



**Office of the President
of the General Assembly**
80th Session



**High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly
on the Midterm Review of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)**

16-17 July 2026

General Assembly Hall & Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters

Concept Note

**Theme: Delivering Sustainable Urbanization for All: Accelerating and Scaling
Implementation of the New Urban Agenda to 2036 Together**

Background

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted in 2016, set out a vision for sustainable urbanization as a driver of inclusive, resilient and sustainable development, contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global agendas. At the midpoint to its 2036 horizon, the global context in which the NUA is being implemented has evolved significantly. The 2026 Secretary General's Report on Progress in the implementation of the NUA¹ provides a consolidated assessment of progress, remaining gaps and priority actions for the next decade up to 2036, informed by national reporting, United Nations system analysis and stakeholder inputs.

Urban areas now house approximately 58 per cent of the world's population, with built-up areas expanding faster than population growth, intensifying pressures on land, infrastructure, and the environment. This rapid urban transition is unfolding alongside interconnected and compounding global challenges, including climate change, rising geopolitical tensions, increasing displacement, economic volatility, accelerating technological change and escalating disaster risk.

Progress in implementing the NUA has been tangible but uneven across the transformative commitments for sustainable urban development. Advances are most evident in the adoption of national urban and housing policies, the harmonization of urban data and reporting methodologies, the expansion of stakeholder engagement platforms such as urban fora, and the growing recognition of mayors, metropolitan, local and regional authorities as critical actors. Increasingly, localization is recognized as an accelerator for the Sustainable Development Goals, enabling a multilevel, multi-stakeholder approach to urban transformation.

¹ [A/80/696-E/2026/5](#)

As of 2024, approximately 160 countries had adopted or were in the process of developing urban policy frameworks, many of which are integrated into national development strategies, with growing attention to climate resilience, regional disparities, and economic transformation. Urban issues are also increasingly reflected in global agendas, including climate action, where 81 per cent of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) now include urban content, up from 49 per cent in 2021. Cities themselves have emerged as central actors, with over 13,800 local authorities participating in global climate initiatives, collectively representing more than 1.2 billion people.

However, these advances have not kept pace with the scale and complexity of existing and emerging urban challenges. The global housing crisis has deepened, with at least 3 billion people facing inadequate housing conditions and affordability deteriorating across all regions. Informality remains pervasive: the number of people living in slums and informal settlements has increased by over 130 million since 2016, reaching more than 1.13 billion in 2024. Homelessness and inadequate housing are also rising in high-income countries, underscoring the universality of the challenge.

Expansion of infrastructure and basic services have been realized in many contexts. Electricity and drinking water exceed 95 per cent in urban areas globally. However, significant disparities persist, particularly in water, sanitation and hygiene, clean energy, transport access, and digital connectivity. Public transport reaches just 37 per cent of the population in least developed countries, compared to over 80 per cent in high-income regions, reinforcing social and spatial inequalities and limiting economic opportunities. Broader patterns of inequality remain entrenched, with urban poverty increasingly concentrated in informal and underserved areas, and vulnerable groups — including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and displaced populations — facing persistent barriers to inclusion.

Environmental sustainability and resilience present both urgent challenges and opportunities. Cities account for over 70 per cent of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and are increasingly exposed to climate risks, including extreme heat, flooding, and sea-level rise. Urban heat exposure alone is estimated to contribute to approximately 500,000 deaths annually. Despite growing commitments, mitigation and adaptation efforts remain insufficient and underfinanced, particularly at the local level. Meanwhile, urban expansion continues to reduce green space per capita — from 67 m² to 30 m² over the past three decades — undermining resilience and quality of life.

Financing and implementation capacity remain critical constraints. Although cities generate over 80 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, local authorities often have limited fiscal autonomy, revenue base, and access to finance required to meet growing infrastructure, services and housing demands. Capacity gaps continue to hinder effective planning, service delivery, and project implementation. At the same time, fragmented governance, limited stakeholder participation and inadequate urban data constrain evidence-based decision-making and accountability.

Objectives

The High-Level Meeting offers a platform to consider the findings of the midterm review, renew political commitments and identify concrete priorities for action to accelerate implementation, and deliver tangible outcomes in the next decade.

