



**UN HABITAT** Executive Board  
of the United Nations  
Human Settlements  
Programme

Distr.: General  
7 September 2022

Original: English

---

**Executive Board of the United Nations**

**Human Settlements Programme**

**Second session of 2022**

Nairobi, 21–23 November 2022

Item 7 of the provisional agenda\*

**Normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, including reporting on the programmatic activities of UN-Habitat in 2021 and the implementation of subprogrammes, flagship programmes and technical cooperation activities, and an update on the UN-Habitat response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the engagement of UN-Habitat in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster**

**Report of the Executive Director on the contribution, experiences and added value of UN-Habitat in urban crisis situations**

**I. Introduction**

1. The present document highlights the engagement of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, as a follow-up to decision 2022/2<sup>1</sup> of the Executive Board and in connection with the fourth domain of change of the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023,<sup>2</sup> effective urban crisis prevention and response. It builds on a review of the project portfolio of UN-Habitat contributing to the outcomes under the fourth domain of change, the 26 countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, as reflected in the annex to decision 2022/2 and the outcomes of the urban crisis track at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum.

2. UN-Habitat has been developing strong experience and expertise in the prevention of and response to urban crises, in line with resolution 26/2 of the Governing Council, enhancing the role of UN-Habitat in urban crisis response, the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023<sup>3</sup> (HSP/HA.1/Res.1) and decision 2022/2 (paras. 6–9).

3. The report should enable the Executive Board to discuss further prioritization of the work of UN-Habitat on urban crisis prevention and response, as well as potential measures to support stronger engagement.

---

\* HSP/EB.2022/14.

<sup>1</sup> In document HSP/EB.2022/13.

<sup>2</sup> UN-Habitat, *Strategic Plan 2020–2023* (Nairobi, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> HSP/HA.1/Res.1.

## II. The normative and operational portfolio of UN-Habitat on urban crisis prevention and response

### Overview of domain of change 4: effective urban crisis prevention and response

4. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has shown how current global crises are increasingly interconnected and difficult to resolve. Densely populated urban areas often bear the brunt of these crises. Sustainability, preparedness, risk management and crisis prevention have become central to both urban planning and reconstruction efforts. To reduce the impact of these crises, UN-Habitat has laid out pre- and post-crisis measures, building on tools and approaches used in development and humanitarian settings and adapting them to urban crisis, migration or displacement settings. The experience, methodologies and tools of UN-Habitat help advance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, in coordination with humanitarian actors. UN-Habitat interventions are articulated around the three outcomes of domain of change 4 of the strategic plan for the period 2020–2023:

(a) **Outcome 4.1: enhanced social integration and inclusive communities.** UN-Habitat supports Member States in their implementation of strategies and actions to increase social integration and safety in public space, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable, including women, youth, disabled persons and persons in vulnerable situations. To achieve social integration, UN-Habitat promotes participatory and inclusive operational programmes in crisis-affected communities, such as the “people’s process” approach, a cross-sectoral community development planning and implementation tool.

(b) **Outcome 4.2: improved living standards and inclusion of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees through effective crisis response and recovery.** UN-Habitat has prioritized improved living standards and the inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons and returnees in urban settings. UN-Habitat has provided expertise on the planning of refugee camps and incorporated urban planning standards and tenure arrangements suitable for the transformation of camps into settlements, as in northern Kenya, for 60,000 refugees. The flagship programme entitled “Inclusive cities: enhancing the positive impact of urban migration” provides a vehicle for the coordination and integration of normative approaches that support and enhance country-level programming.

