

Concept Note: International Expert Group Meeting

Preventing, Monitoring and Assessing Forced Evictions Worldwide



In the run-up to World Habitat Day, the Housing Policy Section of UN-HABITAT will host an International Expert Group Meeting on Forced Evictions at its global headquarters in Nairobi from 20-23 September 2011

This concept note briefly outlines the objectives and expected outcomes of the International Expert Group Meeting on Forced Evictions, which will be hosted by UN-HABITAT's Housing Policy Section at its global headquarters in Nairobi from 20-23 September 2011.

In the context of the elaboration of the Global Housing Strategy to the year 2025 and within the framework of UN-HABITAT's Adequate Housing for All Programme, some 40 experts will exchange views and contribute knowledge and ideas to the discussions on the future role of UN-HABITAT with respect to preventing, monitoring and assessing the impact of forced evictions globally. Its synergies with the planning, managing and financing of cities in this new millennium will also be explored.

Unlawful forced evictions are on the increase worldwide in frequency, in number, in scale, and in the level of violence. In many countries, they have become common practice *in lieu* of urban planning and inclusive social policies. They affect the lives of millions of people, many of them the most vulnerable and poor who live on the margins of society. In recognition of what has been described as a relentless rise in forced evictions worldwide, UN-HABITAT has pro-actively responded through, *inter alia*, the building of a comprehensive body of normative knowledge and practical experience related to the prevention, monitoring and assessment of instances of forced evictions in all corners of the world.

UN-HABITAT is uniquely placed to ensure that many unlawful and forced evictions are prevented through the provision of advice and guidance to governments, cities and communities.

Where forced evictions take place, the scale and scope need to be accurately and effectively monitored. Such monitoring ensures that the impacts of displacement are appropriately and accurately assessed, which in turn paves the way for the creation of relevant and realistic policy options. Alternatives can then be presented to those with the power to change the status quo through resettlement and compensation to the victims of unlawful forced evictions.

The upcoming Expert Group Meeting of technical experts, academics and practitioners is expected to shape and build the kind of momentum, which is necessary for a further push forward in elaborating the future role of UN-HABITAT in the area of forced evictions. Experts will be expected to provide suggestions and recommendations on HABITAT's future institutional collaborations (with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights under the United Nations Housing Rights Programme), on the potential re-branding of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions (AGFE) into an “International Steering Group on Evictions” as well as the feasibility and desirability of establishing a Global Housing Rights Network. This includes, on the one hand, elaboration on UN-HABITAT’s modes of interaction with a variety of relevant actors and, on the other hand, definition of its priority activities within the strategic framework of UN-HABITAT’s emerging priorities and a mapping of other actors’ activities in the area of forced evictions.



Draft structure and modes of interactions of the proposed Global Housing Rights Network

The terminology around an International Steering Group on Evictions and the Global Housing Rights Network is tentative. It has not been decided to establish neither the Steering Group nor the Global Network. The reference to “network” is made to create connotation to a community of housing rights organizations, professionals, and activists to share best practices and lessons learned on a platform where synergies in research, policy, and program implementation are facilitated, possibly by UN-HABITAT or the UN Housing Rights Programme.