



UN-HABITAT



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains - Programa de las Naciones Unidas para los Asentamientos Humanos

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing: Consultation with States, UN entities and International Organizations

Housing discrimination and spatial segregation

Friday 30th April 2021

Statement by UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat takes this opportunity to congratulate the Special Rapporteur on his election and express its appreciation of the efforts he has already made to highlight and investigate a variety of issues affecting the right to adequate housing.

Since at least 1960, UN-Habitat and its predecessors have been asked by Member States to provide technical advice and policy guidance on slums, housing and related issues of land use and service provision. The basic objective has always been, and remains, universal access with a priority on those most in need. In recent years, this mandate is interpreted through the respect, protect and fulfil framework provided by human rights and as applied to SDG goals 10 and 11, among others. Reflecting this core mandate, “reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban–rural continuum” is one of the four priority areas of the UN-Habitat 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. In October 2020, UN-Habitat also launched the Housing4All campaign to raise awareness on the extent and the importance of equal and indiscriminate access to adequate housing to achieve sustainable and adequate living standards for all.

The Strategic Plan notes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing the basic human rights of the millions of urban dwellers living in poverty and subject to marginalization. It further notes that spatial inequalities in cities perpetuate other forms of social, economic, political or cultural inequality and that unequal access to land, adequate and affordable housing, employment opportunities, basic and social services, mobility and public transport, and public space are key aspects of spatial inequality, which is often characterized by physical segregation.

UN-Habitat recommends action in three broad areas:

1. Achieving increasing equality of outcome in the provision of infrastructure and services through physical planning, citywide land management and land tenure policy. These must focus on those most in need and actively discourage forced eviction and development related displacement. They must also actively encourage social inclusion and the sustaining of COVID 19 derived social protection measures.
2. Adoption of progressive policies on taxation, fees and public service provision. These must be proportional and leverage the value of land and property to provide adequate resources for local governments to fulfil the needs of all residents.
3. Eliminate discrimination, structural, legal and administrative – nobody should be invisible or face barriers to the realization of their rights because of their relationship to a protected group or their legal or administrative status. This includes their relationships with law enforcement and all forms of governmental authority and services. We note that indigenous peoples, historically disadvantaged or excluded communities, the homeless and migrants are particularly vulnerable in this regard.

UN-Habitat will provide further details on our work in these areas in our written contributions to the Special Rapporteur’s work.

Thank you.