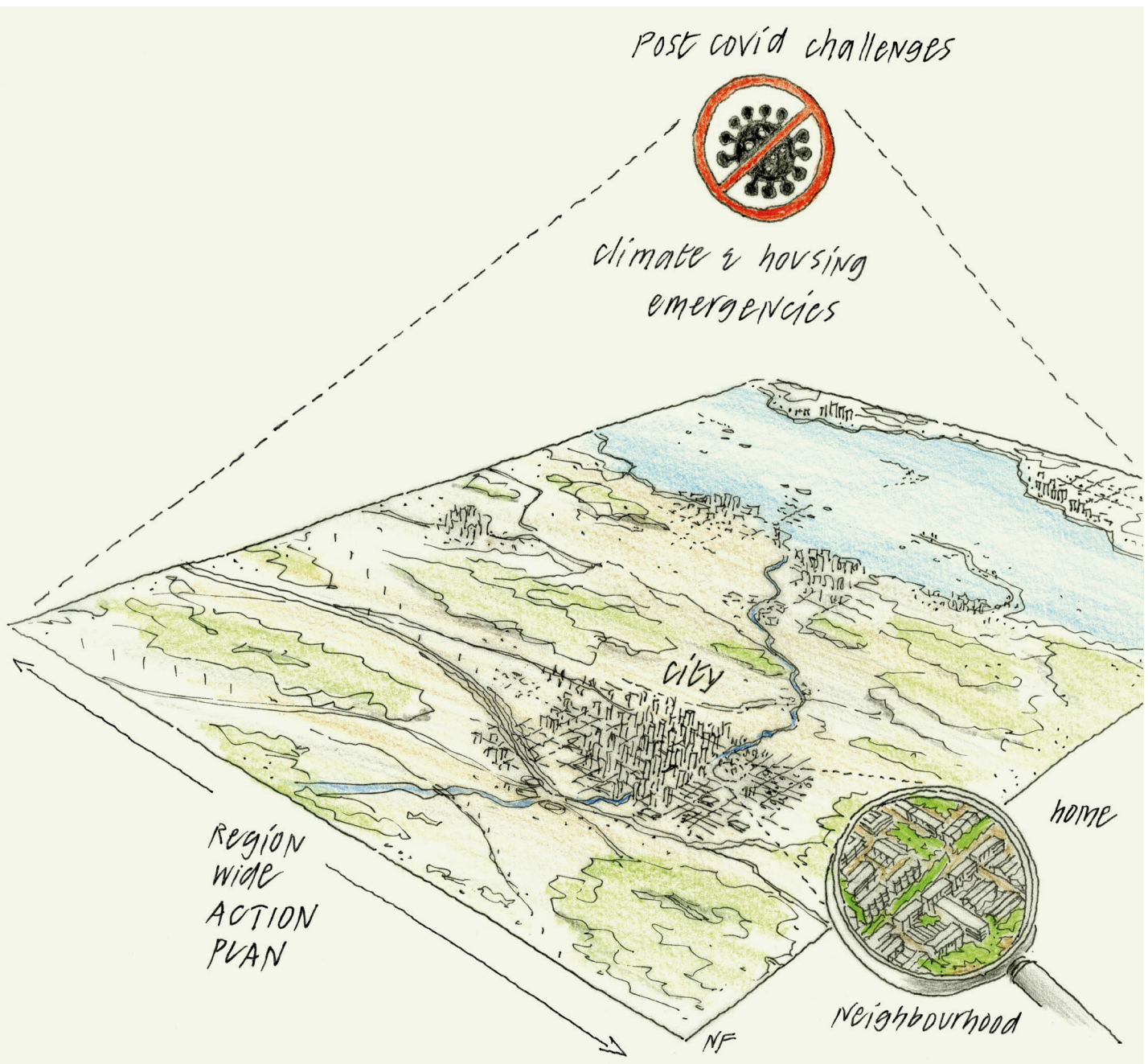


# Place and life in the ECE A Regional Action Plan 2030

Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes



**UNECE**

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**UNITED NATIONS**

Geneva, 2022

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# Foreword

Cities and urban areas, home to over half of the world's population, are facing multiple challenges, including the lingering effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change, and rapid urbanization. These challenges carry negative social, economic and environmental consequences, which, in many countries, are compounded by the lack of adequate and affordable housing. While local and national authorities have implemented a vast array of exceptional emergency measures to support the most vulnerable segments of their population and address the climate change challenge, the road to recovery remains uncertain. This is particularly the case for countries lacking the required capacities and financial resources.

It is, therefore, a great pleasure to present the UNECE regional action plan "Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes" for helping UNECE cities and national governments ensure simultaneous treatment of the multi-faceted challenges to achieving sustainable and affordable housing and sustainable urban development.

