

ZERO DRAFT

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2020-2025



# UN-Habitat – Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

Zero Draft

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## 1. Changing to increase impact

Sustainable urbanization is central to the realization of the global development goals as set out in the suite of global agreements signed in 2015-16, including, most importantly, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Strategic Plan 2020-2025 focuses on the Agency's commitment and contribution to the implementation of these global development agendas. Through its normative and operational work, the Agency's objective is to: ***“advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace to improve living conditions for all”***.

UN-Habitat's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan creates a strong narrative of change, clearly articulating the relationship of sustainable urbanization with the overall notion of sustainable development. It is only with a clear transformative strategy, partnerships, and a fresh and innovative vision of development that it is possible to respond to persistent and new development problems, including extreme poverty, socioeconomic inequalities, slums, social exclusion and marginalization, gender-based discrimination, humanitarian crises, conflicts, climate change, and high unemployment, which are increasingly concentrated in urban areas. A holistic approach towards an urbanizing world, connecting cities and other human settlements, can help advance sustainable solutions for the benefit of all.

The Strategic Plan lays out a recalibrated vision and mission, and a sharpened focus. UN-Habitat proposes to serve Member States, sub-national and local governments, and other key urban actors in the pursuit of four mutually reinforcing and integrated domains of change or goals:

1. Reduced poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities;
2. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions;
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment; and
4. Effective urban crisis prevention and response

The realization of these outcomes is supported by a certain number of specific 'drivers of change' and 'organizational enablers.' Transformative change can only take place through a paradigm shift. UN-Habitat is cognizant of this, and proposes a clear framework that takes into account global trends and focuses on (i) customized solutions taking into account countries in different situations, aligning all efforts focused on the change we want to see; (ii) leveraging partnerships with sister United Nations entities, the private sector, and other development actors and stakeholders; and (iii) significantly enhancing integrated delivery through more effective collaboration across its country offices, regional offices, liaison offices, and the headquarters.

However, implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 equally requires organizational changes and a new model for financial sustainability to ensure that UN-Habitat resources are commensurate with its mandates and roles.

Once translated into action, this Strategic Plan will reinforce UN-Habitat's place as the global centre of excellence on sustainable urban development, offering solutions that help seize the opportunities presented by urbanization, while bringing about transformational change for the benefit of millions of people, ensuring that no one and no place is left behind.

### 1.1 Global trends: challenges and opportunities of a rapidly urbanizing world

Urbanization is one of the global mega-trends of our time, unstoppable and irreversible. In thirty years, two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas. Ninety percent of urban growth will

occur in less developed regions such as East Asia, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa at a rapid pace and in situations where capacities and resources are most constrained and development challenges are most intense. Urbanization in these parts of the world is largely unplanned, fueling the continuous growth of informal or slum settlements. Inequality is a universal concern, both within cities and across territories; over 75 percent of the world's cities grew more unequal over the past 20 years. Although the world has made significant progress in reducing poverty since 2000, inequality is rising in the cities of both developing and developed world. In developing countries, slums, which currently accommodate close to 1 billion people, are the physical manifestation of urban poverty and inequality. About 2.5 billion people lack access to safe sanitation and 1.2 billion people lack access to clean drinking water worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Fewer than 35 percent of the cities in developing countries have their waste water treated<sup>2</sup>.

Gender-based discrimination persists in many parts of the world, and challenges associated with both the young and aging populations are growing. Poverty, humanitarian crises, and conflict are becoming increasingly urban phenomena. Cities play a key role in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, but also absorb most of the risk. Rural areas are equally affected and often do not benefit from overall growth, feeding a continuous rural-urban migration.

In sum, the challenges posed by the current model of urbanization have global ramifications that, if not addressed adequately, could jeopardize chances of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet, the urban transformation is not just a challenge, it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring the benefits of urbanization to all levels and all types of human settlements, from small rural communities, villages, and market towns, to intermediate cities and metropolises. Cities and towns can help drive economic growth and an overall transformation of territories, including both rural and urban areas. Contributing about 80 percent of global GDP, cities function as catalysts, driving innovation, consumption, and investment worldwide, making them a positive and potent force for addressing issues related to poverty and spatial inequality, shared prosperity, climate and the environment, and various forms of crisis.

The implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 will provide pathways to accelerate this transformation towards achieving the SDGs. If we get our cities right, as envisioned in the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, it will be easier to reach other development goals and targets. However, this will require creativity, a full-scale mobilization and joined-up efforts at the global, national, and local levels, in countries at every stage of development.

## 1.2 Becoming a "Solutions Agency" to deliver change

With a focus on achieving its four interconnected and mutually reinforcing goals (poverty and spatial inequality; shared prosperity; climate action and urban environment; and crisis prevention and response), UN-Habitat is well-positioned to help countries and cities confront the toughest urbanization challenges, and to take advantage of the opportunities that urbanization offers to maximize the positive contributions to overall sustainable development. UN-Habitat's value proposition to contribute to the global urban development agenda is derived from its knowledge and expertise, and its ability to provide innovative and evidence-based urban solutions that are both normative and operational. The Agency's convening power, its capacity to influence long-term change, and its ability to leverage partnerships contribute to its added value and implementation capabilities.

UN-Habitat is embracing a solutions-oriented culture, based on decades of experience in, and a deep understanding of, what actually works effectively in cities and human settlements. This means

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<sup>1</sup> ADD SOURCE

<sup>2</sup> ADD SOURCE

moving from a project-focused approach to a broader culture of supporting countries and cities in delivering customized solutions that are integrated across the four goals, and which apply and leverage the knowledge gained from UN-Habitat's experiences as well as the experiences of others.

### 1.3 Leveraging partnerships

It is important to emphasize that no institution alone can ensure that countries make significant progress towards the global urban development agendas. Similarly, there is no single organization that can ensure cities are effectively establishing a path of prosperity and sustainable development. UN-Habitat will call upon all development actors, at every scale, to work in concert to implement this Strategic Plan.

The past decade has seen a tremendous surge in partners engaging with UN-Habitat. Reinforcing this trend, future partnerships must be both aligned with UN-Habitat's four goals, and be well-managed and effective. UN-Habitat will take the lead in some partnerships; in other cases, it will bring its expertise to efforts led by others, providing support while adding value. Emphasis has already been placed on relationships with other United Nations agencies, including the Regional Economic Commissions. The latter are key partners in reaching out to Member States, civil society, and other urban stakeholders working towards the effective implementation and follow-up of the New Urban Agenda and the urban and human settlements dimensions of the 2030 Agenda in each region.

UN-Habitat will continue to expand its collaboration with international and regional development banks to ensure coherence of policy support and the alignment of large-scale urban investments with the principles of sustainable urbanization. An important effort is required to rethink engagement with the private sector to leverage investments in sustainable urbanization and to promote more appropriate models of development.

### 1.4 Delivering as One UN-Habitat: Repositioning and organizational change

UN-Habitat is more than just a collection of regional, liaison, and country offices. It is a collaborative global institution with one unifying mandate. The Strategic Plan and the accompanying organizational changes aim to ensure that all the organizational units of UN-Habitat work in an integrated manner. The focus is on maximizing the interaction between our normative and operational work both at global and regional levels, leveraging change across the four interconnected areas, and aiming for direct impact for those most in need. Regional strategies and country programmes, while responding to the felt needs and demands of Member States, will be fully aligned with the overall objective and goals of the Strategic Plan.

UN-Habitat will focus on the areas of expertise where it has the greatest comparative advantage, as a thought leader and a centre of excellence, doing less better. At the same time, it will act more as a catalyst to provide multi-scalar, integrated, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder urban development and human settlement solutions, leveraging the actions of others, and connecting goals and targets across the SDGs.

UN-Habitat will adjust its set up to reflect the regional diversity in urbanization trends and challenges and to align with the rationalization of the UN development system and its broader reform. The nature of UN-Habitat's support will be guided by the diversity of urbanization challenges as well as specific country demands and capacities.

For UN-Habitat to expand its focus on project implementation to a broader objective of going to scale and leveraging longer term impact, it needs to become an outward looking agency, with a stronger emphasis on partnerships and influencing actions of others, doing “less but better”.

Furthermore, delivering as one UN-Habitat requires reforms of internal procedures and systems, improving the internal budget process, and enhancing human resource management, as described in the organizational performance enablers in section 2.7. Organizational changes will also need to ensure that programmes and services are delivered in a manner that is efficient and effective, evidence-based, and which allow for continuous learning from across the world.

The Strategic Plan recognizes that an important institutional challenge for UN-Habitat is ensuring that its resources are predictable, sustainable, and commensurate with its roles and responsibilities. This requires a new framework for financial sustainability that increases revenues, cuts inefficient expenditures, builds financial capacity, and aligns resources with the four goals.

## 2. Strategic choices

### 2.1 A Bold Vision and a Focused Mission

UN-Habitat’s vision of **“A better quality of life for all in an urbanizing world”** is bold and ambitious; one that challenges UN-Habitat and its partners to enhance international and national efforts geared towards addressing urbanization challenges. It reflects both an aspirational idea and a real need. UN-Habitat sees urbanization as a process that can transform territories, connecting rural and urban areas, knitting together small market towns, with intermediate cities and main urban centres and providing access to basic services and infrastructure to all.

