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**Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda,  
including a briefing on the preparation of the quadrennial  
report of the Secretary-General on progress in the  
implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

## **Progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda: briefing on the preparation of the quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

1. The present report contains an update on progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including on the preparation of the quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the Agenda. Section I outlines the context and purpose of the report, and section II recalls the recommendations of the 2022 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Agenda and describes recent global efforts relating to the preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report. Section III highlights capacity development initiatives to accelerate monitoring and reporting, and section IV outlines recent mobilization efforts and planned initiatives aimed at building momentum in the run-up to the midterm review of the Agenda in 2026.

### **I. Introduction**

2. The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito in 2016, and was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 71/256, adopted on 23 December 2016. The Agenda represents a shared vision for a global commitment to a better and more sustainable future, emphasizing the critical role of sustainable urban development. It serves as an accelerator of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and offers an implementation framework for the urban component of all Sustainable Development Goals. The New Urban Agenda is framed around three transformative commitments (social, economic and environmental), along with key means of implementation to guide policy and practice for promoting a better urban future for all. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), as the main United Nations entity mandated to promote sustainable

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urbanization and human settlements, plays a coordination role in the implementation, follow-up and review of the New Urban Agenda.

3. Through resolution 71/256, the Secretary-General is requested to report on the progress of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda every four years, with voluntary inputs from countries and relevant regional and international organizations. To date, two quadrennial reports have been presented. The first report, produced in 2018, assessed the systems and resources in place to implement and monitor the Agenda and provided recommendations to guide the development of subsequent reports. The second report, presented in 2022, assessed quantitative and qualitative data from monitoring systems, voluntary inputs from countries, and contributions from the United Nations system and key stakeholders.

4. The year 2026 will mark a critical juncture in the 2016–2036 timeline of the New Urban Agenda, as it constitutes the “Quito+10” milestone. As stated in paragraph 175 of the Agenda, the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General will serve as a midterm review “to take stock of the progress made and challenges faced in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda since its adoption and to identify further steps to address them”. The 2026 quadrennial report will serve a dual purpose: reflecting on progress to date while charting the path ahead, with a focus on the role of the New Urban Agenda as a catalyst for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The midterm review will enable a reflective assessment and strategic adjustment of implementation strategies to ensure the continued impact of the New Urban Agenda as the comprehensive framework for sustainable urban development.

5. The present report provides an overview of the most recent progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, including the preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the Agenda. In addition, it outlines recent capacity development and mobilization efforts that have been conducted to guide Member States and stakeholders in the monitoring and reporting of the Agenda. The report also highlights planned initiatives within a strategic road map designed to sustain and amplify the momentum in the period leading up to the midterm review of the Agenda in 2026.

6. All initiatives related to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda are closely linked to the development of the strategic plan of UN-Habitat for the period 2026–2029. As UN-Habitat refines its strategic direction, it is reaffirming its core focus on housing, the foundation of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, which resulted in the adoption of the Agenda. To ensure coherence and impact, the means of implementation to be included in the next strategic plan are being aligned with those of the Agenda (e.g. governance, spatial planning, resource mobilization, capacity development, technology and innovation, and partnerships). This integrated approach will maximize synergies to ensure that the Agenda remains the blueprint for UN-Habitat programming and operations.

## **II. Quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

### **A. Recommendations in the 2022 quadrennial report**

7. The 2022 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/76/639–E/2022/10) outlined progress and challenges related to both monitoring and implementation and emphasized the remaining gaps to be addressed in order to achieve the aims of the Agenda by 2036.