(c) **Outcome 4.3: enhanced resilience of the built environment and infrastructure.** Work towards this outcome focuses on implementing evidence-based local disaster risk reduction and resilience strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. UN-Habitat supports local implementation, mobilizes networks of urban stakeholders and complements work led by the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank at the national level. The Urban Resilience Global Programme developed city profiles, including data for decision-making, to support mayors in Brazil, Mozambique, Paraguay, Senegal, Spain, the Russian Federation and Vanuatu. The city profiles were also adapted to take into account the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Analysis of the interventions of UN-Habitat in crisis contexts

5. The Executive Board, in paragraph 9 of decision 2022/2, requested the Executive Director to support the efforts to reconstruct human settlements in countries affected by conflict and disaster and to use all relevant tools at her disposal to engage with countries newly affected by conflict and disaster, such as Ukraine, and to continue to provide assistance to countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, in particular using urban profiling to assess the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of urban areas and the establishment of urban recovery frameworks.

6. UN-Habitat initiated an analysis of its work in countries and territories affected by conflict and disaster, including those leading to the displacement of persons. The analysis was conducted for the country programming of the 26 countries, territories and areas affected by conflict and disaster, as reflected in the annex to Decision 2022/2 (HSP/EB.2022/13) of the Executive Board. Country programmes identified the nature of the crisis, whether the crisis led to the displacement of persons, the type of interventions by UN-Habitat, their linkages with the outcomes of the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 and the tools from the UN-Habitat catalogue of services that were applied.

7. The methodology adopted allowed the identification of:

- (a) The level of integration of the expected outcomes of the strategic plan;
- (b) The approach of UN-Habitat in response to conflicts and disasters;
- (c) The regional adaptation of global UN-Habitat expertise and regional innovations that can inform global normative work.

8. Among the 26 countries and territories analysed, 16 countries (62%) have been affected by conflicts and 20 countries (77%) have been affected by natural disasters. 11 countries (42%) have been affected by both conflicts and natural disasters, resulting in complex and multidimensional crisis situations. In 17 countries (65%), people have been forced to leave their home, either due to a conflict or a disaster, or both.

9. The analysis has allowed UN-Habitat to review how it is supporting Member States in the different contexts and at the different stages of crises:

(a) The analysis shows the key areas of intervention of UN-Habitat in crisis contexts, from early response through humanitarian interventions (in 9 countries, 35%) to paving the way towards longer-term responses through the establishment of participatory processes to support communities in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of homes after a disaster (in 12 countries, 46%) and the rehabilitation and enhancement of basic urban services (14 countries, 54%), as well as to support local, regional and national governments in building urban resilience and enhancing risk management through disaster risk reduction approaches (12 countries, 46%);

(b) In conflict contexts, UN-Habitat plays a key role in assessing the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of urban areas by conducting urban profiling activities (12 countries, 46%). Particularly in the Arab States region, the profiling exercises lead to the development of urban recovery approaches, building on contextual analysis, participatory recovery planning, implementation of multisectoral interventions and monitoring systems that include environmental, social and political safeguards. The UN-Habitat office in Syria has pioneered and developed an urban recovery framework, which can be scaled up and used in similar contexts globally;

(c) Addressing climate change is an important component of UN-Habitat interventions in crisis contexts, with 17 countries (65%) engaged in activities to adapt or mitigate the impacts of climate change on cities. Climate action is almost systematically undertaken in response to disasters (15 countries, 88%) and is also becoming an important component of UN-Habitat response in conflict situations, as 7 countries facing conflict situations have integrated climate action components into their programming;

(d) Capacity-building of local, regional and national governments, as well as of operational partners and local communities, lies at the heart of UN-Habitat interventions in crisis contexts. 21 countries (81%) engage in capacity-building as a key activity to ensure the sustainability of interventions;

(e) The analysis also demonstrated how interventions are adapted to regional contexts, allowing UN-Habitat to develop regional expertise on various approaches, such as the people's process, a community development planning and implementation tool, in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. In the Arab States region, UN-Habitat has also built up recognized expertise on housing, land and property rights. The analysis revealed the importance of the coordination of the crisis portfolio at the global level, to foster the sharing of experiences and best practices, and peer learning, among other things, to enhance UN-Habitat interventions globally.