The organization’s mission statement is **“UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action to leave no one and no place behind”**.

Over the last few years, UN-Habitat has been refining its approach to strategically integrating normative and operational work. Building on the Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 and the strong evidence that sustainable urbanization is an accelerator for achieving the SDGs as elaborated in the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat has adopted a more strategic and integrated approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities of twenty-first century cities and human settlements. The mission statement reflects this paradigm shift. It also embodies the four main roles of the organization summarized as:

#### **Think; Do; Share; Partner.**

The normative work, including different forms of building knowledge, enables UN-Habitat to set standards, propose norms and principles, share good practices, monitor global progress, and support inter-governmental, regional, national and sub national bodies in their formulation of policies related to sustainable cities and human settlements.

The operational work takes different forms of technical assistance, drawing on the Agency’s unique expertise in the area of sustainable urbanization and crisis response. UN-Habitat uses its highly specialized technical cooperation component to execute human settlement projects in order to provide value-added and tailored support to Member States in implementing policies, strategies, best-practices, norms and standards. In this, UN-Habitat will need to work collaboratively with a multitude of partners, leveraging multiple resources to achieve enduring results in addressing the challenges of urbanization. The Plan will be supported by the UN Collaborative Implementation Framework developed by the Agency

in response to the need to reach out and articulate work with the UN family through a more coherent system-wide approach to development.

## 2.2 An Ambitious Objective

Supported by UN-Habitat’s vision and mission, the desired change or objective for the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is **“to advance sustainable urbanization as a driver of development and peace, to improve living conditions for all”**.

UN-Habitat’s objective is consistent with SDG 11 on “making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” and with the principles and commitments of the New Urban Agenda.

This ambitious objective also reflects UN-Habitat’s aim to develop and implement integrated programmes in view of achieving greater impact. The organization will spearhead interventions that are more holistic rather than sectoral, transformative rather than fragmentary, linking urbanization and human settlements with the 2030 Agenda and the humanitarian-peace-development nexus, as proposed by the Secretary-General’s Reform.

From implementing the previous Strategic Plan, UN-Habitat learned<sup>3</sup> that (i) it was important that the Plan be anchored within a robust theory of change; and (ii) the results framework needed to be strong in order to effectively guide programming towards planned results and foreseen impact.

In this regard, the process of formulating the Strategic Plan for the period of 2020-2025 was strongly guided by a theory of change approach, which allowed for the following:

- Capturing the various components or ‘moving parts’ that must operate in concert to achieve lasting results for the people UN-Habitat serves.
- Moving the strategic focus from a means-based approach to an ends-based approach; and from a process-oriented approach to a results-based approach.
- Connecting to the global agendas, particularly (i) the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, (ii) the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, (iii) the Sendai Framework, (iv) the Paris Agreement, (v) the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and (vi) the New Urban Agenda.
- Re-elaborating the narrative of sustainable urban development and rethinking the way the sustainable urban development agenda should be implemented.
- Introducing in a very clear and deliberate manner a set of proposed drivers of change and organizational performance enablers;
- Introducing innovations to support the work of UN-Habitat and partners.
- Building on UN-Habitat’s focal point role as set out in the New Urban Agenda, and the Agency’s lead role in defining and monitoring the urban dimensions of the SDGs.

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<sup>3</sup> Other lessons learned are included in Annex 1, Section 3.



## 2.3 Domains of change: strategy and scope

To realize its objective to advance sustainable urbanization, UN-Habitat must make progress on its four interlinked domains of change or goals:

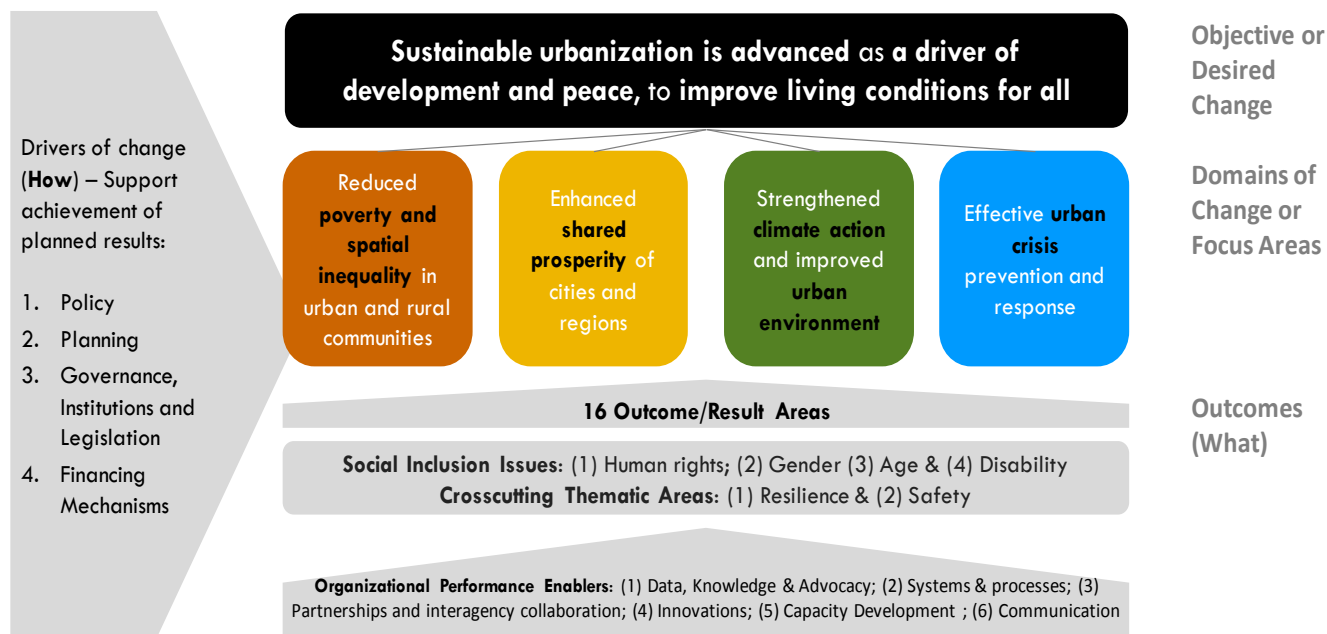
1. Reduced poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities
2. Enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment
4. Effective urban crisis prevention and response

These goals also reflect the three transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda:

1. Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty
2. Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all; and
3. Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development.

The theory of change to realize UN-Habitat’s objective is shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: UN-Habitat’s Theory of Change for the Strategic Plan 2020-2025<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> Please see Annex 1 for the full Theory of Change.

## Domain of Change 1: Reduced poverty and spatial inequality in urban and rural communities

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing the **basic needs** of the millions of urban dwellers living in **poverty and marginalization**, such as expanding access to adequate housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, domestic energy, transport, health, education, and public space. Poverty and marginalization intersect and are often concentrated in specific location, in what is understood to be spatial inequality.

Spatial inequality is defined by the different experiences and opportunities that people can have, and the rights that they can exercise, between regions, between rural and urban areas and within the same city. This is further diversified based on people's socio-economic backgrounds, race, migration status, ages, genders, and abilities. Unequal access to land, adequate, and affordable housing, job opportunities, basic and social services, mobility and public transport, and public space, are key aspects of spatial inequality, often characterized by physical segregation. This impacts poverty levels and opportunities for upward mobility. According to the OECD (2018), "living in a deprived neighborhood can impact education, health and work prospects for children and adults, further deepening inequalities, even across generations."<sup>5</sup> This cuts across most of the SDG goals and targets, as discussed in the Secretary General's Report Progress on the on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda<sup>6</sup> (2018). The New Urban Agenda, as an accelerator to support realization of the SDGs, also includes many of these elements, particularly the need to fight poverty, to promote urban prosperity as well as ecological and resilient cities.

Furthermore, in order to foster inclusive societies, reduce inequalities, and eradicate poverty, as well as strengthen social cohesion, governments at all levels must operate in a democratic, transparent, and accountable manner. This in turn must be accompanied by building a sense of identity and belonging in the city, which can also be fostered through urban regeneration and the preservation of cultural heritage.

The first Domain of Change translates into four key outcome areas where UN-Habitat, working with partners, can contribute. These are:

1. Increased and equal access to basic and social services, and sustainable mobility;
2. Increased and equal access to land, and adequate and affordable housing;
3. Increased and equal access to public space; and
4. Enhanced social integration, inclusive communities and effective urban regeneration.