The Regional Action Plan provides an integrated and balanced approach for supporting local and national development efforts until 2030 in two inter-linked policy areas: cities, neighbourhoods, homes and rural life; and sustainable housing and homes. It contains clear and concise guiding principles, goals, targets and actions for building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable people-centred cities in the UNECE region with affordable, accessible and climate-neutral housing.

The Regional Action Plan is anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, and the United Nations system-wide COVID-19 response guidance documents, thereby providing a universal language for policy dialogue and international cooperation. It also provides a common approach for conceptualizing and implementing forward-looking solutions for upscaling the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All the United Nations Member States stand to benefit from this powerful tool.



**Olga ALGAYEROVA**

Under-Secretary-General  
of the United Nations

Executive Secretary of the United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe

# Preface

To support the COVID-19 response efforts in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region, the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management mandated<sup>1</sup> the secretariat with the task of preparing a Regional Action Plan to inform high-level discussions during the 2021 Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management<sup>2</sup>. Specifically, the Committee stipulated the following:

- ▶ The Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management is further expected to launch a regional action plan for the ECE region “#Housing 2030: promoting sustainable housing as part of the recovery and rebuilding plans after the COVID-19 pandemic” (ECE/HBP/2020/10, paragraph 13).
- ▶ The Regional Action Plan is expected to support Governments in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis through the sharing of examples and good practices in facilitating investments and promoting the “building better” approach - as outlined in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”... The adoption of the Regional Action Plan by the Ministerial Meeting will facilitate an exchange of good practices and experiences, support countries in shaping policy packages and financial measures to promote sustainable housing and urban development (ECE/HBP/2020/10, paragraph 14).

The Committee emphasized that the Regional Action Plan should focus on supporting sustainable and affordable housing as outlined in the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing<sup>3</sup> as well as sustainable urban development. The Committee noted that the Regional Action Plan should be anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup>, the Paris Agreement<sup>5</sup>, the New Urban Agenda<sup>6</sup> and the United Nations guidance report “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19”<sup>7</sup>. It should also build on the “#Housing 2030: Effective Policies for Affordable Housing in the UNECE Region” study<sup>8</sup>, developed by UNECE in cooperation with Housing Europe, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and other partners as well as the #Housing2030 initiative<sup>9</sup>.

These key documents, together with the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development<sup>10</sup>, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development in the Economic Commission for Europe Region<sup>11</sup>, and the United Nations system-wide guidance documents on COVID-19 response provide the basis for the UNECE Regional Action Plan.

The Regional Action Plan provides an integrated, balanced approach to achieving sustainable and affordable housing and sustainable urban development. It contains clear and concise guiding principles, goals, targets and actions for supporting local and national development efforts in the UNECE region until 2030, and for bolstering international cooperation. It was endorsed by UNECE member States in 2021 at the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

<sup>1</sup> The mandate was given during the eighty-first annual session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, which was held from 6 to 9 October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> The Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management was held from 6 to 8 October 2021.

<sup>3</sup> The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing is available at [https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/charter/Language\\_versions/ENG\\_Geneva\\_UN\\_Charter.pdf](https://unece.org/DAM/hlm/charter/Language_versions/ENG_Geneva_UN_Charter.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>.

<sup>7</sup> The report is available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/shared-responsibility-global-solidarity-responding-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19>.

<sup>8</sup> The study is available at [https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Housing2030%20study\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/Housing2030%20study_E_web.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> For more information, see <https://www.housing2030.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> The declaration is available at <https://unece.org/info/Housing-and-Land-Management/pub/2910>.

<sup>11</sup> The Habitat III Regional report for the UNECE region is available at <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/01/habitatiii-regional-report-europe-region.pdf>.

# Acknowledgements

The Regional Action Plan was developed by the secretariat of the Housing and Land Management Unit, Forests, Land and Housing Division of UNECE with the support of the Glasgow Urban Lab\*.

The illustrations in the Regional Action Plan were designed by international award-winning architect Norman Foster, President of the Norman Foster Foundation. The Foundation has a long-standing partnership with UNECE as a Centre of Excellence for the promotion of sustainable housing and cities. The illustrations present a forward-looking vision of city planning, incorporating the different elements of sustainable urban development, including energy efficiency, respect for cultural and social values, and green spaces.

\* The Glasgow Urban Lab is a Centre of Excellence of UNECE which operates as a partnership between Glasgow School of Art and the Glasgow City Council for capacity-building on sustainable urban development.

