Briefing on the status of resolutions during the 2011-2012 biennium

Addendum XX

UN-Habitat

Global Housing Strategy

Framework Document

Housing and Slum Upgrading Branch

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE
Summary

UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy (GHS) is a collaborative global movement towards adequate housing for all and improving housing and living conditions of slum dwellers. Its main objective is to assist member states in working towards the realization of the right to adequate housing.

To achieve the goal of adequate housing for all, the backbone of the Strategy will rely on the principles of inclusive cities as the sound foundations for sustainable urban development. Inclusive cities are achieved by mainstreaming human rights in urban development, including housing and slum upgrading, to ensure social integration, aiming for elimination of urban divide.

The aim is that member states develop their National Housing Strategies. A National Habitat Strategy, as a pillar of the National Urban Policy, is a process of agreed sets of activities formalized in Strategy documents and their updates, which guide polices, planning, and programming of investment, management and maintenance activities in the area of housing, and slum upgrading and prevention. These need to be formulated with full involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Housing Strategies, at national and city levels, are inseparable from land-use strategies, infrastructure strategies, including mobility and local economic development strategies, all integrated in the broad, participatory and inclusive urban planning and management process, within the supportive legal and regulatory framework.

The expected outcomes of the UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy will (re)position housing within the global contemporary debate on economically viable, environmentally and culturally sustainable and socially inclusive cities. Furthermore, several critical outcomes are to be achieved such as: a paradigm shift in thinking and practice in housing policy; Contributing to the global discourse and definition of the post Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Redefined role of governments beyond enablement, to reassuming a leadership role in encouraging pro-poor performance of the markets, facilitating and supporting demand capabilities of economically weakest sectors of the society; systemic reforms promoted to enable wider accessibility to adequate housing, with a variety of housing solutions matching effective demands; Strengthened linkages of housing with other parts of the economy and ensued economic development, employment generation and poverty reduction; decentralization of housing production and empowerment of different actors and modalities of housing development; increased use of sustainable building and neighbourhood designs and technologies towards more cost-effective, flexible and energy-efficient solutions. Most importantly to impact significantly and measurably on the improvement of housing and living conditions of a large proportion of population aiming at poverty reduction.

1. What is UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy (GHS)?

UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy (GHS) is a collaborative global movement towards adequate housing for all and improving housing and living conditions of slum dwellers. Its main objective is to assist member states in working towards the realization of the right to adequate housing.

The document is organized in 10 sections. To be easy to use, and relevant to large variety of national and local contexts, it is kept short and relatively general. Specificity and practical details are incorporated by references to selected thematic practical “how to do it” publications, of UN-HABITAT and its partners, based on global comparative knowledge and on specific “hands-on” experience.
2. Why do we need it?

The unprecedented multiplication of slums, and of other informal settlements, is the physical manifestations in cities of a chronic lack of adequate and affordable housing resulting from inadequate public urban policies, with over 860 million people living now in slums. This is an increase from 725 million in the year 2000, despite all the efforts that have improved living conditions of 230 million slum dwellers. The net growth of slums was more than the improvement. With the exception of a few success stories, globally, there is an urgent need to revisit housing and slum improvement in today’s realities.

Given this situation, a pro-poor housing policy is a very important element of a country development strategy.

When adequately developed it can be a major source of local employment, and can act as development multiplier, benefitting different related complementary industries.

A variety of strategies have been tried around the world in the pro-poor housing polices. Some of them have involved a strong cooperation with the private sector, focusing also on the financial support of the tenants, and others were more based on direct construction in the public sector.

Different strategies have been also used in the form of allocating the housing including, full tenure, leasing, renting.

A new series of challenges are emerging with the development of large-scale pro-poor strategies. The most common problem is that the new low income housing areas are too far away from the livelihood means of their population with the corresponding high cost of transportation being too high for the affected families.

The transfers of poor households from slums to new housing areas, mean often also unlawful evictions, as well are breaking down of the preexisting community links in the slum and with their surroundings. The high cost of current basic services at these new locations is also an important concern.

All these shortcomings are showing a too common pattern of building pro-poor housing without proper urban planning, which should care for the urban cohesion of the all in the available space. The projects tend to be too big and in the absence of urban planning the projects run the risk of becoming segregated communities (just for the poor), with very poor contribution to the urban economy and increasing the inequity gap in society.

Predictions, based on robust data and analysis, indicate that the world will become a planet of cities expanding its urban boundaries at a much higher pace than population growth. The debate will be entrenched in current global reality marked by several sustainability challenges:

- **Financial crisis** and world **economic recession** resulting from the housing market crash caused by **uncontrolled credits** without guarantees, the **decreasing availability of financial resources** for development assistance and shrinking public sector funding, all leading to the decrease of housing supply.

