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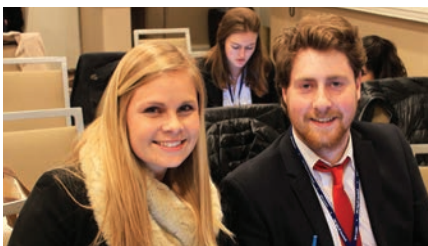
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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME BACKGROUND GUIDE 2017

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



THE 2017 NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2017 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). This year's staff is: Directors Maya Kazamel (Conference A) and Ashley Boyer (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Tanvi Jaluka (Conference A) and Alliyah Edwards (Conference B). Maya completed her B.Sc. in Architectural Engineering with a minor in Economics in 2014 and currently works at a real estate advisory firm in Dubai. This will be her third year on staff, and she is excited to return to NMUN•NY. Ashley received both her B.A. and M.A. in Political Science with an emphasis on international development. She currently works at a global corporation and is looking forward to her third year on NMUN•NY staff. Tanvi received her B.A. in International Studies and Economics from Vassar College. She is currently working on promoting women's economic empowerment at the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C. Alliyah is pursuing her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Economics. She is honored to be a part of this Conference and looks forward to serving as Assistant Director.

The topics under discussion for UN-Habitat are:

- I. Promoting Sustainable and Resilient Urbanization through Information and Communications Technology
- II. Ensuring Access to Adequate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene to Promote Urban Health
- III. Eliminating Urban Slums and Ensuring Access to Adequate Housing

UN-Habitat is an integral player in the UN's development agenda, striving to ensure that urbanization issues are prioritized globally. To this end, UN-Habitat collaborates with all actors, including state governments, local authorities, civil society organizations, and international and non-governmental organizations to promote sustainable cities. Well-planned and developed settlement areas that ensure the provision of basic goods and services are vital to UN-Habitat's work in support of sustainable urban development.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2017 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two essential resources for your preparation are the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) and the [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) available to download from the NMUN website. The [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure. In tandem, these documents thus serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions.

Please take note of information in the [Delegate Preparation Guide](#) on plagiarism and the prohibition of pre-written working papers and resolutions. Additionally, please review the [NMUN Policies and Codes of Conduct](#) on the NMUN website regarding the Conference dress code; awards philosophy and evaluation method; and codes of conduct for delegates, faculty, and guests regarding diplomacy and professionalism. Importantly, any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. Adherence to these policies is mandatory.

If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Alexander Rudolph (Conference A) and Samantha Winn (Conference B), at usg.development@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Maya Kazamel, *Director*
Tanvi Jaluka, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Ashley Boyer, *Director*
Alliyah Edwards, *Assistant Director*



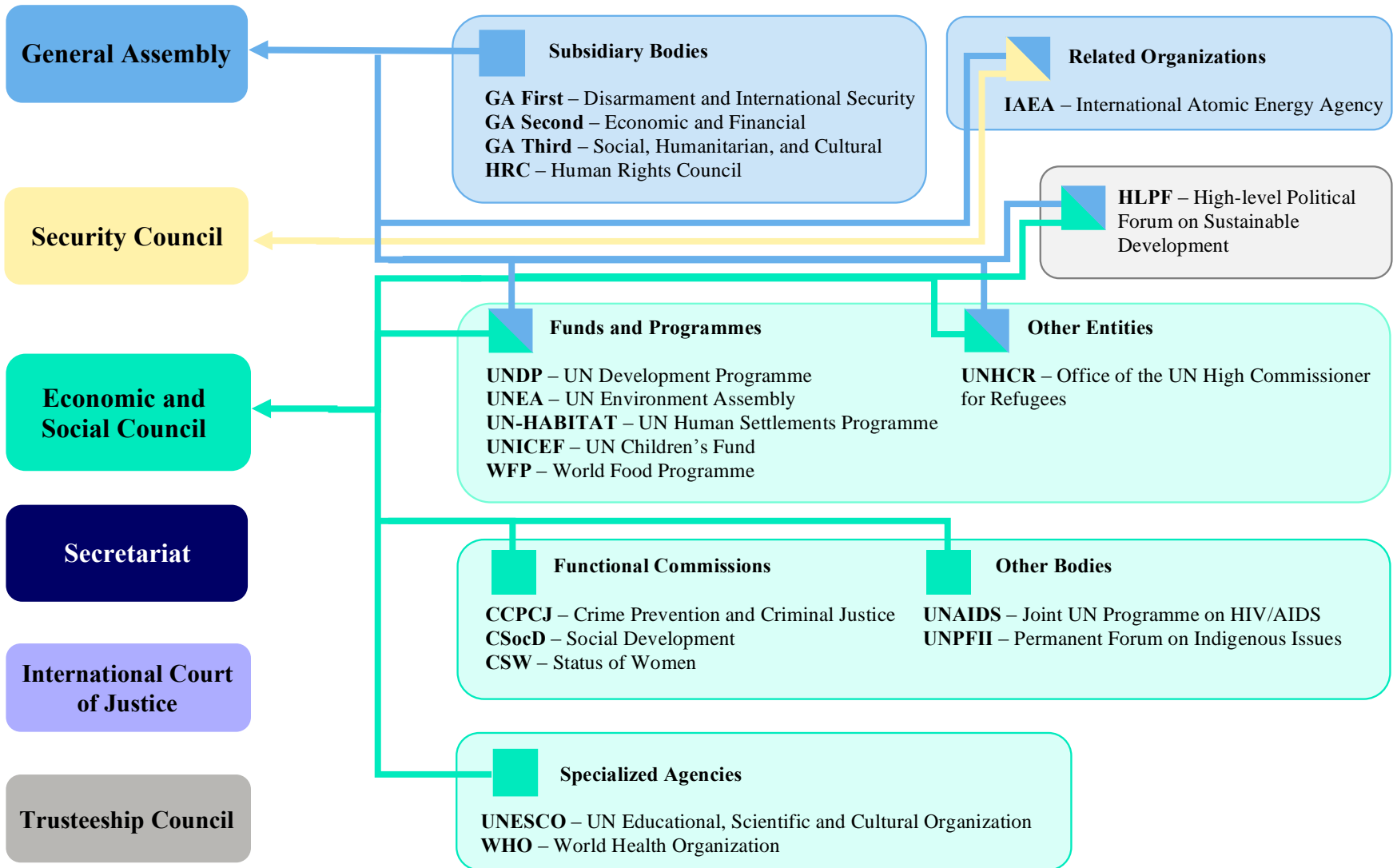
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Abbreviations

CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSO	Civil society organization
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GC	Governing Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
GWC	Global Water Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster
GWOPA	Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance
HAP	Habitat Agenda Partners
HELP	High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICESCR	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i>
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFHP	International Federation for Housing and Planning <i>Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020</i>
IPoA	<i>Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020</i>
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme
LDC	Least developed country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUA	<i>New Urban Agenda</i>
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PSUP	Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme
ROAf	Regional Office for Africa
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All
UN	United Nations
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNCRD	United Nations Centre for Regional Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHHSF	United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene
WATSAN	Water and sanitation
WHO	World Health Organization
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society



Committee Overview

Introduction

Rapid urbanization places immense pressure on the environment, industries, and infrastructure.¹ By 2050, an estimated 70% of the global population will be living in an urban area.² If prioritized, urbanization can serve as an opportunity to further sustainable development for those who live in cities.³ However, unabated urbanization poses significant risks to the general global livelihood⁴ Inadequate urban planning and limited housing have fed the growth of urban slums; in some cities, up to 80% of the population lives in slums.⁵ By 2030, informal urban settlements will house an estimated 3 billion people, all of whom will need access to adequate housing, infrastructure, and basic services.⁶ Obstacles to establishing adequate housing include affordability, sustainability, and limited capacity for governance.⁷

The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme** (UN-Habitat) is a Programme and Fund of the United Nations, reporting to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

At NMUN•NY 2017, we are simulating the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Council, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the conference. On the contrary, for the purposes of NMUN•NY 2017, and in line with the educational mission of the conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UN-Habitat in line with the overall function of the organization.

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly established the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (UNHHSF) on 1 January 1975 with the purpose of addressing urbanization issues.⁸ Under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNHHSF was tasked with assisting country-level human settlement programs through the delivery of fiscal and technical assistance.⁹ The 1976 Habitat I conference in Vancouver, Canada, was the first global conference to acknowledge the pervasive challenges of urbanization.¹⁰ The conference adopted the *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements* (1976), which established a global framework for Member States to respond to rapid urbanization and recommended the creation of the UN Commission on Human Settlements and its Secretariat, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat).¹¹ In 1996, the UN hosted Habitat II, its second conference pertaining to the holistic functioning of cities.¹² This conference was initiated to evaluate global progress since Habitat I and to outline goals for the new millennium.¹³ The resulting *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements* (1996), also known as the Habitat Agenda, established over 100 commitments and 600 recommendations pertaining to the provision of adequate human shelter and sustainable human settlements.¹⁴ The Habitat Agenda outlined the goal of ensuring the creation of sustainable cities with adequate housing, employment, water, sanitation, and other basic public services.¹⁵

The UN system significantly reformed its approach to human settlements after the adoption of the *UN Millennium Declaration* (2000).¹⁶ General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 26 February 2002 on “Strengthening the mandate and

¹ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

² UN DESA, *Cities for a sustainable future*, 2014.

³ Ibid.

⁴ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ UN-Habitat, *Up for slum dwellers – transforming a billion lives campaign unveiled in Europe*, 2016.

⁷ UN-Habitat, *Housing & slum upgrading*.

⁸ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements” consolidated the UN Commission on Human Settlements, Habitat, and the UNHHSF into the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).¹⁷ UN-Habitat emerged as an integral player in the UN system’s development agenda.¹⁸ Today, UN-Habitat collaborates with governments, the private sector, and many intergovernmental and civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure that urbanization issues are prioritized globally.¹⁹ UN-Habitat also plays an important role in implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).²⁰ The international community continues to advance its approach to urban development in light of emerging challenges. The UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) took place in Quito, Ecuador, from 17-20 October 2016.²¹ Conference participants adopted the *New Urban Agenda* (2016), which will serve as a framework for global stakeholders to achieve sustainable and equitable urban development.²²

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UN-Habitat reports to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) regarding all fiscal matters and organizational activities.²³ UN-Habitat is primarily funded through regular budget allocations approved by the General Assembly and voluntary contributions from Member States and intergovernmental donors.²⁴ UN-Habitat also receives donations from other UN entities, local authorities, and the private sector to fund country-level technical projects and specific policy work.²⁵ UN-Habitat has a Governing Council (GC) that meets every two years to establish strategic policy objectives for the organization, adopt programs, and propose the budget.²⁶ The GC consists of 58 Member States elected by ECOSOC according to regional distribution.²⁷ In addition to its biennial meetings, the GC hosts special sessions as needed.²⁸ GC sessions are open to non-Member States, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other UN entities without voting privileges.²⁹

UN-Habitat also has a Secretariat that ensures the implementation of the GC’s decisions via strategies, programs, and initiatives.³⁰ The Secretariat serves as the executive body of UN-Habitat and is based in Nairobi, Kenya.³¹ The Secretariat includes the Office of the Executive Director, Project Office, Office of Management, and External Relations.³² The Executive Director plays an integral role in shaping the UN-Habitat agenda and priorities, thereby ensuring adherence to the organizational mandate.³³ Regional offices also assist with project implementation, including the Regional Office for Africa (ROAf), the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC).³⁴ The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), which is comprised of ambassadors or foreign envoys assigned to UN-Habitat, serves to ensure that the objectives of the GC are carried out by the Secretariat.³⁵ The CPR has a supervisory role and represents the GC on the Secretariat to address any potential issues that arise between the biennial meetings of the GC.³⁶

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

¹⁸ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

²² Ibid.

²³ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

²⁴ UN-Habitat, *Our Donors*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat at a glance*; UN-Habitat, *25th Governing Council*.

²⁷ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*; UN-Habitat, *Members*.

²⁸ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ UN-Habitat, *Our Secretariat*.

³² Ibid.

³³ UN-Habitat, *Governing Council*.

³⁴ UN-Habitat, *Our Secretariat*.

³⁵ UN-Habitat, *Committee of Permanent Representatives*.

