

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

CITIES FOR ALL LEAVING NO ONE AND NO SPACE BEHIND

Expert Group Meeting (EGM) 18th October 2022, Pretoria, South Africa



The EGM brought together senior government officials from South Africa, Kenya, Lesotho and Malawi with the aim of holding initial technical discussions on how the Global Action Plan (GAP) areas relate to diverse national contexts and how they can be framing implementation at country level.

The goal was to prepare for the UN-Habitat Assembly (June 2023) by mobilising 5-6 government partners demonstrating the GAPF implementation. The EGM assessed entry-points within national frameworks for anchoring implementation. The EGM serves as an informal working session preparing a broader stakeholder meeting before the end of the year.

Key Highlights from South Africa Presentation

The Expert Group Meeting was opened by a contribution from South Africa through the Informal Settlements and Disaster Management Responses lead at the Department of Human Settlements Dr Zoleka Sokopo. The Presentation of South Africa's Approach to informal settlements provided a synopsis of the policy, legal and operational aspects of the Upgrading Informal Settlements Program (UISP) that began in 2009. Key aspects of the UISP are;

Policy: Provides the main framework and tools for informal settlement improvement in South Africa

Housing Act: Provides regulatory as well as institutional mandate to receive and manage the funds from exchequer. Within the Act is also the housing code

Grant: There is a grant dedicated for informal settlements upgrading. This is anchored in the Division of Revenue Act (DORA). This defines the parameters of what you can buy, what you can do and what you cannot within the grant framework, which is the informal settlements upgrading partnership grant

Partnerships: These are with metropolitan municipalities and communities. The community approach involves planning with the people and holding shared decision-making on what can be upgraded

Systematic process: This allows the metropolitan municipalities to align their work but at the same time have a standard approach that allows for phasing of interventions but also adherence to the Housing code

Approach: Since last year, the Government introduced a phased approach to informal settlements transformation – phase 1 responding to human rights with access to water, sanitation and secure tenure and phase 2 a comprehensive and integrated response informed by context-specific transformation plans.

Conclusions and Review by the Senior Government Officials

Ms Mary Ndungu, the Director, Slum Upgrading Department in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, said Kenya has prioritised affordable housing, social infrastructure, basic services, and land tenure as key ingredients of transforming slums and informal settlements. Ms There said there are several projects in the pipeline with the government having sourced land and engaged partners through a Public Private Partnership framework to deliver the housing targets, for example a 20,000 housing units project on the eastern side of Nairobi. On social housing, the government aims to develop housing to relocate communities from a slum area in Nairobi called Mukuru. Slum mapping will also be carried out to identify the attributes so that targeted strategies can be employed to scale the improvement and upgrading. A fund will be established to allow for people-driven incremental housing to supplement the government-led projects.

Understanding and raising awareness to change the attitudes, cultural practices, values, and norms is an important element to support behavioural change and the actualisation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms Mamphaka Jeanett Mabesa, the Director of the Department of Housing for the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship in the Kingdom of Lesotho, said there are four key policies which the country is currently implementing. The implementation experience highlighted the importance of participation of communities in all stages. There is need to communicate and create awareness on the call to action on upgrading slums and secure real political commitment within the government, particularly within housing and land administration.

Ms Mercy Betty Dube, Director For Urban Development in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in Malawi, conveyed how the country has embraced the NHCs and its representatives are involved in all planning and implementation of projects. The involvement has fostered trust and acceptance from many communities as opposed to the perception of National government. They are closer to the grassroots and can facilitate partnerships and buy-in from appropriate NGOs, community groups and other stakeholders at the local level. Capacity development is also essential and improving local building materials so that they can be used to build affordable housing.

Land grabbing is also a factor in informal settlements which encompass issues of encroachment. Many countries have clear national laws protecting ownership of land and it is important to understand the laws and the roles of the landowners, communities, and municipalities to protect the land. There are legal mechanisms to resolve land disputes and these mechanisms should be utilised.

The approach to informal settlements has changed over time. This includes the language which focused on eradication of informal settlements and slums being the specific goal with very specific timelines as the case was with South Africa. There has been a shift to a new approach of upgrading, and now transformation, which also considers multi-faceted approaches to a multidimensional problem with the appreciation that it will not be simple, but it can be done.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Participation and inclusion

There was a renewed emphasis from the various experts and stakeholders on the importance of participation and involvement of the community in the planning and implementation of projects. This was deemed to be instrumental in allaying fears of the community members on how they will be affected in addition to allowing planning to be a collaborative effort where stakeholder inputs are incorporated. Community members should also be informed, and awareness created such that when they are affected or it is necessary for people to be relocated, it will be clear on the process of relocation, restitution, and resettlement.

Recommendation 2: Increased finance and innovative financing mechanisms

National governments should allocate targeted funding for slums and informal settlements upgrading from the revenue collected. These funds should also cascade down to the municipalities and local governments with accountability, implementation, monitoring and reporting frameworks to guide their use. Other innovative funding sources should be utilised including peoples contribution towards the projects and in particular the housing units such as is the case with the South Africa housing project. Both government and private developers should integrate the needs of low-income populations by ensuring affordable options in development backed by sufficient subsidy systems for housing uptake and to incentivise private sector investment. Slum upgrading envisages a holistic approach of infrastructure improvement, formalisation, enhanced livelihoods and liveable neighbourhoods. With the infrastructure upgrading and basic services provided in the settlements, governments must also put in place policies and approaches for households to acquire tenure documents such as title deeds or otherwise. A Kenyan example is the use of community titles and SACCOs which allow collective ownership of land by the households.

Recommendation 3: Multi-level governance

Involvement of stakeholders at all levels including governments, NGOs, private sector, and community groups. In addition, strengthening mechanisms for stakeholder engagement in all planning and implementation of projects which ensures buy-in, trust and acceptance. National Habitat Committees (NHCs) or other committees have also previously been a mechanism for overseeing UN-Habitat programmes in the countries. For some countries, they are active and vibrant, but they need to be strengthened and cascaded down to the local levels, for example with district or municipality committees.

Recommendation 4: Comprehensive packages

Comprehensive national and city strategies for upgrading slums and informal settlements should be developed and implemented. Sufficient capacity has to be developed for the governments to manage these actions.

In conclusion, urbanisation is happening very rapidly, and the challenge of slums and informal settlements are largely similar across many nations and the African region. As such, there is need for partnership, innovation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing for sustainable action going forward to transform slums and informal settlements. The Global Action Plan provides a platform that integrates actions across the region and charts the path forward.

Link to Recordings

Launch of the Global Action Plan for Slums and Informal settlements

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTQZbEc6Bv5_ItFpl5rU8BS48IR3WQ5rw



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