



## Fourth OACPS/EC/UN-Habitat International Tripartite Conference

'Slum Upgrading and Prevention in the Decade of Action'

### WORKING SESSION 6:

#### Climate Resilience for the Urban Poor

8<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 11:00-12:30 (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

One of the most significant challenges for climate change adaptation is how to build resilience for the one billion urban dwellers who are estimated to live in slums and informal settlements. A large portion of these populations, say +/- 70 per cent of the total<sup>1</sup>, are highly vulnerable to climate-related impacts such as river flooding, coastal inundation, landslides, and others. Additionally, these settlements have been built outside the 'formal' system of laws and regulations that are meant to ensure safe, resilient structures, settlements, and procedures.

<sup>1</sup> Building Climate Resilience of Urban Poor Initiative

# 4<sup>th</sup> OACPS-EC-UN-Habitat INTERNATIONAL TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE

6 - 8 JULY 2021, ONLINE



COVID-19 is a wake-up call. It is a diagnostic test to assess pre-existing vulnerabilities. For example, due to pre-existing conditions for water and sanitation, adequate housing and overcrowding, and other underlying pre-existing health vulnerabilities such as untreated illnesses, as well as precarious nature

of informal employment and livelihood, the policies to curb COVID-19 spread were impractical in informal settlements and slums. Therefore, the urban poor living in informal settlements and slums worldwide feel the impact of COVID-19 disproportionately.

Climate change rapidly presents additional risks for those living in already inadequate living conditions in informal settlements and slums. Cities are facing an increasing frequency and magnitude of extreme climatic events such as floods, heatwaves, droughts, landslides, storms, wildfires, cyclones, coastal erosion and inundation, and sea surges, and informal communities are particularly vulnerable due to three underlying factors: (i) the **physical location** is often on environmentally-fragile locations such as steep slopes, floodplains, coastal shores and river banks; (ii) the **socio-economic characteristics** of the residents, such as high levels of poverty and illiteracy, mean that these communities have low capacity to deal with climate impacts; and (iii) the **political and institutional marginalization** of these neighbourhoods, stemming from non-recognition of informal settlements as part of the larger city fabric, often results in the absence of meaningful risk-reducing infrastructure.

As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change bluntly warns: "Risks are concentrated in informal settlements". Yet to date, the global community has not heard that warning. Analyst <sup>2</sup>, recon that less than 10 per cent of resources channelled towards climate activities targeting the urban poor by international, regional and national climate funds between 2003 and 2016 have reached local levels, thus running the risk of these highly vulnerable populations slipping through the cracks of climate finance. The global community urgently needs to scale up and address the needs of these neglected and vulnerable populations to Build the Climate Resilience of the Urban Poor.

<sup>2</sup> IIED, 2017. Delivering real change: getting international climate finance to the local level.



This session will be an interactive panel discussion with a broader audience to collectively discuss two key areas:

**1: Climate Action in Informal Settlements:** Climate Action in informal settlements must begin with a detailed, in-depth and nuanced understanding of the physical conditions, demographics, and differentiated vulnerability to adequately plan feasible and targeted interventions. Resilience-building requires a multi-pronged approach that addresses not just physical conditions but also social, economic and political capacities, usually through a participatory process where residents play an active part in planning, designing and implementing actions in four or more areas: (i) upgrading to more resilient **housing**, (ii) upgrading **infrastructure**, (iii) enhancing **ecosystems**, and (iv) supporting **community capacities**;

**2: Build Back Better:** Building, water, energy and waste technologies, urban and community design for low-carbon development, neighbourhood level low-carbon development, and ancillary benefits from low-carbon technology for upgrading are opportunities that can be harnessed to build back better, and most importantly, climate finance might be supporting their deployment. Because the needs are directly linked to climate change, it is appropriate for these costs to be met by climate finance to sufficiently reach the low-income groups who are most vulnerable to climate impacts. Low-income urban dwellers struggle to get the finance they need for livelihood generation, home improvement and buying goods and services as the formal finance system are not adequate to provide access for them. New mechanisms will be needed to link these traditional climate finance mechanisms to the needs of informal settlements, which might include the bundling of projects, the development of new financial instruments.

#### Expected Outcome

The session will present case studies, discuss key principles and practical approaches to develop critical recommendations for integrating climate adaptation considerations into slum upgrading strategy, including the Declaration's Action Framework and policy recommendations.