FOCUS AREA 3:
Access to Land and Housing for All
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SUMMARY

There are over 1 billion slum dwellers globally and their number is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion. Unless radical measures are taken and significant efforts are made to provide a range of affordable housing options and improved access to legally secure land at scale, the rapidly growing cities in the developing south will be host to hundreds of millions of new slum dwellers. The situation is critical and unprecedented in human history.

In response to the emerging urban crisis, UN-HABITAT aims to mobilize a global coalition of partners to address the challenges presented by unsustainable patterns of urbanization. UN-HABITAT’s vision is “to help create by 2013 the necessary conditions for concerted international and national efforts to stabilize the growth of slums and to set the stage for the subsequent reduction of the number of slum dwellers and reversal of the current trend of unbridled urban slum proliferation”. This vision, derived from the Millennium Development Goals, cannot be realized without systemic reform to promote improved access to land and housing for all.

As a strategic result, UN-HABITAT is committed to supporting national and local governments and Habitat Agenda partners in implementing improved land and housing policies. UN-HABITAT is further committed to the following three outcomes: supporting enabling land and housing reforms; increased security of tenure; and promoting slum improvement and slum prevention policies. Some of the important activities to be undertaken include: (a) renewed efforts to promote alternatives to eviction; (b) production of a major new global policy paper on housing, articulating a new normative framework for slum prevention; (c) development of new land tools to implement pro-poor land policies; (d) promotion of a range of land rights rather than just individual titles; and (e) strengthening the UN system’s capacity to address housing, land, and property issues in post-conflict and post-natural disaster situations. A specific effort will be made to further promote measures to mitigate or adapt to risks associated with global climate change and other natural hazards. All activities will be gender-responsive. For more details and references, please refer to the extended version of the strategy paper.
SECTION 1: FOCUS AREA 3 SITUATION

Unless radical measures are taken and significant efforts are made to provide a range of affordable housing options and improved access to legally secured land at scale, cities will host to hundreds of millions of new slum dwellers. The situation is critical and unprecedented in human history. In 2005, nearly 1 billion urban residents lived in slums and if no serious action is taken, their number is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion. These global figures have clear regional dimensions. Asia is already home to more than half of the world’s slum population (581 million), followed by sub-Saharan Africa (199 million) then Latin America, where 120 million people, nearly 30 percent of the population, already live in slums. Slum growth and proliferation will vary by region, but the largest impact will likely be on Africa, where, in many countries, urban growth will be virtually synonymous with urban slum growth and proliferation.

The malfunctioning of the housing sector – resulting in a scarcity of adequate and affordable housing – and inequitable access to urban land are critical factors contributing to urban slum growth and proliferation. Between today and 2030, some 3 billion additional people will need access to adequate housing and related social and trunk services infrastructure. This translates into a global need to deliver 96,150 housing units per day. There is already an acute global shortage of affordable housing, which is most severe in developing countries. For example, an estimated 40 million additional units are required in India; 735,000 in Indonesia; 709,000 in Malaysia; 700,000 in Angola; 659,000 in Bangladesh; 650,000 in South Africa; and 240,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Regarding the use and allocation of land for housing and other urban functions, the space occupied by cities is increasing faster than actual urban populations. Between 2000 and 2030, the world’s urban population is expected to increase by 72 percent, while the developed area of cities is projected to increase by 175 percent. Various factors drive urban sprawl, notably unequal and inequitable access to land, insecurity of tenure, dysfunctional land and housing markets, and inappropriate land and housing policies. Annually, an estimated 2 million people are the victims of unlawful forced evictions, the vast majority of whom live in Africa and Asia. Additionally, it is estimated that less than 30 percent of land in the developing world is actually registered in some form of cadastre. Women meanwhile hold less than 10 percent of the registered land titles in the world.

Land management tools often focus on delivering land to the middle class and the business sector. Associated with this, there is an inequitable distribution of land resources in many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Often the political and economic elite hold vast amounts of land commonly used for housing and real estate speculation, which further excludes low-income households. In some cities, 60 percent of the urban poor occupy less than 5 percent of the land, living in settlements often plagued by overcrowding, inadequate water and sanitation provision, and poor health. Lack of political will, at times linked with corruption and impunity, is one of the pervasive causes of the persistence and continuation of slums in many cities. This tends to lead to increasing social unrest and conflict over the control of land, which in turn contributes to political and social instability, civil strife, poverty, and increased numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees.

In addition, the situation has a negative impact on the gross domestic product and the environment, leading to deterioration in the quality of life for all citizens. City management that cannot deal effectively with these critical issues and rapid urbanization further increase the vulnerability of cities, particularly the vulnerability of the urban poor.

Rapid urbanization makes cities vulnerable to both conflict and natural disasters. Informal settlements are often located on hazardous land, have limited access to water and basic services, are frequently beyond the political control of the state, and can be prone to violence. In such a context, cities have very limited capacity to cope with even the smallest shock. Natural disasters or conflict can trigger massive displacement of affected populations to urban areas, often creating secondary waves of humanitarian crises through, for example, the spread of disease. Climate change will also accelerate migration and displacement and will particularly impact the nearly 634 million people living in at-risk coastal areas. Housing, land, and property issues often arise in situations of displacement and can be a significant barrier to plans for return or other durable solutions.

Concerted action is clearly needed. While an important step forward was made with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, and the slum-related target in particular, many countries are not on track to meeting this target and have actually seen their numbers of slum dwellers increase. The 2008 global financial turmoil unequivocally revealed the linkages between housing and the macroeconomy and the need for new solutions and approaches to affordable housing. Land

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

and housing reforms – which include but are not limited to institutional, legal, policy, regulatory, and financial reforms – are key levers of change. The challenge is twofold. On the one hand, there is a need to create an environment and the knowledge and capacity for governments and Habitat Agenda partners conducive to designing and implementing citywide slum-upgrading and slum-prevention policies and programmes. On the other hand, it is important to promote and support the formulation and implementation of enabling land and housing reforms that will help boost the supply of affordable, secure, and accessible land and housing, with finance at scale.

