



DECADE
OF 
ACTION

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

Accelerating for Transforming
Informal Settlements and Slums **by 2030**





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Introduction

The Global Action Plan consolidates a collective partnership vision of creating Cities for All. It informs a political process for broader engagement and stronger commitments for slum and informal settlements' transformation, for accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

The Global Action Plan (GAP) consolidates a common partnership vision for **accelerating the implementation** of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **New Urban Agenda (NUA)** in informal settlements and slums around the world, specifically SDG Target 11.1: "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums". The 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 a number of bottlenecks that need to be overcome to unlock sustainable and inclusive slum and informal settlements transformation.

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 for 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.

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.

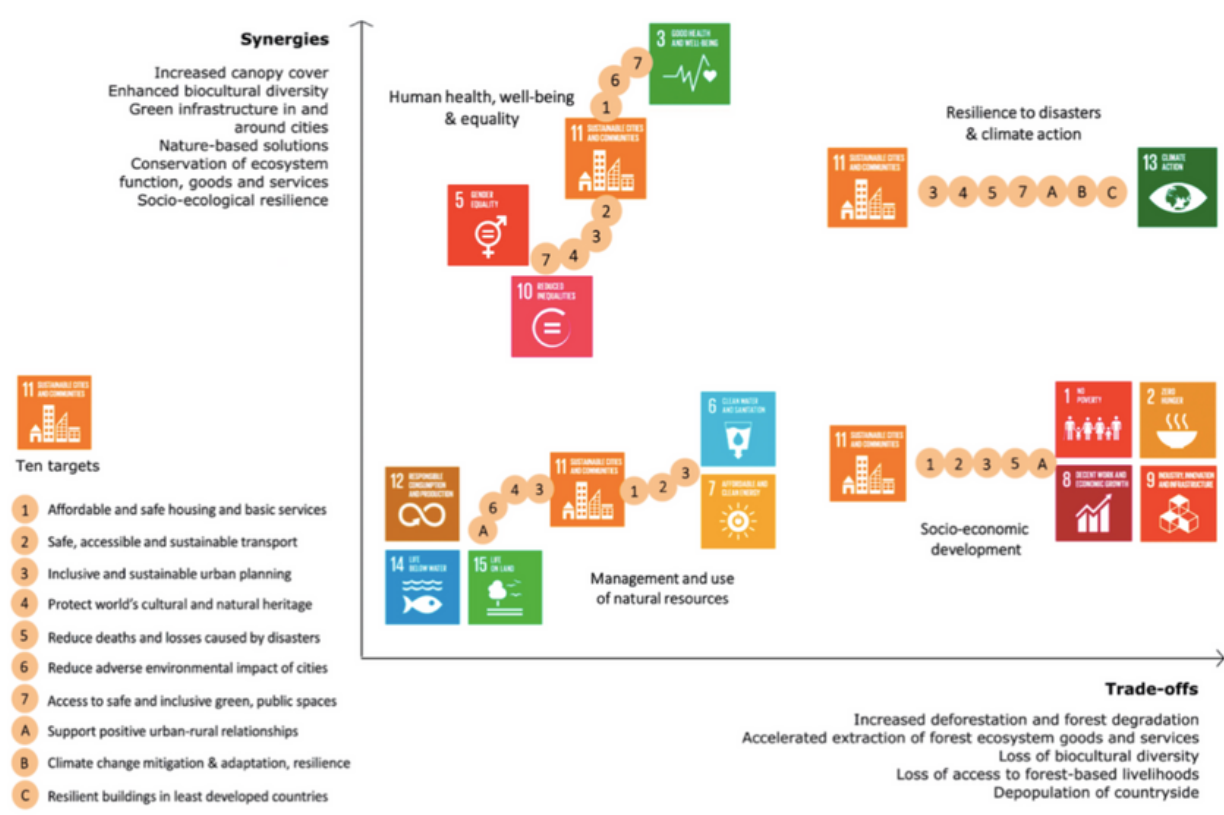


Image 1: Synergies and tradeoff between SDG11 and the other SDGs [1]