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>2030 Agenda</b>	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<b>COVID-19</b>	coronavirus disease
<b>ECE</b>	(United Nations) Economic Commission for Europe
<b>DESA</b>	(United Nations) Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>Habitat III</b>	United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
<b>HSE</b>	Health, Safety and Environment
<b>NUA</b>	New Urban Agenda
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SME</b>	small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>SEIA</b>	Socio-Economic Impact Assessments
<b>UCLG</b>	United Cities and Local Government
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>VLR</b>	Voluntary Local Review
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization







# INTRODUCTION

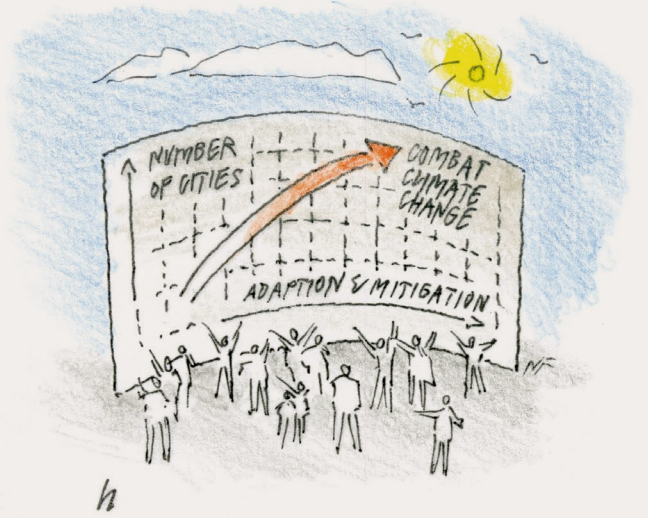
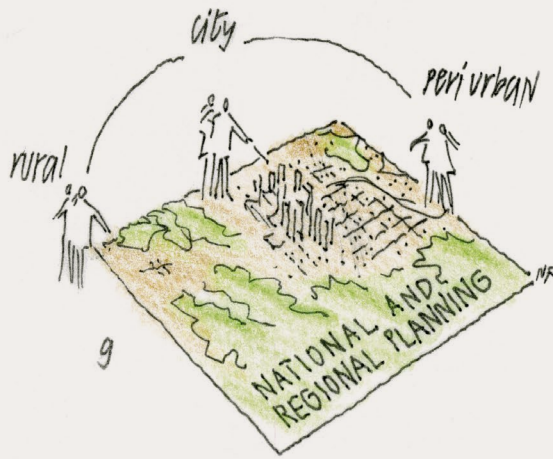
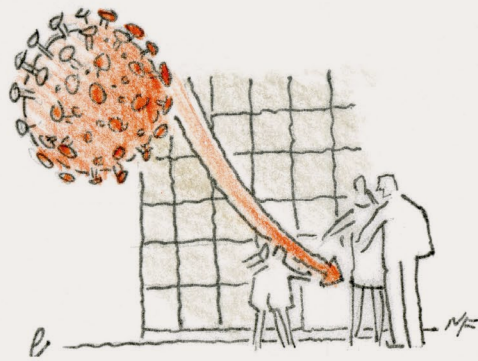
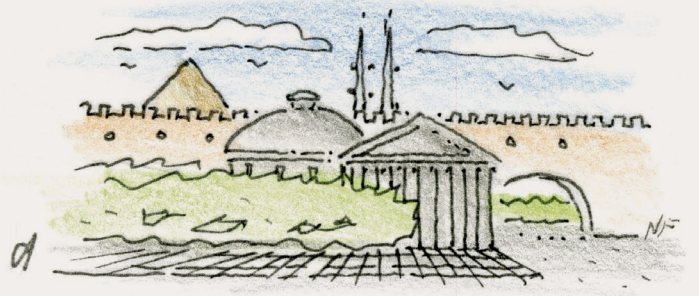
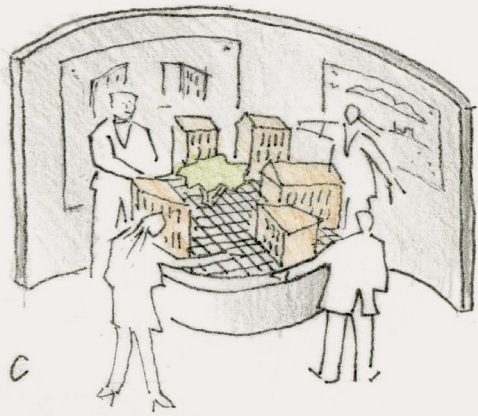
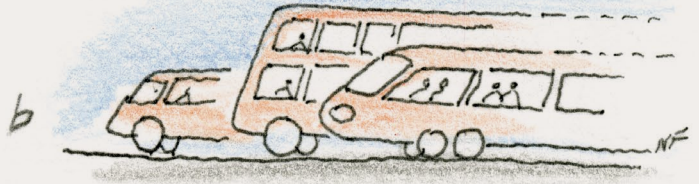
# Introduction

The UNECE Regional Action Plan aims at supporting a simultaneous treatment of the complex challenges to achieving sustainable housing and urban development in the UNECE region in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and housing emergencies. It provides clear and concise principles, policies, goals, targets and actions geared toward creating synergies between interventions at the local and national levels and bolstering international cooperation.

