



DECADE
OF
ACTION

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

Accelerating for Transforming
Informal Settlements and Slums by 2030



human settlements
Department:
Human Settlements
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



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Introduction

The **Global Action Plan for Slum Transformation** consolidates a **collective partnership vision of shaping Cities for All, leaving no one and no place behind**. It is designed as a contribution towards accelerating the **implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **New Urban Agenda (NUA)** in informal settlements and slums.

Slum transformation is mandated by SDG Target 11.1 [1] and is progressively delivering the Right to Adequate Housing in slums and informal settlements as part of everyone's Right to an Adequate Standard of Living [2].

The Global Action Plan (GAP) derives from the joint assessment that while much effort has been made to tackle informal settlements and slums globally, the real slum challenge still lies ahead. Globally, the **number of slum dwellers is projected to triple in the decades to come, if no action is taken**. The elevation of the issue is urgent, and actions need to be taken now. There are areas of coordinated action that need to be tackled, following collective principles to be overcome in order to unlock sustainable and inclusive slum and informal settlements transformation [3].

The GAP and a Global Publication on Slums and Informal Settlements will inform a **Global Implementation Framework**, –a structured approach for diverse partners to contribute. It is designed to engage multiple stakeholders at all governance levels, to foster international cooperation, regional and sub-regional strategies, and to complement implementation efforts at the country level.

The process of co-production will facilitate a political process for broader stakeholder engagement and stronger political commitments. The objective is to drive towards more commitments, more learning, accountability and monitoring, as well as greater impact in transformative programmes. In a coordinated partnership effort designed to match the scale of intervention and mobilisation needed, stakeholders will unify around a common purpose and get ready to respond in a partnership effort, where joint contributions complement one vision, and where local stakeholders and communities are supported in a spirit of co-production.

[1] By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

[2] The definition for Adequate Housing and Adequate Standard of Living as per General Comment No 4 of the UN Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights apply.

[3] UN-Habitat (2002: Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indicators) defines a slum as "a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterised as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognised and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city. It is an area which combines to various extents the following characteristics: insecure residential status, inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding." This definition was referred to and internationally endorsed through the groundsetting flagship publication UN-Habitat (2003): The challenge of slums. However, in an effort to create a universal and operational definition with a limited number of indicators to be reported against in national reports, the first two sentences were omitted.

The **complexity of informality requires strategic engagement and aligned actions**: effective and inclusive governance frameworks, comprehensive and integrated responses with complementary strategic planning frameworks, innovative and diverse financing instruments, and expanded partnerships connecting to people living in slums and informal settlements. Transformation is not a quick fix, it needs continuous and long-term engagement.

All stakeholders are called on to increase ambition and join efforts. The GAP provides a vision, principles, accelerators and actions to be taken on all governance levels to sustainably transform slums and informal settlements, and aims to inform such a consolidated effort.

The GAP responds to the urgent call for transformation in the Decade of Action. It is co-produced with key stakeholders at the forefront of urban transformation on what is needed first to **create a new momentum for slum transformation at scale**.



Image 1: Core dimensions of the New Urban Agenda

Source: UN-Habitat 2019 New Urban Agenda Illustrated handbook

The GAP will **accelerate** the **implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, by coordinating actions for the integrated transformation of slums and informal settlements, targeting not only SDG11, but also **leveraging synergies across** the SDGs.

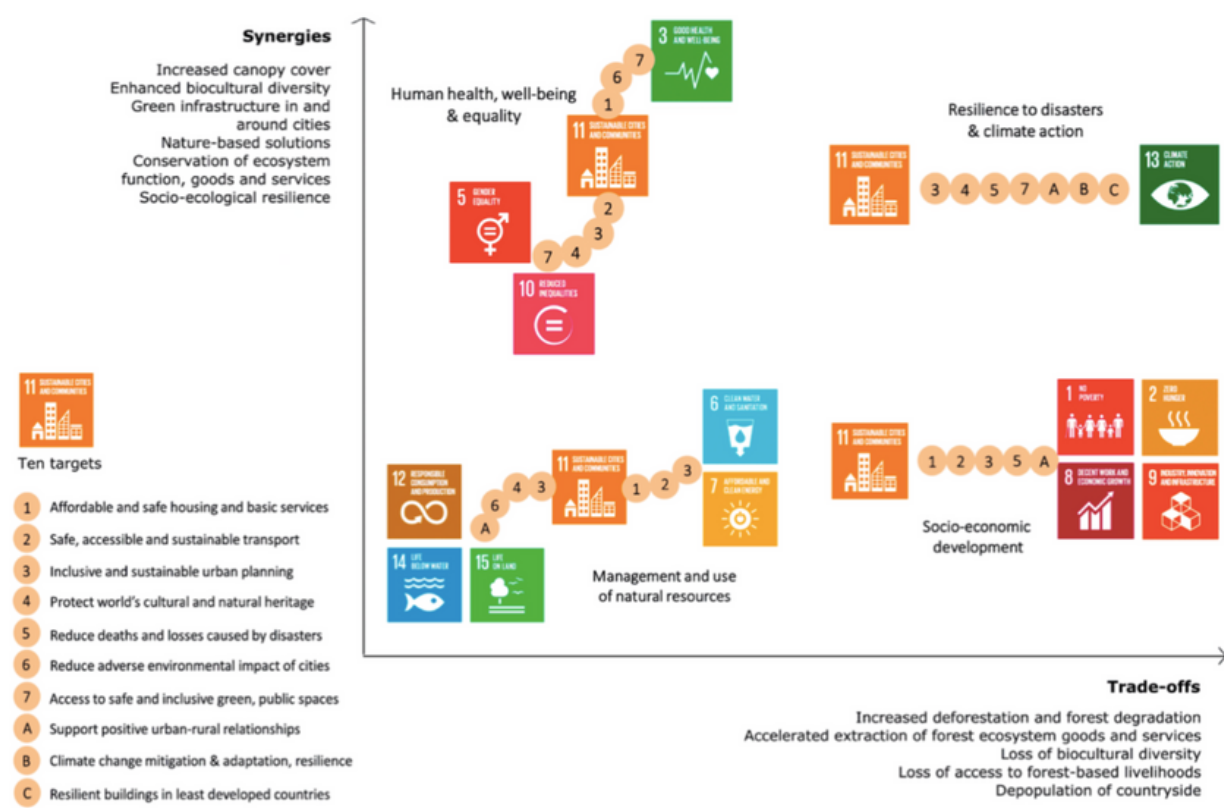


Image 2: Synergies and tradeoff between SDG11 and the other SDGs [4]

Sustainable Development Goals and Linkages to Slum Transformation	
Goal	Relationship with integrated slum transformation and adequate housing
SDG 1: No Poverty	SDG 1.4 foresees that “all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have [...] access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property”. Slum transformation, as defined below, is linked to this as it aims at enabling “Secure tenure, social function of land, prevention of land speculation” as one of its key elements. In addition, SDG 1.5 targets to “build the resilience of the poor and [...] reduce their exposure and vulnerability to [...] disasters”, which is directly linked to SDG 11.5 which calls to “reduce the [...] number of people affected [...] by disasters, [...] with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations”, which is linked to slum transformation, as stated below SDG 11.
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	SDG 2.1 calls to “end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round”. In the same way, slum transformation, as defined below, aims at enabling “sustainable production and consumption patterns, food security and nutrition”.

