

## Foreword



This collection of documents outlines UN-HABITAT's work in line with the agency's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (2008–2013). It also presents the agency's comparative advantage in these times of rapid and often chaotic urbanization.

This folder summarizes all the work that UN-HABITAT does. On the left-hand side is a series of policy leaflets that explains the priorities of the agency. On the right-hand side are product leaflets that describe the key results and success stories from all our programmes.

With more than half of the world's population living in urban areas and over a billion people living in slums, development challenges in towns and cities are enormous. The Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan is a road map that helps UN-HABITAT meet the challenges and expectations of an urban world. It is also a vision for a better urban future — a world in which humanity can engage in social, economic, and cultural pursuits without compromising the ability of future generations to do so as well.

We want to marshal the goodwill, know-how, and resources of all spheres of government, civil society, the business sector, and international and domestic financial institutions to focus primarily on the key determinants for sustainable urbanization and inclusive urban development. To facilitate this process, UN-HABITAT works in five main areas:

- Effective advocacy, monitoring, and partnerships
- Participatory planning, management, and governance
- Promotion of pro-poor land and housing
- Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services
- Strengthened human settlements finance systems

The World Urban Campaign, with its theme 'Better Cities, Better Life', spearheads these priority areas to galvanize political will and commitment concerning the agency's work. Emerging issues that need special attention include urban

mobility, urban legislation, municipal finance, energy use within urban areas, and strategic urban planning.

Sustainable urbanization has become central to development because it builds on the growing realization of the international community that urbanization represents a unique opportunity and is a vibrant, positive force that must be harnessed to support economic growth and social development in a globalizing world economy. This is particularly important during economic downturns and climate change, both of which impact cities the most.

UN-HABITAT also places a lot of importance on the ongoing United Nations reforms, as well as on improving its internal management, which is guided by the norms of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency.

Our development work to support towns and cities is complex, as the city is a human creation that requires a multidimensional approach and strategic thinking. UN-HABITAT also makes a strong contribution in the area of post-disaster and post-conflict recovery and development. Details of UN-HABITAT's work, for which sustained funding is required, are presented in this catalogue, at both the strategic level and the output level.

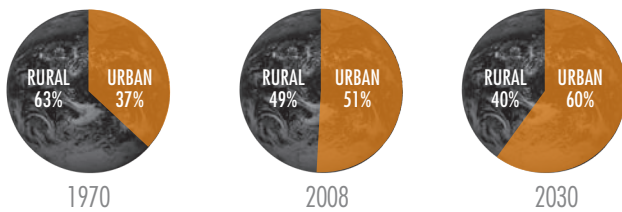
We hope that you will find this folder useful. We look forward to joining with you to create a more sustainable urban future.



**Dr. Joan Clos**  
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

## Introduction

This brief introduction to UN-HABITAT highlights the agency's institutional priorities and operational activities, which focus on the promotion of decent housing for all and sustainable urban development. All the programmes and projects presented in the different focus areas are part and parcel of the agency's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan and are relevant to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and Targets relating to environmental sustainability, access to water, and slum reduction. The plan is a blueprint to help member states meet the challenges of rapid urbanization and climate change. Another important element is UN-HABITAT's humanitarian and disaster management role. Responsive funding for this effort is crucial, given the enormity of land and housing needs and problems that result from conflict and natural disasters around the world.



GLOBAL POPULATION RURAL/URBAN

The world is at the dawn of a new urban era, with most of humanity now living in cities. UN-HABITAT is tackling rapid urbanization, escalating poverty, unemployment, poorly managed disasters, and the effects of climate change. The agency addresses these challenges by turning innovative ideas into action. UN-HABITAT is flexible, focused, and responsive to the aspirations of cities and their residents. Its flagship publications are widely acknowledged as premier reference works on city trends and urban issues.

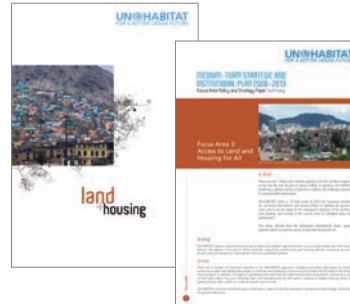
UN-HABITAT's programmes in hundreds of cities around the world are designed to achieve a measurable impact on the lives of the urban poor, as a major contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Working towards affordable housing and sustainable urban development, UN-HABITAT's Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan concentrates on six mutually reinforcing focus areas; five of these are substantive, while the sixth concerns the agency's internal management.



**Focus Area 1**  
**Effective advocacy, monitoring, and partnerships** to promote sustainable urbanization through education, communication, and evidence-based information and, specifically, through global campaigns, policy dialogue, strategic partnerships, and the collection and analysis of data.



**Focus Area 2**  
**Promotion of participatory urban planning, management, and governance** to strengthen the performance of national governments, local authorities, and other stakeholders in developing more liveable, productive, and inclusive cities.



**Focus Area 3**  
**Promotion of pro-poor land and housing** to assist national governments and Habitat Agenda partners to adopt pro-poor, gender- and age-sensitive housing, land management, and property administration through enabling policies and improved regulatory frameworks.



**Focus Area 4**  
**Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services** to expand access to and sustain provision of adequate clean water, improved sanitation, waste management, and environmentally sound transport, energy, and appropriate technologies in urban and peri-urban areas.