10. The analysis also allowed the identification of areas in which UN-Habitat could invest more at scale to better support Member States and cities globally, such as municipal finance and land base revenues to support the equitable delivery of services and the building of the social contract, or the use of technology and digital innovations in support of urban recovery, to enhance data collection and analysis for evidence-based planning.

11. The key normative tools and approaches used to support Member States in responding to crisis contexts were also identified. Several tools used at country level promote participatory processes, such as the *City-wide Public Space Assessment Toolkit*,<sup>4</sup> the *Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk* guide,<sup>5</sup> the urban recovery framework, or the people's process approach, among others. Specific tools have been developed to support cities in their efforts to build resilience, such as the CityRap tool, or to improve land management systems (tools developed through the Global Land Tool Network) and

<sup>4</sup> UN-Habitat, *City-Wide Public Space Assessment Toolkit* (Nairobi, 2020).

<sup>5</sup> UN-Habitat, *Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk: A Guide for Community Assessments, Action Planning and Implementation* (Nairobi, 2020).

urban planning (*Planning for Climate Change* guide).<sup>6</sup> A more thorough review is ongoing to identify further tailoring to crisis contexts, including on issues related to protection and social cohesion.

### **UN-Habitat engagement in countries newly affected by conflict and disaster**

12. UN-Habitat has activated its emergency director function to ensure more corporate responses, including in countries newly affected by conflict and disaster, including the conflict in Ukraine and the floods in Pakistan. Where needed, ad hoc task forces are established to ensure a whole-of-house response, as recently occurred for Ukraine.

13. Based on initial engagement with the Government of Ukraine, Ukrainian cities and civil-society actors, the request of the Executive Board to use urban profiling to assess the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of urban areas and the establishment of urban recovery frameworks is reconfirmed as the best way forward. At the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, 10 events explored how this could best be done, with calls for broad horizontal partnerships with strong engagement of built environment professionals and a confirmation of the need to support bottom-up urban recovery efforts wherever and whenever possible as a complement to nationally led recovery and reconstruction efforts. The tools and approaches tested in various crisis situations require adaptation to specific contexts. The Government of Ukraine has now formally requested UN-Habitat to provide support to local and regional recovery planning.

14. A programmatic framework has been created to set out possible UN-Habitat interventions in support of the Government of Ukraine at the national and local levels. Urban profiling results will be used to inform the development of urban recovery frameworks that should help frame immediate action and progress towards full-scale reconstruction, identify policy gaps, ensure multilevel governance coherence and explore financing options for urban recovery. The urban profiles will also support the development of urban and spatial plans for priority locations in need of recovery and/or complete reconstruction. The purpose will be to ensure that local authorities are capacitated to engage in local recovery processes, thereby consolidating earlier gains in the decentralization process. UN-Habitat also plans to assist the Government of Ukraine and other stakeholders with a systematic analysis of housing delivery systems at city and national level, helping to identify bottlenecks, gaps and opportunities in the housing sector, which has been severely impacted by the conflict.

15. UN-Habitat, through the United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities, plans to contribute to the use of urban data platforms which will house all data and input gathered through the above-mentioned tools. The aim is to digitize and visualize in interactive dashboards the developed urban profiles, compare data with historical information, identify grey zones and challenges in cities, inform the urban and spatial plans and the sustainability and resilience plans for priority locations, and ultimately inform territorial and urban policymaking by respective governments.

16. In addition to the work with the Government of Ukraine, partnerships have been explored with a wide range of Ukrainian civil-society actors, the United Nations country team for Ukraine, including the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and members of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises already present in Ukraine. The intent is to ensure full alignment with Ukrainian priorities and full integration into the response of the United Nations, leveraging Ukrainian capacities and allowing quick and scalable action working closely with a wide range of actors with established presence and capacity in Ukraine. UN-Habitat is a member of the United Nations country team and is currently focused on mobilizing the necessary financial resources and making the necessary preparations for a quick deployment.

