



'Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action'

Regional Consultation for Africa

6th July 2021, 17:15-19:00 (EAT)

Venue: Online

About the Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference

The three-day Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference on Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action has been organized within the framework of the global policy dialogue of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP). PSUP was initiated by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and has been implemented by UN-Habitat in 190 cities in 40 ACP countries since its inception in 2008, with funding from the European Commission (EC). The Tripartite Conference seeks to take stock of progress made in transforming living conditions in informal settlements and slums, and examine the lessons learnt, recommendations, commitments and next steps needed to meet the scale and implement the SDG and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

Description of the session

Urbanization in Africa is progressing rapidly. The continent's rate of urbanization soared from 15 percent in 1960 to 40 percent in 2010 and is projected to reach 60 percent in 2050. It is expected that urban populations in Africa will triple in the next 30 years, transforming the profile of the region, and challenging policy makers to harness the urbanization phenomenon for sustainable and inclusive growth and development. The rapid urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular presents opportunities for economic growth but also the capacities of governments and cities to manage growing population needs for services, housing, jobs, and social infrastructure has been outstripped.

One of the key consequences of this imbalance is the increasing urban poverty characterized by occurrence of slums and informal settlements which lack basic urban services, are unplanned and congested and depriving people of decent living conditions. The proportion of people living in slums are excluded from social, economic, and physical goods of urbanization. A recent UN-Habitat estimate puts this proportion at 56%¹ in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Between 1990 and 2014, the continent's slum population more than doubled, to some 200 million people though there is variability geographically in Africa due to some socio-economic factors, urbanization levels, localized migration patterns and data availability. In northern African cities, for instance, proportions of urban slum populations are lower compared to Sub-Saharan Africa where current urbanization rates are highest globally. The growing urbanization of poverty means that finding ways to improve lives of people living in slums will be one of the most pressing problems of the 21st century for African governments.



Urban issues are high on the global development agenda, most notably, by the global community's inclusion into the 2030 Global Development Agenda, Goal 11, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA)s adopted in October 2016. Urban poverty and informality diminish the ability for Sub-Saharan nations to meet the target SDG11.1.1. Subsequently, it undermines the capacity to achieve the Goals: 1 (End Poverty), 5 (Achieve Gender Equality), 10 (Reduce Inequality) and 13 (Take climate action). Similarly, their ability to deliver on the Africa 2063 Agenda will also be curtailed by the rising urban inequalities.

Living conditions in slums are affecting the health profiles of the urban poor dramatically every day. In global average, the bottom 20 percent of the poorest urban population living in informal settlements have a life expectancy that is 15 years shorter than the richer 40 percent of the urban population.². The challenge of the urgency, the unpredictability of the pandemic, the scale of the vulnerabilities, the long-term need for change as well as the diverse actors and conditions in settlements requires a flexible and adaptive approach with a strategic lens. It might be necessary to re-evaluate local policies, strengthen support in different areas as events evolve and ensure scaling of investment integrating the needs of the disadvantaged. A well-functioning and close partnership with communities in informal settlements with established response mechanisms is needed.

Comprehensive urban poverty data and capacity gap at governance and technical levels and financing mechanisms have been identified as critical factors inhibiting delivery the SDGs and NUA (New Urban Agenda) in the African cities, including the vital need of the urban poor in informal settlements. At the regional level, an overarching policy framework linking to regional and sub-regional political and development agenda to provide an integrated and comprehensive approach would suffice to support regional priority setting, share lessons learned and development policy alignment.

Expected Outcome

The regional consultations will bring together African ambassadors of the OACPS, Ministers, Mayors, academia, development partners, including the European Commission. The event will provide an opportunity to appreciate the urban poverty as a challenge and take stock of regional and sub-regional political and development organizations and opportunities for inclusion of urban poverty into the existing frameworks, especially the Africa Agenda 2063. It will share experiences, strategic frameworks that can be leveraged at local, national, sub-regional and regional levels for implementing the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in informal settlements.

The event will seek to commence further consultations within the sub-regional blocs for common strategies to address urban poverty and informal settlements centering on monitoring urban poverty, financing, urban governance, inclusivity, knowledge exchange and learning and articulation of inclusive urbanization at continental development forums.