**Focus Area 5**  
**Strengthened human settlements finance systems** to improve access to finance for housing and infrastructure, particularly for the urban poor. Innovative finance mechanisms and institutional capacity will leverage the contributions of communities, local authorities, the private sector, governments, and international financial institutions.



**Focus Area 6**  
**Excellence in management** to improve the implementation of the agency's work through strengthened results-based management and improved communication and skills, as well as better financial, human resource, and knowledge management systems.



## Governing body and meetings

### The Governing Council

UN-HABITAT's work and relationships with its partners are periodically examined in detail by the Governing Council, which is subsidiary to the General Assembly and serves as the intergovernmental decision-making body of UN-HABITAT. It reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, and its main functions are as follows:

1. Setting UN-HABITAT's policies by developing and promoting policy objectives, priorities, and guidelines regarding existing and planned programmes of work in the field of human settlements
2. Overseeing working relations with partners by closely following the activities of United Nations agencies and other international organizations in the field of human settlements, and proposing ways through which the overall policy objectives in the field of human settlements within the UN system might best be achieved
3. Approving UN-HABITAT's biennial work programme and budget

The Governing Council meets every 2 years and is composed of 58 member states, which represent 5 regional groups.



▲ Delegates at the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council in Nairobi, Kenya.

### The Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee of Permanent Representatives serves as the Governing Council's permanent intersessional subsidiary organ. Its main functions are as follows:

1. To review and monitor, within the policy and budgetary framework provided by the Governing Council, the implementation of the work programme of UN-HABITAT, as well as the implementation of Governing Council decisions
2. To review the draft work programme and budget of UN-HABITAT
3. To prepare draft decisions and resolutions for consideration by the Governing Council

The Committee of Permanent Representatives has at least four regular meetings, or sessions, in a year, and it is assisted by working group meetings on various topics. Its membership is open to all permanent representatives of the member states of the UN accredited to UN-HABITAT.

## Funding

Most UN-HABITAT funding comes from voluntary contributions from governmental and intergovernmental donors, while UN member states provide the regular budget. Other UN bodies, local authorities, the private sector, and multilateral organizations provide funds for specific projects (termed earmarked or non-core activities).

UN-HABITAT thus has the following sources of funding:

- Regular budget allocations, which are approved by the UN General Assembly (core funding)
- General purpose contributions, which are non-earmarked voluntary contributions from governments to support the implementation of the approved work programme
- Special contributions, which are earmarked voluntary contributions from governments and other donors for the implementation of specific activities in the work programme that are consistent with the UN-HABITAT mandate
- Technical cooperation contributions, which are earmarked resources from governments and other donors for the implementation of country-level activities

### THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL PLAN (2008–2013)

The plan comprises strategic and institutional components. The strategic component envisages a world in which people living in urban settings can access decent housing, clean water, and basic sanitation services. The institutional component places UN-HABITAT at the forefront of reform so that accountability, transparency, and results-based management are streamlined throughout the agency. The plan's vision is to help create, by 2013, the conditions for international and national efforts "to realize more sustainable urbanization, including efforts to arrest the growth of slums, and set the stage for the subsequent reduction in and reversal of the number of slum dwellers worldwide".



## Programmes and projects

UN-HABITAT projects fall under various programmes, which are the platforms on which the agency bases its work. Programmes are designed to help policymakers and local communities find durable solutions to urban human settlement challenges. Programmes operate globally, regionally, and nationally and have huge potential for improving the lives of millions of urban poor. Therefore, programmes represent the agency's core activities, for which increased and sustained funding is required.



▲ A market street in Cairo, Egypt.

UN-HABITAT runs its programmes from its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and its regional offices:

- Regional Office for Africa and the Arab States (Nairobi, Kenya)
- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Fukuoka, Japan)
- Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
- Office for Central European Countries (Warsaw, Poland)

A Cairo office for the Arab states has recently been opened, with financial support from the Government of Egypt.

## Trust funds

UN-HABITAT operates thematic trust funds aimed at helping beneficiaries achieve specific aspects of the Millennium Development Goals and other development targets. These trust funds are designed to facilitate contributions from multiple donors. In addition, they reduce transaction costs through a transparent and accountable governance system involving donor representatives and international and national partners.

The trust funds include the following:

- The **Slum Upgrading Facility**, which provides advisory services, the packaging of financial products, and referral functions to its clients. The concept of 'credit enhancement' is critical, guaranteeing local loans from commercial banks for slum improvement projects.
- The **Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operation**, which provides seed money for pro-poor housing and related infrastructure projects on a reimbursable basis.
- The **Water and Sanitation Trust Fund**, which supports developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goal for water and sanitation in rapidly growing urban areas. It leverages policy advisory skills and local institution building with follow-up investments from regional development banks and the World Bank.
- The **Palestinian Housing Fund**, which is designed to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promote peace building.

## AT THE DAWN OF A NEW URBAN ERA,



Available Investment Opportunities: Key investment opportunities in UN-HABITAT that require committed funding are on [www.unhabitat.org/pipelineprojects](http://www.unhabitat.org/pipelineprojects)

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UN-HABITAT is the United Nations body mandated to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities and to provide adequate shelter for all

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