SECTION 2: LESSONS LEARNED AND KEY RESULTS

2.1 HOUSING, LAND, INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, AND SLUMS: AN OVERVIEW

Over the past 50 years, there has been a significant evolution in approaches to slum upgrading, access to land, and affordable housing provision. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s, developing countries tried to meet the challenge of rapid urbanization through highly subsidized public housing provision, coupled with slum clearance and relocation policies based on a predominantly negative view of informal settlements and slums. These policy responses very often benefited middle-class households and succeeded only in relocating the problem to other areas of the city where more affordable land and housing solutions could be found. Peri-urban areas and centrally located tenements were often the recipients of evicted poor populations, which resulted in overcrowded housing in the urban core and peripheral and badly serviced land occupation. Centralized public provision of housing was costly and therefore difficult to sustain for cash-strapped central governments and state housing agencies, with housing remaining unaffordable for poor households. A master planning approach was the dominant planning paradigm during this period, but proved costly, time consuming, and overly prescriptive; it set standards that could neither be attained by the poor nor fully implemented. Moreover, city master plans commonly failed to anticipate rapid population growth and increasing demand for housing and infrastructure, which led to a spatial urban growth characterized by informality and the urbanization of poverty. The sheer lack of a coherent and adequate policy response left

Overlooking the Rift Valley, Kenya.
city managers without the tools to enable them to keep pace with the rapidly escalating demand for affordable housing and affordable, well-located land for the urban poor, resulting in an explosion of informal settlements.

From the mid-1970s, self-help housing became the dominant approach in an effort to lower standards and costs. Based on the concept of incremental housing (whereby people improved or extended their houses gradually as their resources permitted), four broad variants emerged: (i) sites and services schemes, whereby vacant public land is provided with basic services for residents to construct their own dwellings; (ii) embryonic or core housing units, consisting of as little as a main room and toilet, to be expanded incrementally over time if and when household funds permit; (iii) regularization programmes, whereby residents of an informal settlement are given legally recognized land rights and, in some cases, access to some basic services, with housing improvements considered their own responsibility; (iv) slum-upgrading programmes, usually involving relocation or in situ upgrading to avoid the relocation of the entire slum. Some countries attempted “sites without services” (also known as incremental land development), whereby basic infrastructure was incrementally provided while residents pursued their housing improvement activities. Although well intended, the first two approaches frequently failed to reach the urban poor. The absence of a diversified supply of housing opportunities has often caused displacement: lower-middle class families who could not find housing that met their needs thus hijacked housing originally meant for low-income households. The last two approaches had the advantage of recognizing and building on the existing solutions engendered by the poor but failed to increase in scale, existing on a project-to-project basis.

In general, however, upgrading programmes tended to be most effective in reaching the urban poor. They promoted a package of improvements such as access roads, water supply, sanitation, solid waste collection, and electrification. In many cases, the land component of an upgrading programme involved the regularization of tenure through the provision of individual title. Usually, upgrading programmes excluded housing provision, but at times building material loans were provided, thereby adding a housing finance component to support home improvements. During this period, upgrading was fundamentally project based and was not citywide. It did not increase in scale, nor did it make systemic changes to the land and housing delivery systems. There was no promotion of the institutional, policy, and regulatory reforms that were needed to deal with the slum issue. That is, systematic slum prevention had not been put on the policy agenda.

In situ upgrading became the preferred model throughout the 1990s and in some countries became part of citywide slum-upgrading programmes. It sought to avoid the intrinsic limitations of the project-based approach and the negative aspects of relocation, namely the community’s removal from livelihood opportunities and social networks and the high costs of investing in two locations simultaneously. Less positively, upgrading programmes were criticized for poor cost recovery, inappropriate building standards and planning regulations, and insufficient maintenance of infrastructure. The lack of community consultation in the planning process was also frequently raised as an issue.

From the late 1990s and, in particular, following the adoption of the slum-related Millennium Development Goals and targets, the need to bring slum upgrading to scale had become evident. Firstly, complex and substantially funded citywide upgrading programmes emerged in some countries such as Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, and South Africa. Flagship programmes that have been scaled up to the national level, such as the Kampung Improvement Programme of Indonesia, have continued with greater community participation and increasing roles for local governments.

Secondly, community-driven and non-governmental organization-supported solutions have emerged as an alternative paradigm, such as the Baan Mankong (secure housing) national upgrading programme in Thailand and the Community Mortgage Programme in the Philippines. Non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and women’s savings groups have been vital in bringing these to the national level. In Asia, slum upgrading has evolved from a physically centred intervention towards community-centred approaches through which greater responsibilities, technical facilitation, and political support are devolved to grassroots organizations. Various forms of community banking have emerged in Asian cities, with savings groups and federations of the poor playing an important role in making finance, credit, and loans available for housing the poor.

Thirdly, in countries such as Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, China, and Tunisia, central government-led planning and implementation by strong central institutions have demonstrated that significant results can also be achieved through a rather centralized approach. The focus is now increasingly on moving to systemic slum prevention policies that imply a scaled-up housing supply linked with slum-upgrading programmes at the city and national levels. Fourthly, there has been considerable innovation with respect to affordable housing finance, through such mechanisms as housing microfinance, savings groups, and urban poor funds to access land and housing. However, more work needs to be done in this field to achieve the desired scale.
The supply of land is central to housing delivery, slum upgrading, and any slum prevention strategy. Land itself brings a range of social, cultural, political, economic, and financial attributes associated with property rights, property tax, and national and constitutional laws that have direct implications for the performance of the housing sector and the overall macroeconomic development of a nation. During the last five decades of urbanization, different approaches to addressing the land question have ranged from formal titling to the provision of security of tenure. While individual titling and expensive technical solutions were the order of the day up to the 1960s, there was increasing emphasis on the sociocultural dimensions of land – e.g. customary rights, legal pluralism, community land trusts, etc. – and the development of land policy from the 1970s to the 1990s. In over 12 countries in Africa, these policies introduced innovative forms of land tenure rather than just individual freehold titling. However, by the end of the 1990s and early 2000s it was recognized at the global level that there were insufficient pro-poor tools to deliver effective urban land policies. Without these pro-poor tools, it will not be possible to achieve any notable slum prevention and enable housing delivery at the desired scale. It is also recognized internationally that the trained human resources currently in existence are insufficient for scaling up activities and dealing with the magnitude of the problems emerging with rapid and uncontrolled urbanization.