8. In this context, it is important to recall the recommendations set out in the 2022 quadrennial report for accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda:

(a) Member States were encouraged to make a deliberate effort to elevate the New Urban Agenda, mainstreaming its transformative commitments for achieving other global agendas;

(b) The United Nations was encouraged to continue to generate evidence-based and practical guidance for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the related dimensions of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Governments and all local and non-State actors were encouraged to harness the lessons from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to reorient and accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda;

(d) Housing and associated basic services need to be integrated with health, income, education and access to basic services as five elements of the social contract, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982);

(e) Member States were encouraged to use the New Urban Agenda in a more intentional manner to strengthen efforts to protect our planetary ecosystems;

(f) Member States were urged to amplify the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations;

(g) Member States were urged to consider institutional mechanisms to engage local and regional governments in intergovernmental and national planning processes.

9. Many UN-Habitat initiatives implemented under the strategic plan for the period 2020–2025 and the development of the draft strategic plan for the period 2026–2029 respond to those recommendations. The status of implementation of the recommendations by Member States and non-State actors will be described in the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General.

## **B. Preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report**

10. UN-Habitat has initiated the preparation process for the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. During the previous reporting cycle (2018–2022), the rate of submission of national progress reports by Member States remained limited, reaching only 40 out of 193 Member States. As national progress reports provide critical input to the quadrennial reports of the Secretary-General, UN-Habitat has been actively supporting Member States in advancing their reporting efforts for the 2022–2026 reporting cycle.

11. To this end, UN-Habitat published its revised guidelines on reporting on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda<sup>1</sup> in 2024 to advise Member States on the preparation of national progress reports. The guidelines include new reporting modalities and simplified processes aimed at lowering the reporting burden on Member States. They also outline how to leverage other reporting processes to monitor the Agenda, including voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews. As the New Urban Agenda is the implementation framework for the urban component of the Sustainable Development Goals, data collected for both types of voluntary review can be used as input for New Urban Agenda reporting. The guidelines also provide a suggested outline for national progress reports and offer clear directions on the type of assessment to conduct. They map relevant existing databases<sup>2</sup> and suggest concrete indicators derived from the Global Urban Monitoring Framework for measuring the different components of the Agenda.

12. As part of the development of the 2026 quadrennial report, UN-Habitat aims to increase the number of national reports submitted, but places equal emphasis on the process of engagement with Member States and stakeholders leading to reporting. Preparing a national progress report is more than just a reporting exercise. It is an important national process of in-depth review and consultation that enables countries to take stock of their progress, assess challenges and make course corrections to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. This process provides a structured space to identify where countries are on track and where additional efforts are needed. The engagement process also makes it possible to share experiences and highlight successes and lessons learned, and it serves as a platform for learning, mobilizing partnerships and driving collective action towards sustainable urban development. Producing a report also offers an opportunity to showcase national efforts on a global stage, giving visibility to countries and their achievements and commitments.

13. Member States are encouraged to submit their national progress reports by 1 July 2025 on the basis of the revised reporting guidelines. A note verbale was sent to Member States on 21 June 2024 to inform them about the next reporting cycle for the New Urban Agenda and to encourage them to submit national progress reports. The reporting team at UN-Habitat will analyse and synthesize the national progress reports, together with data from the other five input streams mentioned below. The quadrennial report is expected to be released in June 2026, according to the following timeline:

(a) Input collection phase, including submission of national progress reports: by 1 July 2025;

(b) Synthesis phase: drafting of extended report by November 2025;

<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://unhabitat.org/guidelines-for-reporting-on-the-implementation-of-the-new-urban-agenda>.

<sup>2</sup> Including the Urban Indicators Database, the National Urban Policy Database, the Urban Policy Platform, the Urban Performance Index digital hub, the Urban Monitoring Framework and the Quality of Life Initiative.

(c) Revision phase: drafting of quadrennial report by February 2026;

(d) Clearance phase: by May 2026.

14. In addition, UN-Habitat will systematically complement the national reports on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda with additional sources. A total of six input streams are envisioned, namely: (a) progress reports by national Governments; (b) key Sustainable Development Goal and New Urban Agenda indicators as compiled and independently verified by UN-Habitat; (c) trends and data supplied by other United Nations agencies and other relevant multilateral institutions; (d) better “on the ground” expertise through more dedicated regional involvement, including United Nations regional economic commissions, resident coordinators and country offices; (e) closer integration of urban best practices and other relevant case studies by stakeholders; and (f) better engagement with non-national and non-multilateral actors, including at the local level.

