



Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference

'Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action'

WORKING SESSION 5:

Equitable Approach for Reducing Inequalities and Poverty

7th July 2021, 16:00-17:30 (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

Equitable, inclusive and prosperous cities must tap the full potential of all citizens. Transforming and improving precarious neighborhoods in a sustainable way requires the participation of all segments of the communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made visible and exacerbated multiple existing inequalities, exclusions and deprivations, the impact of which has been felt most acutely by marginalized and vulnerable groups. The layers of marginalization (poverty, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual and gender identity, disability) caused by exclusion, stigmatization, and discrimination were all obstacles to benefiting from the prevention and mitigation of the impacts of the pandemic. Exclusion has also fueled distrust of externally imposed measures in times of crisis. This situation urgently required a "whole society approach" that included **community-led responses** and their vital role in "assisting the most vulnerable populations," recognizing their unique role in "providing economic and livelihood opportunities and tailoring responses to the community context. This includes direct provision of food, medical and prevention services to those at risk, promotion of human rights, reduction of stigma and gender-based violence, especially against women.



The virus had a particularly dramatic impact in fragile contexts and in poor, densely populated urban areas and slums, with residents unable to self-isolate due to lack of adequate housing. The crisis demonstrated that a locally-tailored response to the populations most in need can only be achieved through advocacy, service delivery, and community-led monitoring.

An equity approach to urban development is one that seeks to address the needs of excluded or poorly integrated communities through policies and programs designed to reduce disparities while promoting healthy and vibrant places to live. The equity approach thus aims to correct initial inequalities to achieve equality of opportunity between different social groups, both within precarious neighborhoods and more generally in the city.

It helps reduce barriers to individual and collective potential, contributes to expanding opportunities and strengthening civic engagement. It creates equal life chances with equal concern for people's needs, promoting deeper and more sustainable change.

The equitable approach is part of the steps to be taken to achieve the goal of equality and must always be placed in that overall framework. The principle of equality is not only a moral concept, but also a conceptual framework that guides decision making to improve life in cities for all. Equality in urban development is based on key elements such as **participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, rule of law and social inclusion**. These principles can provide practical guidance for designing and evaluating development strategies and specifying their content - for example, prioritizing universal access to adequate water and energy, security of tenure, access to adequate housing, provision of essential public services and respect for the common good. It can also help deploy or advance existing concepts, such as the "Right to the city."

It is a useful and necessary tool for redefining the urban policy agenda at the local, national and regional levels in order to guarantee shared prosperity. It is also a factor in strengthening the city's capacity for transformation to ensure the collective well-being and fulfillment of all, promoting a more holistic, equitable, balanced and multicultural type of development.

Guiding Questions

- How does the equitable approach translate on the ground, in informal settlements and slums?
- How can an equitable approach contribute to achieve scale in upgrading informal settlements and slums ?
- What progress has been made in implementing community empowerment and capacity building?
- What challenges remain?

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

6 - 8 JULY 2021, ONLINE

PARTICIPATORY
**SLUM
UPGRADING
PROGRAMME**



TRANSFORMING A BILLION LIVES



Expected Outcome

This session will explore community empowerment as a vehicle for change, not only in informal settlements, but more broadly in society. It aims to provide, through the presentation of examples and case studies, clear recommendations for the integration of an equitable approach into slum upgrading strategies and the conference Declaration and Action Framework.



Bangladesh, Dacca, Kallayanpur slum, ©UN-Habitat-Kirsten Milhahn 2019