The Regional Action Plan is anchored in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) which addresses the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated and balanced manner by focusing development efforts around the 17 “integrated and indivisible” global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated 169 targets. The 2030 Agenda also commits all the United Nations Member States, irrespective of their income levels, to contribute to the achievement of SDGs and sets out 231 statistical and non-statistical indicators for tracking implementation and reporting progress through the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

The Regional Action Plan integrates the guiding principles of the 2030 Agenda and supports an integrated and balanced approach to the achievement of SDG 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) in the UNECE region. SDG 11 involves following targets:

- (a) Access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services (11.1);
- (b) Access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all (11.2);
- (c) Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management (11.3);
- (d) Protect and safeguard ... cultural and natural heritage (11.4);
- (e) Significantly reduce the number of deaths ... and substantially decrease direct economic losses ... with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations (11.5), which is of particular significance in the context of the global efforts to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and address its lingering effects;
- (f) Provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (11.7);
- (g) Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning (11.a);
- (h) Increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change ... (11.b).



The SDG 11 places the pursuit for sustainable housing in the broader context of urban development. It stresses that securing access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services (11.1) should go hand in hand with ensuring: sustainable transport systems (11.2); inclusive and sustainable urbanization anchored in participatory, integrated, and sustainable planning and management (11.3); and universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces (11.7). The SDG 11 also features a special emphasis on strengthening local resilience (target 11.b), with resilience understood as the capacity of cities to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of natural and human-made disasters.

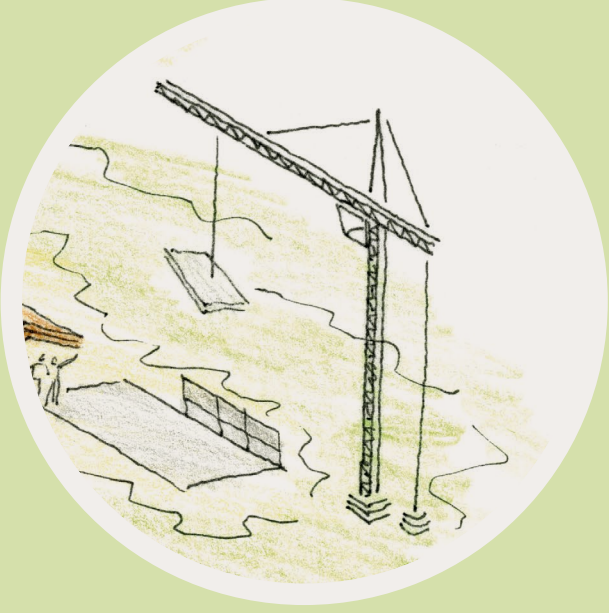
These considerations underline the integrated approach of the Regional Action Plan to placing affordable housing at the forefront of sustainable urbanism. This Regional Action Plan is also based on the fundamental premise that sustainable housing has a key role in the quality of human life, as established in the *Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing*. The Charter, which focuses on common challenges resulting from globalization, demographic changes and climate change, among other things, recognises the provision of housing in itself is a resource-intensive exercise with negative environmental consequences, particularly for carbon dioxide emissions. Therefore, using creative solutions such as large-scale retrofitting of residential buildings, it stipulates respecting the cultural values of communities, and maintaining an undivided focus on ensuring adequate and affordable housing for all citizens. The Charter sets out the following four principles:

- (a) **Environmental protection:** Housing should be planned, constructed and used in a way that minimizes environmental impact and promotes environmental sustainability.
- (b) **Economic effectiveness:** Housing is, and has been, an influential sector in national economies and should be a sustainable element in a vibrant economy as well as meeting people's needs.
- (c) **Social inclusion and participation:** Housing policy should be advanced with an enhanced emphasis on engaged and negotiated civic involvement, social inclusiveness, public health, transparency, and a concern for ethical processes.
- (d) **Cultural adequacy:** Housing policy should take into consideration questions of cultural identity, value, and emotional well-being.

The Regional Action Plan also draws on best practices in sustainable housing across the UNECE region, which were inspired by the consistent implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the principles of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. These practices were captured in the *Habitat III Regional Report on Housing and Urban Development in the Economic Commission for Europe Region*, and formed the basis of the *Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Housing and Urban Development*. The Ministerial Declaration called upon national, regional and local governments and their stakeholders to address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of housing and urban challenges. The Ministerial Declaration also stressed the urgent need for improving overall governance and cooperation, and highlighted the central role of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management in supporting regional action:

“the historical importance of the Committee as a cornerstone of the pan-European cooperation in the field of housing and urban development, including its transforming efforts to address housing and urban development challenges in countries with economies in transition. The Committee is the only open pan-European intergovernmental platform to deal with these topics from all the sustainable development dimensions - economic, environmental and social, including cultural aspects. The work of the Committee is aimed mainly at assisting member states in the region to address a number of major housing and urban challenges, including those of an international nature.”