³⁶ Ibid.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The General Assembly has mandated UN-Habitat to “promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.”³⁷ UN-Habitat also serves as a key partner in implementing the Habitat Agenda.³⁸ UN-Habitat advocates for well-planned and sustainably developed settlement areas to ensure the provision of basic goods and services.³⁹ The organization is able to establish initiatives and action plans to shape policy.⁴⁰ However, UN-Habitat does not have the authority to enforce project implementation in Member States.⁴¹ Despite its limitations, UN-Habitat has played an integral role in international development by providing partnership programs and targeted guidance to policymakers.⁴²

UN-Habitat’s current mandate builds upon General Assembly resolutions 3327 (XXIX) (1974) and 32/162 (1977), which created UN-Habitat’s predecessors: UNHHSF, the UN Commission on Human Settlements, and Habitat.⁴³ UN-Habitat was formally established by General Assembly resolution 56/206 of 26 February 2002 on “Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.”⁴⁴ On 22 December 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/210 on “Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat),” which strengthened the governance of UN-Habitat and reinforced its central role in implementing 2030 Agenda.⁴⁵

In addition to the Habitat Agenda, foundational documents that showcase the increasing precedence of sustainable urbanization and ensuring adequate housing for all include the *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements* (1976) and the *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium* (2001).⁴⁶ UN-Habitat was influenced by the *UN Millennium Declaration*, which established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁴⁷ Target 7.D aimed to improve the lives of over 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020.⁴⁸ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* also advance the urbanization agenda.⁴⁹ SDG 11 outlines the goal of making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.⁵⁰ Likewise, SDG 17 stipulates the goal of strengthening and revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development.⁵¹ The *New Urban Agenda* adopted at Habitat III in 2016 will further shape UN-Habitat’s work in years to come.⁵²

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UN-Habitat’s *Strategic Plan (2014-2019)* outlines seven areas: urban legislation, land, and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; and research and capacity development.⁵³ UN-Habitat considers partnerships a vital component of

³⁷ UN-Habitat, *Mandate*.

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

³⁹ UN-Habitat, *Mandate*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Establishment of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation (A/RES/3327(XXIX))*, 1974; UN General Assembly, *Institutional arrangements for international co-operation in the field of human settlements (A/RES/32/162)*, 1977.

⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role and functions of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/RES/56/206)*, 2002.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/RES/70/210)*, 2015.

⁴⁶ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ UN DPI, *Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*, 2016.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

⁵³ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan 2014- 2019*, pp. 9-12.

promoting inclusive human settlement developments; it strives to include all sects of society in the urbanization process.⁵⁴ Habitat Agenda Partners (HAP) include various entities who work with UN-Habitat to promote sustainable urbanization and human settlements.⁵⁵ UN-Habitat has initiated thematic networks with various HAPs to enable multi-level urbanization cooperation.⁵⁶

UN-Habitat is currently active in more than 70 countries worldwide; key thematic areas include urban policy advice at the government level, addressing the proliferation of slums, housing issues, and post-disaster recovery programs.⁵⁷ The Africa Urban Agenda Programme is one of many programs in which UN-Habitat is actively engaged.⁵⁸ The Africa Urban Agenda Programme works to establish people-centered processes that enhance local accountability, promoting ownership among citizens for the sustainable development of Africa as a whole.⁵⁹ In 2016, UN-Habitat partnered with a team of four urban planning offices on research pertaining to urban regeneration in Mexico.⁶⁰ The Urban Planning and Design Lab of UN-Habitat and the UN-Habitat Office in Mexico are working together with a team of four urban planning offices to initiate a “spatial, economic, social and financial pilot project” for the regeneration of affordable housing in Mexico City.⁶¹

On 21 September 2016, UN-Habitat hosted a policy dialogue with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on financing cities in order to implement SDG 11.⁶² During this dialogue, particular attention was paid to cities in Africa, where rapid urbanization is expected to double the urban population by 2035.⁶³ The financing of infrastructure is particularly important as the infrastructure investment gap is exacerbating “exclusive, unplanned and unsafe” urbanization.⁶⁴ Many municipal governments are facing budgeting crises in relation to infrastructure and planning and are in desperate need of partnership and support to effectively address the urbanization challenges.⁶⁵ Finally, the Habitat III conference and the *New Urban Agenda* marked a significant advancement in the international community’s approach to sustainable urban development.⁶⁶

Conclusion

UN-Habitat advances global urbanization issues in accordance with the principles of efficiency and sustainability.⁶⁷ As the primary international organization working to ensure that cities provide safe and adequate housing for all, UN-Habitat holds a unique position within the global arena.⁶⁸ UN-Habitat provides a platform for international collaboration to ensure sustainable urbanization. Despite substantial progress, much work remains to be done. UN-Habitat is poised to play a vital role in the realization of the SDGs and the *New Urban Agenda*.

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This resolution is foundational for understanding the role and functions of UN-Habitat and an integral source for delegates as it outlines the history and initial establishment of the committee. Additionally, it provides a comprehensive overview of the mandate and structure of the

⁵⁴ UN-Habitat, *Our Partners*.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UN-Habitat, *Africa Urban Agenda Programme*.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat and partners in urban regeneration in Mexico City*, 2016.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² UN-Habitat, *Policy Dialogue with OECD looks at financing cities*, 2016.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

⁶⁷ UN-Habitat, *History, mandate & role in the UN System*.

⁶⁸ UN-Habitat, *International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning discussed at ISOCARP Congress*, 2016.



organization and serves as a useful starting point for delegates in understanding the primary mission and aim of UN-Habitat. This document is responsible for establishing UN-Habitat in its current form.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Goals & strategies of UN-Habitat* [Website]. Retrieved 30 August 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/goals-and-strategies-of-un-habitat/>

This website can be utilized as a guide to understanding the immediate goals and visions of UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat considers city planning, governance, and infrastructural development as highly important and directly related to ensuring adequate housing for all. This website discusses how the objectives of the committee have been framed historically by documents such as the Habitat Agenda and provides insight into how the goals of the committee are currently shaped by the Strategic Plan.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *History, mandate & role in the UN System* [Website]. Retrieved 30 August 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/history-mandate-role-in-the-un-system/>

This source can be utilized as a guide to understand the scope and mandate of the committee. It provides a historical perspective of urbanization issues and how the international community has addressed them overtime. In addition, this source discusses significant international developments that have shaped the global urbanization agenda such as Habitat I and Habitat II. This source should be utilized by delegates to frame their policies in their position papers.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Strategic Plan 2014-2019*. Retrieved 16 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/un-habitats-strategic-plan-2014-2019/>

This report is essential for delegates to understand the most up-to-date priorities of UN-Habitat. The Strategic Plan is broken down into three components: strategic analysis, strategic choice, and strategy implementation, which outline current urbanization obstacles and an action plan to overcome said obstacles. Delegates should utilize this resource as a tool for framing their respective country policies to address the committee topics.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *UN-Habitat at a glance* [Website]. Retrieved 16 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/un-habitat-at-a-glance/>

This website is particularly useful for gaining insight into the overall function of the committee. It provides valuable background into the committee history, mandate, and overall role within the UN system. Additionally, this website discusses UN-Habitat funding and the outlines the main goals and visions of the organization.

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I. Promoting Sustainable and Resilient Urbanization through Information and Communications Technology

“ICT has ushered significant and irrevocable changes in the way people live, boosted social prosperity, and had significant impact on the growth and competitiveness of economies and cities. For a majority of the world’s population, being connected is a de facto way of living.”⁶⁹

Introduction

By 2050, cities will hold 66% of the world population, generate more than 80% of global gross domestic product (GDP), and house the majority of social and economic structures.⁷⁰ Such conglomerations of human activity have consequently resulted in growing amounts of greenhouse gas emissions and other climate pollutants, which have contributed to global warming, public health crises, and food and water insecurity.⁷¹ As such, while urban development has the potential to create great economic benefits, poorly managed urban growth is likely to counterbalance them.⁷² In recent years, the United Nations (UN) has prioritized sustainability issues and encouraged investments by Member States and non-state actors that adhere to the economic, social, and sustainable needs of urban residents to revitalize existing cities and develop more sustainable ones.⁷³

The UN, in conjunction with organizations such as the World Bank and private energy companies, has stressed that urban investments that incorporate a large information and communications technology (ICT) component can meet future challenges.⁷⁴ In general, ICT encompasses any communication device or application that provides information, including radio, television, Internet, mobile phones, satellite systems, and more.⁷⁵ The rise of mobile technology, especially in the developing world, boomed as consumers discovered that the technology could be used not only as a communication device, but also as a device to connect to banking services, inform small-scale farmers about weather patterns, start businesses, and identify instances of corruption.⁷⁶ As a channel for social collaboration and an important tool for the design and management of cities, ICT is leading to dramatic transformations in urban life.⁷⁷ In particular, ICT supports sustainable urban development and promotes “smart cities” characterized by high-quality public spaces, well-functioning communities, increased resource and operational efficiency, improved quality of life, and reduced carbon emissions.⁷⁸ ICT can provide opportunities to strengthen political engagement, encourage interaction between governments and constituents, and foster transparency and mutual accountability.⁷⁹

While sustainability involves the proper management of resources to meet the needs of both current and future generations, resilience refers to the capacity of an urban system to recover from or absorb disaster and reorganize itself accordingly.⁸⁰ The typical definition of sustainability must be adapted to suit an urban context.⁸¹ Urban sustainability must account for a more rapid increase and concentration of population, consumption, and waste.⁸² Cities themselves are centers of production and consumption, but they rely on resources outside of an urban context.⁸³ Member States must consider how cities can leverage ICT to become sites of optimal resource use, increased efficiency, and minimal waste, without straining resources from other regions.⁸⁴ Resilient cities have

⁶⁹ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Floater & Rode, *Cities and the New Climate Economy: The Transformative Role of Global Urban Growth*, 2014, p. 1.

⁷¹ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 1.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Floater & Rode, *Cities and the New Climate Economy: The Transformative Role of Global Urban Growth*, 2014, p. 2; UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Chapter 2 - Urbanization as a Transformative Force*, 2016, p. 42.

⁷⁴ World Bank, *ICT for Greater Development Impact*, 2012, p. v.

⁷⁵ National Institute of Urban Affairs, *ICT in Urban Services*, 2015, p. 3.

⁷⁶ World Bank, *ICT for Greater Development Impact*, 2012, p. v.

⁷⁷ Dave et al., *Sustainable urbanization: The role of ICT in city development*, 2010.

⁷⁸ Ibid.; Papa et al. *Smart and Resilient Cities: A Systematic Approach for Developing Cross-Sectoral Strategies in the Face of Climate Change*, 2015, pp. 22-23.

⁷⁹ C40 Cities, *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Engagement*, 2015, p. 16.

⁸⁰ Dave et al., *Sustainable urbanization: The role of ICT in city development*, 2010.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

adaptive systems that can cope with disasters, climate change, and other hazards without needing to be drastically altered.⁸⁵ Because these systems are so dynamic, city stakeholders must constantly revisit and update existing technology to adapt to change.⁸⁶

International and Regional Framework

In addressing this topic, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is informed by the *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium* (2001), which advocates for sustainability and the use of technology in cities, including in slums and unplanned settlements.⁸⁷ Important aspects of ICT for development are reinforced in the UN's *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 7, 9, and 11 of on clean energy, industry and infrastructure, and sustainable cities.⁸⁸ The 2030 Agenda highlights the contribution of ICT to innovation, investment, sustainable consumption, economic and social equity, and opportunity.⁸⁹ The SDGs discuss the potential benefits of ICT to renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, and urbanization more generally.⁹⁰ Target 11.b encourages cities and human settlements to adopt policies and plans to improve resource efficiency, promote inclusion, mitigate climate change, and adapt to natural and manmade disasters.⁹¹

The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015* (2005) created priority areas and strategic goals to build the resilience of states and communities against disaster.⁹² The application of ICT here is clear: the Hyogo Framework indicates a number of opportunities for the use of ICT in priority areas, including bolstering data on disaster, proliferating preparedness measures via the media, and coordination between citizens and governments during disasters.⁹³ Specifically, priority 3 stresses the use of “knowledge, innovation, and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.”⁹⁴ The Hyogo Framework was replaced by the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* in 2015, which highlights the limited availability of technology as a point of high vulnerability.⁹⁵ The Sendai Framework and its plan to make the world safer from natural hazards is also mentioned in Target 11.b of the SDGs.⁹⁶

The 2005 *Tunis Commitment*, a product of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), is the first document that specifically prioritizes the importance of ICT for sustainable development, poverty reduction, conflict prevention, and provision of opportunities for the most marginalized people to create an inclusive global community.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the commitment emphasizes that the international community must pay attention to gender, racial, and socioeconomic gaps within the digital society.⁹⁸ In 2010, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in partnership with the Bureau International Des Expositions and the mayor of Shanghai, China, released the *Shanghai Manual* to help city leaders “use integrated urban planning, management, financing, and technology to green their economies and build climate and economic resilience.”⁹⁹ Chapter 8 of the *Shanghai Manual* discusses using ICT for the creation of smart and connected cities.¹⁰⁰ Overall, the *Shanghai Manual* is a resource for urban planners and decision makers; it contains many examples of innovative efforts to promote

⁸⁵ Papa et al. *Smart and Resilient Cities: A Systematic Approach for Developing Cross-Sectoral Strategies in the Face of Climate Change*, 2015, p. 26.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁸⁷ UNEP, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992; UN General Assembly, *Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium (A/RES/S-25/2)*, 2001, p. 8.

