resources for the Working Group within the broader context of implementing the United Nations Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7 and in line with the overall UN-Habitat Resource Mobilization Strategy 2026-2029. A proposed resource mobilization strategy for the period 2026–2029 was prepared and is submitted to the present session (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/4). It sets out the indicative resource requirements for implementation of the road map and the proposed approach to mobilizing the necessary support. It further identifies priority funding partner segments, tailored value propositions and messaging, and the proposed outreach approaches.

19. Engagement with partners is continuing to support the substantive work of the Working Group, including through participation in consultation meetings, contributions towards the development of recommendations and support for their dissemination and application. These engagements are intended to inform the recommendations by broadening the knowledge base and experience, and ultimately facilitate their uptake and implementation by relevant institutions and practitioners through strong stakeholder ownership of outcomes.

20. A communications strategy for the Working Group is also under preparation, with the objective of increasing the visibility of the process, supporting the uptake of its recommendations and the Housing Knowledge Platform by Member States and partners, and sustaining the engagement secured during the period under review.

III. Key outcomes

21. The activities undertaken in the course of 2026 resulted in the following key outcomes:

(a) A marked increase in Member State engagement, with the number of nominating countries almost doubling over the course of a single cycle;

(b) The development of draft recommendations on integrated housing policies through expert input and Member State consultation, for consideration at the present session and summarized in the addendum to the present report;

(c) The further development of the recommendations on housing environmental sustainability and resilience, including through an additional intersessional consultation in 2026, and the finalization of the proposed definition of homelessness for consideration at the present session;

(d) Broader and more inclusive participation in the substantive work of the Working Group, including through two intersessional meetings convened in hybrid format in 2026 for the first time in the Working Group's cycle;

(e) Increased regional and global visibility of the work of the OEWG-H, including through engagement at the second Africa Urban Forum and the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, and strengthened political recognition through the Political Declaration adopted at the mid-term review of the New Urban Agenda (A/80/L.89), which reinforces the work of the Working Group in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda; and

(f) The strengthening of internal coordination arrangements within UN-Habitat and the preparation of a resource mobilization strategy for the period 2026–2029 to support implementation of the road map.

IV. Progress on ongoing workstreams

22. Three workstreams initiated in the preceding cycle are being carried forward towards the fourth session. Their sequencing has been adjusted deliberately, in order to ensure coherence with parallel initiatives and to allow the outcomes of recent intergovernmental deliberations to inform their content.

A. Definition of informal settlements

23. The development of a global reference definition of informal settlements builds on the consultations undertaken in 2025, including an Expert Group Meeting held on 21 August 2025, and an intersessional meeting held on 17 September 2025. The work is being aligned with parallel initiatives, including the work of the Global Urban Data Coalition, to promote coherence and consistency between the global reference definition proposed by the Working Group and the classifications used in global monitoring and reporting efforts remain mutually consistent. Given that Integrated National Housing Policies provide an overarching framework for addressing informal settlements, the sequencing of this work is important. A global reference definition adopted in isolation from the instruments that will be used to apply it would be of limited operational value, and priority has therefore been given to convergence between these initiatives. Further consultations were held in 2026 to advance this work.

24. The presentation of the global reference definition has consequently been deferred. This also allows the outcomes of recent high-level deliberations, including the high-level meeting on the mid-term review of the New Urban Agenda held in New York in July 2026, to be reflected in the proposed text. Complementary consultation phases will be organized in 2027, ahead of the presentation of the definition to the fourth session.

B. Housing monitoring framework

25. Work on the housing monitoring framework, which defines and guides the monitoring of the progressive realization of adequate housing for all at the global, national and local levels, is advancing on the same basis and at a deliberate pace. This work builds on consultations undertaken in 2025, including an Expert Group Meeting held on 22 August 2025, and two intersessional meetings held on 18 September 2025. The framework is closely linked to the definitional work described above, since the categories it measures must correspond to the definitions agreed. It will likewise be the subject of complementary consultations in 2027 and will be presented to the fourth session.

C. Land management tools

26. Enabling land management tools for housing provision is the additional theme identified by the co-chairs for consideration at the fourth session. An Expert Group Meeting is planned for 2026 to initiate this workstream, with the corresponding intersessional meeting to be held in 2027. The work is oriented in particular towards the compilation of a compendium of case studies presenting concrete examples of land management tools and the conditions under which they have been applied, so that the recommendations subsequently formulated rest on documented practice rather than on principle alone.