In addition, this Regional Action Plan is based on the findings and recommendations of the *#Housing2030: Effective policies for affordable housing in the UNECE region* study, which was carried out by UNECE in partnership with UN-Habitat and Housing Europe, as mandated by the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (UNECE 2021 Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management). The study explored, among other things, housing governance and regulation; access to finance and funding; access and availability of land for housing construction; and climate-neutral housing construction and renovation. The regional Action Plan also follows the United Nations system-wide COVID-19 response guidance documents, which are discussed in the next section.



# THE PANDEMIC AND ITS EFFECTS

## COVID-19

# The COVID-19 pandemic and its effects

The year 2020 saw countries across the world besieged by the COVID-19 pandemic, which triggered a global health crisis “unlike any in the 75-year history of the United Nations”<sup>12</sup>. The impact of this crisis was highlighted in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19* report, published in March 2020.<sup>13</sup> The report detailed the social, economic and multidimensional impacts of the pandemic, and warned against their profound and negative effects on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Shared Responsibility report gave way to the United Nations common guidance document *Saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better*<sup>14</sup>, published in September 2020. The guidance document called for factoring the social and economic costs of public safety and health measures into national COVID-19 response plans based on situational assessment and has been updated several times to reflect the findings and recommendations of national *Socio-Economic Impact Assessments* (SEIAs). As shown in table 1, consistent with the guidelines outlined in the Shared responsibility, these assessments are focused on enabling a three-point COVID-19 response effort with a view to supporting:

- ▶ Delivery of a large-scale, coordinated and comprehensive health response
- ▶ Adoption of policies that address the devastating socioeconomic, humanitarian and human rights aspects of the crisis
- ▶ A recovery process that builds back better.

TABLE 1 THE UNITED NATIONS THREE-POINT COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Point	Title	Response
1	The Health Response	Guided by WHO and the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the United Nations health response sets out to <b>control the virus, support the development of a vaccine, diagnostics, and treatment, and strengthen preparedness</b> . As health is the quintessential global public good, the response focuses on whole-of-society responses, solidarity with developing countries and special attention to people at greatest risk.
2	Safeguarding Lives and Livelihoods	<b>Addressing the devastating socioeconomic, humanitarian, and human rights aspects of the crisis</b> , the United Nations undertakes a wide-ranging effort to safeguard lives and livelihoods. With strong emphasis on supporting the most affected and least resilient, the UN has pushed for a comprehensive stimulus package amounting to at least 10 per cent of global GDP and massive support to developing countries.
3	A Better Post-COVID-19 World	Guided by the Sustainable Development Agenda, the United Nations envisages <b>a recovery process that pursues a better post-COVID world</b> by addressing the climate crisis, inequalities, exclusion, gaps in social protection systems and the many other fragilities and injustices that have been exposed.

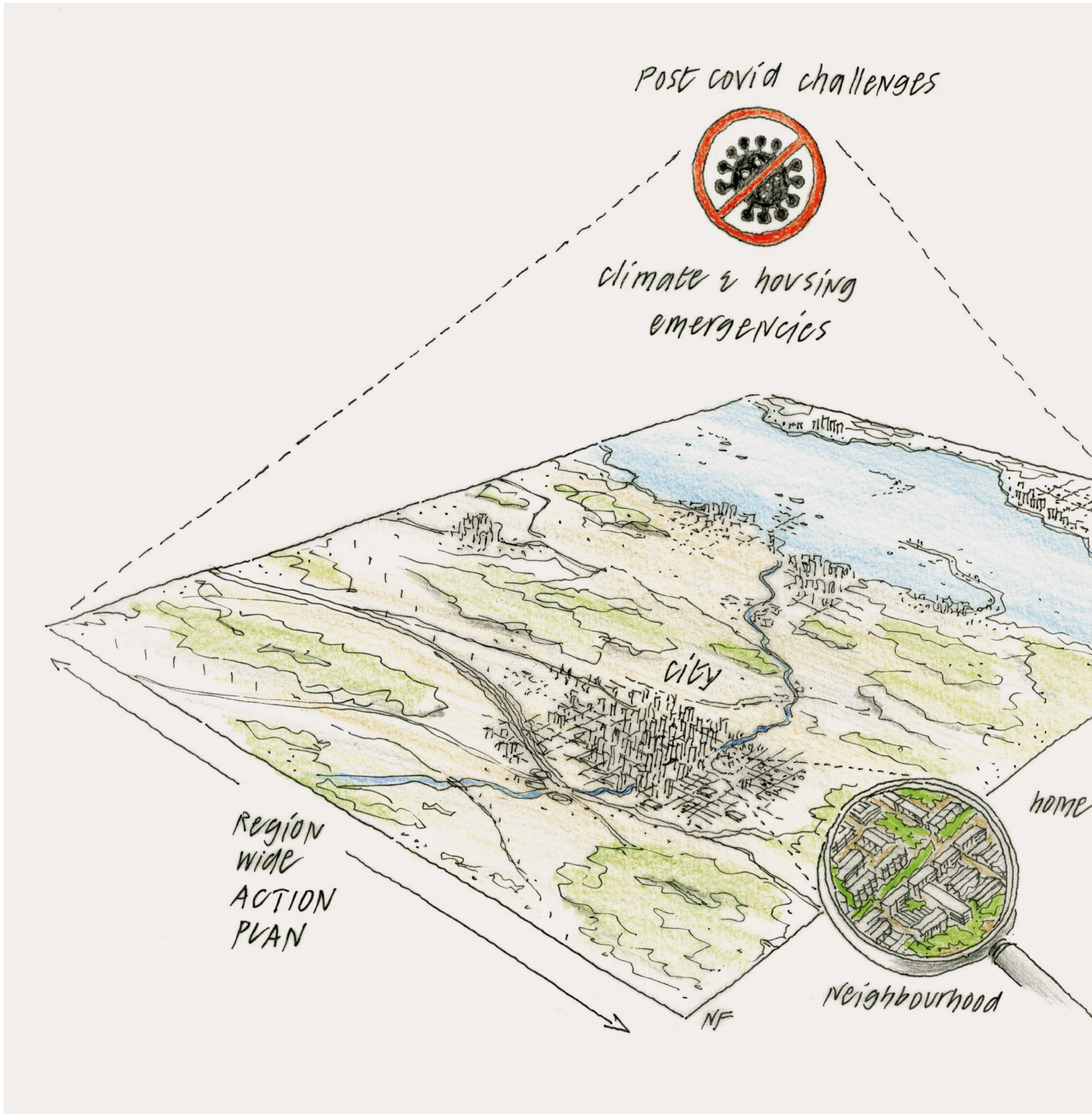
Source: United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better (United Nations publication, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19* (United Nations publication, 2020). Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-comprehensive-response-covid-19-saving-lives-protecting-societies-recovering-better>.