The meeting is expected to:

- Take stock of and share experiences on progress, achievements, gaps and emerging challenges in the implementation of the NUA.
- Identify and promote priority accelerators, policy innovations, and systemic shifts to advance adequate housing and sustainable urbanization up to 2036.
- Strengthen political commitment and generate momentum to accelerate implementation of the NUA across all levels of government, including through integrated, people-centered, whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approaches.
- Showcase effective practices, scalable solutions, and innovative partnerships, including financing mechanisms, to address gaps and support countries in different contexts that leave no one behind.
- Enhance international cooperation and multilateral engagement to advance sustainable urban development.

Format

The high-level meeting will consist of an opening segment, a plenary segment, four interactive multi-stakeholder panels and a closing segment.

Plenary Segment

The plenary segment will highlight regional and national experiences in implementing the NUA, identify priority actions and share commitments and transformative efforts to accelerate progress.

Guiding Questions:

1. What progress has been achieved since 2016, and what are the most critical barriers hindering progress?
2. What priority actions are needed to accelerate delivery in the next decade?
3. What specific commitments or partnerships can be announced to support implementation?
4. How to strengthen international cooperation to address current gaps and emerging challenges collectively?

Multi-stakeholder Panel 1 – Delivering for People: Scaling Adequate Housing, Land, Basic Services, and Inclusion

Sustainable urban development is achieved by and for the people. Achieving the vision of the NUA hinges on responding to the needs of, and respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights of all, particularly those at risk of being left behind, including women, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, persons experiencing homelessness, as well as Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In this regard, the right to adequate housing as well as access to land, basic services, public health and inclusive urban opportunities are important priorities. During and after crises, urban and housing solution pathways shall bridge the humanitarian-development divide as early as possible. Migration sensitive frameworks can positively contribute to migrants' dignity, reduce urban poverty and housing insecurity and strengthen urban-rural linkages. At the midpoint, progress in policy frameworks has not been matched by delivery at scale.

This panel will examine how to accelerate implementation to ensure no one, and no place is left behind.

Guiding Questions:

1. What innovative and scalable approaches across policy, regulations are needed to accelerate access to adequate and affordable housing for all, and how can these efforts better reduce inequality and vulnerability while supporting Member States and all stakeholders in meeting global commitments?
2. How can integrated urban-rural linkages, and investment be strengthened to ensure equitable access to basic services, sustainable mobility, food systems, and safe and public space, particularly in underserved and rapidly urbanizing areas, while reinforcing synergies across relevant global frameworks and commitments?
3. What actions are needed to strengthen the capacity of local and regional authorities, communities, and stakeholders to co-create inclusive solutions, while ensuring implementation reaches persons in vulnerable situations?
4. What is required to bridge the humanitarian-development divide early, building local and regional authorities and community capacity to co-create inclusive urban solutions for displaced populations?

Multi-stakeholder Panel 2 – Unlocking Delivery: Financing Sustainable Urbanization at Scale

Local, subnational, national housing authorities face persistent constraints in accessing predictable, adequate, and sustainable urban financing. Currently, global growth uncertainties,

fiscal pressures, rising debt burdens, and fragmented financing flows are further constraining urban and adequate housing investment and operations across many regions. Under these circumstances delivering on the NUA at scale will require increased efficiency and effectiveness of the application of available finance while developing new innovative financial models.

This panel will examine how to unlock affordable, efficient and effective public and private financing at scale to support NUA implementation.

Guiding Questions:

1. What reforms are needed to efficiently and effectively leverage domestic finance, including unlocking the potential of local authorities and overcoming fragmented sectoral investments towards a system-wide approach to scaling up finance for adequate housing, infrastructure, and basic services including in informal settlements?
2. How can the role of International Financial Institutions, climate finance and capital market contributions be better aligned to deliver on the commitments of the NUA, including through inclusive and innovative finance mechanisms?
3. What role could the United Nations system play to better coordinate among countries to scale financing for adequate housing and sustainable urbanization, in line with the NUA and Sevilla Commitment?
4. What are the key elements to create an enabling environment at multilateral and national levels that foster efficiency and effectiveness to scale finance for informal settlement upgrading, adequate housing, and urban transformation?

