



Our New Urban Agenda

Learning Series

Learning, Reflecting, Acting Together

QUESTIONS CHAT AND INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Series 1: Reclaiming our NUA

Webinar 1

Global Kick-Off:

Our New Urban Agenda: Shared Vision, Shared Responsibility

1. **How can we convince Member States about the value of reporting on the implementation of NUA?**

Reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda is not just a procedural exercise, it is a strategic opportunity for Member States to showcase progress, share innovations, and strengthen accountability in sustainable urban development.

In accordance with **UN General Assembly resolution 71/256**, the Secretary-General is mandated to submit a progress report every four years, based on **voluntary inputs** from Member States and relevant stakeholders. While the voluntary nature of these inputs reflects respect for national ownership, it also highlights the importance of **advocacy and stakeholder engagement** in encouraging participation.

UN-Habitat actively promotes the submission of **National Progress Reports (NPRs)** through various channels. However, the role of stakeholders—particularly at the national level—is **critical**. Your advocacy can help elevate the importance of reporting within national agendas and ensure that urban development efforts are visible and aligned with global commitments.

In the last reporting cycle (2018–2022), **40 Member States** submitted NPRs. For the current cycle (2022–2026), we aim to reach **at least 55 submissions**—a modest but meaningful increase. With 193 Member States, there is significant room to grow.

2. How can we achieve an equitable distribution of population to mitigate the increasing urbanisation, given that even rural and peri-urban areas are becoming heavily populated, encroaching on areas of critical biodiversity and unbalancing sustainable development?

Addressing the challenges of uneven population distribution and rapid urbanization requires a **systems approach** that strengthens **urban-rural linkages**, promotes **balanced territorial development**, and safeguards **critical ecosystems**.

UN-Habitat recognizes that urbanization is not confined to cities alone, **rural and peri-urban areas** are increasingly affected by population pressures, land-use change, and infrastructure expansion. This often leads to **encroachment on biodiversity hotspots**, **fragmentation of natural habitats**, and **imbalanced development outcomes**.

To promote **equitable population distribution**, we advocate for:

1. Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages

- **Integrated territorial planning** that connects cities with surrounding rural and peri-urban areas.
- **Investment in rural infrastructure and services** to reduce push factors driving migration to urban centers.
- **Support for local economies** through inclusive value chains, agro-industries, and digital connectivity.
- **Mobility and accessibility improvements** to ensure people can live in rural areas while accessing urban opportunities.

2. UN-Habitat Initiatives

UN-Habitat supports Member States and local governments through:

- The [Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles \(URL-GP\)](#) and **Framework for Action**, which provide tools for policy integration and spatial planning.
- Technical assistance for **National Urban Policies (NUPs)** that incorporate rural development and environmental protection.
- Collaboration with partners to promote **nature-based solutions**, **green infrastructure**, and **resilient land-use planning**.

3. Possible Support

We offer:

- **Capacity-building** for local and national stakeholders on integrated planning and sustainable land management.

- **Data and spatial analysis tools** to identify population trends, ecological risks, and development gaps.
- **Policy dialogue platforms** to share best practices and co-create solutions across sectors and regions.

3. **How can cities be empowered to lead transformative action that aligns local urban priorities with global sustainability commitments?**

Cities are central to achieving global sustainability goals. As hubs of innovation, economic activity, and social transformation, they are uniquely positioned to translate global agendas, such as the **New Urban Agenda** and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, into **local action**.

From UN-Habitat's perspective, empowering cities involves a combination of **policy coherence**, **capacity-building**, **data-driven planning**, and **inclusive governance**. Here's how:

1. **Strengthening Urban Governance and Local Capacities**

- Cities need **autonomy**, **resources**, and **technical capacity** to lead transformative change.
- UN-Habitat supports cities through **capacity-building programmes**, including training on sustainable urban planning, resilience, and inclusive governance.

Explore: [UN-Habitat Capacity Building](#)

2. **Integrated Planning through National Urban Policies (NUPs)**

- **National Urban Policies (NUPs)** provide a framework to align local priorities with national and global goals.
- UN-Habitat assists governments in developing and implementing NUPs that empower cities to act strategically.

Learn more: [National Urban Policy Programme](#)

3. **Monitoring Progress with Urban Data Tools**

- Cities need reliable data to track progress and inform decisions.
- UN-Habitat's **City Prosperity Index (CPI)** and **Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF)** help cities assess performance across key dimensions like equity, sustainability, and governance.

Explore:

- [City Prosperity Index](#)
- [Urban Monitoring Framework \[The Global...UN-Habitat\]](#)

4. **Localizing the SDGs through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)**

- **Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)** allow cities to report on their SDG progress, share innovations, and engage in global dialogue.