⁸⁸ UN DPI, *Goal 11: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable*, 2016.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹¹ UN DPI, *Goal 11: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable*, 2016.

⁹² UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction. *Hyogo Framework for Action*, 2005.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015.

⁹⁶ UN DPI, *Goal 11: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable*, 2016.

⁹⁷ UN WSIS, *Tunis Commitment (WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7 –E)*, 2005.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ UN DESA et al, *Shanghai Manual: A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development of the 21st Century*, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

sustainable urbanization and provides practical solutions to be applied at the city level.¹⁰¹ This manual contains valuable case studies that demonstrate the potential of social media, mobile phones, e-governance, and monitoring and mapping technology to promote sustainable and resilient urbanization.¹⁰²

The Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) represented a pivotal moment for the future of UN-Habitat and its work, as the October 2016 conference addressed the rapidly growing urban population.¹⁰³ In the lead-up to the conference, UN-Habitat issued a series of papers; Paper 21 (2015) deals with the concept of creating smart cities, or the strategic use of technology and innovative approaches to increase urban efficiency and competitiveness.¹⁰⁴ The document highlights key priority areas for governments and international organizations to consider, including bolstering connectivity, government transparency, resource efficiency, and increasing access to information.¹⁰⁵ Habitat III resulted in the adoption of the *New Urban Agenda* (2016), through which state leaders made numerous “transformative commitments for sustainable urban development.”¹⁰⁶ These commitments reinforce the importance of ICT and include “adopting a smart-city approach,” using “innovations in technology” to balance short-term and long-term needs, and developing “technology-based innovations in transport and transit systems to reduce congestion and pollution while improving efficiency, connectivity, accessibility, health, and quality of life.”¹⁰⁷

Role of the International System

UN-Habitat’s efforts to realize sustainable and resilient urbanization are guided by its mandate to develop methods for promoting equitable human settlements through social and environmental awareness.¹⁰⁸ UN-Habitat’s *Strategic Plan 2014-2019* highlights the immediate need for strategic readjustments to combat global economic crisis, rising rates of poverty, and the effects of climate change.¹⁰⁹ Particularly, the Plan emphasizes that that these goals cannot be met without strengthening existing partnerships at all levels: with governments, regional authorities, the private sector, and civil society.¹¹⁰ The body stresses that as the world becomes increasingly defined by digital infrastructure, ICT is fundamentally changing the way society operates.¹¹¹

A focal point of UN-Habitat’s work is to promote inclusivity at all levels, which often manifests in collaborations with various international, state, and civil society actors.¹¹² Inclusivity is crucial to sustainable and resilient urbanization, as governments must tap into the needs of all their residents and the technological vision of private companies to create a comprehensive development trajectory.¹¹³ UN-Habitat’s work with regional bodies such as the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) includes initiatives on using ICT for disaster risk reduction.¹¹⁴ Their collaboration has resulted in the creation of an information superhighway aiming to increase the accessibility and affordability of broadband internet across Asia and the Pacific.¹¹⁵ The UN Economic and Social Council’s Commission on Science and Technology for Development issued a 2016 report to illustrate the role of ICT in urban infrastructure, titled *Smart Cities and Infrastructure*.¹¹⁶ The report urges for an integrated approach and increased collaboration with local levels of government by Member States.¹¹⁷ In addition, the UN Economic Commission for Europe conducted a survey of European Member States to determine the efficiency of their housing and urban management sectors and found that national governments have not been collaborating with

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 235 – 252.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁰³ UN-Habitat, *About Habitat III*, 2016.

¹⁰⁴ UN Task Team on Habitat III, *21 - Smart Cities*, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 4-7.

¹⁰⁶ Habitat III, *New Urban Agenda: Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All*, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ UN-Habitat, *History, Mandate & Role in the UN System*, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² UN-Habitat, *History, Mandate & Role in the UN System*, 2012.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ UN ESCAP, *ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2016.

¹¹⁵ UN ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway*, 2016.

¹¹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Smart Cities and Infrastructure: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.16/2016/2)*, 2016, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

regional and local governments and the private sector, which does not tap into the full potential of ICT for urbanization.¹¹⁸ The World Bank has also conducted studies on the use of ICT for city growth and governance, and youth involvement in development, citing that ICT can encourage efficiency, youth empowerment, and citizen engagement.¹¹⁹

The UN Information and Communications Task Force (UN ICT TF) released a statement in 2005 urging Member States to harness the potential of ICT for education.¹²⁰ UN ICT TF was the main multi-stakeholder initiative intended to lead a global effort to end the global digital divide and its principal aim was to support the WSIS.¹²¹ Some outcomes from UN ICT TF were the creation of the Global E-Schools and Communications Initiative, to improve access to education through ICT, the Global ePolicy Resource Network, a database of national e-strategies for development, and the Global Center for ICT in Parliament, to provide dialogue between various stakeholders about ICT.¹²² The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) later absorbed UN ICT TF and became the main international body for the promotion of ICT in development.¹²³ ITU hosts multiple regional forums for the private sector and Member States to discuss ICT and sustainable development.¹²⁴ The ITU's membership represents the largest cross-section of the world's ICT sector and its Development Sector is dedicated to working with the UN to improve ICT access in the poorest countries.¹²⁵ They act in an advisory capacity to governments and international organizations and have created an online movement called #ICT4SDG, which has multiple platforms including Twitter and Tumblr, aiming to highlight projects that promote ICT in developing countries.¹²⁶

ICT and Urban Sustainability

Promoting Smart Urban Design and Greater Mobility

One of the most efficient ways city stakeholders can improve the operation and sustainability of physical infrastructure and services is by using ICT for better-informed decision-making.¹²⁷ Urban sensors and advanced analytics can provide instantaneous spatial and environmental information about urban environments.¹²⁸ Stakeholders can utilize these analytics to swiftly identify current problems and minimize delays caused by a lack of information.¹²⁹ ICT-enabled applications can also optimize travel through better traffic monitoring, route optimization, self-driving vehicles, and vehicle communication.¹³⁰ The planning of the city structure itself will change with ICT.¹³¹ Through promoting public transportation, virtual communication, and a better integrated transport system, urban planning can utilize spaces previously allocated for vehicles and transform them into organized urban settlements for housing and public amenities.¹³² ICT can also ensure that services such as healthcare, finance, and education are universally accessible.¹³³ Smart cities can also better integrate public safety measures through remote monitoring and security cameras, which would encourage the mobility of residents, especially women.¹³⁴

¹¹⁸ UNECE, *United Smart Cities: Smart Urban Solutions for Transition and Developing Countries*, 2015, p. 2-3.

¹¹⁹ McKenzie, *Youth, ICTs, and Development*, 2007.

¹²⁰ UN ICT Task Force, *Harnessing the Potential of ICT for Education*, 2005.

¹²¹ ITU, *WSIS +10 Outcome Documents*, 2014.

¹²² Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, *Our Activities*, 2014; WSIS, *Global ePolicy Resource Network*, 2003.

¹²³ ITU, *ICTs for a Sustainable World*, 2016.

¹²⁴ ITU, *ICTs and Climate Change: ITU-T Technology Watch Report #3*, 2007.

¹²⁵ ITU, *ICTs for a Sustainable World*, 2016.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *The Role of ICT in the Proposed Urban Sustainable Development Goal and the New Urban Agenda*, 2016, p. 6.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

Creating Informed and Transparent Governance Structures and Partnerships

Smart cities depend on highly capable digital infrastructures that guarantee inclusion, safety, and connectivity.¹³⁵ ICT allows cities to circumvent expensive development challenges and instead deliver relevant services.¹³⁶ For example, West Africa currently has one of the poorest infrastructures for cross-border and rural-urban mobility.¹³⁷ As a solution, the African Development Bank promoted ICT in the form of mobile phones to improve communication, financial transactions, and data sharing, which allows for information transfer without the need for costly infrastructure development.¹³⁸ In order for cities to be more adaptive and individualized, governments must provide greater transparency and accountability around services and policy.¹³⁹ The current application of ICT may allow citizens to rate the quality of services, but there must be a shift towards two-way accountability and transparency where citizens have access to policies and strategies, not just the final services.¹⁴⁰ ICT is growing rapidly, and the predominant growth is occurring in the private sector, without collaboration with local governments.¹⁴¹ Given the industry's rapid expansion, there is an international need to guide urban actors on the necessary policy measures, guidelines, and legal frameworks to foster ICT growth in conjunction with urban growth and needs.¹⁴² The creation for such an international framework requires a strong global vision and sharing of best practices and legal frameworks. Importantly, these frameworks must cover issues such as data management, privacy, and security.¹⁴³

Capacity-Building and Bolstering Human Capital

In order to make a significant impact, ICT must be accessible to the entire population of the city.¹⁴⁴ It is important to note that availability does not mean accessibility.¹⁴⁵ ICT products may be available in a city, but not practically accessible to the entire population due to discrimination, high costs, or low training and education.¹⁴⁶ In order for ICT to have a meaningful impact, even the most vulnerable citizens should have access to it.¹⁴⁷ To remedy this, ICT-focused capacity-building, with a focus on marginalized groups, is crucial.¹⁴⁸ In particular, socioeconomic status is closely related to information use and political participation.¹⁴⁹ ICT has the ability to educate marginalized members of the population and to enable widespread knowledge sharing.¹⁵⁰ Overcoming the digital divide and providing access to the global digital economy for all citizens will require expanding traditional business models.¹⁵¹ Opportunities for governments to foster such innovative environments include encouraging community engagement and public-private partnerships.¹⁵²

Case Study: Mobile Applications to Combat Violence against Women in Egypt

Women in urban areas are twice as susceptible to violence as men, according to UN-Habitat.¹⁵³ In 2010, HarrassMap, a volunteer-based initiative, used a combination of online and mobile technology to curb the social acceptability and prevalence of sexual violence in Egypt.¹⁵⁴ Anyone can report an incident of sexual assault or

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ African Development Bank Group, *Technology Can Help Africa Leap-frog Development Challenges*, 2013.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *The Role of ICT in the Proposed Urban Sustainable Development Goal and the New Urban Agenda*, 2016, p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁴¹ C40 Cities, *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Engagement*, 2015, pp. 26-27.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

¹⁴⁴ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *The Role of ICT in the Proposed Urban Sustainable Development Goal and the New Urban Agenda*, 2016, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵³ UN-Women, *In Rio de Janeiro's Favelas, a New Online Tool Tackles Violence Against Women and Girls*, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Hayes, *Tackling Gender-Based Violence with Technology*, 2014, p. 22.

harassment via SMS, email, or social media.¹⁵⁵ These reports are then mapped geographically on HarrassMap and visible to all application users.¹⁵⁶ While reporting an incident, each person is given access to information about local resources, such as free psychological counselling and legal assistance.¹⁵⁷ After its first year, HarrassMap received 40 reports per month, which spurred the creation of community action teams in problem neighborhoods and has been especially useful in reaching women in slums and agricultural areas within the city boundaries.¹⁵⁸

ICT and Urban Resilience

Responding to Man-made and Natural Disasters and Crises

ICT plays a fundamental role in supporting the Sendai Framework, through bolstering knowledge transfer on risk and disaster management.¹⁵⁹ ICT can be used to establish early warning systems, involve the media in communicating information about risks, and coordinating national risk efforts.¹⁶⁰ Updated ICT systems can provide city leaders with appropriate and actionable intelligence.¹⁶¹ Space and weather technology can provide tools for early warning, disaster monitoring, and emergency response efforts.¹⁶² For example, UNESCAP works with governments to use data from space for effective drought monitoring before its effects become dire.¹⁶³ Overall, better integration of ICT in disaster risk projects improves data collection and readiness and provides specialized information that local governments can use to respond to different cities' specific risk contexts.¹⁶⁴

Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change

ICT can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by replacing physical products, like paper, and services with e-products and services.¹⁶⁵ It can also help mitigate climate change through innovations that increase communication across and within cities on the effects of climate change.¹⁶⁶ For instance, increased access to broadband can provide city leaders and residents with weather information, disaster alerts, and emergency effort updates.¹⁶⁷ The spread of mobile phones also reduces the use of larger, less energy-efficient devices.¹⁶⁸ In addition, Smart grids and buildings help households reduce their energy consumption.¹⁶⁹ Households and factories can automatically regulate their heat, water, and electricity use by integrating ICT with renewable technology such as solar panels.¹⁷⁰ ICT-optimized travel solutions, like GPS mapping technology, can better enable route optimization, reducing emissions from transport vehicles.¹⁷¹

Promoting Citizen Engagement

By engaging residents through ICT, governments can streamline the needs of their cities and target problem areas that previously may have gone undetected.¹⁷² For example, city leaders can use digital platforms to crowd-source information about the real-time functioning of the city.¹⁷³ This might include tagging graffiti, maintenance requirements, and congestion hotspots.¹⁷⁴ By incorporating existing and proposed projects online and requesting feedback, strategies for resilient urbanization can be adapted to particular contexts.¹⁷⁵ Making city data available to

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction, *Hyogo Framework for Action*, 2005, p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ UN-Habitat, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² UNESCAP, *ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2016.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ UNESCAP, *ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2016; United Nations Task Team on Habitat III, *Habitat III Issue Papers: 17 – Cities and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management*, 2015, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶⁵ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 4.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ C40 Cities, *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Engagement*, 2015, p. 9.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

residents, community groups, and companies can encourage crowd sourced solutions to urban challenges.¹⁷⁶ This also provides city leaders a platform to be aware of and respond to external pressures and concerns posed by their constituents.¹⁷⁷ Social media already facilitates dialogue on political, economic, and environmental conditions of cities; governments have the potential to tap into this dialogue and directly interact with citizens.¹⁷⁸ Governments can also improve their city planning by making data and processes transparent and readily available online.¹⁷⁹ Programs that promote free dialogue ensure that local governments design policies that ensure maximum impact while empowering individuals to partake in a shared vision of the city.¹⁸⁰ In 2012, London launched the Talk London program, which created an online town hall for city residents to read reports and join discussions on policy issues via social media.¹⁸¹ The challenge for city governments stems from the pace and scale of change; digital companies and infrastructure are often introduced rapidly and entirely in the private sector, responding to local need for a certain service.¹⁸² As a result, city governments are forced into a reactive mode rather than proactively anticipating and planning for change.¹⁸³

Case Study: Using Minecraft for Community Participation in Urban Planning

One way that UN-Habitat is exploring the use of digital technology for citizen engagement and collaboration is through the video game Minecraft.¹⁸⁴ The game enables players to build constructions out of cubes in a 3D generated world.¹⁸⁵ In these workshops, young people are brought together to visualize urban designs in Minecraft and present these to city authorities and local government officials.¹⁸⁶ These workshops were held in 15 different locations across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.¹⁸⁷ Plans created from the workshops were then given to planners and architects and rendered as real architectural designs.¹⁸⁸ An assessment from Nepal showed that digital tools were a powerful way to include citizen voices in urban planning, especially those of youth, who are often marginalized.¹⁸⁹

Conclusion

Cities simultaneously offer great potential for growth and pose the biggest challenges for global sustainability.¹⁹⁰ As a consequence of rapid urban expansion, cities produce large amounts of greenhouse gases and are unable to provide adequate infrastructure and services for their residents.¹⁹¹ ICT has an incredible potential in supporting desired urban outcomes, well-connected communities, increased resource efficiency, and growth with reduced carbon emissions. ICT must balance economic growth with public needs.¹⁹² Use of technology can empower public participation, advance government accountability, and improve human rights indicators.¹⁹³ One of the key challenges in achieving this is that there is no current consensus on what a “smart and sustainable city” is and how to adapt “smart” agendas, or development agendas that incorporate technology, to the complex, evolving, and dynamic nature of cities.¹⁹⁴ The World Bank estimates that more than half of the total cost for infrastructure development will be concentrated in cities and it is clear that ICT will be a crucial component of this investment.¹⁹⁵ The cities of tomorrow will depend

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁸¹ Mayor of London and London Assembly, *Talk London*, 2016.

¹⁸² C40 Cities, *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Engagement*, 2015, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 8.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Villa & Mitchell, *Connecting Cities: Achieving Sustainability through Innovation*, 2010, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁹³ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹⁵ Relhan et al., *Good Urban Governance through ICT*, p. 17.

on a highly capable digital infrastructure that guarantees integration on all levels and inclusion of citizen voices.¹⁹⁶ To fully realize the potential of ICT for both sustainable and resilient urbanization, Member States must create governance models that foster communication, capacity-building, and inclusion.¹⁹⁷

Further Research

While performing further research on this topic, delegates should consider how governments can adapt to rapid innovation in a dynamic urban context. Where are the potentials to incorporate ICT into existing and future UN-Habitat projects? How should Member States consider resilience in drafting new and updating old frameworks? What are the major challenges and opportunities of government transparency in promoting ICT for urban development? How can Member States ensure that the most marginalized populations in cities have access to ICT? In what ways does sustainable and resilient development expand beyond climate change? How should the international community come to a consensus on defining terms like “smart cities” and “resilience?” How can governments create frameworks that are flexible and respond to the dynamic concerns of urbanization and ICT innovation? In what ways can ICT be integrated throughout all levels of urban development?

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Dave, S., et al. (2010). *Sustainable urbanization: The role of ICT in city development*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/reports/sustainable-urbanization-role-city-development>

This article focuses on demonstrating the challenges posed by urbanization, population growth, and urban sprawl through data and analytics. It also highlights the role of ICT in designing smart cities that offer a better quality of life for their residents while being more sustainable and cost-efficient. It provides a unique and creative alternative vision for cities of the future. Delegates will find the statistics and formative case studies presented to be extremely useful.

Floater, G., & P. Rode. (2014). *Cities and the New Climate Economy: The Transformative Role of Global Urban Growth*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from: <https://files.lsecities.net/files/2014/11/LSE-Cities-2014-The-Transformative-Role-of-Global-Urban-Growth-NCE-Paper-01.pdf>

This report examines how countries can achieve economic growth in the context of climate change. In addition, the report depicts the challenges urbanization can pose as concentrated productivity and consumption can exacerbate climate change. It further suggests ways through which innovation in ideas and technology can continue to promote economic growth in tandem with environmental sustainability. For delegates, this source provides an excellent review on various urban economic histories throughout the developing world. It highlights the problems and opportunities of urban development in critical developing countries.

Hayes, C. (2014). *Tackling Gender-Based Violence with Technology*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from: <http://hirondeleusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/STATT-Tackling-GBV-with-Technology.pdf>

This document provides multiple case studies in which mobile and internet-based technology has been used to prevent or respond to gender-based violence. Specifically, this document explores the effectiveness of these technologies, financial considerations, challenges and advantages of technological interventions, and the relationship between “traditional” advocacy and technology. For delegates, this guide is useful in its context-specific descriptions and to explain how technology has been adapted to suit different political climates, including post-conflict zones.

International Telecommunications Union. (2007). *ICTs and Climate Change: ITU-T Technology Watch Report #3*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/oth/23/01/T23010000030002PDFE.pdf

This study looks at the potential role that ICT plays at different stages of the processes of climate change. It particularly focuses on how the ICT sector can bolster the energy, transport, and construction sectors. It considers the most vulnerable components of global warming. This report is most useful for delegates in demonstrating prior and ongoing strategies to incorporate ICT in

¹⁹⁶ C40 Cities, *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Engagement*, 2015, p. 15.

¹⁹⁷ UN-Habitat & Ericsson, *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action*, 2016, p. 12.

climate change mitigation. It also includes a discussion on the potentials for public-private partnerships. It concludes with a discussion on achieving a climate-neutral United Nations.

Papa, R., et al. (2015). *Smart and Resilient Cities: A Systematic Approach for Developing Cross-Sectoral Strategies in the Face of Climate Change*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from:

<http://www.tema.unina.it/index.php/tema/article/download/2883/3154>

This is a study focused on defining terminology and concepts related to sustainability. In detail, it provides an existing review of the literature on “smart cities” and “resilient cities.” It acknowledges that international strategies to promote technology for resilient urbanization have been fragmented and offers a more comprehensive concept. It provides key assessments for policymakers as they plan development projects (i.e. are networks equipped to promptly inform people of disasters?). For delegates, the graphs and charts in this document identifying terminology and their contexts will be especially useful.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs et al. (2010). *Shanghai Manual: A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development of the 21st Century*. Retrieved 30 August 2016 from:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/shanghaimanual.pdf>

The Shanghai Manual contains many examples of innovative urban leadership and provides delegates with practical advice on policies and best practices in sustainable urban development. Chapter 8 is a particularly useful section for delegates. It provides detailed information on the use of ICT for creating smart and connected cities, relevant issues and challenges, and suggestions for further action. Most significantly, this document contains valuable case studies on actions already taken by the international community and discussions on their successes and failures. It provides key statistics and detailed policy options.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme & Ericsson. (2014). *The Role of ICT in the Proposed Urban Sustainable Development Goal and the New Urban Agenda* [Report]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from:

<http://unhabitat.org/the-role-of-ict-in-the-proposed-urban-sustainable-development-goal-and-the-new-urban-agenda/>

Published in response to the need for a new urban agenda in tandem with the SDGs, this report addresses the need for innovative solutions in planning for urbanization. It provides an outline for how ICT could fulfill and monitor the progress of the SDGs through supporting transformative changes in society. In addition, it provides a guideline for cities to harness ICT to address the social, environmental, and economic challenges they face. The discussion of the cross-section between the New Urban Agenda, SDGs, and ICT will be very important for delegates to understand the topic.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme & Ericsson. (2015). *Information and Communication Technology for Urban Climate Action* [Report]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/information-and-communication-technology-for-urban-climate-action-2/>

<http://unhabitat.org/information-and-communication-technology-for-urban-climate-action-2/>

This report has been written in order to highlight the key role ICT plays in mitigating the effects of climate change in growth, sustainability, and human life. The report particularly emphasizes the cost-effectiveness of ICT in the face of costly infrastructure and investment for development. This guide also provides specific details on the types of ICT that can be used to combat different impact-areas of climate change. Delegates will particularly benefit from the selected case studies.

Villa, N., & S. Mitchell. (2010). *Connecting Cities: Achieving Sustainability through Innovation*. Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from:

http://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/ac79/docs/innov/Connecting_Cities_Sustainability_Through_Innovation_IBSG_1021FINAL.pdf

This guide emphasizes the importance of government transparency and increased access to information to promote urbanization that adequately meets the needs of different populations. Arguing that ICT in cities facilitates human interaction and mobility, this guide provides strategies for technological innovation and the creation of an urban services program. In particular, it highlights both the challenges and opportunities of combining urban and digital networks and services. This guide is particularly useful for delegates in identifying the necessary components for creating smart communities. It addresses topics such as mobility, workplaces, energy reform, and efficient infrastructure.



World Bank Group. (2012). *ICT for Greater Development Impact: World Bank Group Strategy for Information and Communication Technology*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTINFORMATIONANDCOMMUNICATIONANDTECHNOLOGIES/Resources/WBG_ICT_Strategy-2012.pdf

The World Bank's strategy for ICT 2012-2015 outlines an international strategy to promote ICT for poverty reduction, market competitiveness, job creation, and cross-sectoral communication, among others. The framework identifies three pillars that the international community must prioritize: transform, innovate, and connect. It provides specific suggestions for policymakers to implement on the international, national, and local levels. It also offers a table of suggested baseline indicators for policymakers to gauge levels of ICT development and regional directives. Urban development is listed clearly as a sectoral priority for ICT and development.