*Outcome 1: Increased and equitable access to basic and social services, and sustainable mobility*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11.*

All cities and human settlements, regardless of size, require adequate basic and social services accessible to everyone: access to water, sanitation, waste management, energy, ICT, health, and education. To be productive and inclusive, cities also require sustainable mobility. These are essential to sustainable urbanization across territories, and key to enabling development and prosperity. This needs to be reflected in national urban policies and sectoral plans, guidelines and tools to localize the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, innovative financing mechanisms, advocacy and capacity development, and translated into physical concrete interventions. UN-Habitat will work with a wide range of stakeholders towards this outcome, through normative and operational work, whether, as part of integrated

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<sup>5</sup> OECD (2018) *Divided cities: understanding intra-urban inequalities*, OECD, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264300385-en>.

<sup>6</sup> A/73/83-E/2018/63

development strategies (e.g. policies and plans for compact and inclusive cities), or sectoral actions (e.g. integrated sustainable mobility systems).

*Outcome 2: Increased and equitable access to land, and adequate and affordable housing*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 16.*

Increasing security of tenure allows households and communities to not only improve their own living conditions but also use land as an asset to lift themselves out of poverty. Insecurity of tenure affects in particular women-headed households, and those who are otherwise vulnerable. At the same time, land and property are an important domestic revenue source for local governments, which can be captured to invest in expansion and improvement of basic services and infrastructure. Yet, land management is rarely integrated with spatial plans or policies. Adequate and affordable housing also requires integrated responses and concerted actions that articulate planning, financial mechanisms and regulatory frameworks, focusing both on owner and rental markets. Housing and slum upgrading play a fundamental role in economic development and poverty reduction, placing housing at the centre of the sustainable urban development agenda and as an effective equalizer for shared prosperity and growth.

This is a critical outcome for UN-Habitat to lead on within the UN system, working closely with other partners focused on housing and those investing in land management towards advocacy, knowledge production, policy, and capacity development, as well as field projects.

*Outcome 3: Increased and equitable access to public space*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 10 and 11.*

The availability, distribution, access, and quality of public space is recognized as an important element to reduce inequalities, generate local economic activities, promote social cohesion and a sense of identity, and facilitate proximity relations, among other factors, all of which all contribute to sustainable development (as demonstrated in SDG 11.7). Too often, those living in slums, informal and poor settlements have little or no access to safe and well-designed public spaces. Women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities are often excluded due to the location or design of public spaces. The regulations on public space rarely deal with issues of access or quality and possibilities for the disabled.

This is a critical outcome for UN-Habitat that requires greater emphasis. UN-Habitat will lead the work on better policies, plans, designs, sharing of practices as well as laws and regulations to provide and protect safe and more inclusive public spaces. More effective data collection and monitoring of the availability and quality of public space also requires specific attention.

*Outcome 4: Enhanced social integration, inclusive communities and effective urban regeneration*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 16.*

Inequalities in cities, particularly those that are concentrated in specific locations, perpetuate other forms of social, economic, political and cultural inequalities. While making efforts to reduce poverty and spatial inequality, it is equally important to take concrete steps towards fostering social integration, building a sense of shared identity and nurturing community belonging. This requires effective and meaningful participation of community and grassroots groups in planning, policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. Urban regeneration and revitalization can also contribute to strengthening identities and belonging, integrating both host communities and newcomers, including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

It is important that urbanization models and urban planning allow for socially and physically integrated urban growth. This should allow for equitable access to services, transport, education, public space, employment and housing for the most vulnerable, by focusing on mixed-use development, transport planning for multiple users, affordable housing policies, and urban renewal programmes. The New Urban Agenda points to the primary role for national and local governments, while recognizing the need to fully engage a multitude of local development actors and stakeholders, including the private sector towards this outcome. This requires strong institutions, strengthened rule of law, combining both a bottom-up and top-down approach.

UN-Habitat supports the development of policies, plans, guidelines and capacity development to help local authorities to develop and nurture inclusive communities. It will require a renewed engagement with the private sector.

## Domain of Change 2: Enhanced shared prosperity for cities and regions

In the current global economy, urbanization contributes a disproportionately high share of GDP. Well planned and managed urbanization can generate wealth, maximizing the benefits of economies of scale and agglomeration, allowing for integrated territorial development and connecting rural and urban development. Genuinely prosperous cities promote collective well-being and fulfillment for all. Achieving balanced territorial development and overcoming inequalities, requires combining economic growth strategies with socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable development.

This Domain of Change translates into four key outcome areas where UN-Habitat, working with partners, can contribute. These are:

1. Improved spatial connectivity and productivity of cities and regions;
2. Increased and equal access to decent jobs and livelihoods;
3. Increased and fairly distributed locally generated revenues; and
4. Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations for urban development.

### *Outcome 1: Improved spatial connectivity and productivity of cities and regions*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 1, 2, 8, and 11.*

The spatial organization of cities and regions, accessibility and design of urban space, as well as the integration of different scales of cities and human settlements, including small and intermediate cities and towns, can significantly enhance urbanization's contribution to productivity and inclusive economic development. For this, connectivity across urban networks, between cities and their surroundings, peri-urban and rural areas, must be strengthened. This requires a country-wide (and sometimes cross-border) approach to development, with reinvigorated urban and rural territorial planning. National Urban Policies, effectively implemented and with the appropriate legal frameworks and technical support can ensure that prosperity is shared across cities and regions. Adequate territorial planning can strengthen capacities of small and intermediate cities to provide win-win situations for regions, as it can reduce pressure on primary cities and help rural populations to access information, goods, services, resources that are needed for improved opportunities and increased productivity. At the urban scale, spatial development frameworks, city-wide strategies, and local plans are key tools to ensure improved spatial connectivity and productivity, as the first step to integrate and propose strategies to promote better connected and more inclusive cities.

New governance arrangements, across existing administrative boundaries and sectors, are needed to reinforce institutional coordination at all levels. Metropolitan governance and other collaborative structures are critical factors to address urban sprawl and other negative externalities that cause spatial and socioeconomic segregation as well as environmental and natural resource degradation.

This is a growth area for UN-Habitat's knowledge and expertise. Working with strategic partners, such as OECD, the World Bank and others, UN-Habitat supports government authorities at different levels to develop policies, frameworks, and actions to boost productivity of cities and regions through an integrated territorial development approach.

### *Outcome 2: Increased and equal access to decent jobs and livelihoods.*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 12.*

Sustainable urbanization requires thriving urban economies that generate new types of productive employment. The concentration of infrastructure, people, amenities, public spaces, as well as economic, social, and cultural activities, leads to substantial benefits and efficiency due to agglomeration and scale economies. Well-planned cities can maximize the urban form and leverage these economies of agglomerations that - supported by good connectivity and adequate serviced land - can boost productive activities. More work is needed to integrate informal urban economies into the formal and to focus on infrastructure development and connectivity to facilitate increased and equal access to jobs and livelihoods. Aside from the informal sector, a strong focus is needed on youth employment and entrepreneurship as they are key in driving innovation.

UN-Habitat plays a key supporting role in the realization of this outcome, complementing the work of ILO, UNIDO and other organizations to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all. UN-Habitat's technical support focuses on increasing the comparative advantages of cities to maximize their productive potential, addressing negative externalities such as pollution and congestion, enhancing mass transit options, and providing efficient, reliable services. Through urban planning, regulatory frameworks, and business model analysis, UN-Habitat contributes to making cities more competitive and innovative to increase productivity gains and to raise standards of living that are critical to attract capital and generate jobs.

### *Outcome 3: Increased and fairly distributed, locally generated revenues*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 8, 11, and 17.*

Local authorities all over the world have a fundamental mandate to deliver basic services and public goods. In doing so, they face huge challenges. Cities in developing countries, in particular, cannot reconcile available financial resources and increasing levels of municipal expenditures. This financial gap is further aggravated by the rapid growth of their populations, which creates an ever-increasing demand for public services and funding for new public infrastructure and its maintenance.

While there is a need for greater and more efficient sharing of financial resources between central and local governments, the potential local sources currently available to local authorities for generating revenue should also be fully exploited. These include, for instance, user fees, tax increment, land value finance, or debt instruments like bonds and loans. Domestic resource mobilization is critical to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Improving municipal finance is key to this, jointly with facilitating access to local development funds and fiscal decentralization instruments.

This outcome requires UN-Habitat to cooperate with various development partners and financial institutions. UN-Habitat focuses on providing technical support to local, regional, and national authorities to formulate and implement policies and strategies to increase local revenue and ensure an equitable allocation. The Agency is also assisting local authorities in enacting institutional and legal reforms that are necessary to generate additional financial resources, including through public private partnerships, as well as land-based revenue and financing tools. This includes the quantification, capturing and distribution of land value increments, assets management, and land taxation mechanisms.

#### *Outcome 4: Expanded deployment of frontier technologies and innovations for urban development*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 17.*

Frontier technologies - including the internet of things, sensor networks, machine-to-machine communication, robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, 3D printing, Geographic Information systems (GIS), remote sensing, autonomous unmanned vehicles, drones, blockchain, cryptographic computing, and big data processing and visualization to support policy-making – are profoundly influencing the emergence of smart cities, how we build and manage our cities and human settlements, and how urban managers take more informed decisions. The New Urban Agenda calls for technology and communication networks to be strengthened and for smart-city approaches that use digitalization, clean energy, and technologies to boost economic growth and improve service delivery, while promoting broad-based inclusion, including of persons with disabilities.