While development professionals have been grappling with rapid urbanization for decades, humanitarians have been slow to understand and respond to the humanitarian impacts of urbanization. That is, the greater the inflow of people into urban settlements that have weak governance structures, the greater the demand on local government capacity to meet increased needs, and the greater the risk of eventual city failure. In addition, cities are increasingly the scene of humanitarian crises, yet humanitarian response in urban areas must take into account operational factors such as higher population densities, the prevalence of cash economies, heterogeneous societies, and the presence of informal authorities and self-styled “neighbourhood authorities”. The challenges of urban crises call for closer cooperation between humanitarian and development professionals, a specific emphasis on engagement and capacity development for local authorities, and efforts to reduce the length of time spent in the emergency phase in favour of catalysing recovery efforts at the earliest stage. UN-HABITAT’s Strategic Policy on Human Settlements and Crisis and its Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework articulate the challenges and potential opportunities of addressing urban emergencies through a human settlements lens.

Similarly, while there is a recognized need to invest in disaster risk reduction, the way urbanization affects or induces natural disasters is insufficiently understood. Unsustainable land use and inadequate housing are clear factors that increase vulnerability. Improved access to land and housing, therefore, is an important entry point to strengthening city resilience.

2.2 UN-HABITAT’S EXPERIENCE IN RETROSPECT

Since its creation in 1978, UN-HABITAT has been active in both policy development and project implementation. During the past two decades, UN-HABITAT has implemented technical cooperation and assistance activities worth approximately USD 2 billion in countries in Africa, the Arab states, Asia, Latin America, and countries with economies in transition. Nearly one-third was shelter related – e.g. housing, land, basic infrastructure, etc. – focusing on housing and slum-upgrading policies and implementation, combined with capacity building and other institutional support. During the 1990s, as housing gradually became less of a priority for donors, development banks, and national governments, UN-HABITAT’s shelter portfolio virtually ceased to exist. Since the publication of its seminal 2003 work The Challenge of Slums, however, demand for UN-HABITAT support on housing, land, and slum upgrading has significantly increased. Another trend has been the growth in demand for UN-HABITAT support in post-disaster and post-conflict shelter, housing, land, and property rights issues. Although the utilization of existing linkages between policy development and implementation has not always been as intensive as desired, the combined work provides a rich experience to draw upon in developing future programmes.

In terms of housing policy, UN-HABITAT was at the forefront of the global debate on affordable housing when it published the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, adopted in December 1988 by UN Resolution 43/181. A watershed in the evolution of housing policy, the global strategy was the first global housing policy framework that provided guidance for both global and national action. It made three key recommendations: (1) it encouraged governments to shift towards programmes and policies that assist people and communities to house themselves; (2) it advocated legal and institutional reform to enable the housing sector to work more effectively; and (3) it advised governments to abandon their role as a housing provider and instead enable a range of public, private, and non-governmental organization actors to produce shelter and manage the housing sector as a whole.

1 UN-HABITAT (1991), Global Shelter Strategy for Shelter to the
A recent review of two decades of experience in executing enabling shelter strategies provides useful lessons. A significant number of national housing policies have been reviewed and revised to reflect a shift in the role of governments from that of producer to enabler, in addition to attitude changes towards slums and informal settlements. However, further reform is still needed in various areas: decentralization (notably legislative and fiscal reforms that enable local governments to generate resources to bring housing policies under the mandate of municipal authorities, including strategies and their implementation); participation (civil society participation in decision making, policy formulation, and empowerment to achieve equity and equality in access to land and housing resources); partnerships (to enable an integrated multi-stakeholder approach to housing, with governments becoming coordinators, facilitators, and enablers of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, savings groups, and grassroots organizations engaged in housing developments); and public “land management” (to enable housing delivery at the desired scale, upgrading, and slum prevention).

In retrospect, the publication of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 was a high point in UN-HABITAT policy work and was very influential within the circle of housing professionals and academics. Nevertheless, since its enactment by the UN General Assembly was not accompanied by the substantive allocation of resources for implementation, it did not result in the desired impacts at country level among decision makers. Building on the strategy, in 1993 the World Bank produced its own landmark publication: Enabling Housing Markets to Work. The publication, which emphasized housing markets rather than the housing sector, proved more influential at the country level than UN-HABITAT’s global strategy. Governments in developing countries retreated from the housing sector, leaving housing provision almost entirely to the market. From 1996 onwards, following decentralization trends that included devolution of authority and responsibilities to local governments, housing provision was frequently devolved to

2 UN-HABITAT, United Nations Human Settlement Programme (2006c), ibid.

A settlement in Cairo, Egypt.
countries during the last 15 years is the ultimate evidence that the market approach to housing did not result in affordable and accessible housing and land for the poor.

With demand for housing policy work decreasing from the second half of the 1990s onwards, UN-HABITAT shifted its focus to rights-based programming via three major initiatives. First, the United Nations Housing Rights Programme was established in 2002 within the offices of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, and it produced a series of highly regarded publications. The focus on housing rights, however, came at the expense of UN-HABITAT’s broader global role in housing policy development, while “the right to housing” became a highly contentious issue among various UN member states.

Housing became disconnected from other urban sectors such as infrastructure and land. More broadly, it became disconnected from its important role in building the national economy via its backward and forward linkages with the other parts the economy1, thus failing municipal governments – but without the resources or fiscal instruments needed for completing the tasks. Leaving housing provision to the market was one solution that aggravated housing conditions in cities.