- UN-Habitat provides technical support and peer learning platforms for cities undertaking VLRs.

Explore: [Voluntary Local Reviews](#)

5. Global Platforms for Collaboration and Visibility

- The **World Urban Forum (WUF)** convened by UN-Habitat, is a premier platform for cities to share experiences, shape policy, and build partnerships.

Join the conversation: [World Urban Forum](#)

4. **In a time when people/stakeholders are increasingly skeptical of the effectiveness of global organizations, what steps can UN-Habitat take to galvanize regional support for NUA implementation?**

Skepticism toward global institutions underscores the need for **tangible, inclusive, and locally relevant action**. UN-Habitat recognizes this challenge and is committed to strengthening **regional ownership** and **stakeholder trust** in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda on the ground. To galvanize regional support, UN-Habitat is taking the following steps:

1. Regional Customization of Global Frameworks

- Translating the NUA into **region-specific priorities**, challenges, and opportunities.
- Supporting **regional urban forums** and **ministerial meetings** to align national and local efforts with global goals.

Example: The Regional Action Plans developed in collaboration with regional partners help contextualize the NUA for Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and others.

2. Strengthening Regional Partnerships

- Collaborating with **regional economic communities, development banks, and UN regional commissions** to integrate urban development into broader regional agendas.
- Facilitating **multi-stakeholder platforms** that bring together governments, civil society, academia, and private sector actors.

3. Decentralized Technical Support

- Establishing and expanding **regional offices and hubs** to provide tailored technical assistance, capacity-building, and policy support.
- Empowering **local and regional champions** to lead advocacy and implementation efforts.

4. Promoting Regional Data and Knowledge Sharing

- Supporting the development of **regional urban observatories** and **data ecosystems** to monitor progress and inform decision-making.
- Encouraging **peer learning** through platforms like the [World Urban Forum](#) and [Urban Agenda Platform](#).

Explore: [Asia-Pacific Urban Agenda Platform](#)

5. Building Trust Through Transparency and Impact

- Demonstrating results through **evidence-based reporting, impact stories, and community-led initiatives**.
- Promoting **Voluntary National and Local Reviews** to showcase regional contributions to the SDGs and NUA.

Explore: [Voluntary Local Reviews](#)

5. **Urban renewal processes in cities are driving out traditional residents and increasing land prices. How can we prevent this phenomenon, which affects thousands of families?**

Urban renewal should be a pathway to inclusive development—not displacement. However, when renewal processes prioritize market-driven growth without safeguards, they can lead to **gentrification, loss of cultural heritage, and rising land prices** that push out traditional residents.

UN-Habitat advocates for **inclusive urban regeneration** that protects communities, promotes affordability, and ensures equitable access to urban opportunities.

1. Inclusive and Participatory Planning

Urban renewal must be co-created with communities. UN-Habitat promotes participatory planning tools that empower residents to shape the future of their neighborhoods.

Explore:

- [Our City Plans Toolbox](#)
- [Visioning as a Participatory Planning Tool](#)

2. Affordable Housing and Slum Upgrading

Cities must integrate **affordable housing** into renewal strategies to prevent displacement. UN-Habitat supports governments in developing housing policies that are inclusive and gender-responsive.

Explore:

- [Housing and Slum Upgrading Programme](#)
- [Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme \(PSUP\)](#)

3. Land Value Capture and Regulation

To counter speculative land price increases, cities can apply **land value capture** mechanisms that reinvest profits into public goods and affordable housing.

Explore:

- [The Role of Land in Adequate Housing](#)
- [Developing Public Space and Land Values](#)

4. Social Safeguards and Eviction Guidelines

UN-Habitat promotes international standards to prevent forced evictions and ensure fair resettlement when relocation is unavoidable.

Explore:

- [Quick Guide on Eviction Alternatives](#)
- [Forced Evictions Fact Sheet](#)
- [Assessing the Impact of Eviction Handbook](#)

6. **The New Urban Agenda is often discussed through its social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Yet, one of its unique contributions is bringing in the spatial dimension. How does this spatial perspective support your country or city in implementing the New Urban Agenda? And what concrete spatial approaches or practices are you applying on the ground?**

The **spatial dimension** of the New Urban Agenda is a transformative lens that enables cities and countries to plan more **equitable, efficient, and resilient urban systems**. It goes beyond physical infrastructure to address how space is organized, accessed, and governed—impacting everything from mobility and housing to inclusion and sustainability.

UN-Habitat promotes spatial planning as a **strategic tool** to implement the NUA and achieve the SDGs, especially **Goal 11** on sustainable cities.