### **III. Contribution to United Nations system-wide engagement relevant to urban crisis prevention and response**

17. As the nature of crises has become increasingly urban, UN-Habitat has increasingly focused on supporting humanitarian and development actors in adjusting to this new reality, guided also by the New Urban Agenda and longstanding experience in working in crisis-affected countries and cities.

---

<sup>6</sup> UN-Habitat, *Planning for Climate Change Guide: A Strategic, Values-Based Approach for Urban Planners* (Nairobi, 2014).

## Sustainable urbanization for sustaining peace

18. The work of UN-Habitat is embedded in broader United Nations efforts for peace, security and development. As a development agency, UN-Habitat has a strong mandate to mitigate the root causes and drivers of conflict, in line with the peace and security reform of the United Nations. General Assembly resolution 71/243, on a quadrennial comprehensive policy review, acknowledges “that a comprehensive whole-of-system response, including greater cooperation and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, is fundamental to most efficiently and effectively addressing needs and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Anchored in the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 under domain of change 4, the work of UN-Habitat in urban crisis contexts builds on experiences gained and lessons learned in urban development contexts, while being adapted to the priorities of a humanitarian crisis response, as appropriate. UN-Habitat has developed specific tools and guidance documents on urban crisis and conflict response, including on land, housing (spatial), data collection, urban and territorial planning, access to services, recovery and reconstruction.

19. Drawing on extensive lessons learned, UN-Habitat has been able to define key principles for engagement in urban crisis and conflict contexts. These include:

- (a) **Multi-governance.** Coordination between different levels of government, with a strong focus on including local authorities in decision-making processes;
- (b) **Cross-sectoral coordination.** Applying an area-based approach and spatializing data foster a cross-sectoral approach which enables multisectoral analysis and the visualization of gaps in response;
- (c) **Inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and participatory processes.** To ensure ownership and inclusion of perspectives of all levels and parts of society, including local and national authorities, civil-society organizations (including religious and faith leaders, representatives of women’s and youth associations, and representatives of people in vulnerable situations, e.g., in displacement contexts), local academia and private sector actors;
- (d) **Increased coordination between humanitarian-development-peace actors.** To foster an integrated and coordinated approach, from data collection and analysis to joint prioritization and recommendations for action, investment and implementation.

20. Key areas of the work of UN-Habitat on crises, which also create a platform for sustainable urbanization, include land and property issues, urban and territorial planning, including in refugee and displacement settings, housing, and local economic development and municipal finance. To advance sustainable urban development, UN-Habitat works with all levels of government for transformative change, providing advisory services in areas including urban legislation and policy development at the national level, city-level projects on planning, inclusive governance structures and municipal finance systems, and neighbourhood-level interventions and local implementation. UN-Habitat is therefore best placed to enhance communication and coordination across different levels of government and advocate for whole-of-government approaches.

21. The United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development (CEB/2019/4/Add.4), adopted by the United Nations Chief Executive Board for Coordination, chaired by the Secretary-General, in April 2019, points to the potential of sustainable urbanization as a transformative force for cities in crisis, displacement, resilience and peacebuilding. While increased displacement creates great challenges for cities, cities have a unique opportunity to manage and integrate urban displacement into sustainable urban development strategies, as set out in the New Urban Agenda. The strategy points out that all crisis response and recovery processes offer opportunities to rebuild in a better way and strengthen overall resilience, requiring a better alignment of humanitarian and development efforts, and that cities in post-conflict settings can become critical spaces for rebuilding the social contract, reviving institutions so that they can become more accountable and inclusive and creating transitional justice mechanisms in support of peacebuilding.

## Humanitarian-development-peace nexus

22. On 16 June 2021, UN-Habitat has become an adherent of the recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.<sup>7</sup> The recommendation provides its adherents with a framework which promotes more collaborative and complementary humanitarian,

<sup>7</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, document OECD/LEGAL/5019.

development and peace actions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations. UN-Habitat is currently aligning its normative work with the recommendation and building corporate capacities related to the framework through the nomination of key staff to participate in the Nexus Academy, a six-day training course co-designed by UN-Habitat and other adherents.