15. The approach will seek to promote practice-focused monitoring of progress. While quantitative approaches will be a foundation for the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General, UN-Habitat will seek to maximize its review and assessment of good practices and solutions that have enabled progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Drawing on resources from the New Urban Agenda platform, mapping global practices and seeking additional input from stakeholders and partners, the progress review will aim to report on solutions that have worked well and offer opportunities for uptake and mainstreaming by actors and stakeholders.

16. As part of the preparatory process, UN-Habitat will also undertake a global consultative process targeting relevant stakeholders. In the context of its networks of stakeholders, including those who have been attending the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat will organize virtual consultative meetings with key stakeholders to collect input on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. A United Nations system consultation process will also be launched with a view to receiving input from United Nations entities, including regional economic commissions, on key sector-specific and geographical trends, conditions and practices in order to enrich the global assessment of implementation progress.

17. The preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report of the Secretary-General will be closely coordinated with the development of the global synthesis report on Sustainable Development Goal 11, which is also slated for release in 2026. Given the strong connections and complementarities between the two reports, efforts will be made to maximize synergies in data collection and analysis and in the compilation of case studies. This integrated approach will enhance the coherence and depth of both reports, ensuring that together they provide a comprehensive assessment of progress in sustainable urban development and offer mutually reinforcing policy recommendations.

### III. Capacity development for effective monitoring and reporting

18. Capacity development plays a crucial role in supporting the implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda. Guided by the capacity-building strategy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, UN-Habitat is spearheading efforts in capacity development, knowledge exchange and partnerships to align with the current quadrennial reporting cycle. UN-Habitat has previously developed various capacity development tools to enhance understanding of the Agenda, including the *New Urban Agenda Illustrated* handbook and a crash course on the Agenda.

19. The preparation of the 2026 quadrennial report will be leveraged for capacity-building and advocacy on the New Urban Agenda through continuous engagement with Member States and other stakeholders. Efforts will be focused on building the capacity of Member States and stakeholders to monitor and report on implementation, particularly in the context of the 2026 quadrennial report. In this regard, UN-Habitat has developed a new learning series on monitoring the transformative commitments of the Agenda, including an e-learning module (available in English and French on the UN-Habitat Learn platform) and a moderated webinar to further train national Governments in effective reporting on the implementation of the Agenda.

20. The learning series specifically aims to increase both the quantity and quality of submissions of New Urban Agenda national progress reports and serves as an in-depth learning opportunity on the revised national reporting guidelines. It also supports the broader efforts of UN-Habitat to build and mobilize a broad coalition of stakeholders to implement and monitor the Agenda. The learning series provides information on the relevance of New Urban Agenda reporting as a tool to achieve implementation of the Agenda and other global agendas. It provides guidance on the different reporting modalities and outlines the suggested key components of national progress reports. It identifies the principles of participatory and multilevel processes for the reporting process and unpacks

how to collect and analyse key data and best practices. The target audience includes national and local focal points preparing national progress reports, representatives from regional bodies engaging in the New Urban Agenda monitoring and reporting processes and any other learners willing to join.

21. In 2025 and 2026, the learning series will also include additional moderated webinars, in-person training events, brown bag sessions and capacity development sessions, including during multilevel urban forums. An initial webinar was organized on 6 February 2025 and was attended by 36 participants. More virtual and in-person sessions and events will be organized as part of the strategy to build the capacity of Member States in implementing and monitoring the New Urban Agenda, including with a view to enabling the following:

- (a) Improved knowledge and understanding of the New Urban Agenda and its transformative impact in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (b) Interactive dialogue and exchange between Member States that have prepared or will prepare national progress reports;
- (c) Enhanced knowledge and application of monitoring and data tools to support assessment and reporting on New Urban Agenda implementation;
- (d) Sharing and learning on practices and solutions that have enabled progress in New Urban Agenda implementation;
- (e) Stakeholder engagement and input on monitoring and reporting on New Urban Agenda implementation.

