

## Input from UN-Habitat to the report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

UN-Habitat, the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements, was mandated by the General Assembly in 1978 to address issues of urbanisation and sustainable development. In line with its 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, UN-Habitat has been supporting countries and cities in leveraging the opportunities urbanization offers. UN-Habitat has carried out both normative as well as technical assistance/operational activities, many of which have contributed significantly to the *Implementation of the United Nations System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)*. Pursuant to UN-Habitat's mandate, the contributions are most directly related to the four Areas of Policy Focus described below.

### **D – Future of Food and Sustainable Agriculture**

Territorial networks of small cities and towns, and urban-rural linkages can create opportunities for livelihoods and increased food security. They can connect markets and thereby, for example, enable smallholder farmers to sell their produce.

In collaboration with the WHO, the FAO and other partners, UN-Habitat has developed Guidelines and accompanying case studies and tools on *Enhancing Urban-Rural Linkages for Sustainable Urbanization and Human Settlements*. UN-Habitat's work on urban and territorial planning helps strengthen physical, socio-economic and political connections between urban and rural areas, crucial for food security and livelihood diversification.

### **E – Reducing Inequalities**

Poverty and inequality do not just intersect but are often spatially concentrated. Spatial inequality - defined as the concentration of disadvantage in a specific location, and typically characterized by physical segregation - manifests itself in unequal access to land, adequate, accessible and affordable housing, employment opportunities, basic and social services, mobility, and public space. In an effort to tackle the devastating effects of spatial inequality, UN-Habitat's new 2020-2023 Strategic Plan identifies *Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum* as one of four Domains of Change. UN-Habitat has developed and applies a wide range of tools and approaches aimed at reducing the multiple intersecting manifestations of inequality.

Special emphasis is placed on working with local and national governments to strengthen their urban legal systems in order to make sure no one is left behind. Through the *Planning Law Assessment Framework* governments can assess their legal frameworks and initiate appropriate reforms. As a complement to this, the legal database *UrbanLex* was established in 2014 and now features 1,800 legal instruments from around the world, to support the advancement of inclusive, sustainable and resilient cities.

The *Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme*, initiated by the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Commission, has delivered secure tenure for 800,000 slum dwellers, provided sustainable livelihoods to 268,000 women and youth through Community Managed

Funds, and directly improved living conditions of 516,203 people. The programme further leveraged an estimated indirect investment of about 1 billion USD from governments, development banks, private sector and community savings.

Through its *Global Public Space Programme*, in 2019 alone, UN-Habitat has made cities more inclusive for approximately 445,000 people – many of whom are girls and women. Using the mixed reality technology Minecraft, UN-Habitat empowers communities to design their own public spaces. In Ghana, this led to improved market space experiences for women, while in Viet Nam and Palestine, girls' safety in public space was increased.

Women and youth have also benefitted from the *Global Land Tool Network*, which promotes tenure security through the continuum of land rights. The tools have expanded tenure security for over 300,000 households in 13 countries over the past years. Women and young people are now being included in land mapping and are receiving certificates of occupancy in many countries, including in the complex protracted conflict context of Afghanistan.

### **F – Addressing Climate Change and the Intensification of Natural Hazards**

UN-Habitat's resilience profiling and adaptation planning tools successfully support cities and human settlements across the globe to become more climate resilient. In the Lao PDR, 189 towns and villages benefitted from inclusive planning processes that, for example, have guaranteed year-round water supply. Moreover, 16 informal settlements in Fiji, 5 in the Solomon Islands, and 5 peri-urban areas in Mongolia undertook climate change assessments to guide priority actions benefitting nearly 200,000 people.

In Mozambique, the *Safer Schools Programme* proved successful in the face of the Cyclones Idai and Kenneth. When 4,000 classrooms were destroyed or damaged, the only schools to withstand the full force of the storms were those built according to UN-Habitat's disaster risk reduction standards. The standards are now recognized in legislative frameworks for resilient construction across different sectors in Mozambique, including infrastructure and housing.

### **G – Fighting Poverty in Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts**

UN-Habitat's extensive country work has responded to member states' challenges and aspirations in regard to strengthening sustainable urban development and thereby fighting poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts. The multi-sectoral build-back better approach links people and structures across the city space, aligning with the Secretary-General's call for humanitarian efforts to incorporate sustainable development. It has resulted in durable solutions for IDPs and refugees as well as in safer, cleaner, more inclusive cities enjoyed by displaced and host communities alike.

Using *City and Neighbourhood Profiling Tools* in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, UN-Habitat has been able to assess and identify urban recovery needs in order to mainstream sustainable urbanization in fragile contexts. Over 70 profiles have been completed, improving evidence-based humanitarian, post-conflict recovery and reconstruction planning and thereby contributing to the fight against poverty in these contexts.

A major contribution was made towards strengthening the approach to land and conflict. In March 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General validated the Guidance Note on *The United Nations and Land and Conflict*. The Global Land Tool Network and UN-Habitat developed the Note in collaboration with a core

group of United Nations agencies. The agencies are the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; the United Nations Department of Political Affairs; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation funded the work. To further support this agenda, UN-Habitat's new 2020-2023 Strategic Plan identifies 'Effective urban crisis prevention and response' as one of four Domains of Change.

As the above examples demonstrate, UN-Habitat has been leveraging the benefits of sustainable urbanization to fight the multiple dimensions and root causes of poverty. Building on its diverse technical and normative expertise, UN-Habitat has spearheaded the inter-agency development of a *UN System-wide Strategy on Sustainable Urbanization*. The strategy was adopted by the Chief Executives Board led by the Secretary-General in 2019 and is now a blueprint for sustainable urban development. It is expected to be catalytic in facilitating the role of sustainable urbanization in the eradication of poverty across agencies.