<sup>14</sup> *Saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better* (United Nations publication, 2020). The report and subsequent updates are available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-comprehensive-response-covid-19-saving-lives-protecting-societies-0>.

The SEIAs revealed that the pandemic has altered the everyday life of people around the world, prompting governments to rethink policies to adapt to the new normal and address the far-reaching impact of the pandemic. The pandemic has resulted in reversing many of the hard gains made by countries in pursuit of the SDGs (see table 2), with lingering effects that require multi-faceted solutions addressing the pandemic-induced emergency needs and the long-term development objectives at the local and national levels as well as the global challenges, including climate change.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "Putting the UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19 into action: Insights", *Policy Brief*, No.2, June 2020. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/brief-2-putting-un-framework-socio-economic-response-covid-19-action-insights-june-2020>.



TABLE 2 THE MULTIFACETED SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Area	Impact	Description
<b>Poverty</b>	Poverty increase	40-60 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty because of the economic shocks from COVID-19
<b>Gender equality</b>	COVID-19 impact on women	On average, women make up to 70 per cent of health-care workers and social-care sector in 104 countries
<b>Education</b>	Students out of school	Nearly 1.2 billion learners (or 68 per cent of the total students enrolled) are affected by school closures 144 countries still have nationwide closures in place
<b>Social protection</b>	Lack of adequate social protection	55 per cent of the world's population (as many as four billion people) are not covered by social insurance or social assistance
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally displaced people (IDPs) at risk	1/3 of the world's IDPs live in 10 countries most at risk to the COVID-19 socio-economic impacts
<b>Slum dwellers</b>	Slum dwellers	Over 90 per cent of COVID-19 cases are happening in urban areas
<b>Jobs</b>	Income and jobs lost	About 1.6 billion informal workers lost 60 per cent of their income, with little to no savings and no access to social protection
<b>Remittances</b>	Remittances flows reduction	Remittances to LICs and LMICs are expected to fall by almost 20 per cent cutting off a significant lifeline to many vulnerable households
<b>Trade</b>	Decline in global trade	Global trade values fell 3 per cent in the first quarter of 2020
<b>Commodities</b>	Fallen commodity prices	Commodity prices fell by a record 20% in March, driven by steep drops in oil prices
<b>Food insecurity</b>	Increase in food insecurity	COVID-19 will double the number of people facing food crises
<b>Tourism</b>	Dramatic fall in tourism	Tourism is considered one of the hardest hits by the COVID-19 outbreak

Source: Putting the UN framework for socio-economic response to COVID-19 into action: Insights, Policy Brief, No.2 (United Nations publication, 2020).

The pandemic has also highlighted the need to rethink urban planning. This is the running theme throughout the United Nations policy brief COVID-19 in an urban world<sup>16</sup>, which showed that individuals living in overcrowded and underserved urban areas were the hardest hit as they were unable to observe social distancing requirements. This means that recovery plans must be placed alongside urban housing and efforts to address the climate crisis, with a view to building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities. The policy brief recommends simultaneous actions with the following three broad policy objectives: reducing inequality; strengthening local capacity; and pursuing a resilient and inclusive economic recovery (see box).