[4] Devisscher, T. et al (2019). SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities – Impacts on Forests and Forest-Based Livelihoods.

<i>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being</i>	SDG 3.9's focus is to "substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination". This SDG is first linked to SDG 11.6 which calls to "reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities". In parallel to those two SDGs, slum transformation mentions "protection of air, water and land ecosystems and biodiversity" as one of its key elements (see definition below). In addition, SDG 3.3 targets to "end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases". Slum transformation, in the same way, stresses the importance of "risk reduction and management of external shocks, [...] like pandemics" (see definition below).
<i>SDG 4: Quality Education</i>	SDG 4.a calls to "build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all". Slum transformation, more generally, mentions "culturally adequate and inclusive design of housing, infrastructure, services and public spaces" for all, as a key element (see definition below).
<i>SDG 5: Gender Equality</i>	SDG 5.5 targets "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life". Slum transformation points to this goal, by calling for "full, effective and inclusive participation of all key stakeholders in planning and decision making, promoting social interactions, safety nets, and diverse cultural expressions", as well as "equal rights and social cohesion" (see definition below).
<i>SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation</i>	SDG 6.2 calls to "achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all". In parallel, slum transformation mentions "availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures" for all as one of its key elements (see definition below).
<i>SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy</i>	Slum transformation targets the "availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures" as mentioned in the right to adequate housing, which includes energy for cooking, heating, lighting and thus relates to the "universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services" mentioned in SDG 7.1
<i>SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth</i>	Target 8.5 works towards "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value". Slum transformation points towards "equal access to economic opportunities, productive resources" for all as one of its key elements (see definition below).
<i>SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities</i>	SDG 10.2 targets to "empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status". Slum transformation works towards achieving that by ensuring "full, effective and inclusive participation of all key stakeholders in planning and decision making, promoting social interactions, safety nets, and diverse cultural expressions" (see definition below).

<p><i>SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities</i></p>	<p>Slum transformation aims at slums being recognised and addressed as an integral or equal part of the city, envisioning the City for All. Key elements below its four dimensions are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Affordable, habitable and accessible housing and services" and „Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures“, directly linked to „ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums“, as per SDG 11.1 • "Enabling locations near employment, asocial facilities and services, and public transportation“, linked to SDG 11.2 target to "provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all" • "Balanced, sustainable and integrated urban development" and „Full, effective and inclusive participation of all key stakeholders in planning and decision making“, directly linked to SDG 11.4 with its targets for „inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning“. • "Risk reduction and management of external shocks, like disasters, pandemics, or climate change“, linked to SDG 11.5 with its aim to „reduce the [...] number of people affected [...] by disasters" and to 11.b request for „plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters" • "Culturally adequate and inclusive design of housing, infrastructures, services, and public spaces“, linked to SDG 11.7 call to „provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces"
<p><i>SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production</i></p>	<p>SDG 12.2 targets: "by 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources" which is directly linked to slum transformation which calls to "ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns, food security and nutrition" and "protect (...) ecosystems and biodiversity" (see definition below).</p>
<p><i>SDG 13: Climate Action</i></p>	<p>SDG 13.1 calls to "strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries". A parallel can first be made with SDG 11.5 which aims at "reducing (...) the number of people affected by disasters (...)". In the same way, one of slum transformation's key elements is the "risk reduction and management of external disasters, pandemics or climate change" (see definition below).</p>
<p><i>SDG 14: Sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources</i></p>	<p>SDG 14.2 calls to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems, linked to one of the key elements of slum transformation which is the protection of "air, water, and land, ecosystems and biodiversity" (see definition below).</p>
<p><i>SDG 15: Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems</i></p>	<p>SDG 15.5 calls to "take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species". In parallel, slum transformation includes the protection of "air, water, and land, ecosystems and biodiversity" as one of its key elements (see definition below).</p>

<p><i>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</i></p>	<p>SDG 16.7 “ensures responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”, which is linked to slum transformation’s key element on “inclusive, decentralised governance systems” (see definition below).</p>
<p><i>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</i></p>	<p>With coordination and knowledge as well as finance and demonstration being identified as accelerators to be streamlined across all key actions, slum transformation targets to “Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources” (SDG 17.3) through “multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries” (SDG 17.16), For “effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships” (SDG 17.17) with “international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals” (SDG 17.9). Furthermore, with monitoring being a separate key action below the environmental stability dimension, slum transformation targets to “increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location” (SDG 17.18)</p>

Investing in **slum transformation supports** the **implementation** of **multiple SDGs**. The GAP creates the framework to address goals and targets in clusters in a **context-sensitive, cross-sectoral approach**, thereby achieving more with limited resources. This framework presents a set of principles and key actions to facilitate an expansion of the scale for transforming informal settlements and slums and improving people’s lives. It promotes equitable, green, sustainable and targeted solutions to the many diverse contexts around the world. With this it integrates informal settlements and slums in sustainable urban development approaches and tackles inequalities and vulnerabilities of residents to climate change and external shocks in line with the goals of the NUA.



The Global Action Plan Framework


The GAP is presented during Urban October 2022 with the motto: “Mind the GAP – leaving no one and no place behind!”. It builds on the momentum of the **Decade of Action** and the High-level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda putting housing and informal settlements at the core of the global agenda until 2030. It responds to the priorities of the Executive Director of **UN-Habitat for 2022** – highlighting **climate change, adequate housing, post-conflict and post-disaster urban regeneration**, and the **SDG localisation**.

The GAP is informed by the co-creation of a **Global Publication** “Solutions to Slums”. Twenty years after the adoption of MDG 7.11 in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 as a specific goal addressing slums, it is critical to update and integrate knowledge and practical lessons to guide the way forward for the next decade of action globally. UN-Habitat with its core partners – the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States; the European Commission; the World Bank; UNICEF; Habitat for Humanity; Slum Dwellers International; and HUAIROU Commission – have started a global scoping paper to cover progress, learning, sustainable approaches, finance and delivery mechanisms for scaled actions towards a comprehensive publication in 2023 – 20 years after the introduction of the slum definition. The publication will **provide a snapshot of the current global status quo** of slums and informal settlements, reflect on **lessons learnt in the past 20 years** and **identify sustainable and inclusive solutions for transforming informal settlements and slums**. It will create a **knowledge and innovation platform that** informs how to transform informal settlements and slums and can be linked strategically to an overarching, coordinated and integrated response. Together, we are committed to ensuring that future approaches are sustainable, affordable and inclusive. Our future efforts must proactively facilitate sustainable urbanisation and development and respond to the demands and needs of people living in informal settlements and slums.