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C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group & Arup. (2015). *Polisdigitocracy: Digital Technology, Citizen Engagement, and Climate Action*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.c40.org/researches/polisdigitocracy-digital-technology-citizen-engagement-and-climate-action>

Dave, S., et al. (2010). *Sustainable urbanization: The role of ICT in city development*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/reports/sustainable-urbanization-role-city-development>

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Hayes, C. (2014). *Tackling Gender-Based Violence with Technology*. Retrieved 25 September 2016 from: <http://hirondeleusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/STATT-Tackling-GBV-with-Technology.pdf>

International Telecommunications Union. (2007). *ICTs and Climate Change: ITU-T Technology Watch Report #3*. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-t/oth/23/01/T23010000030002PDFE.pdf

International Telecommunications Union. (2016). *ICTs for a Sustainable World* [Website]. Retrieved 30 July 2016 from: <http://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Pages/default.aspx>

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II. Ensuring Access to Adequate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene to Promote Urban Health

Introduction

As stated in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), “everyone has the right to living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.”¹⁹⁸ Adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) helps to create a healthy society and promotes urban health.¹⁹⁹ Sanitation and clean water are very important to the sustainability of urban health.²⁰⁰ Currently, 663 million individuals do not have access to clean water around the globe.²⁰¹ Contaminated water kills more people annually than any other form of human degradation, including war.²⁰² Women are especially vulnerable, as they are often responsible for collecting water.²⁰³ When communities lack easy access to clean water supplies, women and girls must take long and often treacherous journeys to ensure accessibility for their community.²⁰⁴

WASH is defined as “water availability and quality, presence of sanitation and facilities and availability of soap and water for handwashing.”²⁰⁵ Urban health is defined as the makeup of social, economic, and environmental factors that deal with the overall population of an area, as well as the overall health in urban environments.²⁰⁶ Without adequate access to WASH, urban health is at risk.²⁰⁷ Whether caused by unsanitary behavior or insufficient infrastructure, poor WASH leads to the spread of waterborne diseases, such as cholera.²⁰⁸ These diseases, along with many others, threaten global public health as they need close monitoring and medication to be treated.²⁰⁹

Approximately one in four city residents worldwide live without improved sanitation.²¹⁰ Improved sanitation is defined as access to water stations and facilities capable of properly disposing human waste and excrement.²¹¹ 2.5 billion individuals do not have access to proper amenities to dispose of human excrement, which leads to contaminated water and promotes the spread of preventable diseases.²¹² WASH issues are particularly dire in Asian and African countries, which failed to reach their full potential for water and sanitation under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).²¹³ The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is working diligently to promote sustainable development targets pertaining to water and sanitation.²¹⁴ UN-Habitat and its partners implement programs and initiatives to better monitor, support, and promote WASH as it relates to urban health.²¹⁵

International and Regional Framework

The *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000) defined the MDGs and established a global framework for sustainable development through 2015.²¹⁶ Target 10 of MDG 7 on environmental sustainability sought to cut in half

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁹⁹ UNICEF, *Water Sanitation and Hygiene*, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ UN-Water, *World Water Day 2013: International Year of Water Cooperation*, 2013.

²⁰¹ Water.org, *Facts about Women and the Water Crisis*.

²⁰² Water.org, *Facts about Water and Sanitation*.

²⁰³ Water.org, *Facts about Women and the Water Crisis*.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ WHO & UNICEF, *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Health Care Facilities: status in low-and-middle-income countries and way forward*, 2015.

²⁰⁶ WHO, *Urban health*.

²⁰⁷ WHO, *Urban health*; UN DESA & UN-Water, *Water and Cities*.

²⁰⁸ Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor, *Sanitation*.

²⁰⁹ UN DESA & UN-Water, *Water and cities*.

²¹⁰ Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor, *Sanitation*.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ UN Millennium Project, *Goals, Targets, and Indicators*, 2006; WASH United, *WASH United in South Asia*.

²¹⁴ UN-Water, *About UN-Water*, 2014.

²¹⁵ UN-Habitat, *Water & Sanitation*.

²¹⁶ UN Millennium Project, *Goals, Targets, and Indicators*, 2006.

the number of individuals without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.²¹⁷ Target 11 of MDG 7 aimed to achieve “a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers” by 2020.²¹⁸ The *Johannesburg Declaration on Health and Sustainable Development* (2002) identified pollution, overcrowding, and underdeveloped waste treatment infrastructure as key threats to WASH and urban health.²¹⁹ The declaration called upon the international community to strengthen commitments towards preventing waterborne diseases.²²⁰

On 23 December 2003, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution 58/217 to declare 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life.”²²¹ The resolution established goals for the UN system pertaining to water, human health, and the environment.²²² Recognizing that cities cannot obtain or even maintain sustainability without reasonable access to clean and protected drinking water, the resolution recommended actions to reduce the number of areas with low access to water and sanitation.²²³ Other goals of the Decade for Action initiative emphasized MDG targets 7.C and 7.D, which pertained specifically to the areas of water and cities.²²⁴ MDG 7.C called for the number of individuals living in urban areas without access to clean drinking water to be halved by 2015.²²⁵ Through international cooperation and effort, this goal was accomplished in 2010, five years before the deadline.²²⁶ Furthermore, MDG 7.D called on Member States to reduce the number of slum dwellers by at least 100 million by the year 2020.²²⁷ Over the course of the Decade for Action, “Water for Life,” more than two billion people gained access to enriched sources of water and sanitation.²²⁸

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted *General Comment No. 15* (2002) on the right to water at the recommendation of the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.²²⁹ This comment established that access to water is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.²³⁰ Line 15 of the document states that “with respect to the right to water, States parties have a special obligation to provide for those who do not have sufficient means with the necessary water and water facilities and to prevent any discrimination on internationally prohibited grounds in the provision of water and water services.”²³¹ On 28 July 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/292 on “The human right to water and sanitation,” which echoes *General Comment No. 15*.²³² It also recognized that water and sanitation were basic necessities for human rights.²³³ The resolution further requested that international organizations and Member States provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries to build facilities for sanitation and water filtration.²³⁴

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²³⁵ SDG 6, to “[e]nsure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,” has particular importance for WASH and urban health.²³⁶ Targets for Goal 6 call for an end to open defecation, universal access to

²¹⁷ Water Governance Facility, *Governance, Advocacy and Leadership in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (GoAL WaSH)*.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ UN DESA, *Johannesburg Summit 2002: Key Outcomes of the Summit*, 2002, p. 2.

²²⁰ WHO et al., *Johannesburg Declaration on Health and Sustainable Development*, 2002.

²²¹ UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015 (A/RES/58/217)*, 2003, p. 1.

²²² Ibid., p. 3.

²²³ UN DESA & UN-Water, *Water and Cities*.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ UN General Assembly, *High-Level Interactive Dialogue, The International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Life’: Progress Achieved and Lessons Learned for Sustainable Development*, 2015, p. 2.

²²⁹ UN ECOSOC, *General Comment No. 15: the right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (E/C.12/2002/11)*, 2002.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² UN General Assembly, *The human right to water and sanitation (A/RES/64/292)*, 2010.

²³³ UN ECOSOC, *General Comment No. 15: the right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) (E/C.12/2002/11)*, 2002.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ UN DPI, *Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*, 2015.

²³⁶ Ibid.

clean drinking water, and capacity-building to improve the ability of local communities to manage WASH infrastructure.²³⁷

Role of the International System

UN-Habitat works with many programs and partners to advance WASH. Created in 2003 by the UN High Level Committee on Programmes, UN-Water is an inter-agency mechanism that coordinates global policy and initiatives on issues related to freshwater and sanitation.²³⁸ UN-Water's policy efforts focus on water quality, equitable access, and sustainable resource management.²³⁹ In regards to sanitation, UN-Water seeks to encourage the utilization of proper waste facilities.²⁴⁰ It monitors the overall state of global water and promotes feasible solutions for global water goals.²⁴¹ In 2015, UN-Water organized the World Water Day Campaign with the theme of Water and Sustainable Development.²⁴² UN-Water collaborated with the Global Water Partnership and Stockholm International Water Institute to focus on the linkage between water, sanitation, and other factors of sustainable development.²⁴³ Complementing World Water Day, UN-Water actively supports World Toilet Day, which is an initiative to expand knowledge and access to sufficient waste sanitation.²⁴⁴

The World Health Organization (WHO) established global guidelines for drinking water quality, updated most recently in 2011.²⁴⁵ The 2011 *Guidelines for drinking water quality* define access to clean water as key to the protection of public health.²⁴⁶ The guidelines provide recommendations for managing risk from hazards that may comprise the safety of drinking water.²⁴⁷ WHO has a Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to collect regional, national, and global data for water supply and sanitation.²⁴⁸ Since 2015, over 300,000 children under the age of five have died from waterborne diseases linked to the improper management of waste, water, and sanitation.²⁴⁹ UNICEF has further collaborated with UN-Habitat on the importance of handwashing.²⁵⁰ In 2016, the two organizations joined in a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of handwashing to 850 youth in Lebanon.²⁵¹ International Handwashing Day is celebrated on 15 October each year.²⁵² Handwashing Day initiatives educate children about bacteria and other diseases that spread in the absence of proper handwashing.²⁵³

The Human Rights Council (HRC) has also helped integrate WASH in urban regions of many developing countries.²⁵⁴ The HRC established a Special Rapporteur on the human right to water and sanitation in 2014.²⁵⁵ The Special Rapporteur is responsible for examining crucial issues related to the right to water and providing suggestions to the UN and its partners on achieving clean drinking water and basic sanitation goals.²⁵⁶ According to the Special Rapporteur, having access to safe drinking water and sanitation is central to living in dignity and upholding human

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ UN-Water, *About UN-Water*, 2014.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² UN-Water, *Annual Report 2015*, 2015, p. 8.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ WHO, *Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality: Fourth Edition*, 2011, p. 24.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ WHO & UNICEF, *Mission and objectives*.

²⁴⁹ UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat partners with UNICEF to highlight benefits of handwashing*, 2016.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ WHO, *Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality: Fourth Edition*, 2011, p. 25.

²⁵⁵ UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, *Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation*, 2014.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

rights.²⁵⁷ Other UN system partners engaged in WASH include the World Bank, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).²⁵⁸

Water and sanitation have become such a pressing issue in urbanization that UN-Habitat considers it a core urban theme.²⁵⁹ To improve access to water and sanitation for urban health, UN-Habitat has established many fundamental goals, including stronger legislation, building codes, and capacity-building initiatives.²⁶⁰ UN-Habitat collaborates with organizations such as the Committee on Economic and Social Rights (CESCR), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and WHO to advance WASH initiatives.²⁶¹ UN-Habitat's water and sanitation (WATSAN) programs, managed by the Urban Basic Services Branch, assist local governments with the pursuit of WASH-related SDG targets.²⁶² The WATSAN programs provide support in the areas of policy, technology, and finance.²⁶³ UN-Habitat established a trust fund in 2003 to support WATSAN initiatives, with a particular focus on improving urban water and sanitation infrastructure in Africa and Asia.²⁶⁴ UN-Habitat also funds other programs such as the Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA).²⁶⁵ GWOPA supports peer exchanges to strengthen water and sanitation utilities.²⁶⁶ GWOPA aims to advance global partnerships between water utility operators.²⁶⁷

The Global Water Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster (GWC) is a partnership of 32 UN agencies, government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and private sector donors.²⁶⁸ Led by UNICEF, GWC assists in the delivery of WASH during times of emergency, coordinates national policies, and advances best practices.²⁶⁹ Globally, the aim of the cluster approach is to improve and strengthen response time for emergency personnel in areas impacted by humanitarian crises.²⁷⁰ GWC aims to strengthen the response of humanitarian aid at the country level by requiring high standards of probability, culpability, and collaboration.²⁷¹ Along with GWC, the Sanitation and Water for All Partnership (SWA) is an active player in the fight for adequate access to water and sanitation.²⁷² SWA is a global organization that presides over 150 countries and their governments, self-contained sectors as well as civil societies to improve accountability.²⁷³ SWA works toward achieving the goal set to improve hygiene, sanitation, and water for all.²⁷⁴

Disaster Risk Reduction

Natural disasters pose a unique risk to water supplies and sanitation infrastructure.²⁷⁵ Natural disasters and WASH are linked.²⁷⁶ During natural disasters, one of the first things impacted is water.²⁷⁷ Storms, droughts, and floods directly affect water supplies and sanitation infrastructure.²⁷⁸ Various disasters impact WASH in multiple ways as they can destroy toilets and waste processing facilities, leaving behind contaminated water and leading to disease.²⁷⁹

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ UN-Habitat, *Water & Sanitation*.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, *About WOPs*.

²⁶⁷ Global Water Operators' Partnerships Alliance, *What we do*.

²⁶⁸ Global WASH Cluster, *About us*.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Sanitation and Water for All, *About SWA*, 2016.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ WHO et al., *Disaster Risk Management for Health: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene*, 2011, p. 1.