<sup>16</sup> Policy Brief: COVID-19 in an urban world (United Nations publication, 2020). Available at [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid\\_urban\\_world\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_urban_world_july_2020.pdf).

# A three-pronged approach for building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities post-COVID-19

## 1. TACKLING INEQUALITIES AND DEVELOPMENT DEFICITS

### Impact:

- ▶ COVID-19 is widening existing spatial, social and economic inequalities in cities
- ▶ The global housing crisis has worsened the pandemic and in turn has been worsened by it
- ▶ Inadequate access to urban health-care and basic services is undermining COVID-19 responses
- ▶ Access to public space is unevenly distributed despite its importance in curtailing COVID-19
- ▶ The pandemic is exposing the inequalities underpinning the digital divide.

### Solutions:

- ▶ Governments could tailor responses for high-risk neighbourhoods given the spatial disparities in COVID-19 impacts and resilience
- ▶ Innovative short-term responses to inadequate and unaffordable housing, overcrowding and homelessness could be a starting point for ... policy shifts
- ▶ Access to essential public services is key for effective COVID-19 response, recovery and building resilience to future crises in cities
- ▶ Equitable access to health services helps to protect lives
- ▶ Targeted interventions for vulnerable groups recognise differentiated exposure to risks and impacts.

## 2. STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL ACTORS, PARTICULARLY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

### Impacts:

- ▶ Highlighted role of local governments as front-line responders in crisis response, recovery and rebuilding
- ▶ Substantially reduced local and subnational governments' revenues and budgets
- ▶ Demonstrated the power of community
- ▶ Constrained local government capacity to deliver essential services and infrastructure
- ▶ Resulted in innovative local government solutions for COVID-19 response and provision of services.

### Solutions:

- ▶ National governments could promote inclusive, collaborative and responsive governance across jurisdictions and levels of government
- ▶ National governments can help ensure response and recovery measures fit the local context by adopting stimulus packages to maximize subnational responses and boost local budget capacity
- ▶ Improve transparency and enable effective community engagement in civil society in local government responses
- ▶ Counteract mis- and dis-information
- ▶ Local government provision of essential services should be a priority in cities
- ▶ Public transport remains vital, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- ▶ Urgent attention is needed to address the inadequate state of public services in many cities.

### 3. PURSUING A RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE AND GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

#### Impacts:

- ▶ Interrupted global value chains; devastated the hospitality, travel and tourism industries; and disrupted the global economy, causing deep recession
- ▶ Local economies have been hit hard
- ▶ Major job losses have occurred in cities, especially in informal and low-paying jobs
- ▶ Lockdown and lower economic activity have resulted in positive environmental effects, showing that a green urban future is possible.

#### Opportunities:

- ▶ The possibility for a climate-resilient urban future
- ▶ The correlation between COVID-19 and compact urban development is misleading and could encourage lower densities and sprawl
- ▶ Reliable and robust urban data and statistics.