- **Urban exclusion** resulting from the growing fragmentation of urban areas exacerbated by: the **insufficient urban planning** in advance and up-to scale; the **lack of coordinated housing policies** impeding a wide range of initiatives; and, the **lack of slum prevention strategies** that would ensure availability of diverse, equitable, adequate and sustainable housing options.
Increasing economic inequalities leading to social polarization with dangers of violent and destructive conflicts, exacerbated by prevailing zoning regulations, and policies that favour single homeownership solutions over other tenure modalities, excluding large portions of the population from accessing adequate housing, resulting in mismatches between supply and affordability, and creating income stratification of the city into large single units of one social class and tenure type, resulting in ghettos and other forms of social exclusion.

Environmental degradation stemming, among others, from urban sprawl characterized by low density suburban development, in some contexts, and the rapid multiplication and persistence of slums and informal settlements, in other contexts, further threatening the sustainability of cities.

Climate change and environmental impacts are increasing urban vulnerabilities, the building sector at large being at present the single largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and accounting for up to one-third of global material resource consumption.

UN-Habitat Global Shelter Strategy to the year 2000 (GSS 2000) has encouraged an enabling approach: shifting housing policies away from an exclusive focus on building houses towards a more comprehensive approach through regulatory measures and public sector incentives to enable and facilitate housing action by a wide range of actors, not just governments alone.

Significant shifts in policies and approaches, and a consequent wealth of empirical research emerged. A wide range of practical applications of the principles of the GSS 2000 policy documents took place in different countries with mixed results. In some countries there was a total retreat of governments from housing, while in others a focus on programmes to boost home ownership to the detriment of rental housing emerged. In others, housing finance institutions and mechanisms to ease access to housing credit were established; city and nationwide slum upgrading programmes combined with sites & services programmes and supply of new plots were created with an emphasis on security of tenure so as to enable individuals and households to invest their savings in housing improvements. During the 1990s, about 150 countries have reported annually to UN-Habitat on their progress in implementing the GSS2000.

Main lessons from the GSS 2000 implementation, and from related developments since the GSS 2000 inception, as summarized in the UN-HABITAT report Regional Reviews and Global Assessment of the GSS 2000, include:

1- Confirmation that focusing government housing polices on creating an “enabling environment” facilitating housing action by a wide range of actors is a valid approach and step in the right direction. This enabling approach was however often linked with the over-optimistic assumption that the “enabled”, deregulated markets will alone respond to housing needs of all income groups, what they failed to do in the majority of cases. Governments’ withdrawal from a direct role in provision of housing and in the markets of key inputs such as land, finance, infrastructure or building materials, and had, in a number of cases, an effect of reduced supply of affordable housing, especially for the poorest. More active role of governments, supported by allocation of necessary resources is needed. 

2- Absence of effective urban planning has profoundly affected availability of affordable housing. Lack of an organizing framework integrating land use and infrastructure planning, including mobility and transportation, has resulted in chaotic urban sprawl, penalizing especially the poor with worsening accessibility to sources of income, services and markets. Lack of planning and of the enabling zoning regulations, which would allow and support mixed land-uses, was detrimental to local economic development.

3- At the same time the “enabling approach” has been often guided by a too narrow understanding of the breadth of polices and areas affecting supply of affordable housing. This has resulted in limiting the areas of reforms of the regulatory framework to
those directly implied in housing production, without sufficient inclusion of urban planning, urban economy, land markets, and fiscal mechanisms which would encourage efficient use of urban land, urban services, public spaces, industries of building materials and components, regulations concerning local economic activities and others.

4- The approach and implementation was also often not responsive to the high variety of needs and priorities of urban poor, women headed households, indigenous people, minority groups, youth and the elderly

5- Too narrow involvement of stakeholders at national, city and local levels, both in terms of breadth of spectrum of stakeholders, and of real participation from the early stages of strategy formulation, resulting in mismatches between needs of the urban population and the resulting urban development.

6- Too much emphasis on documents and reporting as compared to action on the ground.

In sum, while, as already stated above, most of the objectives, rationale and general principles, and the guidelines for action, of the GSS remain valid today; new impetus in our new realities is clearly needed. The GHS is a necessary response to this challenge.


To achieve the goal of adequate housing for all, the backbone of the Strategy will rely on the principles of inclusive cities as the sound foundations for sustainable urban development. Inclusive cities are achieved by mainstreaming human rights in urban development, including housing and slum upgrading, to ensure social integration, aiming for elimination of urban divide. The following main Sustainable Urbanization Prerequisites, based on lessons of the past experience, including the GSS 2000 implementation, will guide the work on housing delivery and slum upgrading and prevention, reflecting the new urban development principles.

The areas listed below are organized in five groups, corresponding respectively to the five levels of housing process: national urbanization prerequisites, city urbanization prerequisites, housing prerequisites, sustainable housing, and housing governance and management, including tenure and maintenance. While such presentation helps to have an overview of the process, it is of course necessarily a simplification. For example, the area of finance is highly relevant at all five levels, as are also areas of land and technologies.

