



5 October 2026 | Muscat, Oman

**World
Habitat
Day**

**Adequate
Housing
for All**

KEY MESSAGES

Global Observance of World Habitat Day

Muscat, Oman | 5–8 October 2026

Venue: Oman Convention and Exhibition Center



KEY MESSAGES

World Habitat Day 2026 provides an opportunity to reinforce adequate housing as one of the defining development priorities of our time.

The global housing crisis is undermining progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, increasing inequality and limiting opportunities for billions of people. At the same time, practical solutions already exist. By investing in adequate housing, transforming informal settlements and slums, and strengthening integrated urban development, countries can build more inclusive, resilient and prosperous cities.

- Home is where sustainable development begins.
- A home is more than shelter – it is the foundation for dignity, health, safety and opportunity.
- Adequate housing is a human right that promotes gender equality and social inclusion.
- Everyone deserves a home that provides the stability to learn and thrive.
- Transforming informal settlements transforms lives, neighbourhoods and cities.
- Investing in housing is investing in climate resilience, economic growth and social inclusion.
- Adequate housing is not simply another development issue. It is where development begins.
- The Baku Call to Action is a shared roadmap for collective action on adequate housing.

SHORT TAGLINES

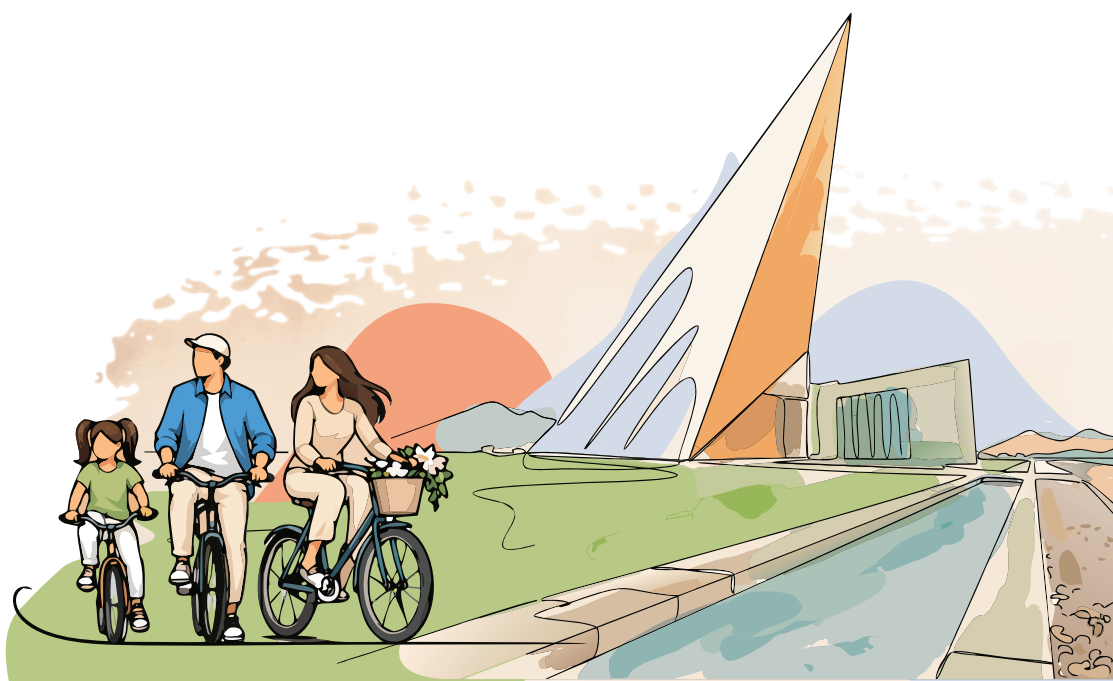
- Health begins at home.
- Learning begins at home.
- Opportunity begins at home.
- Climate resilience begins at home.
- Inclusive cities begin at home.

SEVEN CONDITIONS OF ADEQUATE HOUSING

Housing is adequate when it meets seven basic conditions:

1. Secure tenure
2. Access to basic services
3. Affordability
4. Habitability
5. Accessibility
6. Good location
7. Cultural adequacy

Each one is essential for people to thrive.



