



Housing and Land Rights Network
Habitat International Coalition

AGENDA

Draft General Comment on Land and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Friday 9 July 2021, 13:30 – 16:30 CEST

Live on Zoom from Villa Moynier, Geneva

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is developing a general comment on land and economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR). The purpose of this general comment (GC) is to clarify the specific obligations of state parties relating to land and the governance of land tenure under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. By way of public consultation, the Committee invites interested individuals and organizations, including states, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations, academics, international and regional organizations and experts, to make a written contribution to the draft GC.

The draft GC ([Draft Text in English](#)) recognizes the broad and complex relationship between land and human rights. It proposes more general and holistic guidance for policy in this area than has previously been available. Consequently, if and when adopted, the draft general comment is likely to influence policy and law on land governance and management in many member states.

This public webinar builds on previous exchanges between the organizers and the rapporteurs of the draft GC. Developing further the areas identified in the first discussion, the debate will focus on the following issue areas:

- Women's rights to land and inheritance
- Evictions and displacement
- Impacts of international investments including land grabbing and displacement
- Land rights in urban areas; spatial justice and land rights
- Examples of national legislation and policies.

Background

Land use management and land tenure security are one of the basic building blocks of environmental, economic and social sustainability globally. Land is a determining factor in the availability of housing and of economic opportunity and the management of its use is also a major driver in local and global environmental health. It is also important to note that access to, and control over the use of, land has been increasingly recognised as central to cultural life and identity. This is particularly prominent in the rights of indigenous peoples, as recognised by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention 169. Without access to land, the achievement of the right to an adequate standard of living, as recognised by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will be impossible for many individuals and communities.

The importance of land is explicitly recognised in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in relation to poverty (Goal 1), gender equality (Goal 5) and environmental sustainability (Goal 15). Further, effective land management is a prerequisite for a number of other goals. Land tenure security, and the closely related issue of housing tenure security, have also been recognised as fundamental elements of the right to adequate housing. General comments 4 (the right to adequate housing) and 7 (forced evictions) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are influential in this regard.

UN-Habitat and its predecessors have been asked to provide technical assistance and policy guidance on land use and tenure for more than 60 years. The Global Land Tool Network is a partnership committed to increasing access to land and tenure security for all. The Geneva Human Rights Platform is a leader in promoting understanding of, and access to, the international human rights framework and Geneva based forums. The Geneva Cities Hub promotes cities' access to Geneva based institutions. The Habitat International Coalition is an independent alliance of non-profit organizations defending and implementing human rights relating to housing and habitat. In collaboration with partners, we seek to promote a wide discussion on the draft general comment both to ensure the relevance of its content and to encourage the adoption of its principles and guidance.

Agenda

- 13:20 – 13:30 **Registration / Login to Zoom meeting**
- 13:30 – 13:45 **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**
- Felix Kirchmeier, Geneva Human Rights Platform
 - Robert Lewis-Lettington, UN Habitat / GLTN
 - Kamelia Kemileva, Geneva Cities Hub
 - Joseph Schechla, Habitat International Coalition
- 13:45 – 14:45 **National and extraterritorial Obligations of States parties under the Covenant as relating to land**
- Summary of issues / proposed comments
(Including *women's rights to land and inheritance; evictions and displacement*)
(Including *international investments and land grabbing and displacement*)
 - Respondent UN Habitat / partners
 - Discussion
- 14:45– 15:00 **Break**
- 15:00 – 15:45 **Specific topics of relevance to the implementation of Covenant rights in land-related contexts**
- Summary of issues / proposed comments
(Including *land rights in urban areas; spatial justice and land rights*)
 - Respondent UN Habitat / partners
 - Discussion
- 15:45 – 16:15 **Remedies**
- Summary of issues / proposed comments
(Including *examples of national legislations and policies*)
 - Respondent UN Habitat / partners
 - Discussion

16:15 – 16:30

Action points / Closing of the meeting

Registration / Languages

The meeting will be held primarily in English, with simultaneous interpretation into Spanish and French.

Please register via the following link:

<https://geneva-academy-ch.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZModemppjMqEtcpEg6dejqMUrv4bTP-zl51>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.