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

Sustainable Development Goals and Linkages to Slum Transformation

Goal	Relationship with integrated slum transformation and adequate housing
<i>SDG 1: No Poverty</i>	<p>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. 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 “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.</p>
<i>SDG 2: Zero Hunger</i>	<p>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”.</p>
<i>SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being</i>	<p>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).</p> <p>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).</p>
<i>SDG 4: Quality Education</i>	<p>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).</p>
<i>SDG 5: Gender Equality</i>	<p>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 out 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).</p>
<i>SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation</i>	<p>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).</p>

Goal	<i>Relationship with integrated slum transformation and adequate housing</i>
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	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
SDG 8: <i>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 resource” for all as one of its key elements (see definition below).
SDG 10: <i>Reduced Inequalities</i>	<p>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).</p> <p>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).</p>
SDG 11: <i>Sustainable Cities and Communities</i>	<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”

[2] World Health Organization (2018), WHO Housing and Health Guidelines.

[3] Shulla, K., and Kőszeghy, L. (2021), SDG Booklet: Housing Ensures Sustainable Development.

Goal	Relationship with integrated slum transformation and adequate housing
<p>SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production</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>SDG 13: Climate Action</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>SDG 14: Sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources</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>SDG 15: Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems</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>SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</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>SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals</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** and the **Localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals** for core actions.

The GAP is informed by the co-creation of a **Global Publication** “Solutions to Slums”. Since the endorsement of a goal addressing slums in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, 20 years of learning have not been captured or integrated 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 HUIAROU 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 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 1.1 billion people, or over 13% of the global population, living in inadequate, crowded and unsafe housing and being severely affected by multiple shocks and risks [4]. In 2020, about one in four urban dwellers worldwide lived in slums or informal settlements, marked by the most severe deprivation. This translates to more than 1 billion people, 85% of whom live in three regions – Central and Southern Asia (359 million), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (306 million), and Sub Saharan Africa (230 million). The region with the highest percentage of the population living in slums is in Sub Saharan Africa, where more than half the urban population lives in slums, followed by Central Asia and Southern Asia, with 48,2% of the urban population living in slums [5]. 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 and informal settlements 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. The report is informed by the slum definition and deprivations. One of the five slum deprivations, tenure security, is not yet being reported on by member states [6].

Since 2000, the global urban population living in slums has decreased relatively (from 31,2% to 24,2%), primarily in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (where the urban slum population has changed by -15,8%), Latin America and The Caribbean (-14,2%), Sub Saharan Africa (-14,0%), Western Asia and Northern Africa (-12,9%), and Central Asia and Southern Asia (-7,8%). However, the total number of slum dwellers has increased (from 894.9 million to 1.06 billion, an increase of 18,4%). Sub Saharan Africa has witnessed the sharpest increase (from 130 million to 230 million, an increase of 77,0% in the total number of slum dwellers), followed by Central Asia and Southern Asia (from 250 million to 359 million, an increase of 43,6%) and Oceania (without New Zealand and Australia, rising from 331 million to 431 million, an increase of 30,1% in the total number of slum dwellers).

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

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

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

While Albania, Belarus, Costa Rica, Eswatini, Guyana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Vietnam have reported a decrease of more than 50 percent in both percentage of urban population living in slums and the total number of slum inhabitants, Angola, Cuba, Iraq, Ireland, Myanmar and Suriname have reported more than 35 percent increase in both indicators [7].

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 [8]. 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 [9].

Research conducted in 107 developing countries revealed that 1.3 billion people or 22% of the global population are multidimensionally poor. 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 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 [10]. 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 living in inadequate housing in the Global South, 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 [11].

Trends

The world's population is projected to reach 8 billion on 15 November 2022, and could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100. More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries,

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

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

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

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

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

namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania [12]. The fastest growing megacities through 2030 are located in Tanzania (Dar es Salaam), Angola (Luanda), Nigeria (Lagos), Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), Bangladesh (Dhaka), Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore), India (Bangalore, Agnadabad, Hyderabad) [13].

Sub Saharan Africa will account for most of the growth of the world's population over the coming decades, and is projected to become the most populous of the eight geographic regions in the late 2060s, surpassing both Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and Central and Southern Asia in size (figure III.2), with a possibility of its population reaching 3.44 billion by the end of the century. The population in many countries in Sub Saharan Africa is projected to double between 2022 and 2050, putting additional pressure on already strained resources and challenging policies aimed to reduce poverty and inequalities [14].