The Global Action Plan Taskforce

The Global Action Plan Framework is designed as an initiative of the Slums and Informal Settlements Network (SiSnet) launched during Habitat III in Quito in 2016 and the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP), initiated by the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, and financed by the European Commission. The Government of South Africa championed the issue of informal settlements during the Habitat III process, and conducted with UN-Habitat’s support the “Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements”. Since then, the Government of South Africa, UN-Habitat and the SiSnet have jointly conducted global policy, thematic, and expert meetings and events together.

The Slums and Informal Settlements Network has heard the calls and is joining forces to act now. As a **multiple partnership framework composed of powerful key actors**, it will collectively establish the GAP which is to be politically endorsed, and which will inform a **broader stakeholder implementation setting** towards scaling efforts in transforming informal settlements and slums.



Governments **from all regions** are joining efforts and are invited to drive the same political mobilisation processes in sub-regions. In a consolidated global effort of transforming informal settlements and slums, the taskforce demonstrates a partnership approach for joint programme implementation, to change the “way of doing” to integration of actions at multiple levels informed by policy decisions, prioritisation and contextualization.

The GAP aims at taking coordination, collaboration, commitments, and partnerships to the next level. It is looking at consolidating efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda during the Decade of Action and providing a joint partnership vision. It will outline actions and activities and serve as an umbrella action plan against which:

- annual targets, implementation arrangements and activities of the taskforce can be defined,
- national and local governments can be mobilised towards multi-governance delivery mechanisms, and
- finance partners can be invited to contribute to the demonstration of impact in the implementation of a coordinated partnership approach towards integrated, inclusive, and sustainable transformation.

The Slum Challenge Post-2020

The state of slums and informal settlements today

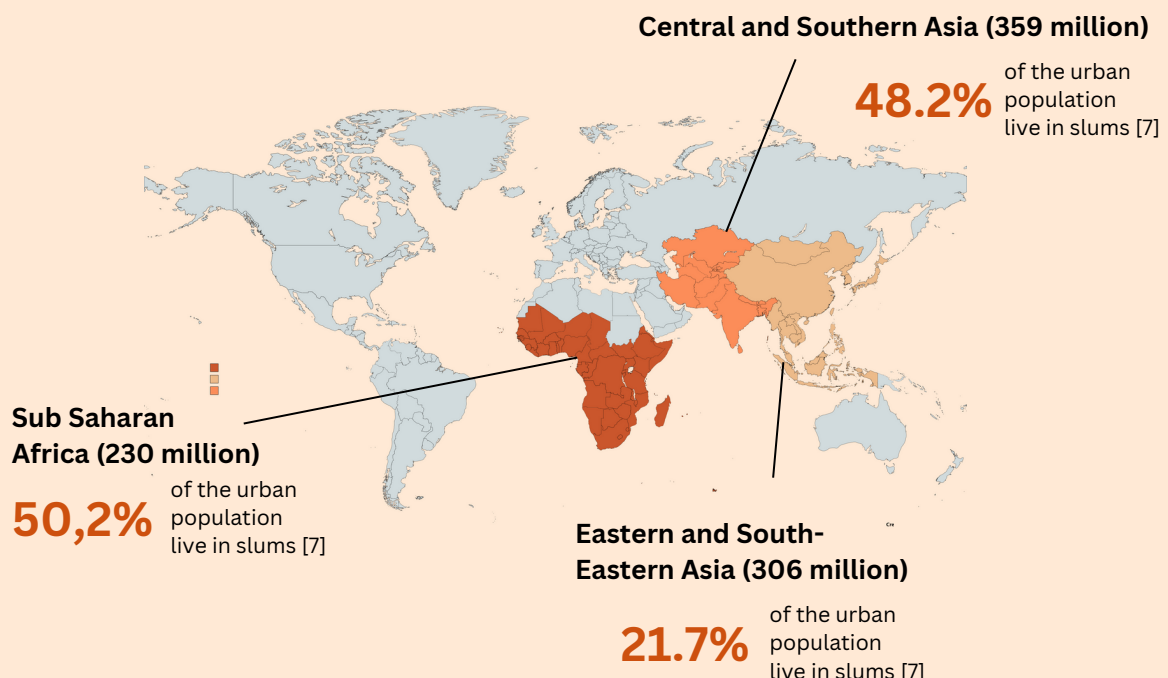
In 2007, the world population arrived at a critical milestone; for the first time in history more people were living in urban than in rural areas. Rapid urbanisation in many countries with fragmented and weak institutional frameworks to tackle multiple, complex, and interrelated urban challenges has led to currently about 1.6 billion people, or over 20% of the global population, living in inadequate, crowded and unsafe housing and being severely affected by multiple shocks and risks [5].

Slums today: factsheet

In 2020, about **one in four** urban dwellers worldwide lived in **slums or informal settlements**, marked by the most severe deprivations [6].



This translates to more than **1 billion people**, -85% of whom live in **three regions**:



[5] UN-Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[6] The UN-Habitat (2003): The challenge of slums, defines a slum as "a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterised as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognised and addressed by the public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city. It is an area which combines to various extents the following characteristics: insecure residential status, inadequate access to safe water, inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality of housing, overcrowding."

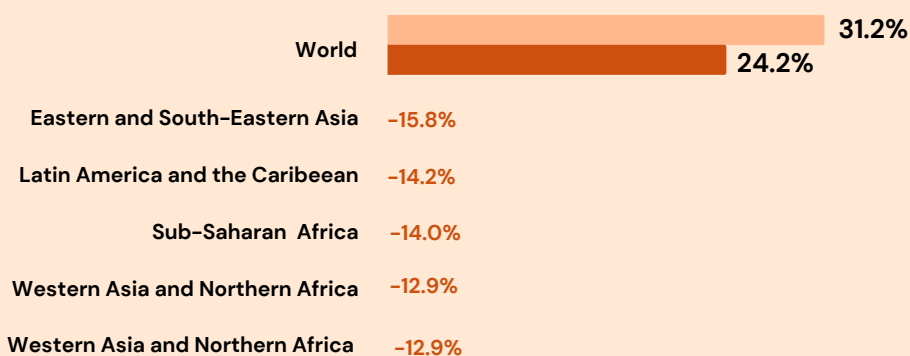
[7] United Nations (2022): SDG Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022

UN-Habitat (2020) and World Bank (2018) put the following countries among the top countries with highest percentage of the urban population living in slums varying from above 90 percent to above 60 percent: Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