1 UN-HABITAT (1991), *Global Shelter Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000*; Angel, Shlomo and Stephen Mayo (undated), *Enabling to benefit from the economic multipliers inherent in the construction sector and the building industry.

The UN Housing Rights Programme led to the establishment of a second major initiative in 2004: the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions to the Executive Director. The group has undertaken advisory missions in a number of countries to promote negotiated alternatives to forced evictions. While its services are in demand, it has lacked the normative tools, guidelines, and methods to deliver results at the required scale and mainstream housing rights and alternatives to forced evictions into the overall policy agenda of UN-HABITAT and Habitat Agenda partners.

The third major rights-based initiative was UN-HABITAT’s Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, which operated from 2000 to 2006. The campaign promoted debate on land issues; developed tools, indicators, and guidelines; and launched national campaigns in ten different countries. Evaluations2 concluded that the campaign had been successful in raising awareness, mobilizing political will, and promoting dialogue among national stakeholders on important issues related to security of tenure. However, it was also seen as a stand-alone programme within UN-HABITAT that did not sufficiently link its advocacy and follow-up investments. Though not rights-based per se, UN-HABITAT’s Cities without Slums Programme (2003–2006) suffered a fate similar to that of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure. While it produced slum-upgrading action plans for eight eastern and southern African cities, Cities without Slums only rarely succeeded in mobilizing funds for implementation, consequently failing to bring solutions to the desired scale and producing little impact at the country level.

In 2006, UN-HABITAT established the Global Land Tool Network as a global partnership of more than 36 key international actors, including the World Bank, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Slum Dwellers International, the Huairou Commission, the International Federation of Surveyors, and others engaged in research and training on land reform issues. It was clear to many of these groups that there were not enough pro-poor land management tools to enable the delivery of land policy and widen access to secure land for all, which is what triggered the establishment of this network. The global assessment made prior to launching the Global Land Tool Network concluded the following:

Policies and Their Effects on Housing Sector Performance: A Global Comparison.

1. While there are many examples of good land policy, few policies have been fully implemented due to a shortage of pro-poor, large-scale land tools.

2. Conventional land titling approaches have largely failed to deliver results because existing technical solutions are expensive, inappropriate for the range of tenures found in developing countries, and unsustainable in financial terms or in terms of available capacity; instead, a range of land tenure options is more appropriate.

3. Land sector work cannot be successfully undertaken at the required scale without greater donor coordination at the country level, consistent with the Paris Declaration (2005).

While the work of Global Land Tool Network partners is still relatively recent, it has already made important contributions in recognizing the need to move beyond titling to promoting a range of land rights; moving from policy development to policy implementation; acknowledging the critical importance of linking land governance with the more technical side of land; and placing gender at the centre of the global land agenda.

Lessons have also been learned about scaling up at the country level. These lessons are being embedded in inter-agency work, such as in post-conflict programmes, in regional offices, and in building up the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework side of the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan. Also, the Global Land Tool Network has learned a number of partnership lessons: how to develop a shared agenda with partners; how to embed activities in partners’ work programmes; how to create institutional in-house arrangements across the agency to ensure outputs; and how to coordinate multiple outputs produced by a range of partners within a framework of agreed overall goals.

UN-HABITAT has also been a strong advocate for strengthened local, national, and international capacity to respond to humanitarian challenges in urban areas. UN-HABITAT’s 20 years of engagement in crisis response has been summarized in the Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction Framework, which emphasizes five areas to strengthen urban resilience: social and physical infrastructure, environment, livelihoods, land, and planning and shelter. Security of tenure, particularly through the use of short-term use rights, has been recognized as providing a useful tool to stabilize communities and cities, without compromising pre-existing housing, land, and property rights or the future development agenda of the city. Additional lessons include the recognition of the need for more appropriate planning laws and building codes and the inherent resilience of many forms of vernacular architecture. The Building Back Better Programme in Pakistan illustrates post-earthquake, people-centred housing reconstruction that successfully builds on improved vernacular building techniques, involving different disciplines and stakeholders in order to link building technology, regulatory and normative reforms, and capacity building, similar to the post-tsunami reconstruction in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

Several important lessons are highlighted below, as they will shape UN-HABITAT’s strategic approach to land and housing for the period 2008–2013:

1. Housing is critical for macroeconomic development and employment generation and must be reintroduced into the global and national development agendas as a major economic sector with a clear normative view and holistic approach. This approach is critical, as countries will benefit from its potentially sizeable impacts on national development, economic growth, and poverty reduction. Development banks and bilateral agencies have largely stopped their support for shelter, and a concerted effort will be required to revive housing as a development priority at both global and country levels.

2. Both extremes of market-based approaches and unilateral, state-driven initiatives have failed to address adequate access to land and housing in a satisfactory manner, and usually resulted in increased homelessness and urban slum proliferation. A new conceptual approach is required that is based on a better knowledge of the functioning of the formal and informal urban housing sector, as well as land markets. There is also a need for greater understanding about the incremental housing and land development mechanisms that propel shelter (self) production by the poor, as way to redesign policies and redefine the role of governments, regulations, and housing finance. This means redefining what constitutes “appropriate regulation” and “the enabling function of governments”. Equally, enabling housing finance to work for the poor implies recognizing the failure of formal housing finance and the strength of microfinancing and community-based credit schemes as the predominant tools to provide financial resources to poor households in the majority of cities in the developing world. Scaling up these tools

3 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan of UN-HABITAT (2008–2013)
remains a critical challenge for addressing housing in the 21st century.

3. Promoting security of tenure based on the legal recognition of a range of land rights is far more effective, equitable, and sustainable than an exclusive reliance on conventional land titling programmes. In urban areas, an incremental approach to upgrading land rights over time is preferable. Group and collective rights (e.g. cooperatives), for instance, can avoid unnecessary displacement. It is not possible to deliver security of tenure at the desired scale without developing an underlying land administration system that supports housing rights. Global Land Tool Network partners’ work at the country level has shown that the development of new pro-poor land tools and systems is difficult and time consuming and that going to a global scale will require the significant resourcing of many organizations.

