

Habitat III Thematic Meeting: Informal Settlements

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Countries throughout the world have been experiencing rapid urbanization for decades, and this will continue to happen particularly in Africa and parts of Asia. Combined with increasing urban poverty, chronic shortages of serviced land and adequate housing, and ineffective and inappropriate urban policies and planning approaches, large numbers of urban dwellers have had few other options than to settle in life- and health-threatening slums. Today, around a billion urban residents live in slums globally. Unless urgent action is taken, this number is likely to increase in the coming decades, posing a significant threat to the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of cities.

The significant increase of the world's urban population leads to a crisis of unprecedented magnitude in urban shelter provision. All these new urban citizens need to be provided with shelter, employment and with urban basic services. The limited capacity of most urban economies in developing countries is unable to meet more than a reduced part of these needs, so that most of the employment and housing are found in the informal sector, where around 67% of the urban population in developing countries are currently living and working.

The Habitat III Thematic Meeting will explore approaches and strategies in the inter-related areas of tenure security and housing, livelihoods, safety, and governance. Planning and policy interventions aimed at improving the living conditions of informal settlements dwellers face key challenges, such as tenure security, land availability, provision of infrastructure, services, and socio-economic facilities, availability of appropriate construction materials and building technologies, poverty, high unemployment, and vulnerability.

Those, and other related issues will be discussed during the Habitat III Thematic Meeting on Informal Settlements in Pretoria, South Africa.

More information at [habitat3.org/pretoria](https://www.habitat3.org/pretoria)