Special Session: Ensuring Adequate Housing for All in Asia and the Pacific

Date & Time: 21 April, 13:15-14:15
Room: Conference Room 2
Organizer: UN-Habitat and ESCAP

Background

Globally, the housing crisis has re-emerged in recent years as a key development challenge. The extreme vulnerabilities faced by those living in slums or facing homelessness were spotlighted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. While housing is historically framed as an economic issue, it is now widely recognized as a fundamental human right encompassing social inclusion and equity. Strategies must incorporate resilience, inclusiveness, and sustainability to address the complex realities of urban housing.

More than three billion people will require adequate housing over the next 15 years. The Pact of the Future repositioned adequate, safe and affordable housing as a key area for multilateral action, and multilateral finance must follow. UN-Habitat convened a new Intergovernmental Expert Group on Adequate Housing for All and readies its new Strategic Plan 2026-2029, fully focused on housing, land and basic services.

The Asia-Pacific region is urbanizing at an unprecedented pace. Limited access to affordable land and stunted financing options exacerbate housing deficits. Governance capacities are insufficient to plan and build at scale. New challenges – climate change, urban disasters, migration – require novel, adjusted responses. Adequate policy guidance is often lacking.

UN-Habitat is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly as a focal point for adequate shelter for all and sustainable urbanisation and human settlements within the United Nations system. UN-Habitat has a crucial role in the implementation and monitoring of SDG11 and the New Urban Agenda, which emphasises equitable access to safe, adequate and resilient housing.

UN-Habitat's forthcoming Strategic Plan 2026-2029 is to mobilize multilateral action in support of the commitment for housing action in the Pact for the Future (September 2024), on "…access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and support developing countries to plan and implement just, safe, healthy, accessible, resilient and

sustainable cities." UN-Habitat seeks to support reinvigorated housing policy dialogues, South-South knowledge collaboration and engagements with multilateral banks. The Plan, submitted for Member State approval in May, has a primary focus on housing, land and basic services, in the context of (1) development and poverty eradication, (2) climate and environment and (3) conflict and crisis.

This Special Session will provide an opportunity for dialogue on how adequate housing for all is a challenge and a solution for the urban transformation of Asia and the Pacific. The Panel seeks contributions from speakers and panelists on contemporary housing priorities and on impact and innovation in the areas of policy, strategy, financing, and action.

Expected Outcomes

- High-level reaffirmation of the importance of adequate housing for all, with recognition of the needs of vulnerable communities.
- Identification of key areas for multilateral collaboration, including housing sector assessments, policy reforms, financing, knowledge exchange, and capacity building.
- Broad agreement on the importance of follow-up mechanisms to support the implementation of housing-related commitments.

Tentative Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
13:15-13:20	**Welcome remarks** Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UNESCAP
13:20-13:25	**Opening remarks** Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director UN-Habitat
13:25-13:35	**Keynote address** Minister of Housing from Member State
13:35-14:05	**Introduction** Panel – Unlocking partnerships and finance to advance adequate housing for vulnerable communities
14:05-14:15	**Concluding Observations** Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Tentative Speakers and Participants

The session is expected to convene high-level representatives from Asia and the Pacific, reflecting the region's diversity and commitment to adequate housing. The speakers aim to represent the following regions:

- Pacific
- South and South-West Asia
- South East-Asia
- East and North-East Asia
- North and Central Asia

Contact Information

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