4. UN-HABITAT’s capacity needs strengthening and realignment in order to respond in an ongoing and sustainable manner to global shelter challenges and to support increasing demand from countries and Habitat Agenda partners for its shelter-related assistance.

5. There is a clear need for more inclusionary efforts to secure rights for women, youth, and other vulnerable groups to access land and housing. Women’s inheritance rights, for example, must be addressed, particularly in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Women are critical to achieving both shelter objectives and access to land. Many women play a pivotal role in housing-related livelihood strategies, including through home-based enterprises, urban agriculture, and water collection, and as managers of rental housing. Women’s savings groups are similarly a critical element of many slum-upgrading strategies.

6. The need to address climate change should shape the development of new approaches to housing, land, slum upgrading, and slum prevention. There are ample opportunities to pursue climate change mitigation by promoting the use of low-cost, environmentally sustainable building materials and construction technologies, the rational use of land resources, and the use of environmentally sound designs for neighbourhoods, housing, and urban layout in deprived urban areas and new developments.

7. Housing, land, and property issues in crisis-prone and post-crisis contexts require a strengthened national and international response. More effort is required to identify and address land-related issues that can contribute to or mitigate the impacts of natural or human-made disasters, and to ensure that land-related entry points for risk reduction and peace-building are addressed early and effectively.

SECTION 3: FOCUS AREA 3 KEY RESULTS AND STRATEGIES

UN-HABITAT’s vision is “to help create by 2013 the necessary conditions for concerted international and national efforts to stabilize the growth and proliferation of slums and to set the stage for the subsequent reduction in the number of slum dwellers”. This vision cannot be realized without improved access to land and housing for all.

UN-HABITAT is committed to supporting national and local governments and Habitat Agenda partners to improve access to land and housing, including in crisis-affected countries. The agency is further committed to the following three outcomes: (1) improved land and housing policies implemented; (2) increased security of tenure; and (3) slum improvement and slum prevention promoted.

UN-HABITAT’s approaches will be guided by the recognition that access to a range of affordable land and housing options at the desired scale are a sine qua non for slum prevention. For example, in order to function well the housing sector requires that land, infrastructure, and service-related inputs are provided, and that finance, labour, and a supply of building materials are available to produce housing outcomes that meet the needs and budgets of different social groups (see Figure 1). This will enable individuals and different social groups to access the shelter option that best suits their needs and capacities. The institutional, legal, and regulatory frameworks that govern the housing sector are essential for maximizing impacts on reduced slum formation. Each of these inputs is regulated by their specific normative frameworks. For example, a functional infrastructure and services sector must be supported by adequate regulations and standards, as well as strong operations and maintenance systems.

Equitable access to land is a cross-cutting issue that underpins slum prevention, housing delivery, city management, infrastructure and service delivery, environmental management, community facilities, economic growth, finance, and investments. Frequently in African countries, the responsibility for land is vested at the central or federal government level, while in Latin America and some Asian countries it is a subnational or municipal domain. Therefore, while in some countries the most effective point of entry for land matters is the national or federal level, in others it requires city-level interventions. These peculiarities have helped to maintain a policy divorce between land and housing, with the latter being dealt with at national and city levels. Also, the underpinning land management
systems that support property rights are generally national rather than urban or rural systems. Housing and land have a different range of attributes and functions, some of which converge for housing delivery and slum upgrading. Basically, without land there is no housing, and land without housing makes no city and no urban realm. Therefore, the land–housing symbiosis is central in UN-HABITAT’s Focus Area 3 strategy.

3.1 EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

This section begins with a short description of the focus area’s expected accomplishments, including some key activities at the global, regional, and national levels. The broad normative approach and strategy are then presented, including the gender mainstreaming strategy. The section concludes with an overview of the partnership strategy.

FIRST EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT: ENABLING LAND AND HOUSING REFORMS SUPPORTED

(i) Improved knowledge of innovative land and housing policies and programmes

A major new global policy document on housing will be developed. The last global statements on housing issues were UN-HABITAT’s Enabling Shelter Strategy (1988) and the World Bank’s Enabling Housing Markets to Work (1993). A better understanding of land and housing markets, both formal and informal, will be promoted, and a review of regulatory frameworks will be undertaken to increase knowledge about the functioning of the housing sector through expanding housing profiles of countries, closely linked and feeding into housing policy review and implementation. The policy linkages between land and housing – as well as between housing and land and other important sectors, such as planning, infrastructure, finance, and the building

Figure 1: The systemic view of the housing sector.
sector – will also be reviewed. Partners’ networks will continue to be mobilized to ensure the dissemination of global experience and the documentation of innovative practices as part of the new policy development and to broaden policy ownership. Evidence-based knowledge is key in this strategy, and its success will also aim to bring housing policy back onto the international development agenda and further increase the land policy profile. The housing profiles, backed by evidence and country-level assessments, will enable the formulation of a State of Global Housing Report.

New tools and methodologies will be developed for housing sector and policy analysis and applied in priority countries. The Global Land Tool Network partners will continue working on pro-poor and gender-responsive land tool development. Work will also continue on collecting, analysing, disseminating, and mainstreaming land indicators and reintroducing housing indicators (disaggregated by sex) within global, regional, and national mechanisms. This should include initiatives with the Global Urban Observatory, Shelter Profile Studies, African Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, and World Bank. This should be done to support country-level activities carried out within the framework of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework. Key findings and recommendations from these activities will be widely disseminated through partner networks, regional housing, construction, and land ministerial conferences (the African and Asia Pacific Ministerial Conferences on Housing and Urban Development and the coordination body for ministers of housing and urban development in Latin America and the Caribbean, MINURVI), the World Urban Campaign, the Best Practices database, UN-HABITAT flagship reports, and Urban World (formerly Habitat Debate). An important advocacy objective for the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan period will be to mainstream land, housing, and slum improvement and prevention objectives in the policy documents of global partners, at the country level, in national development plans, and in poverty reduction strategies.