### **The Secretary-General’s “Action agenda on internal displacement”**

23. UN-Habitat contributed to the work of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, established by the Secretary-General. UN-Habitat, together with the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Joint Internally Displaced Person Profiling Service, submitted a paper entitled “IDPs in towns and cities: working with the realities of internal displacement in an urban world”<sup>8</sup> and organized a high-level roundtable on internal displacement in an increasingly urbanized world to support the consultations of the High-Level Panel with local actors. The roundtable brought together local authorities, in particular from Burkina Faso, Colombia, Iraq and Ukraine. The Secretary-General’s “Action agenda on internal displacement”<sup>9</sup> recognizes, among other things, the important role of local authorities and urban planning in managing urban displacement.

### **Humanitarian action: Inter-Agency Standing Committee and cluster system**

24. Since 2008, UN-Habitat has been part of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the highest-level humanitarian coordination forum of the United Nations system. In recent years, the focus of the Committee has been on ensuring that humanitarian responses are adjusted to address humanitarian challenges in urban areas, taking into account the increasingly urban nature of humanitarian crises. This has included a strong focus on strengthening and empowering the role of local governments in humanitarian responses in urban settings.

25. UN-Habitat will once more officially take up the role of co-chair of the housing, land and property area of responsibility under the Global Protection Cluster in 2023, while maintaining minimal engagement in the Global Shelter Cluster. This will help to advance the use of the Secretary General’s 2019 guidance note on the United Nations and land and conflict,<sup>10</sup> which UN-Habitat facilitated and which allows coherence across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus to deal with acute risks of protection or further displacement, while addressing root causes.

### **Strategic partnerships**

26. Since 2019, in recognition of the increasingly urban nature of displacement, UN-Habitat has enhanced its engagement with UNHCR through a global memorandum of understanding. Building on their respective mandates, the memorandum of understanding promotes the complementary, capacities and tools of the organizations and the improvement of their response to urban migration crises. The partnership recognizes the positive role that sustainable development can play in mitigating drivers of conflict, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies, and that a comprehensive response is fundamental to addressing needs and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. The partnership covers both normative and operational aspects related to humanitarian and development responses in support of their respective mandates, the global compact on refugees, and other global agreements such as the 2030 Sustainable development agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the New Urban Agenda. The collaboration has already resulted in more holistic and integrated settlements-based approaches being applied in refugee settings (e.g., in Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa), city profiles developed under the urban planning in migration contexts programme (e.g., in Cameroon, Egypt and Jordan), where the profiling tool has been adapted and the financial planning component included, expanded operational engagement in refugee settings (e.g., the inclusion of UN-Habitat in the Solutions Initiative for South Sudan and Sudan), as well as the deployment of technical experts from UN-Habitat in key refugee operations (e.g., in Bangladesh), and the secondment of a UNHCR senior advisor to UN-Habitat headquarters to support the urban crisis work stream. The collaboration has been underpinned by the

<sup>8</sup> International Institute for Environment and Development, Joint Internally Displaced Person Profiling Service and UN-Habitat, “IDPs in towns and cities: working with the realities of internal displacement in an urban world”, 2020. Available at [www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/sites/www.un.org.internal-displacement-panel/files/published\\_ied\\_jips\\_unh\\_submission.pdf](http://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/sites/www.un.org.internal-displacement-panel/files/published_ied_jips_unh_submission.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, “Action agenda on internal displacement”, 2020. Available at [www.un.org/en/content/action-agenda-on-internal-displacement/assets/pdf/Action-Agenda-on-Internal-Displacement\\_EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/content/action-agenda-on-internal-displacement/assets/pdf/Action-Agenda-on-Internal-Displacement_EN.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, “Guidance note of the Secretary-General: the United Nations and land and conflict”, 2019. Available at <https://gltm.net/2019/03/15/guidance-note-of-the-secretary-general-the-united-nations-and-land-and-conflict-march-2019/>.

dissemination of lessons learned from joint field responses through internal staff learning events jointly held by the two agencies and the development of joint normative tools (e.g., the settlement profiling tool, *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas*),<sup>11</sup> as well as participation of UN-Habitat in the revision of the UNHCR urban refugee policy. The enhanced collaboration between the organizations was reflected in the substantive participation of UNHCR in the urban crises track during the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. Similarly, UN-Habitat made three pledges at the Global Refugee Forum (on improved data on urban migration, youth inclusion and normative tools for integrated settlements) which have all been incorporated into the migration work of UN-Habitat.