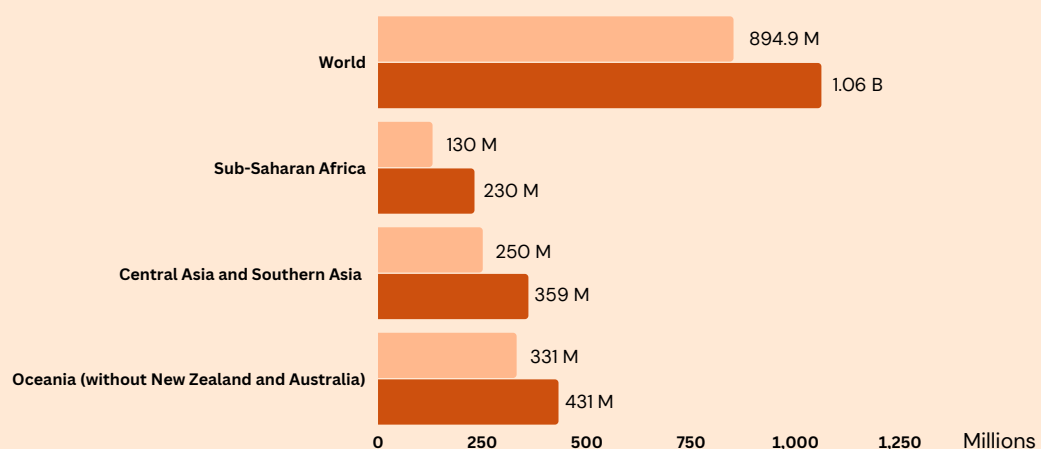
The SDG targets have an explicit focus on reducing inequalities, but national, regional and global averages often mask significant inequalities in service levels between and within countries, between wealth quintiles, and between rural areas and urban areas. Accurate and consistent data collection, analysis and reporting are identified as critical issues. From 193 member states of the United Nations, only 81 countries provided data on their respective slum populations in 2020, as informed by the slum definition and deprivations. One of the five slum deprivations, tenure security, is not yet being reported on by member states [8].

From 2000 to 2022, the global urban population living in slums has known [8]:

> A relative decrease...



> ...but an increase in absolute numbers



[8] UN-Habitat (2020): Global Urban Indicators Database 2020 (unpublished). There are efforts for enhancing reporting – particularly on indicator 1.4.2 – through the Global Land Indicators Initiative which is co-hosted by UN-Habitat, through the Global Land Tool Network.

Countries having experienced **drastic changes** in both **percentage of urban population living in slums** and the **total number of slum inhabitants** [9]:

➤ **A decrease of more than 50%**

Albania	Kazakhstan
Belarus	Kyrgyzstan
Costa Rica	Mongolia
Eswatini	Tajikistan
Guyana	

➤ **An increase in more than 35%**

Angola	Myanmar
Cuba	Suriname
Iraq	
Ireland	

Marginalised groups and multidimensional poverty

The urban poor living in slums are heterogeneous groups with different levels of vulnerability based on gender, age, ethnicity, race, household structure, migration status and other intersectional factors. The most marginalised populations are migrants, refugees, women, the elderly and others who live in overcrowded and risk-prone informal settlements [10]. Children living in slums and informal settlements (estimated to be approximately 350 million to 500 million) are arguably one of the most vulnerable groups globally, given the inadequacy of their standard of living, the multidimensional poverty they experience, and their dependency on others and their environment to meet their basic needs and survive [11].

Research conducted in 107 developing countries revealed that 1.3 billion people or 22% of the global population are multidimensionally poor, suffering from severe deprivations. About 200 million of the 1.3 billion multidimensionally poor people reside in urban areas (Sub Saharan Africa: 92.3 million, South Asia 65.2 million). Urban poverty has social, economic, environmental and spatial dimensions, and its manifestation differs from place to place. Dimensions vary across indices, and can include poor quality and overcrowded housing, inadequate provision of infrastructure and basic services (such as improved water and sanitation), high prices paid for basic necessities, inadequate income, limited or no safety net, inadequate, unstable, or risky asset base, poor groups' voicelessness in governance and political systems, as well as inadequate protection of the poor's rights. These dimensions are interrelated. For instance, affordable public transportation provides access to jobs; jobs better access to housing and basic services; and access to improved housing and services increases participation in urban governance and decision-making processes. Dimensions interact with and reinforce each other as entailing a web of deprivation to create, recreate and entrench urban poverty, cumulative vulnerabilities and deprivations that are difficult to reverse without collective and integrative action. Inadequate access to water and sanitation is one of the key drivers of multidimensional poverty in slums, and which have a greater impact on women and children [12]. Children's well-being, including their cognitive development, health and education, is significantly impacted by the quality of their housing. By 2030, 60% of urban residents will be children, who are more susceptible to the impacts of disasters, climate change, public health emergencies and conflict given their multidimensional poverty and already compromised living and health conditions. Despite being one of the groups most affected by the climate crisis, children and youth are often not included in the decision-making processes, including around climate mitigation and adaptation [13].

[9] UN-Habitat (2020): Global Urban Indicators Database 2020

[10] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[11] UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat (2022): Children, cities and Housing: Rights and Priorities

[12] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[13] UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat (2022): Children, cities and Housing: Rights and Priorities

Trends

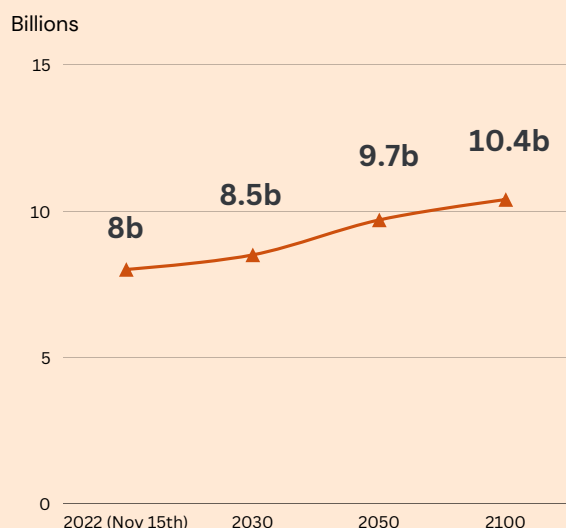
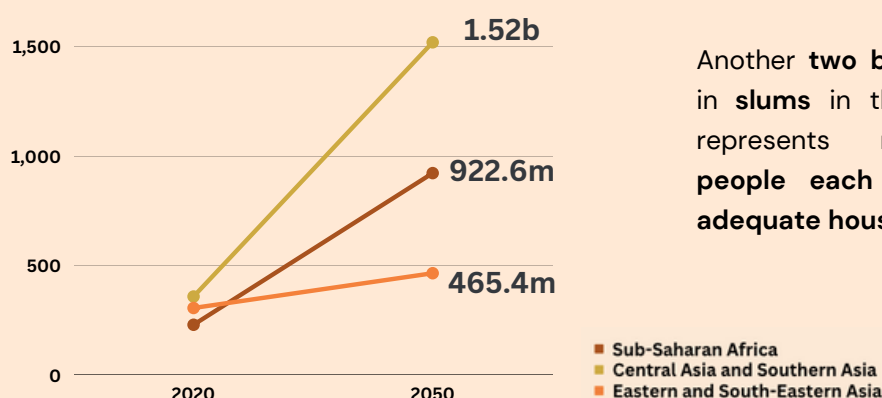


