

EMG Interagency Dialogue on an IMG on Urbanization and the Environment

Thursday 17 July 2025

14:00-15:30 CEST

Concept Note (Updated 17 July 2025, 12:00 CEST)

Background

As a legacy of UN-Habitat's upgrade from a centre to a fully-fledged programme, the mandate and terms of reference of the EMG still include the topic of human settlements. As the UN System-Wide Strategy on Sustainable Urban Development, adopted by the Chief Executive Board in 2019, lacks an interagency mechanism for coordinated implementation, and the EMG lacks a mandate from the Chief Executive Board, there has been growing momentum for the harmonization of these two modalities.

Consequently, in the 30th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Environment Management Group (EMG) in October 2024, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat proposed to the EMG Chair a new Issue Management Group (IMG) on urbanization and the environment. In the mid-term technical segment of the 31st SOM UN-Habitat's EMG focal point reiterated this intention and proposed the four subtopics of:

- Land use change and urban expansion: a macro, peri-urban scale focused predominantly on biodiversity
- Housing and neighbourhood configuration: a meso, neighborhood scale focused predominantly on climate change mitigation
- Informal settlement transformation: a meso, neighbourhood scale focused predominantly on climate change adaptation
- Construction and material flows: a micro, building scale focused predominantly on pollution

Subsequently, a discussion paper and this concept note have been drafted for an interagency dialogue between member entities of the EMG. This virtual dialogue will be held on Thursday 17 July, 14:00-15:30 CEST. In it, participating entities will be encouraged to share their views and suggest concrete proposals for such an IMG. These will feed into the drafting of terms of reference that would be recommended to the EMG Technical Segment of the SOM for consideration of the SOM in September.

Programme

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| 14:00-14:05 | Welcome by Ligia Noronha, ASG, Secretary of the EMG |
| 14:05-14:10 | Opening and Framing of the dialogue by Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of UN-Habitat |
| 14:10-14:30 | Presentation of the discussion paper (5 minutes per subtopic) |

Land use change and urban expansion

Andrew Rudd, Programme Development Branch, UN-Habitat

Housing and neighbourhood configuration

Herman Pienaar, Lead – Urban Lab, UN-Habitat

Informal settlement transformation

Ombretta Tempa, Chief, Land, Housing & Shelter Section, UN-Habitat

Construction and material flows

Joshua Maviti, Programme Management Officer, Land, Housing and Shelter Section, UN-Habitat

14:30-14:55 Initial thoughts and perspectives from agency and programme representatives (5 minutes each)

14:30 Jyotsna (Jo) Puri, Director, Policy and Programmes Division, UNEP (Confirmed)

14:35 Gulnara Roll, Head of Cities Unit, UNEP (Confirmed)

14:40 Astra Bonini, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, DESA (Confirmed)

14:45 Curt Garrigan, Chief of the Sustainable Urban Development Section for the Environment and Development Division, UNESCAP (Confirmed)

14:50 Javier Torner Ruiz De Temino, Regional Advisor for Cities, UNECE (Confirmed)

14:55-15:20 Open discussion moderated by Hossein Fadaei, Head of the Secretariat, Environment Management Group

Guiding questions:

Is this workstream relevant for collective unpacking?

Which related challenges should a dedicated IMG explore?

How could the UN System accelerate impact?

15:20-15:25 Synthesis by Andrew Rudd

15:25-15:30 Concluding remarks by Moderator