Innovation is critical for the realization of various dimensions of development and prosperity, in the process unleashing undeveloped potential and making fuller use of local resources and assets. Innovative funding opportunities and partnerships need to be explored and the capacity of local governments to effectively procure, test and implement frontier technologies need to be significantly strengthened.

In order for frontier technologies and innovations to effectively contribute to urban sustainability, they need to be appropriately applied to ensure that the prosperity they bring is shared among citizens, cities and regions. This outcome must be realized by a wide array of actors, and UN-Habitat can play a significant role support this process through specific normative and operational activities. These could include thinking through the longer-term impact on urbanization, the development of governance frameworks that integrate technologies and data into urban management, policies that ensure the appropriate use of technology in cities and human settlements, and smart city plans and strategies that integrate the use of frontier technologies and data in urban planning and regeneration. It would require the creation of open, user-friendly and participatory data platforms that ensure that the benefits of data collection and integration is shared for all. Many other social and institutional innovations involve the creation of new systems and models to meet the needs of underserved populations in a more efficient, effective, and sustainable manner.

#### **Domain of Change 3: Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment**

This Domain of Change focuses on the intersection of cities and human settlements with climate and the environment. The Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, defines roles for all countries and stakeholders concerning all elements of climate action. In response to the increasing challenges posed by climate change, Member States have developed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as a commitment to advance the Paris Agreement. UN-Habitat's 2017 review of 164 NDCs reveals that 113 of those have strong or moderate urban content,

predominantly focused on adaptation, or a combination of adaptation and mitigation actions, with only a very small number focused exclusively on mitigation<sup>7</sup>.

This Domain of Change addresses the resilience, adaptation, and mitigation actions for sustainable cities development, through curbing climate change impacts, as well as creating new economic opportunities for the improvement of the health of human and natural systems in cities.

UN-Habitat acts as a catalyst for connections and actions in the global climate arena, linking global actors and policies to national and local contexts. The Agency builds these linkages through a strategically designed process combining policy advice, technical support, advocacy, thematic expertise, knowledge production and sharing on international best practices. In this manner, UN-Habitat climate action programmes create a platform to facilitate linkages in both directions - global to local and local to global; as local and regional governments engage in these processes.

The Domain of Change is composed of four UN-Habitat outcomes that altogether aim to strengthen climate action and improve urban environments to create systemic change by designing integrated solutions that balance the patterns of human life and the built and natural environments in cities. These outcomes are:

- 1: Improved protection of urban biodiversity and ecological assets
- 2: Reduced greenhouse emissions and improved air quality
- 3: Improved resource efficiency and sustainable waste management
- 4: Effective adaptation of cities' infrastructure to climate change

#### *Outcome 1: Improved protection of urban biodiversity and ecological assets*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.*

The New Urban Agenda articulates a “shared vision” for cities toward strengthened climate action responses and an improved urban environment. Member States envisage cities and human settlements that: “Protect, conserve, restore and promote their ecosystems, water, natural habitats and biodiversity”<sup>8</sup>. However, to better protect urban biodiversity and ecological assets, planning decisions must be based on a more scientific understanding of watersheds, ecosystems, geology, soils, etc. When developing new facilities and infrastructures, alternative analyses should consider the full array of means to achieve a given end, from conventional engineering approaches to nature-based solutions, while fully valuing the services provided by ecosystems. Regional and metropolitan planning approaches provide better protection of essential blue-green-corridors, and a set of regulatory instruments (e.g., conservation regulations) that contribute to protecting ecological assets. At the same time, recognizing that other, competing demands are also placed upon open space including for various recreational uses and urban agriculture, there is a need of explicit trade-offs, leading to more informed decision-making. UN-Habitat can contribute to this outcome by providing climate action and urban environment responses with a more holistic framework. The allocation of open spaces, urban gardens, botanic gardens and parks become critical actions to preserve, regenerate, restore urban biodiversity. Adequate planning and legislation to reduce urban sprawl and its negative effects on the environment is part of the Agency’s in-depth knowledge and responses for this outcome.

#### *Outcome 2: Reduced greenhouse emissions and improved air quality*

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<sup>7</sup> UN-Habitat (2017) Sustainable Urbanisation in the Paris Agreement

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 13 (g, h), *New Urban Agenda*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 3, 11, and 13.*

The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that urban areas currently account for over 67 percent of energy-related global greenhouse gases, which is expected to rise to 74 percent by 2030. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates suggest that cities are responsible for 75 percent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with transport and buildings being among the largest contributors. Urban sprawl and segregation of functions greatly increases the climate impact, making it vital to ensure that we are able to plan urban growth in a more sustainable and climate neutral way. The sustainable management of resources includes strengthening “the environmentally sound management and minimization of all waste..., including air and short-lived climate pollutants, [and] greenhouse gases..., in a way that... strives to transition to a circular economy”<sup>9</sup>.

Scientists have concluded that, to hold global warming to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40-50 percent by 2030 (from 2010). There is thus an urgent need to accelerate transformative action, particularly in cities<sup>10</sup>. This is a priority area for UN-Habitat across the domains of change during this strategic period.

In an effort to promote mitigation practices, UN-Habitat normative and operational work proposes to use integrated and territorial planning approaches to promote compact and transit-oriented development, with benefits in terms of reduced use of private vehicles and reduced emissions. The Agency will continue advocating for the adoption of renewable energy generation in urban areas using solar rooftops on public and residential buildings; wind farms whenever possible, and converting municipal waste to energy. This will reduce dependency on fossil fuel for energy generation and construction of major hydropower plants. Cities are taking ambitious new steps, with 73 large cities in the C40 network<sup>11</sup>, having committed to become net carbon neutral by 2050 or before. UN-Habitat will continue to mobilize cities to set targets, report data, and track progress through the cities climate action framework, and to help to lead the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a platform that offers a means for mayors to publicly commit to, systematically plan for and report on climate action. At the same time, further building on local government action, “Planners for Climate Action” offers a new way to build capacity and mobilize hundreds of thousands of professional planners working in the public and private sector.

Scientists estimate that more than 80 percent of people living in urban areas where air pollution is monitored are exposed to ambient air quality levels that exceed WHO limits, with attendant health risks<sup>12</sup>. To help cities improve air quality, UN-Habitat can assist governments to develop clean air action plans, recognizing substantial synergies of such plans with actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address both outdoor and in-door air pollutions. Such plans will be evidence-based and designed through meaningful, informed participatory processes and multi-sectoral approaches. This work will be done together with UN Agencies such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization, and key strategic partners.

### *Outcome 3: Improved resource efficiency and sustainable waste management*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 6, 7, 11, and 12.*

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 71, *New Urban Agenda*

<sup>10</sup> IPCC 2018

<sup>11</sup> A network of the world’s mega-cities committed to addressing climate change.

<sup>12</sup> World Health Organization 2016



In 2016, the world generated 242 million tonnes of plastic waste, accounting for 12 percent of all municipal solid waste<sup>13</sup>. In the New Urban Agenda, Member States note the need to [facilitate] the sustainable management of natural resources<sup>14</sup>. The promotion of resource efficiency measures in the built environment will further contribute to reduce wastage of energy, water, materials, land in the building sector by adopting green building practices; energy performance indicators as well as rating systems. In order to support Member States to improve resource efficiency, UN-Habitat offers support to countries to develop energy and resource efficient codes for buildings, make appropriate reference to and integrating energy and resource efficiency principles in country specific codes, developing policy guidelines for mainstreaming energy and resource efficiency in buildings, and to facilitate knowledge sharing in this area. UN-Habitat is further developing and promoting knowledge on smart and sustainable urban development, including through training modules, tools, and products which are available on the “One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC:Learn).” UN-Habitat will build its work in this area, including supporting governments with technical expertise to smart city and circular economy approaches.

The Agency is well-equipped to support Member States’ commitment to “Reducing waste generation by reducing, reusing and recycling waste,”<sup>15</sup> and combines its longstanding work in urban basic services with an increasing emphasis on the need for reducing waste and efficiently recycling various components in a sustainable manner. UN-Habitat and its partners will assist national and local government partners in the development of resource recovery centres where municipal wastes are converted into resources (energy, composts, recyclable materials etc.) in an effort to minimize the environmental degradation. The Agency will continue producing knowledge products that cover solid waste recycling and use (such as the “*Energy and resource efficient urban neighborhood design principles for tropical countries: Practitioner’s Guidebook*”) and provides guidance to countries on sustainable waste management systems, including the construction of new water supply and sanitation infrastructure, expanding distribution networks, which include gravity fed systems, boreholes, rain water systems, household sanitation facilities, and decentralized waste water management and treatment systems. UN-Habitat is also engaged in supporting low carbon plans for urban basic services in the context of the New Urban Agenda, including developing urban mobility, energy, and waste management services. In this respect, UN-Habitat will scale up its guidance and technical services offered to countries and their local governments.