22. The learning series will build on the existing capacity development work and resources of UN-Habitat, including in the context of UN-Habitat Assembly resolution 1/3, on enhancing capacity-building for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda, and leveraging the existing UN-Habitat Learn platform.

## **IV. Mobilization towards the 2026 midterm review of the New Urban Agenda**

### **A. Recent mobilization initiatives**

23. As part of its recent mobilization efforts, UN-Habitat has initiated a renewal of the Urban Agenda Platform, which was launched in 2020 and designed to be a global knowledge portal gathering up-to-date information, training and data to support the implementation of the Agenda by Member States and stakeholders. The Platform includes the following key components:

- (a) New Urban Agenda resources: products related to the Agenda in various languages, including audio files, and the quadrennial reports of the Secretary-General;
- (b) National progress reporting resources: resources on reporting mechanisms to generate national progress reports on the basis of voluntary, multilevel, participatory and transparent processes;
- (c) Strategic resources: data analytics, training on the New Urban Agenda, best practice database and stakeholder case studies.

24. UN-Habitat has conducted several assessments of the Urban Agenda Platform to ensure that it is fit for purpose. The renewal of the Platform is aimed at making it more participatory, interactive, inclusive, user-friendly and mobile-friendly. The revamped Platform will be launched in May 2025 to respond to the needs of Member States and stakeholders and further support them in the implementation and monitoring of the New Urban Agenda.

25. The global mobilization regarding the New Urban Agenda is also leveraging regional efforts. Several Member States have expressed interest in developing New Urban Agenda regional platforms. Malaysia is currently developing the Asia-Pacific platform to support Member States, cities and regional partners in implementing the Agenda in the region, through enhanced awareness, know-how, monitoring and reporting strategies tailored to the regional context. UN-Habitat has developed guidelines on New Urban Agenda regional platforms to support Member States and stakeholders in the development of such platforms, which can be instrumental to promoting regional and national progress reporting processes, including the generation of regional, national and local case studies.

26. In addition, recent urban forums have played a critical role as inclusive platforms for mobilization relating to the New Urban Agenda. Urban forums provide opportunities to domesticate and localize the Agenda, as well as advancing evidence-based policymaking and review in specific

contexts. They also offer the chance to convert the analysis and outcomes of the sessions into a New Urban Agenda national progress report. UN-Habitat published a guide on multilevel urban forums<sup>3</sup> in 2024 to strengthen the role of such forums as platforms for urban policy dialogue, stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization, and to provide guidance on how to leverage multilevel urban forums for reporting on global agendas. Multilevel urban forums serve as a space for accelerating the implementation and monitoring of the Agenda with support from UN-Habitat.

27. UN-Habitat participated in the Africa Urban Forum, held in Addis Ababa in September 2024, and organized a session entitled “The New Urban Agenda for Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want”. The aim of the session was to align advocacy on the New Urban Agenda with Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The discussions underscored the critical linkages between the New Urban Agenda and Agenda 2063, the role of African urban governance, policies and legislation, and future leadership in achieving those shared goals. The session also enhanced the commitment of African countries to engaging in the 2026 reporting cycle.