Sustainable Urbanization Prerequisites at the National Level:

1- National Urban Policy: The objective of the National Urban Policy should be to provide the organizing and unifying frameworks for the overall national urban growth strategy. It needs to ensure effective coordination of all government actions towards sustainable urban development, including affordable housing for all and improving of living conditions of slum dwellers. This is to include intersectoral coordination of national government institutions, vertical coordination between various levels of government, concertation with the private sector, civil society organizations, research organizations and academia. Slum upgrading and prevention need to be mainstreamed within the National Urban Policy. The Housing Strategy is a pillar of the National Urban Strategy.

2- National Economic Policy: The National Economic Policy, as it refers to urban development, should support sustainable urbanization, taking advantage of it as a key driving force of national economic development. It should take full advantage of forwards and backwards linkages of the production, improvement and maintenance of housing, and of the enormous employment potential of the construction industry for local economic development. It should also enable, encourage and support local economic activities,
especially within the lower income areas of cities and towns. It needs to include slum upgrading and prevention about the priority areas of attention. Locally appropriate approaches should be considered for possible use of housing subsidies for the poorest sectors of population.

3- **National Legislation:** National legal frameworks should cover all areas determining the production and availability of affordable housing. This includes legislation and regulations addressing housing and those affecting the availability of all the required housing inputs, especially land and finance, as well as the law influencing the income earning opportunities of the poorest sectors of the population, i.e. the demand side of the affordability equation. The legal and regulatory framework need to make the process transparent, equitable and regulated by the rule of law as well as to empower all actors involved in housing.

**Sustainable Urbanization Prerequisites at the City Level:**

1- **Urban Planning:** The continuous, participatory and inclusive Urban Planning process should be the starting point and framework for integrating housing within planned city extensions or urban in-fills, so that housing is no longer a stand-alone exercise. We need: (a) **Mixed urban land uses** integrating housing with economic, social, recreational and other land uses avoiding dormitory towns; (b) ** Appropriately high urban densities** to improve urban efficiency, reduce cost of network services and safeguard the environment by limiting urban footprint; through planning and locally-based densification (c) **Social mix of the population** of various income groups, family compositions and ethnic origins, through a variety of tenure modalities housing types and costs to render housing accessible to different socio-economic demands; (d) **Comprehensive land management and full integration between land use and infrastructure planning** to create highly efficient urban patterns, and facilitate better mobility. (e) **Climate change responsiveness, and preparedness**.

2- **Urban Economic Development:** Economic development at the local level needs to take full advantage of the potential leading role of housing through its broad backward and forward linkages and high employment generation capacity. Related income-generating activities and job creation for lower income groups is an important component of bridging the affordability gap to better access adequate housing. Sustainable local economic development strategies are inseparable from housing strategies and from urban planning in general. Predictable availability of land and infrastructure is a precondition for the economic growth at all scales. Mixed land use zoning, combined with regulations supporting family-based, and small and medium enterprises, facilitate better income levels thus enhancing the ability to afford housing. Regulations supporting incremental expansion of single family homes by adding rental units also improve family and local economy, while improving rental housing opportunities, increasing urban densities, and reducing urban sprawl.

3- **Local Legislation and regulations:** The legislation, regulations and procedure of their implementation and enforcement at the local level, need to encourage the efficient use of urban land and infrastructure to support investment, improvements and maintenance. Subdivision regulations need to encourage mixed land uses, social and income-level mix, and incremental upgrading of infrastructure. Building codes need to allow incremental improvement, expansion and densification. They should also encourage the use of indigenous construction materials and building technologies. Both, subdivision regulations and building codes need to be sufficiently flexible and appropriate to local conditions. They should preferably be, performance based and not prescriptive.

**Housing Development Prerequisites:**
1. **Land and Urban Design**: Availability of land, with a variety of tenure types and adequate tenure security, should be ensured, in advance of construction, within a planned urban development framework. Functioning land management information system to supply sufficient information for large-scale urban operations such as supply of major infrastructure are needed. Appropriate subdivision regulations, enabling the community-oriented urban design are required to ensure adequate provision of land for public spaces, streets, other infrastructure, services and other public uses. 11

2. **Finance**12: Variety of options of housing finance13 should be offered, including mortgage finance, financing for social and rental housing, the non-collateral credit mechanisms for owner-builders; credit for developers, credit for contractors, and for producers of building materials and components. Cross subsidy mechanisms, within the urban projects, between commercial and housing land uses, and between the high cost and low cost housing and plots to encourage socially mixed development.