#### *Outcome 4: Effective adaptation of cities’ infrastructure to climate change*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 9, 11, and 13.*

A Special Report on Global Warming released by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in October 2018 warns that the earth’s surface has warmed 1°C - enough to lift oceans and unleash a crescendo of deadly storms, floods, and droughts. At current levels of greenhouse gas emissions, the IPCC Report projects that temperatures were likely to rise by 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052, resulting in increased sea-level rise, threatening coastal urbanization, and climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth.

Since a large portion of cities are located on shorelines of water bodies, urban residents are especially vulnerable to climate change. Approximately 360 million of these urban residents live in coastal areas less than 10 meters above sea level and will be directly affected by the forecasted sea level rise and natural disaster such as floods. Fifteen (15) of the world’s 20 megacities are at risk from rising sea levels

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank 2018

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 65, *New Urban Agenda*

<sup>15</sup> Paragraph 74, *New Urban Agenda*

and coastal surges. Cities are also homes to concentrations of populations that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and health associated factors, particularly in informal settlements,<sup>16</sup> where housing construction materials are often not robust enough to withstand surging seas, wind storms, and flooding caused by climate change.

To help cities and human settlements adapt to climate change, UN-Habitat, working with partners, will build on several areas of comparative advantage. Firstly, the Agency will continue its efforts to base planning on vulnerability analyses to reduce the exposure of populations to climate-related hazards such as flooding and landslides, as well as to address a broader set of natural and manmade hazards. Secondly, the Agency will follow pro-poor approaches to building climate resilience in marginalized neighborhoods and informal settlements, even while helping cities to integrate such communities into city-wide urban systems. Thirdly, drawing on UN-Habitat's national-local mandate and convening power, multi-level governance approaches will be promoted so that national governments empower local governments to take climate action through improved frameworks with strong national and local collaboration.

#### Domain of Change 4: Effective urban crises prevention and response

Crises induced by rapid and unplanned urbanization, climate change, natural disasters, conflict or other human made disasters, are increasingly urban and protracted. Migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons now seek safety, access to services and livelihoods predominantly in urban areas rather than camps. On average, more than 80 percent of refugee crises last for ten years or more, 40 percent last 20 years or more, and conflict-related internal displacement lasts 23 years.<sup>17</sup> These crises are increasingly urban, with 60 percent of the global refugee population hosted in cities;<sup>18</sup> and concentrated in developing countries. Urbanization rates, fueled by migration and displacement, are often the highest in countries affected by crises with weak systems, institutions, and capacities.

Effective urban crises prevention involves risk and conflict sensitive approaches to urban development. Well-planned and well-managed urbanization has the potential to create built environments that are more resilient and socially stable, that can overcome drivers of conflict and reduce risks. If crises do occur, it is key to base humanitarian response on a proper shared understanding of the urban crises environment, to empower the local stakeholders, and especially local governments, and to focus on fast tracking recovery and a return to more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban development trajectories.

The complexity of urban settings requires adjusting both humanitarian and development responses. New alliances between national and local governments built environment professionals, academics and humanitarian and development organizations, and international financial institutions are crucial to drive an agenda of systemic change, as set out by the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

This Domain of Change translates into four inter-related outcomes, relevant to both crisis prevention and crisis response:

1. Increased security of tenure and protecting land, housing and property rights;
2. Enhanced social cohesion and inclusive planning for conflict prevention and recovery;
3. Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons;

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<sup>16</sup> IPCC 2014; One in seven of the world's population lives in slums and informal settlements (SDI 2018)

<sup>17</sup> Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile (September 2015) See: <<https://www.odi.org/publications/9906-protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-self-reliance-exile>>

<sup>18</sup> Flier: Adapting to Urban Specificities – Report on Humanitarian Action in Urban Crises,” Brussels

#### 4. Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure.

##### *Outcome 1: Increased security of tenure and protecting land, housing and property rights*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 1, 5, 10, and 11.*

This outcome can contribute to peace and stability, can help to prevent forced displacement and facilitate social and economic inclusion. Land is often a root cause and driver of conflict and poorly managed land can be a bottleneck to development. Lack of secure tenure often complicates humanitarian support. Tenure documentation may be lost, destroyed, or may never have been issued, such as in informal settlements. Lack of tenure security exposes vulnerable populations to a wide range of protection issues, including further displacement

Addressing Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights early on in a crisis situation is often critical to allow for early voluntary return or local integration. HLP rights are a critical component of durable solutions for forced displacement, enabling affected populations to return home, remain where they are and access basic rights, or to move to a location of their choice.<sup>19</sup>

This is where UN-Habitat adds value at a critical juncture; through applying principles of the land tenure continuum<sup>20</sup>, and building the basis for fit-for-purpose land administration systems. A key role for UN-Habitat is to continue to catalyze a UN system-wide approach towards a more coherent and sustained engagement at scale on land and conflict across the conflict cycle.

##### *Outcome 2: Enhanced social cohesion and inclusive planning for conflict prevention and recovery*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 9, 10, 11, and 16.*

Inclusive engagement of all segments of society, and especially women, children, youth, and older persons as well as vulnerable groups; including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons in the planning and management of cities and communities can ensure more equitable access to public space, basic services, infrastructure and livelihood opportunities. This can help to contribute to overall stability and social cohesion, reducing the risk of more wide-scale conflicts.

Adapted urban planning approaches can help to guide incremental decision-making on appropriate humanitarian and development responses to crises. This allows for more area-based, multi-sectoral and integrated responses, which leverage the social capital of all urban stakeholders, including that of community groups and the private sector. It is critical to empower local governments and provide them with the capacity to promote social cohesion and resilient recovery. UN-Habitat will achieve this by creating urban specific recovery frameworks, tools and approaches, building on the existing systems, mobilizing networks of urban stakeholders and rebuilding social fabrics.

This is a key outcome area, where UN-Habitat's urban expertise can contribute to broader results of conflict prevention and fast-tracking recovery, working closely with a wide range of actors.

##### *Outcome 3: Improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons*

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/themes/housing-land-and-property/>

<sup>20</sup> "The land tenure continuum offers an alternative approach to the dominant focus on titling of individually held private property as the ultimate form of tenure security, or the end goal of land tenure reforms. It promotes recognition and increase of security across the continuum, with opportunity for movement or transformation between different tenure forms" from informal and formal forms of occupancy recognition to documented rights. (UN-Habitat 2016, Framework for evaluating the continuum of land rights scenarios)

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 8, 10, 11, and 16.*

Migration is part of the DNA of cities. It is important, therefore, to make migration work for cities and to make cities work for migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons. Access to affordable housing, basic services, health, education and to decent jobs are common challenges encountered by migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons in cities. Rapid inflow of populations, if not properly managed using a human-rights based approach, can result in acute shocks to city systems and consequent breakdowns, including in social cohesion.

As forced displacement into urban areas is increasingly protracted, integrated urban development strategies should address the needs of both host communities and the displaced, overcoming both chronic and acute vulnerabilities. As such, managing urban displacement needs to be seen as part of managing urban growth, avoiding further growth of informal settlements and building more inclusive sustainable cities and territories. This requires strengthening the collection of data and information, particularly disaggregated data, and the adoption of appropriate housing responses and integration into urban development strategies.

UN-Habitat has a key role to play in supporting local governments to manage urban displacement. In cases when camp-like environments are inevitably needed due to the scale and pace of incoming displaced persons, UN-Habitat contributes its expertise on planning camps as future urban extensions with adequate urban planning standards and suitable tenure arrangements for later transformation into neighborhoods.

UN-Habitat can build further on its strong experience and expertise and focus on more strategic partnerships with the key humanitarian and development actors, as part of the implementation of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees and the New Urban Agenda.

#### *Outcome 4: Enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure*

*Contributes to the following SDGs: 9, 11, and 13.*

Urban resilience refers to the ability of cities and human settlements to resist and recover from shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards a more sustainable urban system. A resilient city assesses, plans, and acts to prepare for and respond to all hazards, either sudden or slow-onset, expected or unexpected. Appropriate urban recovery frameworks can facilitate and accelerate the transition from crisis response to recovery and a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future. They provide important opportunities to remedy the underlying risks and vulnerabilities.

UN-Habitat's resilience assessments and profiling are key to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems, as a basis to design proactive measures to make cities, neighborhoods and communities more resilient to future shocks, and to support the principle of building back better, when a crisis does occur. These include, for instance, reviewing building norms and their enforcement, introducing or reinforcing planning restrictions in locations of risk, upgrading basic infrastructure, and re-planning destroyed areas. UN-Habitat's expertise in urban resilience can also help align humanitarian and development responses.

## **2.4 Social inclusion dimensions and crosscutting thematic areas**

The Strategic Plan 2020–2025 presents a departure from previous strategies in the way it addresses some foundational areas of work that are fundamental to the achievement of the development agendas, including the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Plan approaches these overarching organizational priorities that must underpin all areas of work that UN-Habitat carries out, along two tracks: that of social inclusion, which entails human rights, gender, age, and disability; and that of cross-cutting thematic areas: resilience and safety.<sup>21</sup> Both these tracks provide a transversal connection through all the domains of change and their respective outcomes.