How the Spatial Perspective Supports Implementation

- It enables **territorial coherence** by linking urban, peri-urban, and rural areas through integrated planning.
- It helps manage **urban growth**, reduce **spatial inequalities**, and prevent **unplanned expansion**.
- It supports **data-driven decision-making** through spatial indicators and mapping tools.

Explore:

- [New Urban Agenda Overview \[New Urban...UN-Habitat\]](#)
- [NUA Illustrated Toolkit \[New Urban...UN-Habitat\]](#)
- [NUA Handbook \(PDF\) \[The New Ur...UN-Habitat\]](#)

Concrete Spatial Approaches and Practices

1. Participatory Urban Planning

Cities are using UN-Habitat's [Our City Plans Toolbox](#) to develop inclusive and incremental urban plans that reflect local needs and priorities.

2. National Urban Policies (NUPs)

Countries are integrating spatial strategies into [National Urban Policies](#) to guide coordinated development across sectors and regions.

3. 3. Urban-Rural Linkages

Spatial planning is used to strengthen urban-rural linkages, ensuring balanced development and reducing pressure on urban centers.

4. Territorial Planning Guidelines

UN-Habitat's International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) provide a framework for spatially effective urban transformation.

5. Public Participation in Spatial Planning

The Toolkit for Meaningful Public Participation helps cities engage communities in shaping spatial outcomes.

7. What financial strategies have been put in place to support the implementation of these different initiatives, especially in Ecuador?

In Ecuador, the financial strategies are anchored in aligning national policy with project pipelines that can attract and sustain investment. We have built a “learning and financing pathway” where local governments move from ideas to bankable projects through urban laboratories, technical assistance, and recognition programs like the Premio Hábitat Ecuador. This model, now part of our Política Urbana Nacional, allows municipalities to strengthen proposals with international partners such as GIZ and access financing mechanisms from multilateral organizations. At the same time, initiatives like the Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios show how community co-design, backed by World Bank support, turns public space and housing priorities into measurable investments. The lesson is clear: combining strong policy frameworks, technical preparation, and predictable financing channels enables us to move from isolated pilots to scalable, climate-resilient urban development.

** This information is drawn from publicly available reports and case studies on Ecuador's urban development and financing strategies, including documentation on the Política Urbana Nacional, Premio Hábitat Ecuador, and World Bank-supported programs such as the Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios, as well as international cooperation efforts (e.g., GIZ). It also reflects remarks shared by the Vice Minister during the panel discussion.*

8. To fulfil the idea of solving global issues with local actions, how can we better share experiences and knowledge of countries with each other?

Solving global challenges through local action requires **collaborative learning**, **peer exchange**, and **accessible platforms** for sharing experiences. UN-Habitat supports this through a range of initiatives that connect cities, countries, and stakeholders across regions.

1. Our NUA learning series

The New Urban Agenda Learning Series offers a space where participants can engage directly, ask questions, and share their own ideas based on local contexts. By encouraging this open exchange, the series helps countries learn from each other's experiences while adapting solutions to their unique challenges, making global goals actionable at the local level.

2 Urban Agenda Platform

The Urban Agenda Platform is a centralized portal for sharing best practices, monitoring progress, and accessing tools to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and SDGs. It includes:

- A searchable database of urban solutions.
- Learning modules and capacity-building resources.
- Reporting tools for Voluntary National and Local Reviews.

3. World Urban Forum (WUF)

The World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization. It brings together thousands of stakeholders to exchange ideas, showcase innovations, and build partnerships.

Explore:

- [Call for Submissions – WUF13](#)

4. Global Future Cities Knowledge Platform

This platform facilitates peer learning among cities implementing sustainable urban projects. It offers case studies, tools, and forums for dialogue.

Visit: [Global Future Cities Knowledge Sharing](#)

5. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

VLRs are powerful tools for cities to report on SDG progress and share their experiences globally. UN-Habitat provides technical support and promotes peer learning through the [VLR Series](#).

6. UN-Habitat Learn

UN-Habitat Learn is an online platform offering free courses on sustainable urbanization, accessible to all stakeholders. It supports capacity-building and knowledge exchange across regions.

7. Best Practices Database

The Urban Best Practices Database is a repository of vetted urban solutions that can be replicated and scaled.

8. Multi-Level Urban Forums

UN-Habitat supports Multi-Level Urban Forums to foster dialogue between national, regional, and local actors, linking policy and practice.

** The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the panellists and do not necessarily reflect the official position of UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat does not endorse these statements, nor does it assume responsibility for them.*