The number of slum dwellers by 2030 is projected at over 1.2 billion, based on trends between 1990 and 2012, with the largest slum dweller populations in East Asia, South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The largest proportional increase in the number of slum dwellers is expected to occur in Sub Saharan Africa, with a projected 360 million slum dwellers by 2030 (an increase of over 120 million from 2018) [15]. Empirical analysis shows that a one per cent increase in urban population growth will increase the incidence of slums in Africa and Asia by 2.3 per cent and 5.3 per cent respectively [16]. From 2020 to 2050 the urban population in Sub Saharan Africa is projected to rise from 458.7 million to 1.26 billion (174,3% increase) and in Central Asia and Southern Asia from 745.1 million to 1.34 billion (79,7% increase). This could lead to an increase of the slum population in Sub Saharan Africa from 230 million (2020) to 922.6 million (2050), in Central Asia and Southern Asia from 359 million (2020) to 1.52 billion (2050), and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia from 306.6 million (2020) to 465.4 million (2050), resulting in 2.91 billion slum dwellers in 2050 in those regions [17]. Another two billion people living in slums in the next 30 years represents roughly 183.000 people each day [18] in need of adequate housing.

[12] DESA (2022) World Population Prospects 2022

[13] Overseas Development Institute (2015): What works in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers. A review of the evidence across four programmes

[14] DESA (2022) World Population Prospects 2022

[15] Nicolai, Susan, et. al. (20125): Projecting Progress – Reaching the SDGs by 2030

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

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

[18] 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. 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 [19]. 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 [20].

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 [21]. 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 [22]. 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 [23]. Populations living in slums and informal settlements disproportionately bear the burden of environmental risks [24] and 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 [25].

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

[20] SDG Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022

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

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

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

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

[25] 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 [26]. 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 management practices, local governance, policy frameworks, and finance instruments for scaling [27]. 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 [28]. Those living in slums and informal settlements are disproportionately affected by the urban services 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 [29]. Immediate action is needed to address the regression of Target 11.1.

[26] 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.

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

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

[29] 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"*.

As a composed expression, "slum transformation" derives its definition from its components: A slum is defined 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."* The definition of transformation is *"the **process of changing completely** the character or appearance of something in order to improve it"*. Slum transformation can therefore be defined as *"**process of complete change of territorial units that lack adequate housing, to recognise and integrate them as equal parts into the city**"*.

By focussing on the process-quality of slum transformation, slum transformation has the ambition to build on inherent potentials of slum dwellers, to overcome all deprivations included in the slum definition, to reduce inequalities and poverty, and to provide a **"better quality of life to all"**.

Key elements of the definition of slum transformation

Process of complete spatial change:

- **No quick fix:** 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:** To ensure change in the whole contiguous settlement, spatial interventions integrate solutions across sectors to leverage synergies.
- **No one left behind:** 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:** To ensure that interventions meet the various needs identified, flexible approaches are adopted that allow for a diversity of solutions.

[30] As defined in General Comment No 4 of the UN Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights

[31] UN-Habitat (2002): Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indicators. Secure Tenure, Slums and Global Sample of Cities; 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.

Adequate housing:

- **No dimension left out:** 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:** 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:** To enable effective and socially just distribution of available resources for equal integration, slum transformation strategies at national, regional and local levels to align projects of different stakeholders to overall goals for efficient partnerships.
- **No one excluded:** 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.

Our Vision of Cities for All

Cities for All

Slum Transformation creates **Cities for All** with **thriving neighbourhoods** that **unlock human freedom and untap the full human potential of all groups** of residents through **spatial justice, social inclusion, economic prosperity and environmental stability**.

To recognise and integrate slums and informal settlements equally into the city means to go the **last mile and commit to transforming our cities – Leaving No One and No Place Behind**. It is to accept that slums and informal settlements are often the only affordable option, but are an inadequate solution, and are home for at least 1 out of every 4 persons of our urban population today. In some countries, these rise to 90%, a home to almost all urban residents in the city. It is to recognise that slums and informal settlements are **productive, dynamic, and diverse neighbourhoods of our cities**. It is to harness that people will need to continue building houses responding to urbanisation. These will shape our future cities. We are thus to proactively engage, influence and provide a joint integrated vision of an adequate standard of living to create cities for all.