Figure: Expected growth in world population

Sub Saharan Africa will account for **most of the growth of the world's population over the coming decades**, reaching [16]:

3.44 billion by the end of the century

Figure: Projected slum population rise by area, based on urban growth predictions [17], [18], [19], [20]



More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries [14]:

- the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- The United Republic of Tanzania
- The Philippines
- Ethiopia
- India
- Nigeria
- Egypt
- Pakistan

The fastest growing megacities through 2030 are located in [15]:

- Tanzania (Dar es Salaam)
- Angola (Luanda)
- Nigeria (Lagos)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa)
- Bangladesh (Dhaka)
- Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore)
- India (Bangalore, Agnadabad, Hyderabad)

Another **two billion people** living in **slums** in the next **30 years** represents roughly **183.000 people each day** in need of **adequate housing** [21].

[14] DESA (2022) World Population Prospects 2022

[15] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[16] DESA (2022) World Population Prospects 2022

[17] Overseas Development Institute (2018): SDG progress. The ODI projects an increase of slum dwellers by 2030 of 106.2 million people, which will raise the total number to over 1.2 billion. However, the number is likely to be underreported, as 71% of Low- and Middle-income countries lack data on this indicator.

[18] Habitat for Humanity (2021): Progress report SDG 11.1

[19] UN Habitat (2020): World Cities Report 2020

[20] <https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/>

[21] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

Drivers of slum growth: impacts of pandemics and climate change

So far, these estimations have not considered the inevitable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other external causes that are expected to further impact the situation. COVID-19 is a global health crisis, and it has far-reaching implications for urban areas that should orient future interventions to increase resilience of urban areas to future pandemics. With over 90 per cent of confirmed cases coming from urban areas, cities have been the epicentres of COVID-19. By their nature, cities are built-up agglomerations with concentration of people and high densities, and as such, the impact of pandemics such as COVID-19 increases with crowding of people, making slums highly susceptible to disease spread in a pandemic, in sharp contrast to well resourced neighbourhoods with adequate housing, infrastructure and access to effective health services [22] such as epidemiological surveillance. COVID-19-induced lockdowns and physical distancing measures have disproportionately affected low-income households, the poor and vulnerable, the informal sector, and daily wage workers who must leave their homes for subsistence wages. The overcrowded nature of slums and informal settlements, with their shared multi-family living areas, inadequate infrastructure, poor public services and precarious locations, means that self-isolation and physical distancing are not feasible [23]. In 2020, around 1 in 4 people lacked safely managed drinking water in their homes and nearly half of the world's population lacked safely managed sanitation. COVID-19 has highlighted the urgent need to ensure everyone can access good hygiene. At the onset of the pandemic, 3 in 10 people worldwide could not wash their hands with soap and water within their homes [24].

With the construction sector being one of the major climate stress contributors, the climate crisis severely affects urban economies through infrastructure damage and livelihood disruption, especially in coastal cities and in contexts where resilience to climate shocks is relatively weak. Current projections indicate that a 2°C increase in global temperature in 2050 will expose 2.7 billion people, or 29 per cent of the global population, to moderate or high climate-related risks, with 91 to 98 per cent of the exposed and vulnerable population living in Asia and Africa respectively [25]. Hotspots of high human vulnerability are concentrated in small island developing States, the Arctic, Southern Asia, Central and South America, and much of Sub Saharan Africa [26]. By 2030, 600 million of the urban poor will be directly exposed to climate change risks. By 2050, there will be 143 million internal climate-related migrants, if climate mitigating actions are not taken [27]. Low-income urban residents cumulatively contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions but often disproportionately bear the burden of environmental risks [28] and lack the capacities to adapt effectively, requiring additional support [29]. Indeed, populations living in slums and informal settlements are increasingly exposed to flooding, rising sea levels and extreme weather, making them more vulnerable to the loss of life, property and livelihoods. Many of these settlements exist on land that is deemed undesirable or unsuitable for formal development, including the outskirts of cities, low-lying land earmarked for storm drainage and steep slopes. These locations expose residents to disproportionate risks associated with flooding, landslides and extreme weather. Use of substandard building materials and practices and lack of infrastructure also influence households' vulnerability to climate change. Resilient housing materials are needed to protect against flooding, withstand heavy storms, and cope with extreme temperatures. Several factors can impact heat stress in slums and informal settlements, including lack of trees and vegetation, poor construction materials, poor ventilation, lack of efficient and affordable cooling technology, and lower elevation [30]

[22] In urban slums, vaccination completion with children is of concern, with social stigma of unmarried mothers and lack of access being considered possible contributing factors, see Mahachi et al. (2022): Zero- or missed-dose children in Nigeria.

[23] UN Habitat (2020): World Cities Report 2020

[24] WHO/UNICEF (2021): Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2020: five years into the SDGs

[25] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[26] SDG Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022

[27] UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat (2022): Children, cities and Housing: Rights and Priorities

[28] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[29] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

[30] UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat (2022): Children, cities and Housing: Rights and Priorities

Urgent action needed

SDG Target 11.1 is one of only nine targets regressing [31]. Main causes of the lack of progress toward achieving SDG 11.1 are attributed to population growth, rapid urbanisation, natural population increase, climate change impact, migration, political and economic instability, systemic inequalities, weak and ineffective urban planning and land administration and management practices, local governance, policy frameworks, and finance instruments for scaling [32]. As shown above, slum transformation is a critical element across many of the SDGs, and regression in SDG 11 will impact progress across other sectors that are essential for human development [33]. Those living in slums and informal settlements are disproportionately affected by the urban service divide; they bear the brunt of disease outbreaks, economic shocks and environmental risks. Studies have demonstrated that disparities in accessing essential infrastructure and urban services can have a greater impact on lives, livelihoods and long-term prospects compared with differences in earnings [34]. Immediate action is needed to address the regression of Target 11.1.