²⁷⁶ UNICEF, *Water Sanitation and Hygiene: Climate Change*, 2016.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

In 2005, a massive earthquake struck Pakistan, destroying sanitation infrastructure and contaminating clean water supplies.²⁸⁰ This required emergency personnel to deliver water and sanitation supplies to over 1.7 million people.²⁸¹ In 2010, Haiti was similarly affected by an earthquake that left little to no access to water and sanitation.²⁸² In the aftermath of the earthquake, Haiti experienced an unprecedented outbreak of cholera.²⁸³ In Eastern Asia, natural disasters have caused sewage infrastructure to be unusable for months.²⁸⁴

Though disasters can never be fully prevented, measures can be taken to promote the sustainability of WASH infrastructure; the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* was adopted in 2015.²⁸⁵ The framework includes global goals to mitigate the aftermath of disasters by designing climate change-resilient systems, conducting risk assessments, and establishing emergency response plans to restore services.²⁸⁶ In addition to the Sendai Framework, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) created the Making Cities Resilient campaign to implement disaster risk reduction strategies in urban areas.²⁸⁷ The Secretary-General's High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) was implemented to mobilize political will and investment among governments and global stakeholders to protect water supplies and sanitation infrastructure in the wake of disasters.²⁸⁸ Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Robert Glasser as Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2016.²⁸⁹

After natural disasters and conflicts arise, having a safe home to go back to is essential to the overall health and rehabilitation of affected individuals.²⁹⁰ Without a safe place return home to, displaced persons are especially vulnerable to disease and water insecurity.²⁹¹ Sustainable WASH, including water infrastructure and sanitation, promotes the return of populations displaced by disaster.²⁹² UN-Habitat's 2014 publication, *Realizing The Human Rights To Water And Sanitation: Services*, brings to light the importance of efficient services in the area of water and sanitation.²⁹³

Low-income Urban Dwellers

Approximately 863 million individuals, or 25% of the global urban population, were reported to be living in slum conditions in 2013.²⁹⁴ UN-Habitat defines slum households as lacking access to one or more of its five factors of deprivation: improved water, improved sanitation facilities, living facilities that are not overcrowded, dwellings with sufficient structural integrity, and security from the threat of eviction.²⁹⁵ UN-Habitat states that slums are generally comprised of non-permanent housing structures susceptible to natural disasters and climate change.²⁹⁶ In addition, slums typically house three or more residents per room and lack access to an affordable water supply or proper water sanitation facilities such as showers and toilets.²⁹⁷ As a result, people living in urban slums are more susceptible to disease and other health risks.²⁹⁸ Education of low-income dwellers is important as people who live in these conditions may not understand the health risks associated with little to no access of proper sanitation.²⁹⁹ UN-

²⁸⁰ WHO et al., *Disaster Risk Management for Health: Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene*, 2011, p. 2.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Shah, *Poverty Facts and Stats, Global Issues*, 2013.

²⁸⁵ UNISDR, *Implementing the Sendai Framework to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2015, p. 1.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ UNISDR, *Frequently Asked Questions*.

²⁸⁸ High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters, *High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)*, 2016.

²⁸⁹ UNISDR, *New Urban Agenda to reduce disaster losses*, 2016.

²⁹⁰ UNIDO, *Thematic evaluation: UNIDO Post-crisis projects*, 2010, p. 13.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 14.

²⁹³ UN-Habitat, *Realizing The Human Rights to Water And Sanitation: Services*, 2014, p. 32.

²⁹⁴ UN-Habitat, *World Habitat Day: Voices from Slums*, 2014, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Shah, *Poverty Facts and Stats, Global Issues*, 2013.

²⁹⁹ UN-Habitat, *Water & Sanitation*.

Habitat's WATSAN initiatives have brought to the forefront many issues related to WASH in urban areas.³⁰⁰ One of the main focuses of WATSAN is to educate individuals on what water and sanitation is, why it is important, and why having adequate access is important to urban health.³⁰¹

Conclusion

WASH is pivotal to ensuring urban health in developing countries.³⁰² UN-Habitat and many of its partners are implementing programs and initiative to better monitor, support, and promote urban health as it relates to WASH.³⁰³ Though the number of individuals able to receive adequate WASH has increased, over 1 billion people continue to lack access to safe, clean water and over 2.6 billion people continue to need access to adequate sanitation facilities.³⁰⁴ While UN-Habitat and its partners have delivered many initiatives to help with the overall issues with the lack of access to water and sanitation, there is still more work to be done before the targets of SDG 6 are achieved.³⁰⁵ As urban populations continue to expand, particularly in slum areas, UN-Habitat must support local and regional authorities in improving water distribution systems and sanitation infrastructure to ensure that all people enjoy adequate access to WASH.³⁰⁶ The successful achievement of SDG 6 will also require the international community to improve how it monitors, collects, and reports WASH data.³⁰⁷

Further Research

While delegates are attaining information for this topic, they should consider the following questions: How existing commitments be strengthened and implemented to ensure that the full extent of resources are being used to help those who suffer from deficiencies in relation to WASH? How can UN-Habitat and its partners advance disaster risk reduction strategies to ensure adequate WASH in urban areas? What education initiatives can UN-Habitat undertake to promote urban health through WASH?

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This source will be useful for delegates because it deals with the various ways of implementing WASH. It defines WASH and its relationship to urban health. It identifies challenges that present themselves to the international community, including inadequate WASH, limited capacity for water filtration, and the vulnerability of women and children to waterborne diseases. It deals with different financial strategies, recommendations to target certain groups within developing areas, and best practices for governance and technological exchanges.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015). *Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all* [Website]. Retrieved 5 November 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>

This website outlines specific targets and indicators related to Goal 6, the most pertinent SDG for WASH and Urban Health. Delegates can refer to this source for relevant statistics on global and regional progress towards Goal 6. The site also offers links to international campaigns and initiatives, with news coverage of recent events related to the UN system's work on the goal and its targets.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Goals & strategies of UN-Habitat* [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/about-us/goals-and-strategies-of-un-habitat/>

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ UN-Habitat, *Water & Sanitation*; UN DPI, *Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*, 2015.

³⁰⁵ UN DPI, *Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all*, 2015.

³⁰⁶ UN-Habitat, *Water & Sanitation*.

³⁰⁷ WHO, *Key Facts from JMP 2015 Report*.

This report discusses the seven focus areas of the UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for the next five years (2014-2019). The Strategic Plan focuses on the following key areas: urban legislation, land and governance; urban planning and design; urban economy; urban basic services; housing and slum upgrading; risk reduction and rehabilitation; and research and capacity development. This report allows delegates to gain a basic understanding of what the committee plans to achieve through 2019.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *Water and Sanitation*. [Website]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/water-and-sanitation-2/>

This website is a useful starting point for delegate research as it discusses UN-Habitat actions pertaining to water and sanitation. This source lists the overall goals, programmes, and initiatives that have been implemented by the UN system. It has many statistics and facts on inadequate water and sanitation facilities around the world. Key concerns highlighted here include lack of plumbing, poor sewage management, and inadequate access to clean water for bathing and cooking.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2014). *Realizing the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation: Services* [Book]. Retrieved 6 November 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/books/realizing-the-human-rights-to-water-and-sanitation-services/>

This handbook serves as a guide explaining the human right to water, which is a key component in establishing how important WASH is to urban health. There are also legal obligations that stem from the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. Delegates will be able to use this handbook to find more information about UN-Habitat's policies on water and sanitation. They can then use these guidelines when addressing the issues before the UN body, as well as performing collaborative work with other Member States.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2015). *Proceedings of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme at its twenty-fifth session (HSP/GC/25/6)*. Retrieved 21 July 2016 from: http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Proceedings-of-the-GC-25_English.pdf

This report introduces the budget of the 2016-2017 year. It details the amounts of funding allotted to the committee's seven focus areas. This resource is a useful starting point for research regarding committee funding. Delegates should consult this source to develop solutions under specific focus areas. It also provides a useful overview of initiatives currently under way.

Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor. (n.d.). *Sanitation* [Website]. Retrieved 1 October 2016 from: <http://www.wsup.com/programme/issues/sanitation/>

This website is a useful source to delegates as it highlights several organizations that combat inadequate access to WASH. Some of the organizations include WaterAid, Thames Water, Care, and many others. This website also links to a publication library that includes information on what programs organizations have initiated and what they plan to do in the future.

Water.org. (n.d.). *Facts about Water and Sanitation* [Website]. Retrieved 19 July 2016 from: <http://water.org/water-crisis/water-sanitation-facts/>

This webpage presents facts about WASH resources around the globe, highlighting statistics about access to water and sanitation. This source brings attention to water shortages in specific regions, including Africa, South Asia, and Central America. It also identifies populations in developing countries who lack access to adequate waste treatment facilities. It serves as a resource to understand global issues and provide a foundation for possible solutions.

World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Key Facts from JMP 2015 Report* [Website]. Retrieved 1 October 2016 from: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp-2015-key-facts/en/

This website offers key facts from the JMP report for its 25th anniversary. It allows delegates to review statistics for WASH related issues, especially those prominent in the African and Asian regions. This site highlights specific achievements and failures under the MDGs, pointing out specific areas where the international community can improve its progress under the SDGs.



World Health Organization & United Nations Children's Fund. (2015, June 30). *Lack of sanitation for 2.4 billion people on undermining health improves* [Press Release]. Retrieved 20 July 2016 from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/jmp-report/en/>

This article showcases the progress of UN-Habitat in the last two decades. It discusses the importance of the topic under discussion and highlights the impact of inadequate sanitation on general health. The article goes into depth about the paramount importance of access to adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene for urban dwellers living in poverty.

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III. Eliminating Urban Slums and Ensuring Access to Adequate Housing

*“The right to housing is not just a rallying cry. It, like human rights more generally, offers concrete standards that can be implemented and measured for progress. The results can be transformative and can shift us away from charity toward social justice.”*³⁰⁸

Introduction

In the last century, urbanization has rapidly spread, with two thirds of the global population expected to be living in cities by 2050.³⁰⁹ Urban areas are hubs for commercial activity, productivity, and economic prosperity; however, these benefits are not enjoyed by all city dwellers equally.³¹⁰ As the number of urban residents has grown, so has the number of slum dwellers.³¹¹ Since 2000, the slum population has grown by approximately 6 million persons a year.³¹² UN-Habitat estimates that one in eight people, the equivalent of one billion people worldwide, live in slums today, and these numbers are rapidly increasing.³¹³ Likewise, 95% of urban expansion is expected to occur in cities in developing countries.³¹⁴ The United Nations (UN) defines a slum as a settlement where inhabitants suffer from overcrowding or “inadequate access to water, sanitation, and other basic infrastructure.”³¹⁵ Slum inhabitants may also face insecure tenures or poor structural quality, such as temporary or derelict housing.³¹⁶ In addition, if an area is located in a geologically hazardous zone or extremely polluted zone, the area is classified as a slum.³¹⁷ Slum dwellers often suffer from high poverty rates as well as a higher risk of disease and child mortality and are politically and socially excluded.³¹⁸ Children, especially girls, may not receive education.³¹⁹ One of the strongest efforts by the international community to address the spread of urban slums is the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³²⁰ Housing and slum upgrading is also one of the seven focus areas of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) *2014-2019 Strategic Plan*.³²¹

For the last 20 years, national and international development agendas have largely ignored the importance of affordable housing thus directly contributing to the spread of slums.³²² Adequate housing is an essential expression of a number of established human rights, such as the right to freedom from interference with home, privacy, and family and the right to freedom of movement.³²³ Affordability is only one aspect of adequate housing and the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) defines housing as affordable if household expenditure is within 30% of household income, or 80% of the median household income, such that the household can meet other basic needs.³²⁴ Housing should ensure protection against forces of nature, physical safety, and ease of access for persons with disabilities, and other challenges.³²⁵ Security of tenure is a requirement for adequate housing, as is the availability of basic services and infrastructure such as potable water, sanitation, a source of energy, and disposal of waste.³²⁶ Finally, housing should be located at close proximity to educational and health facilities, employment

³⁰⁸ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context*.

³⁰⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable cities and human settlements*, 2016.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ UN-Habitat, *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, p. 2.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³¹⁴ UN DPI, *Cities – United Nations Sustainable Development Action 2015*, 2016

³¹⁵ UN-Habitat et al., *Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indicators: Secure Tenure, Slums and Global Sample of Cities. Revised Draft Report*, 2002, pp. 22-23.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ The Borgen Project, *5 Negative Impacts of Slums*, 2013.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 14.

³²¹ UN-Habitat, *Goals & strategies of UN-Habitat – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

³²² UN-Habitat, *Chapter 3: The Fate of Housing*, 2016, p. 47.

³²³ OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing*, 2014, p. 3.