Cities and human settlements can only be **inclusive, resilient, safe and sustainable**[32] if informal settlements and **slums are at the forefront of our cities' development**. They deserve formal recognition and inclusion into ongoing and future planning and investment, to enable secure tenure options, connection to basic services and technical infrastructures, adequate housing opportunities, provision of social infrastructure and services, and socioeconomic inclusion. The Global Action Plan builds on the **human right to an adequate standard of living**[33] **including the right to adequate housing**[34] for all citizens, with special mention of mothers and children. Four dimensions are proposed to shape cities that cater to a diversity of lifestyles promoting flourishing human capabilities:

[32] <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11>

[33] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, §25 (1948): 1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his/her control. 2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

[34] UN-Habitat (n.d.) The Right to Adequate Housing. Fact Sheet No. 21/Rev.1: Security of tenure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats. Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal. Affordability: housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises the occupants' enjoyment of other human rights. Habitability: housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards. Accessibility: housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups are not taken into account. Location: housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas. Cultural adequacy: housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity.

Dimensions for the City for All

Spatial justice

1. **Secure tenure**, social function of land, prevention of land speculation
2. **Affordable, habitable and accessible housing and basic services**
3. **Availability** of services, materials, facilities and infrastructures to create enabling **locations** of settlements with employment and public transportation options

Environmental stability

4. **Sustainable and integrated urban and territorial development** with sustainable production and consumption patterns for protection of air, water and land, ecosystems and biodiversity
5. Evidence-based interventions for **balanced socio-spatial impacts** in slums and informal settlements
6. **Risk reduction and management** of external shocks, like disasters, pandemics, or climate change

Social inclusion

7. **Inclusive, decentralised governance** systems
8. Full and inclusive **participation** of all groups in **planning and decision making** and protection from discrimination, violence and harassment for **culturally adequate and inclusive design** of interventions

Economic prosperity

9. **Equal access** to **economic opportunities**, with equitable **support of** human and social capital **formation**
10. Access to innovative, diverse and safe finance, and to **productive resources**

> Principles for transforming informal settlements and slums

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 if interventions in informal settlements and slums have met the criteria of transformation. The principles shall drive localisation 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 targeting the diversity of today's and tomorrow's housing demand

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 prioritise 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. 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 structures 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 and ensure in-situ transformation remains targeted to the population living in the neighbourhood. Transformative actions are designed with the total population of people 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.

Accelerators

There are fewer than 10 years remaining in the Decade of Action. Every second, our world is more and more urban. By 2050, 75 percent of the global population will live in cities, and if no action is taken, this growing population will have no other choice than to densify in the current structures or settle in the fringes of our cities to participate in the urban economy. We are to be prepared, and we call upon the ambition to provide better living conditions for all.

Advocacy and communication

The urgency and scale of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and 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 knowledge we need:

- 1. Global, regional and national events, conferences, seminars, and Expert Group Meetings** conducted by a variety of key stakeholders are essential to take stock, connect and invite to join a global movement committing to change.
- 2. Global Campaigns conducted by a variety of stakeholders** are key to getting more and more stakeholders' attention, change in behaviour and policies as well as expanded knowledge on entry-points for transformation in informal settlements and slums. This includes the mobilisation of private sector business models that are providing job opportunities and enabling spatial and people-centred transformation.
- 3. Political champions** are key to leading policy dialogues and for political mobilisation to move forward with the prioritisation of informal settlements and slums.

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.

Coordination and knowledge

The ambition of transformation can only be achieved with concerted efforts as a multiple partnership framework – when all stakeholders engage embraced by 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.

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 – 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.

In the spirit of localising the Sustainable Development Goals, local governments are to be in the driving seat and to be supported by 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 enforce implementation to achieve the global ambition of slums and informal settlements transformation.