#### 2.4.1 Social inclusion dimensions: Human rights, gender, age and disability

These dimensions are critical for the fulfillment of the UN's commitment that no one is left behind, working towards a situation in which everyone can benefit from the transformative effects of sustainable urbanization.

##### *Human rights*

Approaching urbanization without a human rights focus can widen inequalities and exacerbate various forms of exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination. The 2030 Agenda confirms the commitment to a “world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity”<sup>22</sup>, and the New Urban Agenda is “ground in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties.”<sup>23</sup> UN-Habitat Governing Council resolutions have further affirmed the grounding of UN-Habitat's work within the international human rights system.<sup>24</sup>

Human rights, therefore, inform and interconnect all the outcomes of this Strategic Plan. Through its normative and operational work, UN-Habitat adopts a human rights based approach, aiming to contribute to the realization of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, including the Right to Adequate Housing<sup>25</sup> and the Right to Water and Sanitation,<sup>26</sup> as well as related principles, such as non-discrimination and equality, access to information, participation, and accountability.<sup>27</sup>

For example, reduced poverty and spatial inequality includes outcomes related to equal access to basic and social services as well as access to land and public space. Such access must be equal in both law and practice, and must be non-discriminatory based on gender, age, ethnicity, ability, and other factors. The Right to Adequate Housing is based on fundamental freedoms for rights holders, such as protection against forced evictions as well entitlements, including security of tenure and equal and non-discriminatory access to basic services. Efforts to facilitate social integration and inclusive communities must have human rights standards at their core to realize the full benefits of diversity and promote and protect all residents' rights.

As such, urbanization can only be sustainable if it is human rights-based, and living conditions can only be improved for all if everyone's human rights are comprehensively promoted and protected. As evidence indicates, narrow, discretionary measures addressing symptoms of poverty rather than its

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<sup>21</sup> As part of the previous Strategic Plan, these issues were described as “crosscutting issues” and presented a mix of rights-based and people-focused issues (gender, youth and human rights) and a thematic area (climate change), resulting in a less than cohesive approach across UN-Habitat.

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 8, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>23</sup> See for example Paragraphs 12 and 126, *New Urban Agenda* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>24</sup> In 2013 for example, human rights mainstreaming was approved as a priority issue through its inclusion in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan in the context of Resolution 24/5.

<sup>25</sup> Part of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living contained in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights, as well as other such treaties.

<sup>26</sup> As recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2010 through Resolution 64/292.

<sup>27</sup> All of which are enshrined in the international human rights instruments. See also <https://unhabitat.org/books/the-human-rights-in-cities-handbook-series-volume-i-the-human-rights-based-approach-to-housing-and-slum-upgrading/>

systemic economic, social, and spatial causes, will not produce the ambitious results called for by the 2030 Agenda.<sup>28</sup>

To realize these rights, UN-Habitat will particularly build partnerships with other entities playing an active role in the UN human rights system to draw from their expertise and to shape the discourse and support the advancement of new and existing laws, policies, standards, and practices for sustainable urban development which promote and protect the rights of those most at risk of marginalization. Further, UN-Habitat is able to base its engagement with the private sector on human rights principles, and specifically the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Global Compact, to better maximize the Agency's outreach and impact.

### *Gender*

"The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities."<sup>29</sup> Gender discrimination can further intersect with, and compound, discrimination on other grounds, such as ethnicity, migration status, and age, among others, and thus exacerbates the marginalization of certain groups, curtailing their abilities to fully participate in and benefit from sustainable urban development.

The New Urban Agenda envisages gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,<sup>30</sup> and emphasizes the need for gender-responsiveness in all aspects of sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat, too, has a long-standing track record of promoting the mainstreaming and programmatic prioritization of gender in all of its work.<sup>31</sup>

UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 therefore builds on this key work in the four Domains of Change with the goal of achieving gender equality in accessing the benefits of sustainable urban development in line with UN standards. For example, enhanced shared prosperity in cities and regions can only be achieved if women and girls have equal access to decent jobs and livelihoods; meanwhile, effective crisis prevention and response requires that women and girls have access to secure housing and land property rights; and improved living standards and the inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons would be impossible to realize unless viewed through a gendered lens.

UN-Habitat will continue and strengthen its strong partnerships on this area with governments at all levels, the UN system, in particular UN Women, non-governmental partners, civil society, as well as the Advisory Group on Gender Issues, an independent advisory body to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

### *Age*

The focus on different age groups presents another improvement from the previous Strategic Plan, where much of the emphasis was on working with youth. Building on the important results it has already achieved in the context of youth empowerment and inclusion, UN-Habitat aims to expand the scope of its work to consider the full age spectrum in sustainable urban development, including giving specific attention and consideration to the concerns of children and older people, who can be vulnerable to discrimination in the urban setting and often excluded from access to housing, urban basic services, public spaces and infrastructure, and the benefits that well planned and managed sustainable urbanization can bring.

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<sup>28</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Report on World Social Situation 2013: Inequality Matters*, 2013 <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/world-social-situation-2013.html>

<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 20, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>30</sup> Paragraphs 13 (c), *New Urban Agenda* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>31</sup> See for example GC resolutions 16/6, 20/7, 24/4 etc

The particular needs and vulnerabilities of older persons as well as children, in addition to youth, have been highlighted throughout the 2030 Agenda<sup>32</sup>, as well as the New Urban Agenda, which calls for “age-and gender-responsive approaches” and makes repeated references to the needs of older persons and children, as well as youth.<sup>33</sup> SDG 11 additionally includes two specific targets that highlight the needs of children and older people for safe, affordable, accessible transport systems and public spaces, among other specific targets.<sup>34</sup>

UN-Habitat works with national and local governments, as well as other key partners including civil society, representatives of these age-specific groups, the private sector, relevant UN system bodies, and the UN-Habitat Youth Advisory Board (a body of elected youth representatives who work towards increased participation of youth in UN-Habitat’s work, advice on youth matters and engagement of youth in sustainable urban development, in line with the Secretary-General’s Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy, which is the UN’s strategy to engage with and empower youth<sup>35</sup>). The Agency will further expand these partnerships to ensure the full consideration of the age spectrum and the children and older persons constituencies.

### *Disability*

Research indicates that 15 percent of the world’s population is comprised of persons with disabilities<sup>36</sup>. Disability, similar to gender and age, may be a compounding factor in the context of intersectional discrimination and exclusion, placing a person already vulnerable to exclusion, for example a female refugee, at additional risk to be prevented from accessing affordable housing or urban basic services. This exclusion is evidenced by the fact that more than 80 percent of persons with disabilities live in poverty.<sup>37</sup> As such, sustainable urban development, including in the context of poverty reduction, can only be achieved if persons with disabilities are included meaningfully in decision-making and are able to access their rights.

The New Urban Agenda recognizes the multiple forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities<sup>38</sup> and thus emphasizes their rights and the need for their effective inclusion and access to sustainable urban development, including in the context of the right to an adequate standard of living.<sup>39</sup>

SDG 11 has two specific targets that focus on persons with disabilities, namely in the context of public transport, where special attention is requested to the needs of persons in vulnerable situations, as well as public spaces. Therefore, UN-Habitat will focus on mainstreaming the rights and experiences of persons with disabilities across its work.

UN-Habitat will partner with national and local governments, relevant UN bodies and civil society and rights holders to maximize impact and to meaningfully engage with this group, including through ensuring accessibility in the Agency’s own events and meetings.

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<sup>32</sup> See for example Paragraphs 23 and 25: *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>33</sup> See Paragraph 32 as well as Paragraphs 20, 113, 134, *New Urban Agenda* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>34</sup> See SDG 11, Targets 11.2 and 11.7

<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/>

<sup>36</sup> See for example: Handicap International, *Disability and Development*, [http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap\\_Developpement/www/en\\_page21.html](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap_Developpement/www/en_page21.html)

<sup>37</sup> Paragraphs 23, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>38</sup> Paragraph 20, *New Urban Agenda* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>38</sup> See for example GC resolutions 16/6, 20/7, 24/4 etc

<sup>39</sup> Paragraph 31, *New Urban Agenda* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

## 2.4.2 Crosscutting thematic areas: Resilience and safety

### *Resilience*

Building the resilience of people, communities, and systems is one of the key goals of UN-Habitat's work as informed by the 2030 Agenda and SDG 11, calling for resilient cities and human settlements.<sup>40</sup> The link between resilience and development is also illustrated in the New Urban Agenda, which, for example, emphasizes the need for resilient urban basic services, housing, and infrastructure.

UN-Habitat already has a wealth of experience on urban resilience, for example through its Urban Resilience Hub and the City Resilience Profiling Programme. Building on the need to integrate resilience throughout its programmes and projects, resilience is considered in the Strategic Plan as an important transversal issue that connects all of UN-Habitat's work. For example, all efforts towards adapting communities and infrastructure to climate change must be carried out with the aim of increasing the resilience, with a particular focus on ensuring the inclusion of marginalized and informal communities, to climate-related shocks. Likewise, improving the living standards and effective participation of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons must also improve their resilience, which will thus contribute to effective urban crisis response.