³²⁴ International Federation for Housing and Planning, *Housing Affordability and Segregation: Europe and Southeast Asia*, 2016, p. 5.

³²⁵ OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing*, 2014, p. 3.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

opportunities, and other social facilities, away from polluted or industrial areas, while respecting occupants' cultural identity.³²⁷ The issue of adequate housing should not be treated lightly as access to adequate housing is, first and foremost, a basic human right.³²⁸

International and Regional Framework

The international community has upheld the human right to adequate housing, which was first codified in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948.³²⁹ Article 25 states that everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living, including, but not limited to: decent food, clothing, housing, and other social services.³³⁰ The 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) addresses human rights broadly, and specifically the right to “an adequate standard of living...including adequate food, clothing and housing,” placing responsibility on Member States to ensure the realization of this right.³³¹ The 2011 *Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020* (IPoA) further recognizes shelters as an integral part of human and social development, and a priority area for action for least developed countries (LDCs).³³² Goals set by the IPoA include increasing access of slum dwellers and the rural poor to affordable housing and housing-related infrastructure through improved planning, policy, and legislation.³³³ According to the ICESCR and the IPoA, Member States are required to do everything in their power to facilitate the public's access to adequate housing through appropriate legislation, policymaking, and government spending.³³⁴ Access to adequate housing is a priority, demonstrated by the widespread growth of slums, and is an urgent issue, requiring immediate attention.³³⁵ Member States are responsible for ensuring that all housing meets adequate structural requirements, and provides at least the minimum needs of shelter from the elements, safe drinking water, energy, sanitation, disposal of waste, and emergency services to all inhabitants, in an inclusive and fair manner.³³⁶

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) aims to achieve conditions for sustainable, inclusive economic growth with shared prosperity, pledging to leave no one behind.³³⁷ SDG 11 directly targets slums: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”³³⁸ There are numerous targets for SDG 11, such as the provision of adequate, safe, affordable, and accessible housing, basic services, transport systems, and planning of sustainable urban settlements by 2030.³³⁹ It places special focus on vulnerable groups of society such as persons with disabilities, women, children, and the elderly, particularly the development of inclusive, efficient urban policies for resilient cities.³⁴⁰ SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 all address issues that slum dwellers face such as poverty, food security, healthy lives and well-being, gender equality, access to clean water and sanitation, decent work, and inequality both within and among countries.³⁴¹

The UN has held a number of conferences to address the unique issue of providing adequate housing. The first of these was the First UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) in 1976, when the *Vancouver Declaration on*

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³²⁸ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context*, 2016.

³²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

³³² Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, *Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020*, 2011, p. 10.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³³⁴ OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing*, 2014, p. 6.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³³⁷ UN-Habitat, *Chapter 3: The Fate of Housing*, 2016, p. 47; UN DPI, *United Nations Millennium Development Goals*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 3.

³³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 14.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Human Settlements was agreed on.³⁴² It encourages Member States to establish human settlement policies to guide socioeconomic development and address the most marginalized groups in society.³⁴³ The *Vancouver Action Plan* issues clear criteria for policy development aimed at achieving greater equality in living standards between settlements in the same urban area, as well as between urban and rural areas.³⁴⁴ The second of these, the 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), culminated in the *Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements*, which addresses the twin goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable development of human settlements.³⁴⁵ In discussing these issues, the impact of poverty, discrimination, and the lack of basic services, such as education, healthcare, and adequate shelter, is evident on human settlements, particularly on women, children, youth, and persons with disabilities living in these settlements.³⁴⁶ Importance is placed on integrating the public and private sectors, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to ensure security of tenure and “equal access to affordable, adequate housing.”³⁴⁷

The current global discussion on urbanization and housing culminated in the adoption of the *New Urban Agenda* (NUA) at the Habitat III conference, held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.³⁴⁸ NUA discusses integrating equity and social justice into the development agenda, with the aim of eliminating urban slums.³⁴⁹ The outcome document specifically stresses the commitment of the international community to promote age- and gender-responsive “national, sub-national, and local housing policies” to support the realization of the right to adequate housing.³⁵⁰ It also discusses the positive impact of sustainable housing and housing finance to stimulating progress in other economic sectors and economic growth at all levels.³⁵¹

Role of the International System

UN-Habitat contributes to the development of national urban policy in several Member States, advising on the establishment of national processes, providing examples of good practices, facilitating local-national dialogue, and assisting in establishment of national processes for stakeholder participation.³⁵² The UN-Habitat Urban Planning and Design Lab (Lab) assists authorities with implementation of UN-Habitat’s sustainable urban planning principles, through direct design development and by establishing linkages with legal, financial, and planning instruments.³⁵³ An approach that has been gaining momentum in slum upgrading is the participatory approach whereby communities, authorities, the private sector, experts, and urban practitioners work together at various levels, from the decision-making and design stages to the implementation and follow-up.³⁵⁴ Using participatory planning processes to promote sustainable urban development, the Lab focuses on achieving social equality and countering climate change.³⁵⁵ The Global Network of Labs, a UN-Habitat initiative, brings together local and international planners, focusing on knowledge exchange.³⁵⁶ Working directly with communities, planners utilize a participatory process and set up localized Labs, which directly apply and implement UN-Habitat’s sustainable urban planning principles in existing projects.³⁵⁷ UN-Habitat has several programs in place that address the issues of slum upgrading, the most notable of which is the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP).³⁵⁸ PSUP is a joint

³⁴² United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, *The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements (A/CONF.70/15)*, 1976, pp. 2-7.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁴⁵ United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/CONF.165/14)*, 1996.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda | Habitat III*.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ Habitat III, *The New Urban Agenda: Draft outcome document for adoption in Quito, October 2016*, 2016, p. 6

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7

³⁵² UN-Habitat, *National Urban Policies – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

³⁵³ UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Design Lab – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

³⁵⁴ UN-Habitat, *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, p. 18.

³⁵⁵ UN-Habitat, *Urban Planning and Design Lab – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

³⁵⁶ UN-Habitat, *Global Network of Urban Planning and Design Labs – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ UN-Habitat, *Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

effort between UN-Habitat, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, and the European Commission.³⁵⁹ PSUP aims to strengthen capacity of local and national institutions, contribute to developing policies and strategies for slum upgrading, introduced pilot projects, and support authorities to raise activity-specific funding.³⁶⁰ Their work encompasses over 30 countries and 150 cities in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.³⁶¹

At the seventh session of the World Urban Forum held in 2014, adequate housing, urban poverty, and inclusive housing solutions were identified as the core urban challenges today.³⁶² Recommendations included the importance of learning lessons from previous housing strategies, possibly through the exchange of best practices in the context of South-South cooperation.³⁶³ In addition, the forum identified the importance of developing gender-inclusive strategies for housing and slum upgrading, and identified housing as the core issue of the *New Urban Agenda*.³⁶⁴ World leaders recognized the lack of information available on the role of youth in current housing markets and suggested programs to further engage youth in the construction industry.³⁶⁵ In 2014, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) appointed Ms. Leilani Farha, as the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context.³⁶⁶ In her 2015 report, Ms. Farha clearly identifies housing as a pillar of an urban rights agenda and emphasizes the importance of a people-centered approach, as governments address the twin issues of slums and providing adequate housing.³⁶⁷ The focus of the Special Rapporteur's mandate from 2014 to 2019 is to monitor the transformation of international human rights norms on housing rights to domestic law and policy, with focus on the most vulnerable groups of society.³⁶⁸

The Cities Alliance is a global partnership between governments, NGOs, development agencies, local authorities, and research centers for the reduction of urban poverty and the promotion of sustainable development in cities.³⁶⁹ Habitat for Humanity International is a non-profit Christian organization that partners with families to construct, rehabilitate, and repair simple, decent, and affordable housing, with the aim of eliminating poverty housing.³⁷⁰ Houses are built by volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, with the assistance of skilled labor.³⁷¹ They are then sold to families at no profit and financed through long-term loans, with monthly payments used to finance future housing.³⁷² Since 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built or renovated over 800,000 homes for more than 4 million persons, in addition to improving water and sanitation facilities.³⁷³

Eliminating Urban Slums

Causes of Urban Slums

Urban poverty is one of the main causes of slums.³⁷⁴ As persons migrate from rural areas to cities in search of a better life, they find themselves unable to afford decent accommodation.³⁷⁵ Urban areas provide better job prospects,

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² UN-Habitat, *Seventh session of the World Urban Forum: Urban Equity in Development – Cities for Life (HSP/WUF/7/3)*, 2015, p. 21.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context*, 2016.

³⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (A/70/270)*, 2015, p. 7.

³⁶⁸ OHCHR, *Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context*, 2016.

³⁶⁹ Cities Alliance, *Who We Are | Cities Alliance*, 2016; Cities Alliance, *Our Members | Cities Alliance*, 2016.

³⁷⁰ Habitat for Humanity, *Building and renovating homes | Habitat for Humanity Int'l*, 2016; Habitat for Humanity, *Who we are | Habitat for Humanity Int'l*, 2016.

³⁷¹ Habitat for Humanity, *Building and renovating homes | Habitat for Humanity Int'l*, 2016.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Habitat for Humanity, *Who we are | Habitat for Humanity Int'l*, 2016.

³⁷⁴ UN-Habitat, *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, pp. 1-4.

³⁷⁵ Cities Alliance, *About Slum Upgrading | Cities Alliance*, 2016.

improved transport and communication, and better services than rural areas.³⁷⁶ Unable to afford the higher cost of living, rural migrants often settle in and contribute to the growth of urban slums where housing costs are lower, at the price of inadequate shelter or insecure tenure.³⁷⁷ Another reason for the spread of slums is the lack of preparation, on behalf of local governments, to incorporate a growing urban population and provide sufficient adequate housing, resulting in a housing gap.³⁷⁸ A housing gap occurs when housing provided by the private sector meets or exceeds the required demand, while there is a lack of sufficient affordable housing for the urban poor.³⁷⁹ Through marginalizing the urban poor and excluding them from urban planning schemes, local governments inadvertently contribute to the spread of slums.³⁸⁰

Life in Slums

Insecure tenure is one of the defining factors for a slum, meaning that slum dwellers live in illegal or quasi-legal settlements, with no legal documentation to prove their claim of ownership.³⁸¹ Thus, they live under threat of eviction at any time.³⁸² They may also be unable to improve their homes due to security and safety reasons.³⁸³ Access to clean water and sanitation facilities may be a daily challenge for slum dwellers, with varying degrees of severity around the world.³⁸⁴ Overcrowding and lack of privacy are common issues faced in slums, where the number of inhabitants per unit area is much higher than the average in the same urban area.³⁸⁵ Construction quality and durability of houses is a major concern in slums, where iron sheets and mud floors are common building materials.³⁸⁶ Other difficulties faced by slum dwellers include widespread communicable diseases due to unhealthy living conditions and low literacy rates.³⁸⁷

Slum Upgrading Efforts

Perhaps the greatest challenge to upgrading slum areas lies in urban poverty, which is prevalent in developing and developed Member States.³⁸⁸ Stakeholders including poor residents, landlords, and more exist in slums, and their needs must be fulfilled in order to achieve permanent slum upgrading.³⁸⁹ Common challenges faced by cities globally include rising income disparities, inadequate urban infrastructure, energy, and waste management, as well as poor transport planning.³⁹⁰ Efforts to formalize and upgrade slums require significant endorsement from the local community to work, and are more effective if they involve a larger scope of action such as the improvement of health and education or poverty alleviation in the city as a whole.³⁹¹ As slum conditions vary greatly, different solutions are needed for the unique urban challenges in each.³⁹² However, there is a general need for the provision of urban services such as water, sanitation, and access to housing or land in cases of insecure tenure, and efforts to increase public safety in cases of high crime.³⁹³

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ UN-Habitat, *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, p. 9.

³⁸⁰ Cities Alliance, *About Slum Upgrading* | Cities Alliance, 2016.

³⁸¹ Payne & Durand-Lasserve, *Holding On: Security of Tenure - Types, Policies, Practices and Challenges: Research Paper prepared for the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, Raquel Rolnik, to inform her Study on Security of Tenure*, 2012, p. 6.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ UN-Habitat, *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*, p. 10.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 1-4.

³⁸⁹ Cities Alliance, *About Slum Upgrading* | Cities Alliance, 2016.

³⁹⁰ UNCRD, *First ECOSOC Integration Segment on Sustainable Urbanization (27-29 May 2014): Inputs from UNCRD*, 2014.

³⁹¹ Cities Alliance, *About Slum Upgrading* | Cities Alliance, 2016.