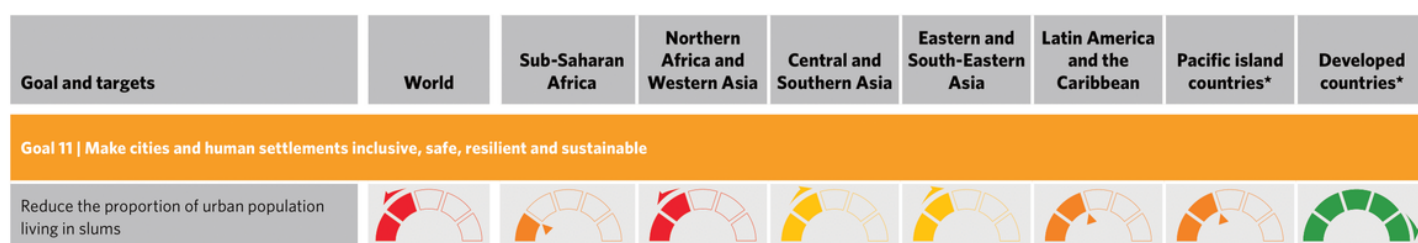


Image 3: SDG 11 Progress Chart

Source: UN Stats, 2022

Lessons learned of the past 20 years guide recommendations for key considerations to be made when engaging in transformational efforts:

Key considerations for slum transformation

- **Vertical and horizontal integration:** Informality across all sectors needs to be considered and connected to policies and strategies that are designed to promote adequate solutions, according to local contexts
- **Continuum of implementation:** Actions need to be informed by a common vision with immediate, mid- and longer-term targets, financed by strategic investment harnessing existing socio-economic potentials
- **Diversity of solutions:** The diversity of solutions and approaches towards spatial transformation must be recognised, the spatial context and potentials for meeting the scale need to be assessed, and the best possible standard of living for the most vulnerable must be prioritised
- **Sustainability:** Considerations for enhancing sustainability in its four dimensions (social, economic, ecological, spatial) need to be integrated into the design of actions

[31] United Nations (2022): Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2022. Based on a limited number of information available as of June 2022, 36 indicators are assessed.

[32] Habitat for Humanity (2021): Progress report SDG 11.1

[33] Habitat for Humanity (2021): Progress report SDG 11.1

[34] UN Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022

Global Action Plan

The **Global Action Plan** derives from the ambition of accelerating the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in informal settlements and slums and thus: *"By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums"*.

Slum transformation

Slum Transformation stands for the vision to **end marginalisation of people and places**, enabling **spatial integration** and a **better standard of living for all**. It jointly shapes **Cities for All** where human potentials and spaces thrive in harmony.

Transformation **harvests the positive elements of informal settlements and slums**: social safety networks, creativity of economic activities, dynamic use of spaces, high diversity of services, compactness; and **overcomes the alarming negative elements**: high levels of poverty and vulnerability, exclusion, pollution, hazardous locations and inadequate standards of living.

Sustainable slum and informal settlement transformation towards progressively delivering human rights in cities consists of four dimensions, closely aligned to the core dimensions of the New Urban Agenda:

Dimensions for the City for All

Reduction of spatial inequality and spatial justice

- **Integrated urban territorial management** for **access to land and secure tenure**, along the continuum of land rights to safeguard the social function of land and property
- **Strategic planning** for **integrated urban development** and pro-active growth management of cities
- **Affordable, habitable** and **accessible housing** and **availability** of basic services, materials, social facilities and infrastructures to create enabling **locations** with thriving public spaces, connected by inclusive mobility options

Social Inclusion and integrated governance

- Inclusive **urban policies** and flexible regulatory frameworks to integrate informality and protect marginalised groups from discrimination, violence and harassment
- **Multi-stakeholder governance** with inclusive **participation** of all groups in **planning and decision making** to enable **culturally adequate** and **inclusive design** of interventions
- Evidence-based interventions for **balanced socio-spatial impacts** in slums and informal settlements

Reduction of poverty and economic prosperity

- **Socio-economic empowerment** with **equal access** to **opportunities**, **social protection mechanisms** and equitable **support of** human and social capital **formation**
- **Localised finance mechanisms** for access to innovative, diverse and safe finance, and to **productive resources**

Environmental sustainability and protection

- **Resilience building, risk reduction** and **risk management** of external shocks, like disasters, pandemics, or climate change
- **Promotion of circular economies and sustainable construction patterns** with green building materials and nature-based solutions for lowering impact of interventions on air, water and land, ecosystems and biodiversity

➤ Principles for transforming informal settlements and slums

Principles orient the implementation of 10 Global Actions for integrated inclusive and sustainable urbanisation, and urban development shaping Cities for All. Transformation needs to be managed transparently and with the full accountability of all responsible entities engaged in the process.

Management of slum transformation**Process of complete spatial change:**

- **No quick fix / long-term:** To completely change the situation, institutionalised mandates at all levels under a dedicated leadership are provided for by streamlined policies and legal frameworks to maintain political momentum for long-term engagement and sufficient finances.
- **No half-hearted approach / integrated:** To ensure change in the whole contiguous settlement, spatial interventions integrate solutions across sectors to leverage synergies.
- **No one left behind / informed:** To measure change, disaggregated data collection, management and monitoring systems regularly provide information about people-centred impacts, from an intersectional perspective that include the perspectives of marginalised groups.
- **No one solution fits all / diverse:** To ensure that interventions meet the various needs identified, flexible approaches are adopted, that allow for a diversity of solutions.

Adequate housing:

- **No dimension left out / multi-dimensional:** The economic, social, and cultural human right to adequate housing is respected through interventions in all dimensions: secure tenure; affordable, accessible, habitable housing options; availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures; enabling locations; culturally adequate solutions
- **No one left behind / freedom-enhancing:** Interventions target spatial justice and socio-economic inclusion, creating the base for unlocking people's potentials and capabilities to overcome poverty.

Recognition of settlements by public authorities and integration of settlements as equal parts into the city:

- **No place left behind / everywhere:** To enable effective and socially just distribution of available resources for equal integration, slum transformation strategies at national, regional and local levels align projects of different stakeholders to overall goals for efficient partnerships.
- **No one excluded / everyone:** To ensure recognition of the needs of all marginalised groups, inclusive multi-governance settings with balanced representation mechanisms enable participatory planning and decision making processes for community-led interventions.

The application of guiding principles is key to inform the *how* — the implementation of the Global Action Plan. It strives to endorse principles for impactful transformation. This shall inform the implementation framework of the Global Action Plan and serve as a check-list for identifying if interventions in informal settlements and slums have met the criteria of transformation. The principles shall drive localization to diverse spatial and target group settings.

Inclusive and participatory, in the spirit of co-production

Transformative actions foster urban governance systems that enable efficient engagement and response to the needs of people living in informal settlements and slums. Transformative actions engage target populations and create ownership, belonging and wellbeing as well as healthy and safe urban societies. Transformative actions bring different stakeholders together and empower deprived communities to partner equally in public affairs. Transformative actions create systems for diverse stakeholders to engage throughout the different cycles of implementation, including inclusive access to finance.