UN-Habitat has several key partnerships working on resilience, such as the Making Cities Resilient Campaign and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, which it aims to strengthen and expand during the period of this Strategic Plan. Other key partners include national and local governments, UN system partners such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the private sector, research institutions, and civil society. UN-Habitat will deepen its work with marginalized and informal communities to ensure their inclusion in resilience and climate adaptation strategies.

### *Safety*

Safety is of key relevance in the 2030 Agenda, which aims for “a world free of fear and violence” “where human habitats are safe”<sup>41</sup> including SDG 11, which aims for safe cities with specific targets on safe transport, including public transport and safe green and public spaces.<sup>42</sup> The New Urban Agenda, also calls for safe “cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all.”

Recognizing the strategic importance of safety in ensuring overall improved urban living conditions as well as its specific benefits for realizing social and economic development through social inclusion, addressing inequalities, and social and territorial exclusion patterns, UN-Habitat is elevating safety as a transversal issue to be considered across all its Domains of Change and their respective outcomes, with special consideration of the groups detailed above. Safety is considered as a crucial factor to improve standards of living and the inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons; only if such groups are safe can they meaningfully participate in decision-making. Safety intersects with social inclusion aspects related to sustainable mobility, effective access and use of public space and basic services and fostering social cohesion and integration. It is also important for the promotion and preservation of productive and competitive cities, decent jobs and livelihoods. Studies have proven strong statistical relationship between crime, violence and increased inequality and the role that the concentration of disadvantages in specific parts of the city – a expression of spatial inequality – plays in exacerbating different forms of criminality. Safety also disproportionately affects women and the youth, leading to diminished outcomes in terms of development and prosperity.

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<sup>40</sup> See for example Paragraph 7, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>41</sup> Paragraph 7, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>42</sup> SDG 11, Targets 11.2 and 11.7



Based on its experience in promoting urban safety through its Safer Cities Programme and its leadership position in the UN system on the issue, UN-Habitat is in a strong position to mainstream safety issues throughout its work as well as to ensure continued programmatic and project-based focus on the key role of safety in sustainable urban development. Strategic partnerships will include national and local governments, UN system partners such as UNODC, UNICEF, UN Women, civil society and stakeholders, including rights-holding groups, research institutions, and the private sector.

### 2.4.3 Modalities of implementing, monitoring and evaluating social inclusion issues and crosscutting thematic areas

Through the Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019, UN-Habitat approached the previous crosscutting issues through the two-track approach of mainstreaming and issue-specific projects. As a result, significant progress has already been made towards setting up programmes and systems across the agency to ensure for effective rights- and issue-based mainstreaming and prioritization and a more cohesive and integrated approach by UN-Habitat. Targeted programmes have led, for instance, to the establishment of One-Stop Youth Centres and other effective field operations with gender and youth projects.

The creation of a Crosscutting Marker System that assesses cross-cutting activities in all projects and programmes providing appropriate recommendations has proven effective in mainstreaming strategic areas of the Agency. This project support and issue-specific projects will therefore continue to play an important role in this Strategic Plan. Supported by key enablers, such as data, systems, innovation, partnerships, interagency collaboration and communications, social inclusion dimensions and cross-cutting thematic areas will be further reinforced. This is the case, for instance, with the systematic disaggregation of data by income, age, sex, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographic location, and other relevant characteristics as indicated in the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda that will be strengthened across all of UN-Habitat's work. Likewise, advocacy and outreach will be strengthened, particularly through strategic engagement opportunities such as the UN-Habitat Governing Council Meetings, Ministerial Conferences and the World Urban Forum. Internal capacity development through formal trainings and informal information events will also be scaled up ensuring increased reach to regional and country offices.

Lessons learnt from the previous cross cutting issues pointed towards challenges around measurability, monitoring, and evaluation as well as funding and buy-in. It is further evident that the Agency's capacity to meaningfully address the social inclusion dimensions, in particular, must be radically strengthened to fulfill its ambitious objectives.

Additionally, indicators for the proposed outcomes in this Strategic Plan under each domain of change take into account social inclusion parameters. Clear and explicit outputs for each social inclusion dimension / thematic area have also been developed and integrated with the domains of change for improved monitoring and evaluation.

## 2.5 Drivers of change

The Strategic Plan presents a method and a framework that describes why and how a desired change is expected to happen, understanding that this transformation is a multi-year journey. Drivers of change are specific elements that work together and are required to deliver services and products that will lead to change or drive results and ultimately lead to the achievement of the objectives of the Strategic Plan; they also represent UN-Habitat's main functional competencies.

The New Urban Agenda identifies 4 fundamental drivers of change.

These are:

1. Policy;
2. Planning;
3. Governance, institutions and legislation; and
4. Financing mechanisms.

These drivers are context specific, and UN-Habitat will support cities and countries to develop their own successful 'recipes' for deploying them, and overcoming the barriers that might prevent their full implementation.

### 2.5.1 Policy

Within the context of urbanization, national governments in all countries must place urban policy at the core of the highest levels of policy analysis (macroeconomic, social, spatial) and debate. National urban policies, specifically, bring together the otherwise disjointed energies and potential of urban centres within national systems of cities and as part of urban and territorial planning. These are excellent instruments not just for resource allocation across cities but also to redress social inequalities within and between urban areas, establish synergetic connections between the dynamics of urbanization and the overall process of national development, recognizing the importance of fostering mutually reinforcing rural-urban linkages and leveraging these linkages for sustainable development.

UN-Habitat will work with countries to develop and implement urban policies at the appropriate level, including in local national and multi-stakeholder partnerships, build integrated systems of cities and human settlements and promote cooperation among all levels of government to enable the achievement of sustainable integrated urban development.

### 2.5.2 Planning

Urban planning is more than a technical tool, it is an integrative and political participatory process that addresses and helps to reconcile competing interests about the city form and functionality within a sustainable urbanization perspective. As a driver of change, urban planning needs to work at the service of the public good, representing collective values and agreements, with development plans and solutions that address pressing needs of cities, while at the same time maximizing their comparative advantages. It must be a central component of the renewed urban governance paradigm, which promotes local democracy, participation and inclusion and transparency, with a view to ensuring sustainable urbanization and spatial quality.

Well-planned cities and human settlements can optimize economies of agglomeration and increase densities. UN-Habitat will promote well-planned cities and human settlements to optimize economies of agglomeration, increase densities when necessary, generate mixed land uses, protect the natural and built environment, promote public spaces with vibrant streets, and encourage social diversity, integration and cohesion. UN-Habitat will reinvigorate long-term and integrated urban and territorial planning and design in order to optimize the spatial dimension of the urban form and deliver the positive outcomes of urbanization.

### 2.5.3 Governance, institutions and legislation

Weak institutions and poor governance mechanisms increase the risk of low performance, waste of resources, inefficient sectoral interventions and overall lack of progress. Proper institutions and governance mechanisms, both formal (constitution, laws and regulations) and informal (social norms, customs and traditions), together determine how people, organizations and firms make decisions of an economic, social and political nature, maximizing potentials and optimizing resources. Urban governance encompasses the different ways by which public and private institutions and individuals participate in the planning and management of the common affairs of the city; and the processes used for effectively realizing the short- and long-term agenda of a city's development. Urban governance can deliver sustainable development when it is environmentally-friendly, participatory, accountable, transparent, effective, equitable and inclusive. UN-Habitat will work with national and local governments to strengthen urban governance, with sound institutions and mechanisms that empower and include urban stakeholders, as well as appropriate checks and balances, providing predictability and coherence in urban development plans to enable social inclusion, sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and environmental protection.

A clear and transparent legal framework for urban development further establishes suitable rules and regulation systems that respond to real needs, actual capacities, and available resources. It can provide a solid, forward-looking framework to guide urban development, which is based on accountability, the rule of law, clear implementation mechanisms, and can be continuously enforced as part of efforts to harness the transformative force of urbanization. The Agency will promote relevant legislation including those based on equity considerations that leave no one and no area behind, which in turn reduces poverty and enhances shared prosperity; relevant building and urban regulations designed to strengthen climate action and improved urban environment, as well as address effective urban crisis and prevention and response.

### 2.5.4 Financing mechanisms

Financing mechanisms are a powerful driver of change of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The ability of national and local governments to mobilize, sequence and make effective use of a wide variety of financial sources and instruments is central for the achievement of the sustainable development agenda. More and more countries and cities are aiming to use an increasingly diverse set of instruments, such as blended finance, impact investment, public-private partnerships, borrowing, bond issuances and others. New schemes such as C40 Finance Facility and the Climate Adaptation Finance are opening novel opportunities for funding. Country/city ownership, multi-stakeholder partnership and higher accountability are critical in the use of these funds. Development finance by bilateral and multilateral funds should support innovative projects, pilot interventions and critical capital investments. These funds should be climate-sensitive, connected to environmentally sound activities and founded on human rights principles.