27. In addition to the partnership with UNHCR, UN-Habitat has engaged in discussions with other United Nations organizations, such as the International Organization for Migration, to elevate field-level operational partnerships to global-level partnerships, which could further enhance UN-Habitat work on migration. A draft global memorandum of understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is currently undergoing an internal review process. This partnership would support the urban crises work in the areas of land issues, urban-rural linkages and green public spaces that can promote inclusion and community cohesion.

### **Networks relevant to urban crisis prevention and response**

28. In 2016, at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Türkiye, UN-Habitat launched the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, a multidisciplinary, collaborative community of practice working to prevent, prepare for, effectively respond to and rapidly recover from the effects of humanitarian crises and displacement in urban settings. The Alliance is an inclusive platform bringing together local governments, built environment professionals, academics and humanitarian and development actors, working to arrive at systemic change and maximizing their complementary contributions in dealing with urban crises. Almost 100 organizations have joined the Alliance to work towards this vision, and to promote the principles outlined in the “Urban crises charter”.<sup>12</sup> The Alliance has shaped common approaches towards, among other things, urban profiling of cities affected by crises and collaboration between humanitarian actors and local governments. A new strategy has been adopted for 2021–2024 which focuses on making knowledge and practices on urban crisis prevention and response more accessible to local governments and local actors, including the further development of an urban humanitarian response portal. The Alliance has also increasingly used the World Urban Forum to foster dialogue and exchanges and shape new partnerships. At the recent eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, the Alliance supported the development of an urban crisis track.

29. UN-Habitat continues to contribute to and engage with different multi-stakeholder platforms as an effective way to leverage its urban knowledge and expertise to strengthen responses in a wide range of thematic areas, including resilience building, displacement and migration. As such, UN-Habitat has been a driving force behind the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, led by the United Nations Officer for Disaster Risk Reduction, and is an active member of the United Nations Network on Migration as well as the GP2.0 network, addressing internal displacement.

## **IV. Urban crises track at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum**

30. For the first time, the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum introduced an urban crises track, with over 40 events that allowed a broad sharing of knowledge and best practices among local, regional and national governments, international organizations, urban practitioners, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. Three official events were organized as part of the urban crises track: an extraordinary dialogue on urban crisis response and recovery, a special session on urban recovery frameworks and a special session organized by the Government of Poland on rebuilding communities and neighbourhoods after war and natural disasters. Among dedicated discussions on global crises, the urban crises track also featured ten events which focused on specific issues related to urban recovery in Ukraine.

31. The eleventh session of the World Urban Forum highlighted the need for an increased focus on urban crisis prevention and response, hand-in-hand with resilience and disaster preparedness. The climate and biodiversity emergencies, pandemics, violence and conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters all converge in cities and surrounding territories. There is an urgent need to build

<sup>11</sup> UN-Habitat, *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas* (Nairobi, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Global Alliance for Urban Crises, “Urban crises charter”, 2018. Available at [www.urban-response.org/help-library/urban-crises-charter-adapting-to-an-urbanizing-world](http://www.urban-response.org/help-library/urban-crises-charter-adapting-to-an-urbanizing-world).

capacities and tools for more effective urban crisis prevention, response and recovery which support both national and local authorities. Mayors have been recognized as first responders to crises who need to be empowered to take charge of responses, recovery and transformation towards a better urban future.