3. **Basic Urban Services**: Variety of options of infrastructure provision levels, including the options of incremental provision, need to be availed, always however, within the planning and layout framework, allowing rational full upgrading in the future.14

**Sustainable Housing:**

1. **Design**: Functional and cultural adequacy, energy efficiency, climatic and environmental appropriateness, affordability, and flexibility for expansion and for upgrading of standards, adaptability for future needs, should be maximised in housing design, both at the building level and at the neighbourhood level. 15

2. **Technologies**: As in the case of design, the aims should be energy efficiency, environmental friendliness, cost minimizing, allowing incremental expansion and improvement of standards, and enabling, where appropriate, owner building, and use of local labour and contractors. Traditional technologies should be considered for local use, and their adaptations for better performance should be encouraged.16

3. **Materials and components**: It is important to maximize, especially in lower income countries, the use of local material and components. Striving for climatic appropriateness, energy-efficiency and environmental friendliness of the production processes of building materials, and for the energy efficiency of their use. Use of imported materials should be systematically avoided.

**Housing Governance and Management**

1. **Tenure types**17: Continuum of tenure types should be available, including customary tenure forms, all providing adequate tenure security, to guarantee households welfare and to motivate improvements and expansion18. Special attention needs to be given to the equal rights of women, of youth, of elderly and of social and ethnic minorities. Land and dwelling tenure types other than freehold ownership should be encouraged, including leaseholds, condominiums, cooperatives, shared, and various forms of rental housing.19

2. **Governance**: Fully inclusive community collaboration, and neighbourhood-level self-governance should be encouraged for management and upgrading of housing areas, through condominiums and cooperatives, homeowners’ and tenants’ associations, local area improvement committees and others.

3. **Management and Maintenance**: Local community contracting of maintenance work to be encouraged especially in the lower income areas and in mixed income areas, to support local economy and create income-earning opportunities, and to strengthen the sense of ownership and of identification with the living environment. Organizational and financial
mechanisms should be put in place for maintenance and replacement of housing and neighbourhood components.

4. Who needs to be involved?

Full involvement, from the early planning stages, of all stakeholders at national, city and locality levels is essential for ownership and success of the GHS.

At the global level:

With UN-HABITAT, playing the role of convener and Secretariat, it is necessary to ensure the involvement of key Habitat Agenda Partners including:

- The National and Local Governments
- Pertinent international cooperation, and external support agencies
- Civil society and private charitable agencies
- Global centers of know-how excellence in the areas of urban development and housing
- Global umbrella organizations of local authorities (UCLG, UNACLA)
- Global umbrellas of community and grass-root organizations
- International professional organizations
- Globally opinion forming and awareness building media
- Private sector (including real estate/developers and selected multinationals)

At the national level:

The first logical step of the GHS at the national level would be, in most cases, the revitalization and expansion of the National Habitat Committees, including Habitat Agenda Partners, and reaching out to ensure the inclusion of all other relevant stakeholders.

Each National Committee needs to have an agreed convener and a Secretariat. National Urban Development Ministry, Housing Ministry, Ministry of Planning and Finance, or an equivalent government agency, would be usually a logical convener. In some cases civil society organizations could also assume that role.

The Committees should include all relevant government Ministries and agencies, with impact on housing, such as Housing, Urban Development, Economic Planning, Finance, Infrastructure, Local
Government/Interior/Territorial Administration and others. It is important to ensure representation of key pertinent civil society organizations, local government associations, professional associations, research community and academia and relevant private sector actors, including banking, chambers of commerce, real estate sector and developers, key building materials' and components' producers. National representatives of “slum dwellers” also need to be included, as well as of women, youth, elderly and minorities.

**At the local/city level:**

Encouraging broad multi-stakeholder participatory consultation, planning and coordination for “Better City and Housing for All” at the local level, especially in the major urban areas of each country should be one of the first tasks of the National Committees and of their conveners. This may be by creation, or revitalizing, where they exist, of the City Habitat Committees, or by expanding participatory mechanisms of the existing local urban development and planning processes.

Getting “on board” as early as possible all relevant stakeholders is very important, including representatives of slum dwellers, of women, of elderly and youth, as well as of the social and ethnic minorities. The private sector also needs to be included, especially real estate developers. In the cases of seemingly conflicting interests, this may require negotiations and even mediation trying to achieve “win-win” solutions, but “all on board” principal is essential for sustainability of urban and housing development.

These City Habitat Committees need to reach to the existing local improvement committees, or similar organizations, existing in the neighborhoods, especially the low-income neighborhoods, to involve them in the Committees, to articulate their demands and needs, and to facilitate coordination and possible synergies.

The leadership of the Committee should be in hands of the Mayor, with Secretariat and day-to-day servicing being the responsibility of an appropriate Department designated by the Mayor, most likely Urban Planning, Urban Development or Housing. In special cases, according to local realities, civil society organizations could also play the role of leadership in Local Habitat Committees.

**5. What are National Housing Strategies?**

National Housing Strategy, as a pillar of the National Urban Policy, is a process of agreed sets of activities formalized in Strategy documents and their updates, which guide polices, planning, and programming of investment, management and maintenance activities in the area of housing, and slum upgrading and prevention. These need to be an integral component of the National Urban Strategies and formulated with full involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Housing Strategies, at national and city levels, are inseparable from land-use strategies, infrastructure strategies, including mobility and local economic development strategies, all integrated in the broad, participatory and inclusive urban planning and management process, within the supportive legal and regulatory framework.