Multi-stakeholder Panel 3 – Delivering Urban Resilience in an Era of Escalating Crises on Climate, Disaster and Environmental Risk

As climate change, environmental degradation, and disaster risks intensify, cities are increasingly on the frontlines of global crises. Despite growing global commitments including under the Rio Conventions, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and other agreements, significant gaps remain in translating these frameworks into integrated, coherent, localized impacts. While many countries have embedded urban dimensions into their NDCs, housing dimensions and adaptation remain underfinanced, and resilience-building efforts are often fragmented across sectors and scales.

This panel will examine how to improve climate and disaster resilience in cities through integrated, inclusive, people-centered, and place-based actions to protect lives and livelihoods, strengthen environmental sustainability and safeguard long-term development.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can national, subnational, and local authorities accelerate integrated approaches while addressing growing risks such as extreme heat, drought, flooding, and sea-level rise, particularly in vulnerable and rapidly urbanizing contexts?
2. How can countries advance implementation of global commitments in national housing policy, territorial planning, sustainable transport and mobility, energy efficiency, resilient infrastructure, environmental protection, waste disposal, and strengthened multilevel governance?
3. How can climate financing instruments and partnerships strengthen housing, land and basic services delivery to ensure that no one and no place is left behind?

Multi-stakeholder Panel 4 – Activating Future-Ready Cities through Governance, Capacity, Data, Innovation and Digital Transformation

As cities navigate an increasingly complex and evolving global context, strengthening local and subnational authorities, multilevel governance, institutional capacity, and forward-looking approaches are central to delivering the NUA. Future ready cities are built on data that is trusted, interoperable, and actionable, enabling governments to integrate policy, capacity, and digital tools into coherent systems that drive resilience, equity, and long-term sustainability. At the same time, rapid digital transformation and emerging technologies — including artificial intelligence — are reshaping how cities are planned, designed, managed, and governed, leveraging new and existing opportunities while mitigating risks related to inequality, access, and rights. This calls for more integrated, inclusive, and forward-looking systems considering the Pact of the Future and its annexes.

This panel will examine how to strengthen sub-national entities and multilevel governance, enhance capacity, leverage digital innovation responsibly, and apply strategic foresight to support and implement resilient, inclusive and future-ready cities.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can multilevel governance be strengthened, including strengthening local and subnational authorities to ensure effective localization and implementation to support more coherent, accountable, and inclusive governance that delivers for all?
2. How can cities leverage digital technologies and data systems, to improve adequate housing, urban planning, service delivery, and citizen engagement, while reducing digital divides, safeguarding rights, and ensuring inclusive and responsible digital transformation?
3. What investments and partnerships are needed to strengthen national, regional, and local institutional capacity, urban data systems, and strategic foresight, and how can the United Nations system support Member States and all stakeholders in anticipating and responding to future housing and urban challenges?

Logistics

Member States and Observers are invited to inscribe in the list of speakers for the plenary segment of the meeting through e-deleGATE. The list of speakers will be opened for inscription on Monday, 8 June 2026 at 10 a.m., until Friday, 10 July 2026 at 5 p.m.. The time limit for statements in the plenary segment will be five (5) minutes for individual delegations speaking in their national capacity and seven (7) minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.

There will be no pre-established list of speakers for the interactive multi-stakeholder panels. Participants wishing to take the floor during the panels are invited to press the microphone button. The time limit will be three (3) minutes for individual delegations speaking in their national capacity and five (5) minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.

The meeting will be broadcast on UN WebTV.

Programme Outline

Time	Session	Venue
Thursday, 16 July 2026		
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Opening Segment	General Assembly Hall
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Plenary Segment	General Assembly Hall
3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Plenary Segment	General Assembly Hall
Friday, 17 July 2026		
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Multi-stakeholder Panel 1	Trusteeship Council Chamber
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Multi-stakeholder Panel 2	Trusteeship Council Chamber
3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Multi-stakeholder Panel 3	Trusteeship Council Chamber
4:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	Multi-stakeholder Panel 4	Trusteeship Council Chamber
5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Closing Segment	Trusteeship Council Chamber

Outcome

As mandated by General Assembly resolution 79/214, the high-level meeting shall adopt a concise and action-oriented political declaration to renew commitment and accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.