(ii) Increased capacity to implement land and housing policies

Policy activities in this area will focus on transforming knowledge of innovative practices into priority guidelines and practical tools, including evidence-based toolkits for policy-makers; quick guides to establish an enabling policy environment; monitoring tools; and guides to establish sustainable land and housing sectors. Knowledge and experience gained through country-level activities, including pilot projects, will trigger knowledge generation for the tools and guidelines. These guidelines and tools will be developed through partner networks, including the Global Land Tool Network and the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions, and will be further utilized through linked training and capacity-building programmes.

The major hurdle in any new policy is the capacity of institutions responsible for its formulation and implementation. The role of government, both central and local, is of particular importance. Generic training materials will be produced, tested, and adapted to local situations. In line with the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework, close cooperation is envisaged among different units of UN-HABITAT, namely the Shelter Branch, the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division, and the Training and Capacity Building Branch, in this endeavour. Cooperation with partners in capacity development will be central to success. The cooperation with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights focusing on mainstreaming the Quick Guides for Policy-makers: Housing the Poor in Asian Cities, which is currently being adapted to Africa and translated into several languages, will be scaled up in country-level capacity-building activities in the different regions. A number of Global Land Tool Network partners are working together to support the African Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa, and African Development Bank in their development of guidelines and indicators for land policy in Africa. These partners include Slum Dwellers International, the World Bank, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the International Land Coalition.

At the country level, support to governments for the design and implementation of improved land and housing policies and programmes will be provided by UN-HABITAT and external partners. Government priorities, as defined in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, will guide the exact nature of support. Important areas are expected to include the strengthening of legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks for housing, land, and property, including the governance dimension and institutional strengthening of land- and housing-related institutions in general. UN-HABITAT will also work to support improved cooperation in the land sector, in line with the Paris Declaration and operationalized in a variety of contexts, including in crisis-affected countries. Lessons learned and recommendations from the country level will internally and externally cross-fertilize the technical advice of UN-HABITAT.
(iii) Increased capacity to promote hazard resistant and sustainable housing construction

Through the Sustainable Urban Development Network, UN-HABITAT will raise awareness and provide guidance to Ministries of Housing and local authorities to develop policies and guidelines to foster the production and utilization of building materials and construction technologies that do not result in high greenhouse gas emission, as one of the vehicles for climate change mitigation. The strategy is to undertake a global scoping assessment and develop toolkits and policy guidelines that will enable governments to move to low-cost, sustainable building practices. Particular attention will be given to hazard-resistant housing construction to support pre-disaster construction and post-disaster and post-conflict reconstruction. Methods to improve traditional and vernacular building practices, including UN-HABITAT’s recent housing reconstruction projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, will be documented and disseminated through partners for application and adaptation at the country level.

SECOND EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT: SECURITY OF TENURE INCREASED

(i) Improved knowledge of equitable land and housing rights

Activities in this area include the documentation, dissemination, and evaluation of innovative approaches to promoting the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as provided for in international instruments, as well as practices that promote the legal recognition of a broad range of land rights, not just individual freehold. A major effort will be made to develop a robust approach (methodology and network) for monitoring forced and market-driven evictions. Increasing the support to mainstream the unique documentation and mediation work of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions into programmes of UN-HABITAT and its partners is an integral part of this strategy. Through the Global Land Tool Network partners, there will be a major focus on developing pro-poor land tools at the country level. The agency will work with member states to assist them to provide

1 Istanbul Declaration (Paragraph 8) and Habitat Agenda (Paragraph 39).
affordable land documents and undertake better city management. Specific stakeholder groups (for example, bilateral development agencies, training institutions, or large consulting firms) will be engaged within an advocacy framework to further mainstream the recognition of a range of land rights and to promote their application at the country level. High-level forums such as regional ministerial meetings, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, and the World Urban Forum will be used to promote innovative forms of land and housing rights.

(ii) Strengthened capacity to achieve equitable land and housing rights

Guidelines, tools, and training materials will be developed and disseminated. Evidence collected from country experience and research will be documented and integrated into training materials. The knowledge generated will be transformed into guidelines – for example, on alternatives to evictions (such as negotiated resettlement), post-crisis situations, and gender and land administration systems (Social Tenure Domain Model). In view of the financial turmoil sparked by the failures of housing markets, UN-HABITAT will revisit the role of land and housing markets, especially for the poor. The objective would be to promote economic growth and poverty reduction, and design and implement improved enabling legislation and regulatory frameworks for land and housing. This will retrofit into training and capacity building. At the country level, governments and partners will be supported to develop and implement improved land and housing strategies. In response to specific demand, technical and policy advice will also be provided to UN reform pilot countries and UN-HABITAT or partner priority countries, among others. Innovative tools will also be tested in pilot programmes. Improved donor coordination in the land sector will also be supported in line with the Paris Declaration. Figure 2 below details the land tools and objectives of the Global Land Tool Network and shows how land reform and land tools are linked.

Figure 2: Interaction among the Global Land Tool Network objective, cross-cutting issues, themes, and tools (source: GLTN, 2008).
(iii) Alternative approaches to forced evictions utilized

In response to the increasing trend of evictions, UN-HABITAT, through the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions and other partners, will make a renewed effort to promote alternatives to forced and development-induced evictions. At the request of governments, advisory missions will be carried out to document, explore, implement, and report on negotiated alternatives to evictions. Eviction impact assessment tools, mediation guidelines, and training packages will be enhanced or developed to support such initiatives.