32. A tried-and-tested approach is the urban recovery framework, an important tool to help drive bottom-up urban recovery led by local governments in support of nationally conceived reconstruction plans. The discussion at the World Urban Forum built on the key role of national governments in leveraging local capacities and potential through institutional mechanisms and multilevel governance arrangements, addressing policy gaps, ensuring coordination and backing financing instruments that can support local governments. With maximized capacities, local governments can implement people-centred participatory processes to anchor recovery at community level. The Forum recommended the global adoption of urban recovery frameworks, to be used in urban crises contexts, which could help governments at all levels, the United Nations system and partners to respond more effectively to urban crises in a more coordinated way, help overcome the humanitarian-development divide and empower local governments. UN-Habitat has recently adopted the tool extensively used in the Middle East and North Africa region for deployment in Ukraine.

33. As is set out in the “Katowice declared actions”,<sup>13</sup> UN-Habitat, as the organization with the mandate to address human settlements, needs to help expand the science, research and data on the future of urban crises and make it available to local governments so they can mobilize the political will and resources needed to take action at scale and shift fundamental policies and practices to accelerate progress. A key instrument to respond to urban crises and increase effectiveness in the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is the use of urban recovery frameworks, aligning nationally led and locally driven responses with a strong focus on multilevel governance and financing instruments. UN-Habitat will continue to advocate for their broader use by the international community, building on collaborations with the European Commission and the World Bank.

34. For UN-Habitat, the issues detailed above require a stronger focus on urban crisis prevention and response in its normative work, expanding its catalytic role within the United Nations system and in multi-stakeholder platforms, such as the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, and further strengthening of strategic partnerships, in particular with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Development Programme. The creation of subprogramme 4 in the UN-Habitat strategic plan for the period 2020–2023 has laid the foundations to do so, though further review of the capacities needed to strengthen internal coordination and response mechanisms is required. Flagship programme 4, entitled “Inclusive cities: enhancing the positive impact of urban migration”, and its related global programme thus require further resourcing that would allow UN-Habitat to play its role.

## V. Way forward

35. Going forward, UN-Habitat will, within the limits of available resources, strengthen the analysis of its operational and normative work in support of urban crisis prevention and response, not limited to the 26 countries included in the present report, to identify regional trends and solutions. This will also help to determine the need for normative work and identify eventual gaps in existing tools and services provided by UN-Habitat globally.

36. UN-Habitat will also explore how to further strengthen its urban crisis response capacities, including the emergency director function, internal mechanisms, surge capacities and engagement in crisis-related mechanisms located in Geneva and New York (e.g., Inter-Agency Standing Committee, humanitarian cluster system).

37. UN-Habitat intends to help ensure that there is sufficient focus on the specific nature of urban crises in data collection and analysis, including on displacement, refugees and migration, working closely with UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank. In response to a call at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat should also help ensure that the science and data on the wide range of crises converging in urban areas is accessible and “at the fingertips” of local governments and local actors.

38. The convergence of crises in urban areas requires further development of the narrative on urban crisis prevention and response and its contribution to climate action, durable solutions for the displaced, sustaining peace and acceleration towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as initiated in the extraordinary dialogue at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum. This could

---

<sup>13</sup> UN-Habitat, “Katowice declared actions: transforming our cities for a better urban future”, Katowice, Poland, 2022. Available at <https://wuf.unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/files/Katowice-Declared-Actions.pdf>.



be built on at the United Nations Habitat Assembly of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in 2023, in preparation for the next UN-Habitat strategic plan.

39. UN-Habitat also plans to focus on mobilizing the resources needed for it to take up its role of supporting United Nations country teams in managing acute urban displacement and finding durable solutions, in response to the Secretary-General's "Action agenda on internal displacement".

40. Working closely with regional and subregional offices, including through flagship programme 4 on urban migration, UN-Habitat will increase its focus on programme development related to urban crisis prevention and response, to be further detailed in close consultation with strategic partners within the United Nations development system and beyond.

---