Evidence and data-driven, leveraging the localisation of actions

Transformative actions are informed by multi-level data, local and global knowledge, continuous and documented learning, comprehensive monitoring, and a richness of diverse solutions that can be applied to context. Transformative actions expand data availability and analysis at multiple governance levels with a people-centred and gender-responsive lens. Transformative actions are informed by local and spatial realities, demand, supply, and the scale of the need.

Integrated and proactive, providing a strategic framework for continuous transformation

Transformative actions are to be designed as part of a comprehensive and forward-looking transformation scenario. Transformative actions are to be designed informed by integrated short-, medium, and long-term and local, city and national transformation frameworks, such as in line with local and national strategies and policies facilitating a dynamic transformation process rather than linear implementation plans. Transformative actions build on each other and follow in awareness that transformation requires a long-term engagement and investment. Transformative actions consider the whole neighbourhood, city, and the country and provide solutions for a diversity of sectors. Transformative actions are linked to different levels of governance and sectors. Transformative actions facilitate the integration of settlements into the urban fabric. Transformative actions mainstream access to technology, smart solutions, connectivity and high service quality towards reducing spatial and socio-economic inequalities – delivering the Right to Adequate Housing.

Equitable and catalytic, meeting the needs of everyone progressively delivering human rights

Transformative actions are to be carried out in response to a particular context and stakeholder group, targeted and tailored to suit the individual's needs leaving no one behind, balancing financial investments and enabling affordability for all. Transformative actions need to be driven by a deeper understanding of the diverse context and respond to all segments of society, including people in all income brackets, women and girls, people with disabilities, youth, racial minorities, displaced persons, and all those at heightened risk of severe disease or discrimination. Transformative actions put the most vulnerable first.

Sustainable and climate-smart, aiming for a healthy urban living environment

Transformative actions consider people and planet, social and environmental protection. Transformative actions positively impact people, urban society and the environment. Transformative actions create resilience to crisis, conflict, and climate change while increasing socio-economic empowerment and social cohesion. Transformative actions are driven by nature-based solutions, circular economy, careful attention to building material, use of space and resources and building people's capacity to provide a better urban environment. Transformative actions create mechanisms to maintain investment, ownership for maintenance, and continued transformation.

Affordable and replicable, prioritising most impactful interventions at scale

Transformative actions have diverse solutions that serve the demand from all income groups in the settlements and ensure in-situ transformation remains targeted to the population living in the neighbourhood. Transformative actions are designed with the total population living in slums and informal settlements in mind. Transformative actions enable multiple financing instruments, partners and investments at different scales to overcome affordability gaps. Transformative actions increase affordability by applying community-led approaches cutting costs and providing income to communities at the same time.

➤ 10 Key Actions for the City for All ^[35]

Principles orient the implementation of ten Global Actions across the four dimensions of Cities for All that target integrated, inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and the achievement of SDG 11.1:

Strategic planning, pro-poor territorial management, and the provision of housing opportunities, services, and social infrastructures create thriving locations that overcome spatial inequality and establish spatial justice. Flexible policies and legal frameworks that inform inclusive stakeholder settings for participatory planning and implementation, as well as regular assessment of impacts at all levels and across groups establish the base for social inclusion and integrated governance. Socio-economic empowerment of informal workers and slum dwellers together with access to finance and comprehensive investment and finance mechanisms tackle poverty and enhance economic prosperity. Promotion of circular economies and sustainable construction patterns lowers the environmental impact of future urban development and establishes, together with risk management and resilience building, the base for environmental sustainability and protection.

Through the local specification and implementation of those ten key actions, national governments take a big step forward in guaranteeing that no one and no place is left behind.

10 Key Steps to be taken by governments

Reduction of spatial inequality and spatial justice

1. **Integrated urban territorial management:** Promote instruments that recognise and document tenure along the continuum of land rights to safeguard secure tenure and the social function of land, and establish effective land management systems that avail land for proactive response to urban growth.
2. **Strategic planning for integrated urban development:** Enable strategic planning of resource-efficient interventions for slum transformation at neighbourhood, citywide, national and regional level for sustainable and balanced, people-centred urban development.
3. **Affordable, habitable and accessible housing and availability of services and infrastructures:** Provide affordable, habitable and accessible housing and available basic services in thriving locations characterised by availability of education and social facilities, integrated and targeted health care services, and safe and accessible public spaces of high quality, connected through inclusive mobility options.

[35] The actions were informed by UN-Habitat publications and by partner documents, as well as by feedback obtained during an Expert Group Meeting and remotely from UN-Habitat sections and external partners. Documents considered included UN-Habitat (2019): New Urban Agenda Illustrated handbook. UN-Habitat (2020): Human Rights, Rule of Law and the New Urban Agenda. UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, UN-Habitat (2022): Children, cities and Housing: Rights and Priorities. UN-Habitat (2015): Housing at the centre of the New Urban Agenda. Position paper. Habitat for Humanity (2021): Progress report SDG 11.1. UN-Habitat (2020): Subnational Urban policy: A Guide. UN-Habitat (2022): World Cities Report 2022. UN-Habitat (2021): Multi-level Governance Approaches to Promote Health Equity: A Guide. UN-Habitat (2022): Slum Upgrading Legal Assessment Tool. UN Women (2018): Harsh realities. Marginalized women in cities of the developing world. Overseas Development Institute (2015): What works in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers.

Social Inclusion and integrated governance

4. **Inclusive urban policies and flexible frameworks:** Develop inclusive urban policies and flexible regulatory frameworks to outline a joint vision for integrating informality and protecting marginalised groups.
5. **Multi-stakeholder governance and inclusive participation:** Institutionalise balanced multi-stakeholder systems for decentralised governance with vertical bottom-up and top-down coordination as well as horizontal cross-sectoral partnership settings with local governments at the lead that engage diverse actors. Promote effective participation of all in planning and decision making for culturally adequate and inclusive design of all interventions.
6. **Monitoring for evidence based interventions:** Monitor progress towards implementation, with disaggregated data for all groups of residents in slums and informal settlements, with focus on women, children and other marginalised groups, to assess multidimensional impacts at neighbourhood, city, national and global levels.

Reduction of poverty and economic prosperity

7. **Socio-economic empowerment:** Design socio-economic transformative actions and promote inclusive and decent economic opportunities, with skills training on innovative technologies and business models for social and physical service provision, to build social and human capital with focus on women and youth. Support local pro-poor livelihood options and job creation as catalyst to integrating the informal sector in economic growth opportunities of the city as a whole.
8. **Access to finance:** Enhance equitable access to innovative, diverse and safe finance solutions for housing, infrastructure, business initiatives and to productive resources. Develop finance mechanisms with comprehensive investment and finance packages that integrate partnerships driven by the public sector and expanded by private sector, local communities as well as third actors.