28. The twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Cairo in November 2024, served as a critical space for in-depth discussion on the New Urban Agenda with a wide range of stakeholders. A vast number of sessions mainstreamed the Agenda, while dedicated sessions were conducted to raise the profile of the Agenda and to better inform participants about the 2026 reporting cycle.<sup>4</sup> The World Urban Forum also provided an opportunity to advocate for the submission of national progress reports on the Agenda and increase the number of pledges for the 2026 reporting cycle. In addition, the following key lessons learned and recommendations from Member States and stakeholders on the implementation of the Agenda emerged from the session and will inform the future efforts of UN-Habitat:

- (a) The New Urban Agenda is increasingly integrated into national policies and urban plans, with growing recognition at the subnational level;
- (b) Measuring progress remains a challenge, and more robust indicators are needed;
- (c) Barriers to full implementation include housing deficits, infrastructure strain, economic inequality and a disconnect between sustainability efforts and the realities of the urban poor;
- (d) The New Urban Agenda should be mainstreamed into national and local governance frameworks rather than being treated as a separate initiative;
- (e) The education sector and academia have a role to play by incorporating the New Urban Agenda into curricula and fostering data-sharing;
- (f) The implementation of the New Urban Agenda needs to be more inclusive, with the participation of women, young people and vulnerable groups in decision-making and monitoring;
- (g) The main actions needed for effective implementation include reframing the narrative, strengthening coordination between the national and subnational levels, promoting inclusion and unlocking finance.

## **B. Road map to the 2026 midterm review**

29. UN-Habitat has developed a road map to sustain and amplify the momentum leading up to the 2026 midterm review of the New Urban Agenda. This milestone will present a critical opportunity to take stock, assess progress, address challenges, refine strategies, share solutions, promote accountability and enhance the impact of the Agenda. To mark this significant occasion, UN-Habitat will actively mobilize engagement and visibility efforts starting in 2025 in order to broaden participation and enhance commitment to the Agenda. The culmination point will be a high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Agenda, to be held by the General Assembly on the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2026.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://unhabitat.org/multi-level-urban-forums-a-guide>.

<sup>4</sup> Sessions relating to the New Urban Agenda held at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum included: “Our collective efforts on the New Urban Agenda”, with Member States, academics, women and young people; “The New Urban Agenda: Where are we? How to get there?”, with the current and former Executive Directors of UN-Habitat; “The New Urban Agenda: Africa leading the way”, as part of the African ministerial round table; “The New Urban Agenda: Cities leading the way”, with city mayors and the Executive Director of UN-Habitat; and “Reporting on the Arab Strategy for Housing and Urban Development and the New Urban Agenda”, a training session held in Arabic for national focal points and led by the League of Arab States in cooperation with UN-Habitat.

30. As part of its mobilization road map, UN-Habitat will leverage its regional and country offices to engage with Member States, local governments and other stakeholders at the local level. National and regional urban forums organized in 2025 will be critical platforms for mobilizing Member States in the run-up to the 2026 midterm review. UN-Habitat will make use of its existing networks for advocacy, such as the Her City platform, the Global Urban Observatory network, UN-Habitat's partnership with universities worldwide (Habitat UNI), the Habitat Professionals Forum and the Cities and Climate Change Initiative. UN-Habitat will also harness key upcoming events, such as the high-level political forum to be held in 2025, the Second World Summit for Social Development and the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others, for advocacy beyond the urban community on building momentum in preparation for the midterm review.

31. As the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Baku in 2026, coincides with the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the New Urban Agenda, it will serve as a key platform for advancing collective efforts related to the midterm review of the Agenda and for marking this significant anniversary appropriately, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/256, in which the Assembly underscored the key role of the World Urban Forum as a platform to support reporting on the implementation of the Agenda.

32. The thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum will mainstream the midterm review of the New Urban Agenda and encourage momentum in preparation for the "Quito+10" milestone through various sessions. In the lead-up to the thirteenth session, stakeholders will be mobilized strategically with a view to strengthening engagement on the midterm review of the Agenda. Aligning stakeholder mobilization for both processes will increase efficiency and broaden participation in the interest of stronger impact. The session will serve as a unique opportunity for Member States to showcase their commitment to implementing and monitoring the Agenda, also enhancing their visibility on the global stage. It will also help to reinforce political will, foster collaboration and position countries and stakeholders as key contributors to shaping the next phase of New Urban Agenda implementation.

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