UN-Habitat will work with countries to support effective, innovative and sustainable financing frameworks and instruments, enable strengthened municipal finance and local fiscal systems in order to create, sustain and share the value generated by sustainable urban development in an inclusive manner.

## 2.6 Organizational performance enablers

**Organizational performance enablers** are means, structures, conditions, knowledge and opportunities needed within UN-Habitat for the Organization to provide the necessary guidance and expertise on the drivers, and to accomplish the expected results and achieve progress towards the outcome areas of the Strategic Plan. Thus, these organizational enablers render the Agency capable to operate better. While developing its internal efforts and expertise in these areas, the Agency will also stand ready to similarly support Member States, sub-national and local governments, and other partners, to develop their organizational enablers and thus drive sustainable urban development.

The Strategic Plan of UN-Habitat has identified 6 **Organizational performance enablers** that will create the conditions for the Agency to support the desired change elaborated in this document:

1. Data, knowledge, and advocacy;
2. Partnerships & interagency collaboration;
3. Innovations;
4. Communication;
5. Systems and processes; and
6. Capacity development.

The following examples are illustrative of the use of enablers in different activities of UN-Habitat:

- The use of data to support the formulation of territorial investment plans for regional infrastructure.
- The development of an innovative digital platform to enhance citizens' participation in the performance of public policies.
- A new strategic partnership with a private sector company to design and implement demonstration projects on climate change mitigation in cities.
- To create a new systems and processes for instance: efficient recruitment; programme planning monitoring, and reporting; simplified procurement, etc.
- To create awareness and communication packages to improve access and use of basic and social services.
- To develop interagency collaboration to put in place youth centres as incubators to expand access to better livelihoods.

An *enabler* is thus more than the existing environment in which the Agency operates; it is a precondition that allows for greater efficiency, higher powers and better conditions for transformative actions.

### 2.6.1 Data, knowledge, and advocacy

All types of data – small, big, spatial, national and local, disaggregated – and related resources, including analytical capacities and leadership in the use of the information, are critical for data and knowledge to work as an *enabler* supporting change. By adopting an incremental and inclusive approach to the creation of user-friendly and participatory data platforms and databases, as proposed by the UN

Secretary General in the Quadrennial Report on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda (2018), it is possible to conceive data and knowledge as a critical resource for change.<sup>43</sup>

Effective advocacy can enable UN-Habitat to shape public opinion on sustainable urban development, support change systems, and promote specific causes in support of this change. As a driver of change, advocacy contributes to focusing the attention of key interlocutors on the Strategic Plan, reaffirming the focal point and catalyzing role ascribed to UN-Habitat with a strong narrative and compelling arguments. The transformative nature of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and the strong idea that its realization requires a collective undertaking, requires that UN-Habitat, UN agencies and partners speak with one coherent voice; advocacy, in this sense, can strengthen credibility and reinforce partners' coordination, ultimately influencing actions, thoughts and beliefs, bringing together different actors and segments of society.

## 2.6.2 Partnerships, including interagency collaboration

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agreement, and Bussan Declaration all emphasized partnerships as key enablers for development. The 2030 Agenda revitalized a global partnership as an essential vehicle for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, partnerships are at the centre of SDG 11 on the means of implementation.

The breadth and depth of partnership are expanding, and although their effectiveness depends on many factors, including their ability to manage and share knowledge and expertise about the issues, processes, and solutions they are promoting.<sup>45</sup> The multidisciplinary nature of urbanization calls for a holistic approach with multi-stakeholders working together on both general and specific issues and making cross-sectoral linkages at all levels.<sup>46</sup>

In recent years, renewed multilateral and international efforts, including UN system-wide coordination, have contributed to shaping policies that are crucial for the sustainability of the planet and the implementation of agreed agendas and initiatives. Following recommendations made by the High-Level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence in the Areas of Development (2006), based on the experience of the MDGs, and the current implementation and follow-up and review of the 2030 Development Agenda, it is imperative to carry forward the spirit of partnership and participation of the UN Agencies in the pursuit of sustainable urbanization.<sup>47</sup>

Interagency collaboration will bring greater synergy, cooperation and coherence to better articulate the domains of change, the respective outcomes and the various outputs in a more integrated and cohesive manner.

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<sup>43</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, Progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, ECOSOC, GA, May 2018, New York.

<sup>44</sup> United Nations (2015) *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Goal 17, New York.

<sup>45</sup> UNDESA (2015) *Partnerships for the SDGs: A legacy review towards realizing the 2030 Agenda*, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/publication/partnerships-a-legacy-review>

<sup>46</sup> UN-Habitat (2016) *The UN Habitat Partner Strategy 2016-2019*, Nairobi.

<sup>47</sup> 'Working as One', the UN system needs to coordinate their efforts and align their experience to deliver concrete results in support of the Governments' efforts to implement these agendas.

The momentum generated with the involvement of 24 UN agencies for the preparation of Habitat III, the submission of a UN System-Wide Strategy on urbanization and sustainable development to the UN Executive Board,<sup>48</sup> and the participation of nearly 20 UN agencies in the preparation of the Quadrennial Report and the Synthesis Report for Goal 11, provide an excellent basis for further engagement and participation. Within the framework of the Secretary-General's UN Reform, the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Framework for Sustainable Development, prepared by UN-Habitat, defines the strategy to establish cross-sectoral partnerships in support of a holistic response. Working to significantly improve engagements in UN Country Teams, Regional Coordination mechanisms and UNDG processes,<sup>49</sup> the Strategic Plan aims to optimize the UN System's contributions, combining specialized expertise of each agency, drawing in their own comparative advantages.

### 2.6.3 Innovations

UN-Habitat needs to put in place the adequate institutional, managerial and financial conditions for innovation to flourish and become a key enabler designing and deploying the drivers of change. It is only when innovation is part of everyone's job across the organization, and when innovative solutions are used by everyone, that innovation becomes a key enabler for development.

UN-Habitat could consider creating 'innovation teams' a part of the implementation scheme of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Drawing from the experience of the Urban Planning and Design Lab, these teams will deploy specific tools and methods, evaluate new innovative ideas and the possibility to implement them, assess specific strengths of people and the potential of existing processes to be improved and transform into innovative solutions.

### 2.6.4 Communication

Communication is a key enabler of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 that connects directly with advocacy and other drivers to support the realization of planned results (outcomes and domains of change). It goes beyond providing simple data and information, and it aims to articulate more elaborated messages and narratives based on a deep understanding of people and partners, their demands and motivations.

UN-Habitat has an important experience in creating communication tools and packages on what the Agency is doing and what it is achieving in different cities and countries around the world, although reporting in transformative change and impact is an area to be improved. The Agency has a track record of amplifying the voices of decision-makers, citizens, slum-dwellers, community groups, and other partners working in urban development, as testified by major conferences as the World Urban Forum.

### 2.6.5 Systems and processes

UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2025 embraces systems and process management as a fundamental *enabler*. Any change in institutions is confronted by resistance and inertia in their internal

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<sup>48</sup> United Nations System (2015) *Urbanization and Sustainable Development: Towards a New United Nations Urban Agenda*, CEB High-Level Committee on Programmes, Agenda Item 6: New UN Urban Agenda, New York.

<sup>49</sup> The Inter-Agency Coordination Framework proposes to incorporate SUD in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), and mainstream it into regional and sub-regional policies and strategic plans/frameworks, such as the Africa Union Agenda 2063, the Regional Economic Communities, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

processes and systems. The design and adaptation of UN-Habitat systems and processes to the Strategic Plan involves more than rearranging work flows and general conditions.

It requires the development of an experienced and capable team that responds to the new requirements and conditions of the plan; well-planned, robust, flexible and adaptable *processes* that render more effective administration and decision-making; realignment of information systems, so they help cross-functional processes work smoothly rather than simply support projects or units; a results-based management that guides programme planning, monitoring and reporting and evaluation; innovative, adapted and highly secure *technology* that supports the operation of day-to-day work of various organizational units; knowledge management to address barriers in systems and processes that have provided limited support to increase performance and deliver better results.<sup>50</sup> In support to the development of information and knowledge platforms (i.e. PAAS, Best Practice database, information portal, social media, etc.), this *enabler* will support an integrated knowledge process to better achieve desired transformations, connecting knowledge to attitude, behavior changes and policy decisions.

### 2.6.6 Capacity development

Capacity development and training is an important enabler of change. It creates and strengthens the ability of UN-Habitat, governments at different levels and partners organizations to plan, manage, execute and monitor policies, programs and projects at all levels. Capacity development (including training) is the means to ground the Agency's normative products, trigger innovations and support long-term institutional transformation at country level. It is comprised of a set of activities focusing on the development of skills, know-how, knowledge, tools and innovative approaches that enable individuals and organizations to understand, analyze and propose solutions to daunting urban challenges facing cities and urbanization. It is therefore an enabler of organizations and individuals alike, but it is also the enabler of policy implementation, organizational and institutional change and transformative actions on the group

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<sup>50</sup> UN-Habitat Knowledge Management Strategy 2015

# Annex 1: The UN-Habitat theory of change