V. Complementary housing workstreams and Institutional Anchoring

27. The work of the OEWG-H forms part of a broader housing approach within the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, anchored in the strategic plan for the period 2026–2029, whose first subprogramme is devoted to housing, land and basic services, and in Habitat Assembly resolutions 2/7 on adequate housing for all and 2/2 on accelerating the transformation of informal settlements and slums by 2030. This broader approach is structured around four complementary functions:

(a) Intergovernmental and normative leadership, exercised through the Working Group itself, which develops and submits the policy recommendations;

(b) Knowledge, data and monitoring, through the Housing Knowledge Platform, which makes relevant knowledge, practices and resources accessible and is the subject of a dedicated report to the present session (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/3), through the Global Urban Data Coalition, which supports the housing monitoring framework and improved monitoring of housing, informal

settlements and urban expansion, and through related knowledge, data and monitoring activities at the regional and country levels;

(c) Technical cooperation and capacity-building, through relevant regional- and country-level activities, including their academic, technical and business components, the World Urban Forums, the establishing Global Housing Hub, and the Housing Studios; and

(d) Operational delivery, through regional and country office programmes, including the Affordable African Housing Compact.

28. Within UN-Habitat, the housing workstreams are institutionally anchored as follows:

(a) An institutional layer comprising the Office of the Executive Director, which provides strategic direction and high-level engagement with Member States, international financial institutions and partners; an internal task force on housing and informal settlements transformation, which ensures cross-divisional strategic coordination;

(b) An internal Task Force on Housing and Informal Settlements Transformation, which ensures cross-divisional strategic coordination;

(c) The Secretariat of the Working Group;

(d) The Global Solutions Division, including the Land, Housing and Informal Settlements Section, which provides thematic and normative expertise, technical assistance and coordinates global programmes;

(e) The Global Knowledge and Advocacy Division, responsible for data monitoring, the World Cities Report, the World Urban Forums and capacity development;

(f) The Regional Programmes Division, which delivers at regional and country level and provides the interface with Member States;

(g) The Secretariat for governing bodies, which ensures political stewardship; and the Corporate Management Division, responsible for planning, budget, monitoring and evaluation;

(h) A housing reference group, with members from all the Divisions, which acts as an internal advisory and sounding board.

29. Two products of the period under review feed directly into this housing approach: the World Cities Report 2026, devoted to the global housing crisis, which provides the evidentiary basis for much of the analysis underpinning the thematic workstreams; and the Baku Call to Action adopted at the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, together with the commitments announced on that occasion.

VI. Way forward

30. During the next reporting period, the OEWG-H will continue to mobilize members, partners and experts and to establish linkages and complementarities with other housing workstreams. For the full implementation of Habitat Assembly resolution 2/7, the following priorities have been identified:

(a) Conclude the workstreams carried forward — the definition of informal settlements, the housing monitoring framework and enabling land management tools — through the complementary consultation phases foreseen in 2027, and present their outcomes to the fourth session;

(b) Revise the recommendations considered at the present session in the light of the guidance received, and continue the development and endorsement of thematic recommendations, which will progressively constitute the set of recommendations that the Working Group will put forward at the third session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly in 2029;

(c) Sustain and further increase the engagement of Member States, so as to ensure geographical representation and the inclusion of the diversity of priorities and contexts;

(d) Continue the incremental development and population of the Housing Knowledge Platform, as the vehicle through which the recommendations of the Working Group are made accessible to Member States, local governments and practitioners;

(e) Capitalize on the alignment between the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026–2029, in which adequate housing constitutes the first subprogramme, and the objectives of the Working Group; and

(f) Mobilize adequate, predictable and multi-year resources, together with sufficient dedicated capacity, to support effective implementation of the road map. The proposed resource mobilization strategy submitted to the present session (HSP/OEWG-H.2026/4) sets out the corresponding requirements and proposed approach.

(g) Identify, under the guidance of the Co-Chairs to be elected at the present session, the additional thematic areas to be addressed in the 2027 cycle, at a rate of no more than two new themes per annual cycle so as to preserve the depth of the work.

31. The indicative sequence for the coming cycle is as follows. Following the present session, the documentation considered will be revised in the light of the guidance received and shared online in January 2027. Consultations on the definition of informal settlements and on the housing monitoring framework will be held in the course of 2027, together with the intersessional meeting on enabling land management tools. Expert group meetings on the two new thematic areas will be convened in the first part of 2027 and followed by the corresponding intersessional meetings, so that all workstreams converge on the fourth session in 2027. Monthly meetings with the Co-Chairs and monthly internal meetings of the Secretariat will continue to provide the coordination framework throughout. Engagement will also continue at the eighty-second session of the General Assembly, at the thirty-second session of the Conference of the Parties and at the United Nations Water Conference.

Annex

Calendar of meetings, 2026

Date	*Type of meeting*	*Thematic focus*	*Time*	*Languages provided*	*Notes/outputs*	*Participants*
19 May 2026	Intersessional Meeting	Housing environmental sustainability and resilience	13:30–15:30 (UTC+4)	EN, FR, ES, AR, RU, ZH	In person at the venue of the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, Baku, and online; framing and proposed recommendations	Over 100 participants
15 July 2026	Expert Group Meeting	Integrated housing policies	13:00–16:00 (EAT)	EN	Background research; identification of areas for recommendations	41 online participants
3 September 2026	Intersessional Meeting	Integrated housing policies	13:00–16:00 (EAT)	EN, FR, ES, AR, RU, ZH	Consolidated draft recommendations	Over 220 participants