National Housing Strategies, as a part of the Urban Strategies, are playing the guiding and compatibilizing role for decisions at the national level, and provide the framework for the strategies at the local level – metropolitan, city, town and village.

National level decisions in the area of housing, and of slum upgrading and prevention, include, generally: the majority of the legal and regulatory frameworks; requirements for, and support to urban planning at the local level; systems of fiscal incentives; major infrastructure investments; and measures to ensure local availability of land, finance, infrastructure, services and supply of building materials and components. They also guide direct involvement of national governments in ensuring supportive pro-poor performance of markets, as well as possible enabling support for the demand side.
In sum, National Housing Strategies, the housing component of the National Urban Policy, are the instruments for providing enabling support and guidance for inclusive housing, slum upgrading and prevention activities at the local level.

**6. Which are the key components of the process of National Housing Strategy?**

Suggested key components are as follows:

*Mobilizing for Action:*

1. **Stakeholders’ mobilization:** The first logical step of the GHS at the national level would be, in most cases, the revitalization and expanding, or establishment, of the National Habitat Committees, including Habitat Agenda Partners, and reaching out to ensure the inclusion of all other relevant stakeholders.

2. **Taking stock of current situation – preliminary diagnosis:** (a) Principal deficiencies of supply of affordable housing; (b) Main, market and other, bottlenecks preventing adequate supply; (c) Principal barriers on the demand side – bottlenecks preventing pent-up demand from becoming an effective demand. (d) Estimate of the overall magnitude and composition of unmet housing needs.

3. **Taking stock of on-going activities:** (a) Main areas of current government involvement on supply and demand sides (b) Activities, programmes and action plans of other stakeholders.

4. **Developing shared vision and goals for the National Housing Strategy (NHS).**

5. **Formulating Preliminary Action Plan for the NHS:** (a) Ensuring full information sharing; (b) Exploring compatibilities, possible synergies and opportunities for collaboration. (c) Agreement on the Preliminary Action Plan.

*Building bases for a sustainable National Housing Strategy:*

6. **Legal and regulatory reviews:** Comprehensive review of the pertinent legal and regulatory framework, concerning supply of affordable housing, and slum improvement and prevention, such as: availability of land and land management, land and housing tenure categories, regularization of slums, and for supply of construction materials and components, construction permits, permits for small and medium enterprise operation, building codes and their enforcement.

   Reviewing and, when needed, changing the laws, regulations and procedures, which represent barriers preventing investments and other initiatives, which would lead to improved housing and neighborhoods, is likely to be the government intervention of a relatively highest impact and the lowest cost.

7. **Planning reviews:** Comprehensive review of the current urban planning systems and processes, as they affect supply of affordable housing, slum improvement and prevention. Reviews need also to cover the implementation mechanisms, participation and coordination among key stakeholders, developing a shared vision of the future of the city, practical planning and implementations.

8. **Finance reviews:** Review of demand for and availability of finance for all levels of housing supply, from industries of construction materials and components, new land subdivisions and introduction of infrastructure, to the individual house/dwelling purchase, construction, extensions and renewals.
9. **Fiscal reviews**: Review, focusing on impact on affordable housing, and slum improvement and prevention, of the fiscal instruments, including taxation, pricing and fiscal incentives for industries, for developers and for other housing-related enterprises of all scales.

10. **Action based on the reviews**: Results of the reviews described in items 6 to 9 above should lead to positive proposals of modifications to be submitted to the appropriate bodies for approvals and implementation. They also feed into the formulation and reviews of the main document of the National Housing Strategy.

**Formulation, adoption and periodical updating of National Housing Strategy**

11. **National Housing Strategy Formulated and Adopted**: Building on the preliminary action plans, and on the inputs from the reviews in progress, housing strategy will be formulated, with special emphasis, as appropriate in particular country conditions, on optimizing the role of the government in encouraging appropriate and affordable housing supply, and in facilitating/supporting the effective demand. Through consultative processes spearheaded by the National Habitat Committee, at national level, the Housing Strategy will be adopted as the main document to guide the implementation.

**Support activities for actions at city/local level:**

12. **Mobilizing for Action at local level**, beginning with the stakeholders mobilization: Encouraging and supporting, the broad multi-stakeholder participatory consultation, planning and coordination for “Better City and Housing for All” at the local level.

13. **Formulating of the Preliminary Local Action Plan for the NHS.**

14. **Supporting local level reviews of selected laws and regulations, of urban planning, and of financial and fiscal instruments.** In parallel to the national level reviews.

15. **Action based on the reviews**: Providing support and guidance for modifications of regulations, procedures and practices, at both local and national level, recommended as results of the local level reviews. Providing inputs for formulation and revisions of the Local Housing Strategy.