(iv) Strengthened capacity to address housing, land, and property issues in crisis-prone and post-crisis contexts

In 2008, UN-HABITAT assumed major new responsibilities, particularly in the areas of shelter and housing, land, and property rights, when it became a member of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (the key strategic coordination mechanism among major humanitarian actors). To meet this challenge, UN-HABITAT is developing new normative approaches and strengthening its in-country response capacity. Guidelines on a range of issues, including post-disaster and post-conflict land and shelter, are being developed to target both the broader humanitarian community and land and housing professionals. Toolkits and training materials are also being developed. Country- and local-level response capacity is also being strengthened through strategic partnerships with organizations such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and UNHCR. In addition to post-crisis response, a major objective for the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan period will be the development of new approaches and tools to support housing- and land-related conflict prevention, analysis, and mediation.

THIRD EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT: SLUM IMPROVEMENT AND SLUM PREVENTION PROMOTED

(i) Improved knowledge of slum improvement and slum prevention

UN-HABITAT’s strategic approach is twofold: consolidate and enhance its own global experience in documenting, monitoring, analysing, and disseminating slum improvement practices through case studies, policy notes, publications, practical guidelines, workshops, and policy and implementation toolkits; and develop a new normative approach to slum prevention with key partners, including (but not limited to) Cities Alliance, the World Bank Institute, Global Land Tool Network partners, and global research networks. Specific areas of attention will be the design, implementation, institutional, and management aspects of citywide slum upgrading and the institutionalization of programmes. On the prevention side, documenting, monitoring, and critically analysing the link between large-scale serviced land and housing provision will be undertaken. This will be linked to the development of guidelines and evidence, both on addressing systemic problems that prevent land and housing delivery at the required scale, including dysfunctions in the market, and further research into slum formation and issues related to the house price-to-income ratio. This process will also be supported by strengthened efforts to develop country-level baseline data and monitor slum formation and growth, together with the Global Urban Observatory and local and national partners.

(ii) Improved capacity to develop slum-upgrading and slum-prevention policies and strategies

The strategy is to involve education and capacity-building institutions in research, publication, communication, and advice. Evidence from UN-HABITAT programmes such as the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (covering 30 countries) and further documentation of citywide slum-upgrading programmes will support the development of generic and tailor-made training and capacity-building materials to enhance the competencies and actual capacity of national and local government officials and Habitat Agenda partners. The promotion of good practices on slum prevention and knowledge on how to design and implement slum prevention policies is an integral part of this strategy. A specific effort will be made to better understand the humanitarian implications of rapid urbanization and develop a range of analytical and programmatic tools to improve humanitarian response in urban contexts that include large population concentrations living in informal settlements.

(iii) Slum-upgrading and slum-prevention policies and strategies supported

In pursuance of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework, UN-HABITAT and its partners will support governments and Habitat Agenda partners to formulate and, where feasible, implement slum improvement and slum prevention strategies. Efforts will focus on UN and UN-HABITAT priority countries and ongoing programmes such as the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme and the Slum Upgrading Facility. A combined package of technical advice, capacity building, and knowledge generation and application will be undertaken to maximize impact.
3.2 NORMATIVE APPROACH AND STRATEGY

UN-HABITAT’s approach to realizing access to land and housing for all will rely on three cross-cutting strategies:

1. Knowledge management and advocacy.
2. Capacity-building at the global and regional levels.
3. Supporting implementation at the country and local level.

Throughout this approach, issues of gender (as well as those relating to the youth and the elderly) will be mainstreamed. The approach is summarized in Figure 3. These strategies will be implemented in parallel. Implementing this approach will not follow a linear process. Knowledge and lessons learned, for example, could be reaped from existing successes and could thus be used in advocacy campaigns and capacity building through the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework. On the other hand, where tools do not exist, they will have to be developed, tested (at country level), and then advocated for, translated into policy, and used in capacity building. For example, the land tools developed for post-disaster and post-conflict contexts will be used to support a range of advocacy, capacity-building, and country-level activities.

The Gender Action Plan will guide UN-HABITAT in strengthening gender equality and women’s empowerment in all areas of its work related to land and housing. The gender evaluation criteria developed by the Global Land Tool Network will serve as a concrete tool for gender analysis, not only of normative products, but also for assessing at the country level the gender sensitivity of areas such as housing design and construction, land administration procedures, taxation systems, and dispute mechanisms when addressing housing, land, and property rights following natural disasters or conflicts.

At the country level, UN-HABITAT’s engagement in land and housing issues will be shaped by several factors:

1. The need to respond to government demands for UN-HABITAT assistance where there is commitment to policy reform.
2. Countries undergoing post-disaster and post-conflict processes where assistance to housing- and land-related issues are at the top of the agenda.

Figure 3: Summary of UN-HABITAT’s approach to and strategy on land and housing.
3. The identification of priority countries, in line with the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework.

4. The fulfilment of commitments made through global programmes.

5. UN-HABITAT’s capacity to undertake prolonged and sustainable assistance. An important aspect of the strategy will be to develop a measured response to country demands, ranging from implementation support through backstopping to engagement via global and country partners.

3.3 PARTNERSHIPS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Consistent with the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan’s partnership vision that UN-HABITAT facilitates the emergence of a “network of networks” of urban development actors, existing networks will be strengthened while maximizing UN-HABITAT’s role as an enabler and catalyst. The Global Land Tool Network model of assembling a coalition of diverse partners around a shared vision will also be adapted to the context of housing- and shelter-related stakeholders, including post-disaster and post-conflict land and housing reconstruction. Collaboration in critical areas, such as the development of a new analytical framework and global housing policy linked to the creation of a new normative approach to slum improvement and prevention, will serve to expand and deepen UN-HABITAT’s relationships with external organizations, a pool of international housing experts, and other parts of the agency under the spirit of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework.

Within this partnership strategy, UN-HABITAT will deepen its engagement with its existing 36 Global Land Tool Network partners, while expanding its network by bringing in new strategic partners, including multilateral and bilateral donors (who are in a position to promote “systemic” change and significantly advance the land agenda at the global level). UN-HABITAT will also be proactive in the coordination of international partners to assist them to jointly work on global and regional programmes.

