



#UNHA2

# ASSEMBLY

## Special Session on achieving universal access to adequate housing through inclusive and stronger multilateralism Second Session of the United Nations Habitat Assembly

**Date:** Tuesday, 6 June 2023

**Time:** 13:30 - 14:30 EAT

**Venue:** Conference Room 1

### Background

Beyond four walls and a roof, housing is the cornerstone of people's health, dignity, safety, inclusion and wellbeing: a place to live in peace, with security and dignity. Adequate housing, therefore, conveys a broader meaning than the physical building and ensures that individuals and households have safe and stable access to a home that is secure and connected to services, employment opportunities and urban life.

At its most severe, achieving the right to adequate housing means comprehensively addressing homelessness and the transformation of slums and informal settlements while providing basic levels of security of tenure. However, it also means encouraging stable and predictable housing markets and planning systems that create an appropriate range of options to support economic and social wellbeing. At present, the United Nations system provides few opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to share experiences and provide mutual support on these issues.

While a comprehensive international framework on adequate housing exists, a stronger multilateral and inclusive platform is needed to operationalise it, exploit its full potential as an engine for socio-economic development, ensure proper data collection, monitoring, and the capturing and sharing of successes in a context of complex global interdependencies. Such a platform is critical to ensure a new social contract based on the coordinated actions of different stakeholders and led by governmental interventions to respect, protect and fulfil the fundamental right to adequate housing. A call that has been reiterated by the Secretary General in Our Common Agenda, where he stressed "*now is the time to renew the social contract between Governments and their people and within societies, so as to rebuild trust and embrace a comprehensive vision of human rights. People need to see results reflected in their daily lives*".

### Objectives of the session

The last decades have witnessed the implementation of inclusive, social and public housing programmes, to enable all persons in vulnerable situations to access adequate housing. Still, a lack of global progress, and in some cases steps back, has been seen in addressing housing deprivations

spanning from homelessness to informal settlements, unfit housing and unaffordability. The achievement of adequate housing for all requires the development of overarching and long-term policies, implementation and monitoring plans, which go further than addressing housing market failures or so-called gaps and crises in affordable housing.

The objective of the session will be to showcase the central role of adequate housing to socio-economic development, and how a comprehensive approach to housing has the potential to deliver a range of social, economic and environmental benefits that particularly help low-income and marginalised groups. These larger goals call for coordinating policies and stakeholders purposefully, and for support to appropriately regulated models of housing finance and provision that are resident-focused and committed to affordable, inclusive and climate-neutral housing. Therefore, the session will also consider how all stakeholders in the housing sector can work together through a strong and inclusive multilateral platform to jointly develop and monitor the housing framework.

Finally, the session will explore mechanisms to advance evidence-based structural solutions and to ensure that measurable efforts in enhancing universal access to adequate housing lead to measurable results through facilitating data collection, strengthening benchmarking, monitoring, capturing and translating success.

### Expected Outcomes

- Create a global movement of national and local governments and other stakeholders to support a renewed social contract underpinned by housing for all as key for the concrete realisation of human rights, adequate standards of living, social inclusion and protection in cities;
- Discuss existing challenges and innovative solutions;
- Endorse the creation of a stronger multilateral and inclusive platform.

### Session outline and proposed speakers (60 min)

**Moderator:** Shipra Narang Suri, Chief of Urban Practices Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat

#### Opening (10 min):

- **Opening remarks (5 min):** Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat, Malaysia
- **Keynote (10 min):** Professor Ricky Burdett on the centrality of well-planned housing to socio-economic development and environmental sustainability
- **Ministerial interventions (15 min)**
  - Amna bint Ahmed Alrumaihi, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Bahrain
  - Henry Yap, Undersecretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, Philippines

**Panel (25 min):** Adequate Housing for all through stronger and inclusive multilateralism, a priority for our common agenda and an equitable future

- **Panelist 1:** Charles Hinga, Housing Principal Secretary, Kenya
- **Panelist 2:** Representative of the Government of France
- **Panelist 3:** Berry Urbanovic, Mayor of Kitchener, Canada and co-President of UCLG
- **Panelist 4:** Carlos Martínez Velázquez, Director General, Infonavit, Mexico

#### Closing (5 min)