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Environmental sustainability and protection

9. **Promotion of circular economies and sustainable construction patterns:** Integrate green building materials and nature-based solutions into transformation interventions for lowering impact on air, water and land, ecosystems and biodiversity. Plan interventions to limit use of space and resources and to address existing pollution through adequate infrastructures and promotion of employment opportunities around waste, energy, and resource management.
10. **Resilience building and risk management:** Build responsiveness of all population groups to disasters, pandemics, or climate change for risk reduction and management of external shocks; Plan with risks proactively when engaging in investing in informal settlements and slums, pro-actively addressing risks of scaled in investment in informal settlements at city and national levels and planning with measures towards risk mitigation.

> Accelerators

An acceleration of transformative actions is needed, as there are fewer than 10 years remaining in the Decade of Action, leading up to the year 2030. Every second, our world is more and more urban, – a phenomenon mostly explained by natural population growth and rural-urban migration, driven by the prospect of greater employment opportunities and the hope of a better life. It is hence expected that by 2050, 68 percent of the global population will live in cities [36]. If no action is taken to cope with this influx of new inhabitants, the result will be widespread growth in slums and informal settlements. The Global Action Plan calls upon the ambition to provide better living conditions for all to anticipate this challenge. Its Partnership Framework is designed to position transformation in slums and informal settlements as a priority, while providing inputs for contributing to the acceleration of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

Together,
we are
driving:

Joint political endorsement of the Global Action Plan
(for example during UN-Habitat Assembly)

Advocacy in the context of a joint Global Campaign

Joint research and knowledge platform embedded in
the New Urban Agenda Platform

Joint monitoring and reporting (SDFs, NUA and against
the GAP implementation with annual events)

Joint programming towards coordinated impactful
scaling at country levels



Coordination and advocacy

The ambition of transformation can only be achieved by the concerted efforts of a multiple partnership framework – all stakeholders engaging together towards a joint vision. Transformative principles can only be implemented with a strong coordination framework. There are still too many actors working in isolation, often in competition for resources and opportunities. Coordination is to top up everyone's effort and guide a long-term vision with diverse inputs. Limited resources are to be leveraged by diverse actors' contributions. In the spirit of localising the Sustainable Development Goals, local governments are to be in the driving seat and to be supported by national governments and the global community. They are to inform the shaping and evolution of global initiatives. National and local governments, according to their specific mandates, are to take the lead of this process together with communities. They are to set targets and support implementation to achieve the global ambition of slums and informal settlement transformation.

[36] UN-Habitat (2018): Revision of World Urbanization Prospects

The urgency and scale of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and the roadmap to achieving sustainable cities as detailed in the New Urban Agenda, are not yet known by all. Many stakeholders are not yet fully aware what the urbanisation of poverty will mean for the future of our cities. More stakeholders need to be mobilised and engaged in priority actions to be taken towards the scaling of transformation in informal settlements and slums. Some countries have most of the urban population living in informality, but lack a clear public response at national or local levels. Some governments have designed national and local responses, but lack access to finance and means to scale pilot projects. Some communities are ready to partner and have local planning at hand, but lack systems to connect to private and public support. A more systematic and holistic response is needed – from policy to implementation of integrated programmes.

Accelerators for advocacy and coordination we need

1. **The Global Action Plan's Implementation Framework:** to coordinate global partnerships, strengthen current efforts of partners to meet the scale needed
2. **The Global Action Plan Taskforce:** to facilitate regular meetings of core and thematic partners against concrete annual work plans and with annual global meetings
3. **Joint global campaigns and advocacy:** to translate the global action framework to national implementation frameworks
4. **Joint monitoring and reporting:** to document the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals with a multiple-partnership approach

During the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2023, member states will have an opportunity to set priorities for the years to come towards delivering the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Member States are invited to take this occasion to commit and mobilise support towards delivering more inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable cities and communities.

Knowledge

At the global level, development partners are continuing to diversify solutions, knowledge, processes and tools to facilitate smooth coordination and a reduction of transaction costs for local and national governments. Those are needed to adapt available resources instead of reinventing the wheel and going through the full learning cycle each time. Coordinated and diverse global initiatives and programmes are essential to mobilise a global change process where countries can learn from each other, global knowledge becomes accessible, and a global shift can be achieved in which more and more countries join in to reach a critical scale. Joint actions at the global level are to be a catalyst, reducing transaction costs for governments and reaching more and more countries, cities and communities towards transforming a billion lives globally. Complementary global initiatives and global programmes are to engage at scale with multiple partners – all applying principles, drivers and key actions to transforming informal settlements and slums.

Accelerators for knowledge we need:

5. **The Global knowledge data and learning platform:** to integrate in the New Urban Agenda Platform informed by the co-production of the Global Publication and linking other available data, knowledge and learning and capacity building platforms
6. **Continued deepened research:** to facilitate solution finding and deep dives on persistent challenges experienced in slum and informal settlement transformation, including the promotion of a global Community of Practice for peer-learning
7. **Multi-partnership knowledge hubs** informed by national, regional and sub-regional strategies and transformation commitments: to localise global knowledge with a multiple partnership approach and facilitate learning between countries, cities and communities

Implementation and demonstration

The ambition of scaling requires constant financial commitment. Finance needs to be made available to enable equity-delivering solutions for the most vulnerable. There needs to be an increased availability of finance for integrated and inclusive urban development. Often, sector finance and large-scale infrastructure development are still prioritised and do not match the full spectrum of transformation. Transformative actions consist of a comprehensive package of actions and implicated stakeholders. Financing needs to be made available for each puzzle piece to complement the bigger ambition of transformation.

Financing needs to match actions, and actions need to match available finance at different milestones of scaling. Investment needs to be carefully assessed and strategically prioritised. Financing needs to deliver affordable solutions leaving no one behind, and at the same time provide for spatial transformation. Integrated action requires financing at all governance levels, and for all stakeholders: for public, community and private actors and all relevant sectors. Investment safeguards need to be developed to enable overcoming risks for initial investments so that actions can evolve. Informal sector initiatives are to be integrated and strengthened as they already engage in improving living conditions today. Capacity building for financial design looking at the demand and supply sides are key for affordable transformation at scale.

Joint programming and implementation at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels with diverse financing entry-points are important to match the transformation entry-point of diverse national contexts.

Accelerators for implementation and demonstration we need:

8. **Demonstrating impacts and transformation,** achieved with pilot actions and translating transformative commitments to Cities for All
9. **Joint programming, global programmes and initiatives:** to demonstrate transformation in informal settlements and slums in a few selected countries, providing a proof of concept as well as practising the shift to co-production and integration
10. **More flexible and integrated financing** to be made available by financing partners: to demonstrate financing needed to deliver transformation

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Detailed Key Actions for the City for All

Achieving the dimensions of Cities for All requires collective action across governments, civil society, communities, private sector, international development partners, as well as dedicated individuals. Recommended contributions are outlined below.

Area

1. Action: Description

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