KEY MESSAGES

STRATEGIC MESSAGE 1

Home is where sustainable development begins

Adequate housing is more than shelter. It provides the foundation for health, education, dignity, economic opportunity, social inclusion, cultural adequacy and resilience.

Sustainable development begins where people live. Every investment in adequate housing contributes to stronger communities and accelerates progress across the Sustainable Development Goals.

Evidence

- The SDG 11 Global Report 2026 describes the housing crisis as one of the greatest barriers to sustainable urban development, with up to 3.4 billion people lacking access to secure, safe and adequate housing. At the same time, more than 1.1 billion people live in informal settlements and slums, and more than 300 million experience homelessness.
- Adequate housing directly influences access to health, employment, public services and economic opportunity.
- UN-Habitat identifies housing as a catalyst for poverty reduction, better health, social inclusion, economic prosperity and climate resilience, accelerating progress across the SDGs.
- Housing is therefore not simply a sectoral investment. It is an enabling condition for sustainable development.

Examples

- **Philippines – Huy-anan nan Bajau sa Surigao initiative**
The Huy-anan nan Bajau sa Surigao initiative shows how adequate housing can unlock wider development outcomes. In Surigao City, UN-Habitat supported the Sama Bajau community through the People's Process, combining climate-resilient stilt housing with secure tenure and community participation in housing decisions. The initiative also connects housing with livelihoods and basic services, demonstrating how a safe, secure and culturally appropriate home can strengthen dignity, opportunity and community resilience.

➤ Mali and Senegal – Chiwarà Project

The Chiwarà Project demonstrates how investment in housing can simultaneously advance affordability, climate resilience, cultural continuity and local livelihoods. It combines Nubian Vault construction and compressed-earth blocks with locally sourced materials, local labour and climate-responsive design, while training local masons and technicians in earth construction. By adapting construction to local climate conditions and strengthening local capacity, the project links adequate housing with skills, livelihoods and more sustainable building practices.

Key recommendations

- Integrate housing into national and local SDG planning.
- Prioritize housing as a cross-cutting investment for health, education, livelihoods and resilience.

STRATEGIC MESSAGE 2

The global housing crisis is holding back human progress

The housing crisis should be presented as a development challenge rather than solely a housing challenge. Homelessness, housing affordability, rapid urbanization, conflict, displacement and climate change are increasingly interconnected.

Unless current challenges are addressed together, progress towards sustainable development will remain limited.

Evidence

- Up to 3.4 billion people experience housing inadequacy.
- More than 1.1 billion people live in informal settlements and slums.
- More than 300 million experience homelessness.
- An estimated 133 million people were displaced globally in 2024 by conflict, persecution, violence, human rights violations and disasters.



KEY MESSAGES

- UN-Habitat estimates that approximately 64 million people were evicted from informal settlements globally between 2003 and 2023.

Examples

Kenya – Affordable Housing Programme

Kenya's Affordable Housing Programme illustrates a national response to the scale and affordability dimensions of the housing challenge. The Kenya Habitat Country Programme 2023–2027 places affordable housing alongside access to basic services and infrastructure, upgrading of slums and informal settlements, urban economic development, innovative financing and climate resilience.

Finland – National response to homelessness

Finland's Housing First approach demonstrates how homelessness can be addressed through a coordinated housing and support system. Adopted as national policy in 2008, it provides permanent, self-contained homes without preconditions and brings together government, municipalities, social-service agencies and non-profit housing providers. Traditional shelters and hostels were converted into affordable rental housing, while integrated support services accompany housing provision. Long-term homelessness fell by 68 per cent between 2008 and 2022.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen local government delivery capacity and financing.
- Coordinate action across housing, displacement and climate.

STRATEGIC MESSAGE 3

Transforming informal settlements transforms cities

The future of sustainable cities will depend not only on what is built next, but on how existing informal settlements and slums are transformed.

Upgrading informal settlements through adequate housing, basic services, secure tenure, public spaces and community participation improves quality of life while strengthening resilience and reducing inequality.

Urgent action is needed as progress in reducing the share of the urban population living in slums and informal settlements has regressed.

