



'Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action'

WORKING SESSION 2:

Global Data Trends on Slums and COVID-19: Meeting the New Scale

Date: 6th July 2021, 15:45-17:15 (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

Conservative estimates project over 1 billion slum dwellers living in cities and urban centers globally. Slums and informal settlements pose a significant challenge to achieving sustainable human development and inclusive urban development policies, especially in developing countries in Africa, South East Asia, Caribbean, and Pacific regions.

By adopting an urban goal SDG 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", the international community made sustainable urbanization part of the core of human development. Target 11.1: "*By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums*", commits member countries to monitoring upgrading of slums which is a key decision support tool to addressing root-causes of informal settlements and contribute alleviation of urban poverty. SDG Target 11.1 is to be realized there is need for countries and cities to have a definitive baseline of the slum situation and indicators to quantify what constitutes an improvement in slum conditions at human impact level. UN Economic and Social Integration Commission (ECOSOC) accorded UN-Habitat the mandate to monitor SDG 11 and report on its implementation. Member states conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019, the negative economic, social and health impacts have continued to intensify partly due to adverse effects of response mechanisms adopted, loss of incomes and employment and in many cases the resultant domino effect of confinements and existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. People living in the lower economic spectrum globally have borne the heaviest brunt of the COVID-19 scourge globally but the urban poor, especially those that live in informal settlements and slums have fared worst.

Statistics have been reported from the favelas of Brazil, the world's third worst country hit by COVID-19¹. In São Paulo, people who live in poorer areas and contract the virus are up to 10 times more likely to die than people in wealthy areas, according to data released by the city's health department. In Rio, the favelas concentrate around 22% of the population of the municipality but correspond to 34.6% of the number of confirmed cases and 9.8% of COVID-19 deaths.².

Reducing urban poverty and inequalities is a cornerstone to ensure cities are better prepared for future shocks and crises. Without inclusive cities and urban development, the impacts of future shocks and stresses may be as acute as – or greater than – they have been during the current outbreak. If cities continue to be divided starkly along lines of income, service access, ethnicity, and migration status, leaving no one behind will be progressively more difficult.

Faced with the exceptional global phenomenon of the COVIS-19 pandemic and rapid urbanization, that is already challenging, to developing countries due to rapid urbanization it is imperative to have further focus on slum populations, understand intricate and interrelated needs and monitor growth interventions. Multi-dimensional data on slums is essential to inform decision makers to consider uniqueness of the needs and challenges and formulate appropriate interventions. The lessons learnt on on-going COVID-19 pandemic is crucial aspect to slum upgrading to forestall similar of worse impact on vulnerable communities in future.

Guiding Questions

- What are the current global, regional, and sub-regional data trends on slums and informal settlements?
- What do recent studies and statistics reveal about urban vulnerability to COVID-19 especially the poor communities?
- How can SDG monitoring framework contribute to formulation of national slum upgrading programmes/policy?
- What is the role of community generated data in informing national/city monitoring frameworks?
- Is there a role of a slum index to support in monitoring governance and participation in slum upgrading?

¹ ¹ <https://covid19.who.int/>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/brazil/qa-brazils-poor-suffer-most-under-covid-19>

4th OACPS-EC-UN-Habitat INTERNATIONAL TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE

6 - 8 JULY 2021, ONLINE



Expected Outcomes

The working session shall highlight the current global trends in monitoring the urban poverty and demographic changes globally with indication of effectiveness of slum upgrading policies, and evidence of poverty alleviation through policy implementation. Exploration of available data and information on the impact of COVI-19 on urban poor, especially those that are living in informal settlements and slums, is expected to provide evidence and point to entry points to address the vulnerabilities through substantial increases in investments to address indicators of poverty.

The session will contribute to inclusion of data and monitoring milestones into the conference Action Declaration and culminate into part of best practices for ACP countries to design adaptable strategies to monitor national policies and programmes. The content and outcomes of the working session will inform the content design of the Solutions to the Slum Challenge: Global Report on Human Settlements 2020 publication that will take stock of global response to slums since the publication of, 'The Challenge of Slums - Global Report on Human Settlements' in 2003.