³⁹² UNCRD, *First ECOSOC Integration Segment on Sustainable Urbanization (27-29 May 2014): Inputs from UNCRD*, 2014.

³⁹³ Cities Alliance, *About Slum Upgrading* | Cities Alliance, 2016.

One of the approaches to slum upgrading is the adaptive approach, which focuses on upgrading physical, economic, and social urban services, often addressing issues of land and tenure.³⁹⁴ These may be on a project-level, integrated with national policies and broad-based programs, and cover a wide range of services, from physical such as infrastructural upgrades, to social such as education, health, sports, and community facilities, and economic such as training, job placements, and microfinance opportunities.³⁹⁵ Together, this kind of integrated approach can help in revitalization of the slum area, and improving the quality of life of inhabitants.³⁹⁶

Ensuring Access to Adequate Housing

While international human rights law asserts that Member States should provide adequate housing to inhabitants, Member States are not required to directly construct housing, and are still allowed to carry out development projects which may lead to displacement of persons and evictions, provided that such evictions are managed in consultation with affected persons and accommodate their needs.³⁹⁷ In addition, access to housing is not synonymous with land or property ownership, although these may overlap.³⁹⁸ The inability of the housing sector to keep up with rapid urbanization and ensure the provision of adequate housing units for urban dwellers is the biggest challenge in addressing adequate housing.³⁹⁹ UN-Habitat estimates that 96,150 housing units must be built each day to ensure sufficient housing in 2030.⁴⁰⁰ Adequate housing is not a problem limited to developing states; affordability of housing and homelessness are also major issues in Member States with adequate resources.⁴⁰¹ In 2015, Ms. Farha's thematic report focused on "homelessness as a global human rights crisis directly linked to increased inequality of wealth and property."⁴⁰² In the absence of a clear definition for homelessness, Ms. Farha proposed a "three-dimensional," human rights-based approach by defining homelessness as firstly, the absence of a home, in both a material and social sense; secondly, the systematic discrimination against those deprived of a home; and thirdly, emphasizing homeless persons as people with rights that have been taken away from them.⁴⁰³

Adequate, affordable housing is intrinsically part of the solution to homelessness.⁴⁰⁴ While developing countries have an issue meeting quantity and quality for adequate housing, more developed markets such as Europe have focused on large-scale production to meet demand, neglecting affordability of rentals, and entirely excluding the possibility of home ownership.⁴⁰⁵ Challenges to provision of adequate housing include weak governance systems, inadequate urban policy and planning, and a malfunctioning housing sector.⁴⁰⁶ The social, cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of housing are often ignored in national housing policies and projects.⁴⁰⁷ Government housing projects proposed in remote locations ignore slum dwellers' lifestyles and livelihoods, and impose extra expenses in the form of increased transport costs, or poor access to basic social services such as education.⁴⁰⁸

McKinsey Global Institute proposed several policy approaches to reduce the cost of affordable housing by 20-50% such as releasing land supply, reducing construction and maintenance costs by capitalizing on new technology, and lowering financing costs for buyers and developers.⁴⁰⁹ Governments can also directly take initiatives in urban

³⁹⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development & The World Bank, *Approaches to Urban Slums: A Multimedia Sourcebook on Adaptive and Proactive Strategies*, 2008, p. 23.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ OHCHR & UN-Habitat, *The Right to Adequate Housing*, 2014, p. 7.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹⁹ UN-Habitat, *Housing & Slum Upgrading – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ OHCHR, *Homelessness and Human Rights*, 2016.

⁴⁰² UN HRC, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (A/HRC/31/54)*, 2015, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7

⁴⁰⁵ International Federation for Housing and Planning, *Housing Affordability and Segregation: Europe and Southeast Asia*, 2016, pp. 2-5.

⁴⁰⁶ UN-Habitat, *Housing & Slum Upgrading – UN-Habitat*, 2012.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ Woetzel et al., *Tackling the world's affordable housing challenge*, *McKinsey Global Institute*, 2014.

planning to ensure appropriate management of their urban expansion.⁴¹⁰ Such strategies comprise economic development, job creation, good governance and inclusion of the general public, and sufficient adequate housing such that marginalized groups of society are integrated.⁴¹¹ These approaches would benefit from partnerships between public and private sectors, as well as NGOs and community-based organizations, all of which are stakeholders in the process, and contribute to its success or failure.⁴¹²

Incremental (Site and Services) Housing

The site-and-services approach is one solution to adequate housing that has been made, in which land and basic infrastructure are provided, and the remaining rooms of the house are completed by homeowners.⁴¹³ Generally, the housing core (toilet and kitchen) are provided, and homeowners build their house through informal finance or family labor.⁴¹⁴ The World Bank has provided considerable support for this approach, and it has been implemented in many cities in South America, Asia and Africa.⁴¹⁵ As it involves a relatively low initial cost compared to conventional house construction, it becomes possible to construct more houses, in addition to making it a viable option for poorer families. Significant criticism of this approach is the location chosen for these sites, which may not be as convenient to slum dwellers as their current location.⁴¹⁶ High standards of construction and poor cost recovery from existing schemes have also restricted the viability of this solution.⁴¹⁷

An example of incremental housing is the work of the Chilean firm, Elemental, in Iquique, Chile in 2003.⁴¹⁸ Faced with the task of rehousing 100 families at an extremely low budget, the firm opted to provide “half a good house,” with plumbing, shelter and services and allow the residents to continue building their homes as they liked.⁴¹⁹ Vertical expansion made full use of the land to house the maximum number of inhabitants.⁴²⁰ However, criticism of this approach is that it has affected only 2,500 homes, an insignificant number considering that 126,000 families lived in slums in 1997 and 29,000 families in 2007.⁴²¹

Conclusion

As urbanization continues to increase exponentially, it is imperative that Member States ensure that the rights of urban dwellers are accounted for. Based on the ICESCR, the current marginalization of a large percentage of the urban population could be construed as a violation of human and urban rights, and urgent action is needed to address this issue.⁴²² Homelessness and the spread of urban slums are a result of inadequate housing, largely due to decades of neglect. A twin approach is required, where efforts are made to upgrade slums, while simultaneously increasing the stock of adequate affordable housing worldwide. These issues are truly global issues, not limited by geography, and Member States have a clear and direct responsibility to address these issues within their borders. Participatory initiatives and inclusive urban policies are possible solutions that the international community currently employs on some scale; yet, there remains room for other creative solutions to address these problems.

Further Research

In the light of urban poverty and weak governments, how can urban slum dwellers be empowered to improve their situations? There exist many classifications for urban slums; how can the international system in general, and UN-Habitat, in particular, account for these differences while working on slum upgrading projects? How can the

⁴¹⁰ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development & The World Bank, *Approaches to Urban Slums: A Multimedia Sourcebook on Adaptive and Proactive Strategies*, 2008, p. 30.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ Srinivas, Sites and Services, *The Global Development Research Center*.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ Moore, Alejandro Aravena: the shape of things to come, *The Guardian*, 2016.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ Moore, Alejandro Aravena: the shape of things to come, *The Guardian*, 2016; Estrada, Chile: Eliminating Slums, *Inter Press Service News Agency*, 2010.

⁴²² UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

international community and Member States introduce policies that ensure the engagement of marginalized groups in society to lead to sustainable development? Where have previous slum upgrading efforts failed and what can we learn from their failures, as well as successes? How can homelessness be effectively addressed, when homeless people are systematically discriminated against in societies? What are the root causes due to which housing is expensive, and how can we build up on existing research to achieve affordable, adequate housing? What approaches, similar to incremental housing, have successfully contributed to the provision of, or access to, adequate housing? How can these initiatives be scaled up, reproduced, and introduced to cities across the world, accounting for cultural, economic, and social differences?

Annotated Bibliography

Cities Alliance. (2016). *About Slum Upgrading* / Cities Alliance [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://www.citiesalliance.org/About-slum-upgrading>

This website provided by Cities Alliance provides excellent background on slums, how they develop, and on slum upgrading in a clear question and answer format. It addresses simplistic solutions such as tearing slums down, and identifies factors to measure the success of slum upgrading. It also illustrates concepts of land rights and ownership, key challenges for slum upgrading, and highlights gender roles. Delegates will find the previous examples of successful slum upgrading projects particularly useful.

Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. (2011). *Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1)*. Retrieved 14 August 2016 from: www.undocs.org/A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1

The IPoA is an excellent example of efforts by the international community to set a common goal for developing LDCs. The collaboration of donor countries, developing countries, parliaments, the private sector, civil society, and the UN system, is exactly the approach that delegates should take to address such a multi-faceted issue. The suggestions provided in the Shelter section will be very useful for delegates as well. Setting forth the problem, the IPoA then sets goals, targets, and action to be taken by least developed countries as well as development partners to improve this particular issue of shelter.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights & United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2014). *The Right to Adequate Housing* [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS21_rev_1_Housing_en.pdf

This fact sheet is a joint publication between OHCHR and UN-Habitat. It defines adequate housing, provides a legal international framework for the right to housing, and outlines the relevance of this issue to the most vulnerable groups of society. In addition, it identifies the obligations of Member States and includes suggestions to monitor implementation of the right to adequate housing. It will be particularly useful to delegates who are new to the topic and will answer common misconceptions in a direct and concise manner.

Srinivas, H. (n.d.). Sites and Services. *The Global Development Research Center*. Retrieved 25 August 2016 from: <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/squatters/s-and-s.html>

Sites-and-services is an alternative approach to providing housing for urban dwellers and in this source, the author provides the historical context and basic principles of this approach. Creative variations, in addition to the process, criticisms of the approach, and future potential, are also described. This source will give delegates an idea of alternative way to provide access to adequate housing for slum dwellers and future urban dwellers, without increasing the burden on governments in developing countries. Delegates are encouraged to research similar examples and draw inspiration for solutions during the Conference.

United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). (2016). *The New Urban Agenda / Habitat III* [Website]. Retrieved 27 August 2016 from: <https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda>

The NUA is one of the most important items on the international agenda at the moment. Set to be discussed in October 2016, the website clarifies the main points of the agenda, and provides links to the various drafts of the agenda. It will guide delegates on the direction that the international community is adopting with regards to urban development. Specific points to focus on are

sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity, and resilient urbanization. Delegates should consider how their recommendations can turn the NUA into action plans to eliminate slums and provide adequate housing.

United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2016). *Cities – United Nations Sustainable Development Action 2015* [Website]. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

This website focuses on SDG 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. It provides essential facts and figures relating to this issue and describes the targets of Goal 11. Links to the relevant international bodies and agencies are also included. This is an important part of the 2015 development agenda and will introduce delegates to one of the basic international agreements, with regards to slums and adequate housing.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (A/70/270)*. Retrieved 17 July 2016 from: www.undocs.org/A/70/270

In this report, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing focuses on the importance of adequate housing, as a driver of social change and key to achieving social justice. She argues that this must be the core focus of Habitat III, around which it poses a “new urban agenda.” Within the topic of adequate housing, five areas are highlighted as priority issues, while recommendations for the new urban agenda are suggested. This will provide perspective to all delegates as they explore the topic at hand.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2012). *Housing & Slum Upgrading – UN-Habitat* [Website]. Retrieved 18 August 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/housing-slum-upgrading/>

Housing and slum upgrading is extensively addressed on this web page. Essential information on housing policy development, housing rights, and current work on slum upgrading are all topics addressed on this website. This is an important resource that explains the work that UN-Habitat carries out in this field. In addition, it will provide the context on which delegates should build their recommendations on the topic.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2012). *Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) – UN-Habitat* [Website]. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/participatory-slum-upgrading/>

This website provides information on the PSUP and outlines international efforts to upgrade slums in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. Recognizing the importance of slum upgrading, and the potential of slums, the PSUP employs a rights-based, gender-inclusive approach to improve slum conditions at the national, city, and neighborhood levels. As such, it is an excellent case study on practical, successful work in the field. The “PSUP Principles” and “Where PSUP is being carried out” sections will be particularly useful to delegates as they investigate solutions to eliminate slums and provide adequate housing to the citizens of the world.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2012). *Slum Almanac 2015 – 2016: Tracking Improvement in the Lives of Slum Dwellers*. Retrieved 18 July 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/slum-almanac-2015-2016/>

The Slum Almanac starts by defining slums and highlights recent international efforts to address this issue. Next, it describes the general challenges of slum life, provides specific statistics, and explains how slums are formed. Chapters 4 and 6 extensively describe the work and results of the PSUP in almost 30 participating Member States. This is an invaluable resource for delegates looking to gain essential background on urban slums.

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