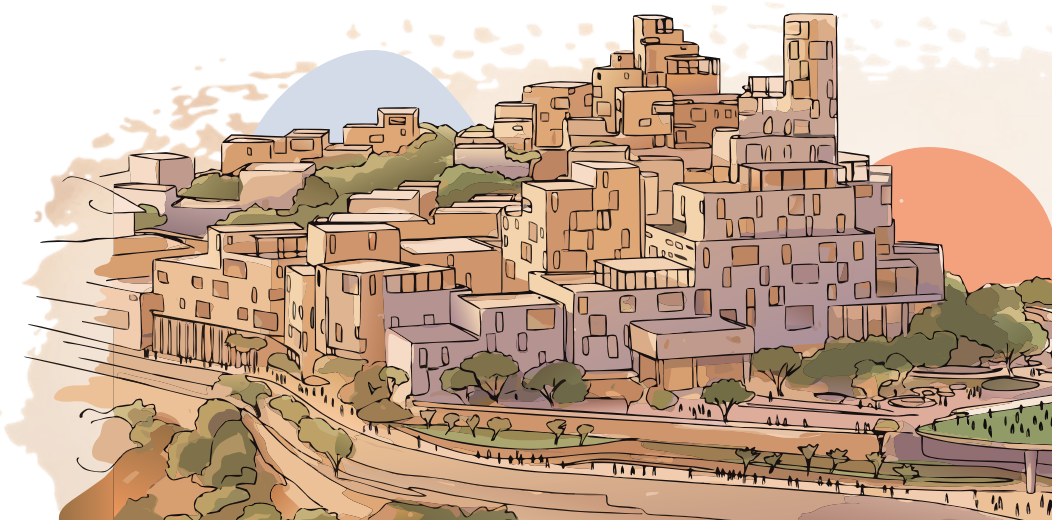
This is our opportunity to reduce poverty, strengthen resilience and improve quality of life.

Transformation means:

- Adequate housing
- Basic services
- Secure tenure
- Public spaces
- Economic opportunity
- Community participation

Evidence

- More than 1.1 billion people live in informal settlements and slums.
- Residents often experience overlapping disadvantages including insecure tenure, overcrowding, environmental hazards and limited access to basic services.
- Integrated, participatory and inclusive upgrading that connects infrastructure, tenure security and community participation can improve access to services, reduce displacement and lower service delivery costs.



KEY MESSAGES

Examples

- Colombia – Integrated neighbourhood upgrading through public transport, cable cars and public spaces**

Medellín demonstrates how transforming informal settlements requires more than housing improvements alone. The Metro Cable connects hillside settlements with the wider public transport network, while pedestrian connections, parks, sporting facilities and libraries improve access to public space and services. Together with initiatives such as Bogotá's Ciclovía and Medellín's Metropolitan Greenbelt, these investments illustrate how mobility and public space can help integrate underserved neighbourhoods into the wider city.
- Thailand – Baan Mankong community-led upgrading**

Thailand's Baan Mankong programme demonstrates how informal settlement transformation can be led by residents themselves. Communities undertake surveys, prepare upgrading plans, build savings groups and negotiate land arrangements, while community organizations access infrastructure subsidies and housing loans. The model combines community participation, secure land arrangements and finance to enable residents to improve their homes and neighbourhoods rather than being displaced by redevelopment.
- Philippines – Community-led self-help housing**

In Mandaue, the Philippine Alliance demonstrates how residents can be directly involved in transforming informal settlements through self-help housing. Community organizations have developed affordable homes both within existing settlements and on government-donated land, with residents participating in design, project management and construction. The approach places communities at the centre of decisions about housing and neighbourhood improvement.

Key recommendations

- Adopt participatory and rights-based upgrading approaches.
- Reduce the growth of new unplanned and inadequately serviced settlements while investing in participatory, in-situ upgrading of existing informal settlements and slums.

STRATEGIC MESSAGE 4

Building more houses alone will not solve the housing crisis

Housing cannot be provided through building alone. It requires a holistic approach and integration with urban planning.

We need systemic change to solve the global housing crisis.

Adequate housing depends on well-planned neighbourhoods that provide access to transport, employment, education, healthcare, public spaces and essential services.