16. **Formulation and adoption of the Local Housing Strategy.**

**Strategy activities covering both national and city/local levels:**

17. **Encouraging and supporting innovation**: Encourage new approaches, consistent with the GHS principles and guidelines in all urban planning and housing programmes and activities at all levels.

18. **Providing continuous methodological support monitoring, and evaluation**: Involving professional staff of the organizations and institutions members of national and local Habitat Committees and making maximum use of volunteers and of the students and staff of relevant Universities and of other Educational Institutions.

19. **Encouraging development and use of new know-how**: Systematic development of locally relevant, innovative, knowhow in area of housing and urban development, including slum improvement and prevention, and dissemination and transfer into use in. Transfer and adaptation of non-local experiences and ideas, national and foreign, should also be encouraged and facilitated.

20. **Societal mobilization**: Initiating and spearheading a broad awareness raising and educational campaign, at national and local levels, on societal mobilization for “better housing and neighborhoods for all”.

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UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy: Framework Document
7. How to achieve it? The role of UN-HABITAT:

UN-HABITAT’s commitment to the GHS is to initiate, facilitate and support it as a collaborative global movement towards adequate, inclusive and sustainable housing for all, and sustainable urban development. As a part of this support UN-HABITAT has developed and will continue updating, jointly with partners, this Framework Document for actions at global, national and local levels. Our mandate also includes the promotion of gender responsiveness at all phases, facilitating international cooperation and assessing progress on implementation. It is expected, that with the methodological support, when needed, of the UN-HABITAT, and assistance of this GHS Framework Document, the countries will develop, implement and update their own National Housing Strategies to address current and future challenges.

For this, national and local authorities will define challenges in terms of housing, slum prevention and slum improvement, as UN-HABITAT will address the uniqueness of each request, for possible support, within its context.

In this context, UN-HABITAT facilitates the linkage between issues and challenges facing key stakeholders and successful solutions and responses identified by our partners. More specifically, the approach to the GHS will include, among others:

- **Continuous joint refinement of principles, methods and generic tools**, building on wide array of UN-HABITAT’s, and its partners’ documents, including this Framework Document.
- **Exchange of experiences** between key actors through innovative approaches including real time follow-up on good practices as they emerge (utilizing social/professional media);
- **Applied evidence-based research** to address today’s challenges including revisiting tested approaches in housing, slum improvement and prevention, including finance, planning, design, implementation, etc.;
- **Effectiveness at scale** as the era of pilot and piecemeal projects is over, supply at scale is fundamental to impact on housing costs and overall housing market performance contributing to slum prevention and improvement;
- **Result based management** to achieve efficiency through partnerships with joint goals, planning and implementation between local and national authorities, academia, practitioners, donors, civil society, private sector, etc.;
- **Capacity development at national and local levels** to assist individuals, communities, governments, and other Habitat Agenda Partners in adopting and implementing GHS.
- Mobilizing and advising formulation of the Agenda of the International Cooperation’s support towards Adequate Housing for All.
- **Actively contributing to the discussion on MDG and SDGs**, to ensure that the issues of housing, and slum upgrading and prevention are adequately addressed.
- **Continuously reviewing progress and popularizing accumulated lessons**, within the partners’ networks and towards the broader global, national and local audiences, including through high visibility events like World Urban Forums.
- **Providing necessary inputs to HABITAT III to ensure that the UNGHS goals are adequately included as part and parcel of its outcomes.**

8. Which thematic areas require special attention and improvement of know-how?

To facilitate the addressing challenges of know-how gaps on the way to Adequate Housing for All, several thematic clusters have been identified during the process of preparation of this Framework Document.
In all cases the ultimate objective is to improve local practice by developing and updating the appropriate know-how, building on local culture, tradition and economy, while incorporating global lessons and experience. These thematic clusters transcend the area of housing, and slum improvement and prevention, but the further improvement of know-how and of practice in these areas will be an important support for the success of the GHS.

These thematic clusters include among others:

- **Urban planning principles**, which need to be further developed and localized. Further work is needed on practical adaptation to local conditions, in various contexts, of the concepts of: (a) High density (b) Adequate street density and efficient street network (c) Mixed land-uses (d) Social mix and (e) Limited land use specializations.

- **Urban land management** to ensure the availability of required land for all urban uses, including housing, within the urban planning framework; and to facilitate, in combination with fiscal instruments and with provision of infrastructure, and its effective and efficient use.

- **Legal and regulatory frameworks**, appropriate in each specific country conditions, which enable and encourage investment into housing at all levels, while contributing to local economic development and facilitating income-earning opportunities by the population, especially the low income groups.

- **Urban economy and housing** including the roles of housing in the economy and in economic development at national and local levels, and the economical prerequisites of sustainable housing policies and actions.

- **Affordability of housing** including housing finance for all levels of housing supply, from industries of construction materials and components, new land subdivisions and introduction of infrastructure, to the individual house construction, extensions and renewals.