SECTION 4: FOCUS AREA 3 MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER FOCUS AREAS OF THE MEDIUM-TERM STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PLAN

UN-HABITAT faces a specific set of challenges and opportunities in managing the implementation of the Focus Area 3 strategy, both internally and externally, and in its quest to improve land and housing policies in the world. The challenges include the following:

1. The urgent need to rebuild the Housing Policy Section in Shelter Branch, which has lost significant capacity over time and has become increasingly driven by external priorities.

2. The institutional fragmentation of housing issues within UN-HABITAT in particular impels the need to improve coordination and cooperation with Focus Areas 4 and 5, namely Subprogramme 4 (Human Settlements Finance) and Subprogramme 3 (Regional and Technical Cooperation), as well as Focus Areas 1 and 2. The inter-divisional and horizontal collaboration defined in the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework needs to be strengthened by better, intensive collaboration and improved communication centred on prioritized issues, countries, and partnerships, which include, but are not limited to, the various regional offices of UN-HABITAT. The articulation of the regional and technical cooperation activities of UN-HABITAT is central in this respect and will strengthen the normative and operational functions embedded in the Focus Area 3 strategy.

3. The development of a global housing policy vision requires strategic resource mobilization and political support from partners, constituent groups, and the Governing Council. Envisioning the replacement of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 with a far more outreaching and operational policy document is fundamental and must involve the international community and have the support of the UN General Assembly.

4. The range of administrative issues to improve the absorption and delivery capacity of established programmes under Focus Area 3 such as the Global Land Tool Network (for example, the effective operation of a basket fund arrangement and the limitations of existing contracting mechanisms) need to be addressed to achieve the desired scale and meet the enormous demand for support in land sector-related activities.
5. The need to strengthen the agency’s humanitarian response through improved procedures and appropriate institutional reforms. On the other hand, there are a range of opportunities to improve impact and results: the arrival of new staff, the increasing demand for land and housing support from governments, the start up of new programmes such as the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme and Shelter Profile Programme, and management innovations such as in-house agreements, the use of retainers (standing agreements for the supply of specific expertise and services), information systems, and the development of a programme management system.

The implementation of the results framework will be driven along four parallel management tracks:

1. Significant energy will be invested during the first two years of the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan period to develop new approaches to housing policy and slum prevention and to translate these concepts into a coherent, fully-resourced programme that builds on the Shelter Profile Programme and incorporates additional donors and funding sources. The new vision will be crafted with the close engagement of external and internal partners. The current housing policy work programme will be reviewed to determine whether certain aspects should be scaled down or even phased out.

2. UN-HABITAT, through the Global Land Tool Network, will continue to promote management innovations to enable it to scale up its delivery without sacrificing quality or accountability. Major management goals include bringing additional donors into the Global Land Tool Network basket, while significantly increasing the delivery of outputs by partners (as opposed to by UN-HABITAT itself).

3. Land and housing will become key entry points for implementing the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework in UN and UN-HABITAT priority countries, as well as for ensuring a more effective institutional response to post-disaster and post-conflict contexts. Cooperation with the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division is crucial in this respect, as is the development of an agency-wide institutional strengthening strategy for humanitarian response.

4. During the 2010–2011 biennium, once UN-HABITAT’s approaches to housing policy and slum prevention are strengthened and the institutional aspects of the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework have been further streamlined, a review will be carried out in line with the results-based framework, and the recommendations will be implemented in the final biennium of the Medium-Term Structural and Institutional Plan (2012–2013).

SECTION 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Table 1 summarizes the indicators used to measure the achievement of the strategic result and expected accomplishments for land and housing. (With reference to the table, “implementation” is context-dependent and may mean the introduction, promotion, revision, adoption, or testing of relevant policies, strategies, and programmes, including legal and institutional reforms. Also, “governments” means national and/or local governments, and their “policies” means strategies, programmes, and/or legal and regulatory frameworks.)

By 2012–2013, these indicators will be harmonized with UN-HABITAT’s Strategic Framework and Work Programmes, as well as with the logical frameworks of specific ongoing programmes such as the Global Land Tool Network and the Shelter Profile Programme. For each indicator, agreed performance measures will be developed and targets and baselines harmonized for the number of governments and Habitat Agenda partners implementing different reforms. Data will be established for the indicators to facilitate monitoring and evaluation, and will be sex disaggregated where possible.
### SUMMARY OF INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic result</th>
<th>Summary indicators of achievement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to land and housing</td>
<td>Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners that are implementing improved land and housing policies, strategies, and programmes, with a particular focus on the poor, women, youth, and vulnerable groups.</td>
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#### Expected accomplishments

1. **Improved land and housing policies implemented**

   1.1 Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners implementing improved land and housing policies, strategies, and programmes.

   1.2 Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners promoting hazard resistant and sustainable housing construction.

2. **Security of tenure increased**

   2.1 Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners implementing improved policies and the progressive realization of equitable land and housing rights, including in crisis-prone and post-crisis contexts.

   2.2 Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners taking measures to reduce forced evictions.

3. **Slum improvement and prevention promoted**

   3.1 Increased number of national governments, local authorities, and Habitat Agenda partners implementing improved policies for slum improvement and prevention.
There are over 1 billion slum dwellers globally and their number is projected to rise over the next 30 years to about 2 billion. Unless radical measures are taken and significant efforts are made to provide a range of affordable housing options and improved access to legally secure land at scale, the rapidly growing cities in the developing south will be host to hundreds of millions of new slum dwellers. The situation is critical and unprecedented in human history.

In response to the emerging urban crisis, UN-HABITAT aims to mobilize a global coalition of partners to address the challenges presented by unsustainable patterns of urbanization. UN-HABITAT's vision is “to help create by 2013 the necessary conditions for concerted international and national efforts to stabilize the growth of slums and to set the stage for the subsequent reduction of the number of slum dwellers and reversal of the current trend of unbridled urban slum proliferation”. This vision, derived from the Millennium Development Goals, cannot be realized without systemic reform to promote improved access to land and housing for all.