Countries therefore need integrated housing systems rather than housing construction alone.

Evidence

- Housing affordability:** The global housing crisis is worsening, with the global housing deficit increasing from 251 million units in 2010 to 288 million in 2023.
- Rental affordability:** 44 per cent of tenant households globally spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent.
- Relationship between housing location and access to services:** housing affordability cannot be measured by housing cost alone: location, transport costs, quality and access to services determine whether housing is genuinely affordable and adequate.
- Evidence supporting integrated neighbourhood planning:** Poorly coordinated housing and urban planning can reinforce spatial segregation and unequal access to jobs and services.
- Housing becomes adequate when it is embedded in a functioning neighbourhood – connected to schools, healthcare, markets, public space and other essential facilities.**



KEY MESSAGES

Supporting examples

Vienna – Municipal and social housing integrated with urban services

Vienna demonstrates that an effective housing system depends on the wider urban environment, not housing construction alone. The city combines around 220,000 municipal flats with about 200,000 subsidized dwellings, supported by public land, long-term investment, regulation and non-profit housing provision. Housing is planned as part of neighbourhoods and the city's wider urban system, including access to public transport, services and green space. The example shows how affordability and adequate housing depend on institutions, land, finance, regulation and connected neighbourhoods.

Oman – Integrated spatial planning and neighbourhood development

Oman illustrates the importance of integrating housing with spatial planning rather than treating housing supply as a stand-alone intervention. UN-Habitat-supported reforms have focused on the legal and institutional framework for spatial planning, including work towards a new planning law. This example highlights the role of coordinated land-use planning, planning responsibilities and institutional arrangements in shaping where and how housing and neighbourhoods develop.

Key recommendations

- Strengthen housing systems.
- Plan connected neighbourhoods and locate new housing near transport and services.
- UN-Habitat calls for integrated housing systems connecting land, infrastructure, transport, services, economic development and housing finance.
- Advance integrated, people-centred housing systems in line with the Baku Call to Action.

STRATEGIC MESSAGE 5

Investing in housing is investing in resilience

Investment in adequate housing generates social, economic and environmental returns that extend well beyond the housing sector.

Housing investment contributes to poverty reduction, public health, economic growth, climate resilience and recovery following disasters and conflict.

Resilience should be built into housing and infrastructure from the outset and not after crises occur.

Evidence

- 45.8 million people were displaced by weather-related hazards in 2024, including 25.2 million by storms and 19.1 million by floods.
- Buildings account for around 34% of global energy demand and 37 per cent of global CO₂ emissions, while housing alone is responsible for an estimated 17-21 per cent of total emissions. This makes housing a major opportunity for climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Climate risks are expected to affect more than 167 million homes by 2040, reinforcing the need to integrate resilience into housing and urban investment before disasters occur.
- By 2050, the number of urban poor exposed to dangerously high temperatures could be eight times higher than today, highlighting the importance of climate-responsive housing design and neighbourhood planning.



KEY MESSAGES

Supporting examples

■ Mozambique – Housing and neighbourhood reconstruction following disasters

Mozambique demonstrates how post-disaster housing investment can be used to build resilience rather than simply replace damaged homes. Following Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, UN-Habitat supported more resilient housing and settlement recovery through technical assistance, resilient housing standards and models, community participation and capacity-building. Linking reconstruction with improved construction practices and settlement-level resilience helps communities and institutions prepare for future climate shocks.

■ Syria – Neighbourhood recovery and restoration of essential services

UN-Habitat's Urban Recovery Framework in Syria demonstrates how recovery can connect housing rehabilitation with the restoration of neighbourhoods and essential services. Urban profiling assesses cities,

neighbourhoods and homes alongside governance arrangements and residents' vulnerabilities, helping identify priorities for recovery and investment. The approach supports multi-sector recovery, including services and community infrastructure, showing why resilient recovery requires attention to the wider neighbourhood rather than rebuilding individual homes alone.

Key recommendations

- Integrate climate resilience into housing and neighbourhood planning from the outset.
- Invest in resilient housing before disasters occur, particularly for communities most exposed to climate risks.
- Mobilize and direct climate and housing finance towards resilient housing, upgrading and recovery.