  It also needs to cover instruments of cross-subsidies between various income categories and different land-uses, as well as of subsidies and incentives on the supply side as well as various forms of possible demand subsidies. The importance of access, especially by low income families, to income earning opportunities, to services and to markets of inexpensive subsistence products, as well as of the opportunities to use housing itself as an income earning vehicle (through rental and for home-based enterprises) also need to better understood and constantly responded to, in order to ensure affordability of housing.

- **Basic urban services** including infrastructure services, urban mobility, as well as educational, health and commercial facilities. Cost recovery challenges and affordability issues need to be better understood and responded to, including the incremental introduction and upgrading of services and infrastructure, in response of changes in affordability and in patronage, as well as the experience with progressive user charges, betterment levies and development charges.

- **Slum upgrading and prevention** ensuring human rights and preventing unlawful forced evictions, while promoting efficient use of land.

- **Sustainability of housing - physical and environmental** including design, construction materials and practices.

- **Housing tenure types** to ensure necessary diversity to address different social, economic and cultural needs.

- **Governance and maintenance** of housing and neighborhoods.

- **Women, youth, and special groups** housing needs, rights and inclusive, affordable and culturally adequate solutions.

- **Post-disaster reconstruction and special solutions for housing in disaster-prone areas, and those affected by climate change.**

- **Revisiting the role of public sector beyond enablement**: including solutions to respond to housing needs of the poorest population and to combat homelessness – government as the
provider of the last resort, safety nets and housing subsidies, as well as other subsidies, targeting affordability of urban services for the poorest sectors of population.

It is important to keep in mind that several of the above clusters are mutually cross-cutting as, for example, urban planning, legal and regulatory frameworks, or housing needs of women, youth and special groups.

9. What outcomes are expected?

It is expected that this approach will result not only in the (re)positioning of housing within the global contemporary debate on economically viable, environmentally and culturally sustainable and socially inclusive cities, but also on critical outcomes such as:

- **Paradigm shift in thinking and practice** in housing policy and serviced land delivery, aware of powerful impact of housing on the economy, within the new charter for urban planning by strengthening the linkages between urban planning, neighbourhood development and housing, including slum improvement and prevention;

- **Contributing to the global discourse and definition of the post Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- **Redefined role of governments** beyond enablement, continuing, and when needed reassuming, its leadership role in encouraging pro-poor performance of the markets, and in facilitating and supporting demand capabilities of economically weakest sectors of the society.

- **Systemic reforms** promoted to enable wider accessibility to adequate housing, with the variety of housing solutions matching the variety of effective demands;

- **Strengthened linkages** of housing with other parts of the economy and ensued economic development, employment generation and poverty reduction;

- **Decentralization of the housing production and empowerment of different actors and modalities of housing development**;

- **Increased use of sustainable building and neighbourhood designs** and technologies towards more cost-effective, flexible and energy-efficient solutions.

And, most importantly of all, result in a

- **Significant and measurable improvement of housing and living conditions** of a large proportion of population, while facilitating at the same time the role of housing production and use as an important support for poverty reduction.

10. When it will happen? What is the timeline?

It is anticipated that member states will endorse the GHS Framework Document at the UN-HABITAT Governing Council 24 in 2013, and subsequently at the UN General Assembly. It is also envisaged that national and World Urban Forum 7 events, as well as regional and international summits and the UN-HABITAT Governing Council 25, will address the housing, slum improvement and prevention question in their preparations Habitat III.
GLOSSARY:

UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy (GHS): GHS is a collaborative global movement towards adequate housing for all and improving housing and living conditions of slum dwellers. It is primarily a process, not a document, but it is guided by a Framework Document. Use of the word “Strategy” emphasizes its long term, goal-oriented, and multi-stakeholder character. It is an adaptation of a general concept of strategy, taken originally from the business environment. It is also used to indicate a continuity of efforts initiated under the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 (GSS 2000).

Strategy: A plan of action designed to achieve a specific goal. Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations.

Policy: A policy is typically described as a principle or rule, or set of rules, to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. It usually consists of a set of established ways of responding to the reoccurring challenges in a given area of activities. Policies can be understood as political, management, financial, and administrative mechanisms arranged to reach explicit goals. They can be formulated and applied at various levels of the organization.

Housing: As defined in this document the term “housing” is used at a number of levels. It is a multi-dimensional concept. It refers to the activity, a process, of residing, as well as to the objects of dwellings and their environment. The main attributes of housing as a dwelling are its location (determining access to livelihood), tenure arrangements, cost and physical structure. Housing is at the same time physical structure, as well as social structure, functioning at different spatial scales (homes, neighborhoods, cities and other settlements, regions and countries). It is also a sector of the economy, and important category of land-use in cities and in other settlements. These linkages with the national economy and with overall urban system are an integral part of understanding of the concept of housing. The graph at the end of section 3 of this document (What guides us? Principles and guidelines) is summarizing various dimensions of housing. The meaning of housing in this document is similar to, but broader than, meaning of the word shelter, as used in Habitat Agenda, and in the GSS 2000. The definition of the “adequate shelter”, cited below, taken from paragraph 60 of the Habitat Agenda, illustrates this point.