Accelerators for coordination and knowledge we need:

4. Global, regional and national transformation commitments combined with knowledge hubs such as: global, regional and sub-regional inter-governmental transformative resolutions and strategies, implementation frameworks such as the Global Action Plan Framework, as well as national, city and neighbourhood level transformation strategies as the foundation for long-term actions. Strategies are to be supported by capacity building support at global, regional and sub-regional levels, for example in the form of local, national, sub-regional and global knowledge hubs. They are to engage actors at all levels and provide the right adapted implementation guidance.

5. Global, well-coordinated, multiple-partnership platforms with dedicated offering to support transformation at all levels, including the new modus operandi of delivering as one, in a full partnership effort with an integrated and inclusive vision. Global programmes can be a vehicle to induce a global change process where countries can learn from each other, global knowledge becomes accessible, and a global shift in reaching scale by more and more countries joining in can be induced.
6. Global knowledge and case studies are to be made available through a Global Action Plan Platform where all stakeholders come together and share resources and learning continuously. They are to ensure that best knowledge and know-how is available and accessible for everyone at any time.

Finance and demonstration

The ambition of scaling requires constant commitment of finance. Finance needs to be 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. Finance needs to assist in overcoming risks and enable a start-off phase where actions can evolve. 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 finance and demonstration we need:

7. More flexible and integrated financing to be made available; financing partners are to engage in the Global Action Plan Taskforce and contribute to the learning as well as continue shaping financing instruments in line with the principles, drivers and actions of the Global
8. Action Plan.

Availability of domestic public finance matching policy commitments is an important first step for transformation at country and city levels. This leverages investment by multiple partners towards blended financing models in different forms and structures, including blend of supply-side and demand-side subsidies. National and city governments are to be equipped with regular annual budget allocations. Implementing agencies are to be equipped with knowledge and capacity to inform multiple affordable and sustainable financing scenarios unlocking long-term transformation.

9. Smaller flexible finance is key to continue piloting, innovating and enriching the slum and informal settlement environment towards mobilizing larger-scale finance after demonstrating impact and feasibility. Smaller investments enable 'reality check', further stakeholder mobilization, adjustments and learning, as well as replication and scaling in similar contexts.
10. Challenge funds and local finance (including micro-finance) solutions for small businesses, start-ups, entrepreneurs and communities can induce more innovations for co-creating affordable and green service solutions and diversifying business cases and job creation for people living in slums and informal settlements.

Actions

Achieving the ten dimensions of the Cities for All requires collective action across governments, civil society, private sector, and international development partners, as well as dedicated individuals and communities.

10 Key Actions for the City for All

Spatial justice

1. **Land:** Promote instruments that recognise and document tenure along the continuum of land rights to safeguard secure tenure and the social function of land and property.
2. **Housing and basic services:** Provide affordable, habitable and accessible housing and available basic (water, sanitation, energy, waste) services through **greenfield development, in-situ redevelopment, housing stock improvement, and social housing** for the most vulnerable
3. **Social infrastructure:** Develop thriving **locations** characterised by availability of education facilities, basic **health care services, community centres** and of safe, inclusive, accessible, culturally sound and quality public spaces, connected by inclusive mobility options

Environmental stability

4. **Planning:** Enable strategic planning of resource-efficient interventions for slum transformation at local, national and regional level for **balanced, sustainable and integrated** urban and territorial **development**
5. **Monitoring:** Measure progress towards implementation and of **socio-spatial impacts** on all groups of residents in slums and informal settlements
6. **Risk management:** Build responsiveness to disasters, pandemics, or climate change for **risk reduction and management** of external shocks; Plan with risks pro-actively when engaging in investing in informal settlements and slums

Social inclusion

7. **Institutional setting:** Institutionalise (gender-) **balanced multi-stakeholder systems** for **inclusive, decentralised governance**
8. **Procedures:** Promote full and effective **participation of all in planning and decision making**, social interactions, diverse cultural expressions for culturally **adequate and inclusive design** of all interventions

Economic prosperity

9. **Economic opportunities:** Promote **inclusive and decent economic opportunities**, support of local pro-poor livelihood options and human and social capital formation
10. **Access to finance:** Enhance equitable access to **finance solutions** for housing, infrastructure, business initiatives and to **productive resources**

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