The use of the term “shelter” was discontinued by the UN-HABITAT, as it was sometimes narrowly understood as a temporary emergency accommodation. It was becoming even more confusing when translated into some languages other than English. To avoid these misunderstandings, UN-HABITAT is using now consistently the term “housing”.

Adequate shelter was defined in the Habitat Agenda document as follows: “Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one’s head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water-supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality
and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be available at an affordable cost. Adequacy should be determined together with the people concerned, bearing in mind the prospect for gradual development. Adequacy often varies from country to country, since it depends on specific cultural, social, environmental and economic factors. Gender-specific and age-specific factors, such as the exposure of children and women to toxic substances, should be considered in this context. This definition equally applies today to the “affordable housing”.

**Slums:** Pejorative term for poor quality housing, e.g., “a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterized as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognized and addressed by public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city” (UN-HABITAT, 2002d:6). Up to the 1980s the term was used mainly for the deteriorated old housing, once occupied by the upper and middle income groups, subsequently subdivided and changed to poor quality rental units for low income groups, often recent migrants to cities – sometimes called “slums of the inner city”.

Since 1990s the term is often used for all areas of substandard housing, including the informal housing build in the urban periphery, usually in the spontaneous unplanned subdivisions, without infrastructure and services, and usually with low levels of tenure security. They are sometimes called “slums of the periphery”.

**Informal settlements:** Term used to describe settlements, which have been built illegally, without the consent of the planning authorities, usually without infrastructure and services and often without fully secure tenure. In majority of cases they have been built for, and often by, the low-income population. In some countries they include however also housing of middle and even high-income families, which took advantage of the land prices usually much lower than in a fully formal market. Housing of such areas often improves over time, as do the servicers and infrastructure. Lack of the proper layouts and of the adequate planning framework is however one of the important obstacles of such processes. These areas are often referred to also as spontaneous housing areas, or, in some cases, as self-help housing areas, although only a portion of housing is indeed build as self-help construction.

**Slum upgrading:** Improving physical and environmental conditions, as well as the provision of infrastructure and services, in the areas considered slums, and incorporating them into the mainstream city, is often called “slum upgrading”. It usually begins with the survey of actual conditions followed by the planned rationalizing of layouts of individual plots (land readjustment) in order to enable introduction of streets and land required for introduction of infrastructure and services. This is combined with some form of ensuring security of tenure (regularization). To be successful the process must be community-driven and fully participatory. Slum upgrading is the main component of the GHS addressing housing situation in the existing part of the cities. Cost of upgrading of slums is usually higher for the inhabitants, for the city and for the society in general, than the planned development of new residential areas, possible with appropriate planning, which enables “slum prevention”.

**Slum prevention:** The term of “slum prevention” refers to the set of measures, which provide viable, in fact preferable, alternatives to the creation of new slums. This means ensuring availability of a highly diversified supply of affordable housing solutions, matching the diversity of housing demand in terms of locations, tenure types, costs and standards. Slum prevention is the main component of the GHS addressing needs for new housing. It requires comprehensive and foreword looking urban planning, appropriate and effective legal and regulatory frameworks, timely provision of affordable serviceable land, and availability of finance. It also requires demand-responsive mechanisms for introduction of infrastructure and basic services, and availability of adequate and affordable construction materials and components.

**Incremental development:** Term refers to gradual expansion and improvement of individual houses, of infrastructure and services, and of neighborhoods as a whole. Incremental development increases affordability by spreading construction expenditures over a longer period of time. It is also allowing for increased flexibility and adaptability to new needs and opportunities, which may materialize during the extended construction period. At the same time it minimizes risk of defaults in times of downturns in family economy.

**Inclusive cities:** The concept refers to cities, which promote growth with equity, places where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic and political opportunities that cities have to offer. Participatory planning and decision-making are at the heart of an Inclusive City.
Promoting inclusiveness is not only socially just, but is good for growth and central to sustainable urban development. Inclusive urban development and governance reduces inequality and social tension; incorporates the knowledge, productivity, social and physical capital of the poor and disadvantaged in city development; and increases local ownership of development processes and programmes.

**PRACTICAL TOOLS AND OTHER KEY REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS:**

4. UNCHS (Habitat) and ILO, *Shelter provision and employment generation*, Nairobi 1995
8. UN-HABITAT, *Citywide Strategic Planning: a step by step guide*, GLTN, Nairobi 2010
9. UN-HABITAT and IIED, *Developing Local Climate Change Plans: Guide for Cities in Developing Countries*, Nairobi 2012
15. UN-HABITAT, *Sustainable Housing for Sustainable Cities: A Policy Framework for Developing Countries*, Nairobi 2012