#### Solutions:

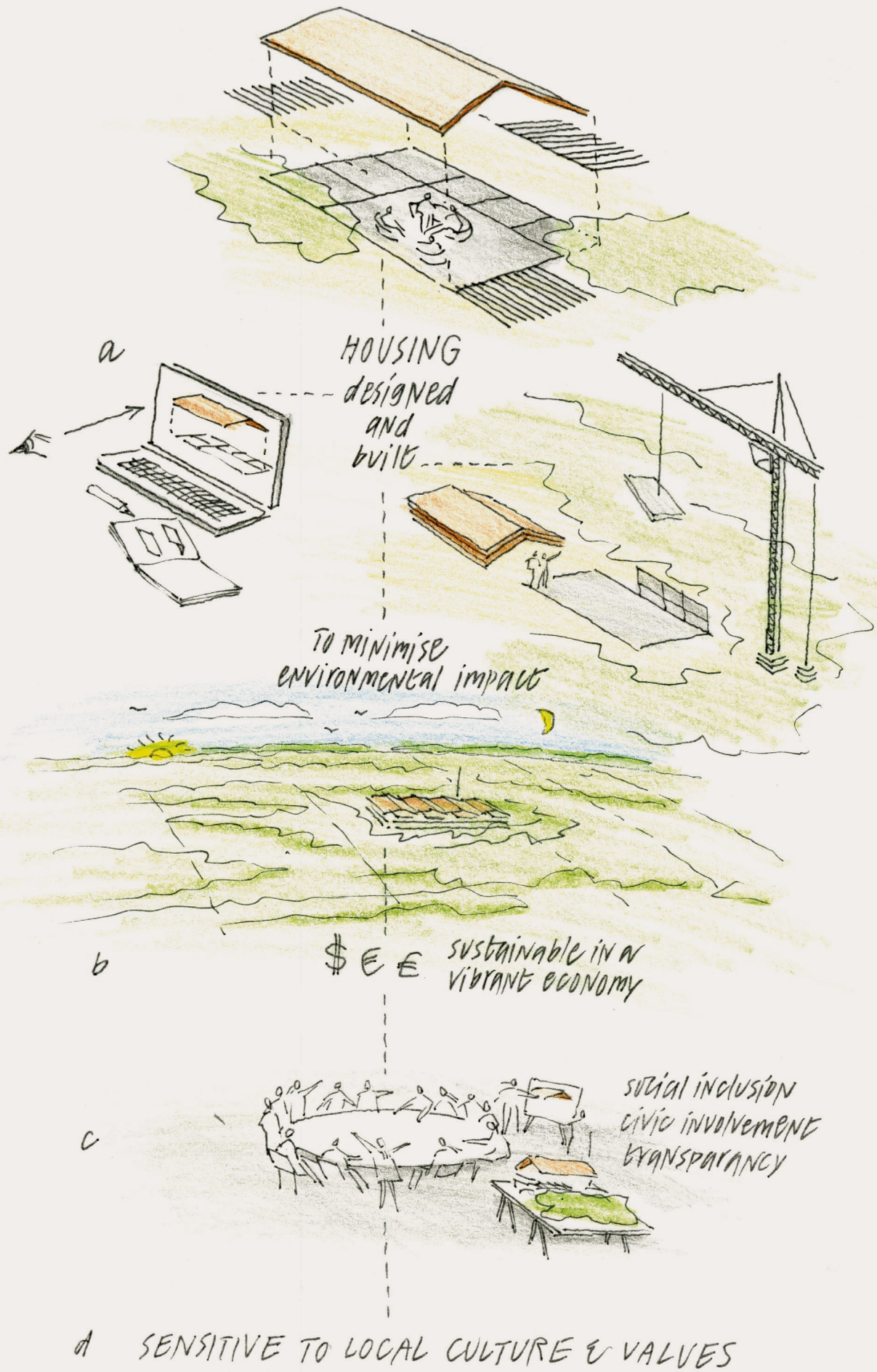
- ▶ Financial assistance is needed to support local businesses
- ▶ Local economic development strategies are critical for recovery
- ▶ Social protection is needed with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized urban groups
- ▶ Recovery and rebuilding in cities could prioritise green, gender-responsive and sustainable pathways
- ▶ Cities are uniquely positioned to drive the transition from a linear to a circular economy
- ▶ Prevent urban de-densification
- ▶ Stimulus packages could support local climate resilience and climate-resilient infrastructure projects
- ▶ Data-driven approaches are needed to build urban resilience.

Source: Policy Brief: COVID-19 in an urban world (United Nations publication, 2020).

In its study “Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future”<sup>17</sup>, UN-Habitat stressed the need to place COVID-19 response in the broader context of urban development. The study looked into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and housing challenges, and set out a global pathway for cities to upscale the implementation of the New Urban Agenda. The impact of the pandemic on the housing sector was highlighted in a number of publications by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to the “Housing amid Covid-19: Policy responses and challenges” publication of OECD, the pandemic has “severely disrupted construction, made it difficult for many households to pay for shelter, and seriously hurt the housing sector.”<sup>18</sup> OECD emphasized that swift responses by governments to alleviate the negative consequences of the crisis for tenants, borrowers, builders and lenders can, in some instances, impede recovery and/or impair the responsiveness of the housing market to the evolving needs of society. This is the case of rental market restrictions which, while helping tenants in the short-term, often results in weakening supply responses by impeding residential mobility. The need to strike a balance between short-term incentives for affordability and the imperatives for ensuring sufficient, environmentally sustainable supply is evident.

<sup>17</sup> UN-Habitat, *Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future* (Kenya, 2021). Available at <https://unhabitat.org/cities-and-pandemics-towards-a-more-just-green-and-healthy-future-0>.

<sup>18</sup> OECD, *Housing amid Covid-19: Policy responses and challenges* (Paris, 2020). Available at <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/housing-amid-covid-19-policy-responses-and-challenges-cfdc08a8/>.



OECD argues that, while much has been achieved in addressing housing affordability through supporting incomes, securing tenure, preventing evictions and sheltering the homeless, there remains much room for improvement.<sup>19</sup> OECD further argued that policies for ensuring purposeful investment can shape better and fairer housing markets and are critical for building back better. In this context, it should be noted that affordable housing is not simply about average market rentals and ownership costs. Rather, affordable housing should be understood from a broader context as a function of the housing needs of individual communities with particular attention to low-income and vulnerable groups. The tools for achieving this are provided in the #Housing 2030 study.

To this end, it is possible to draw the following conclusions from the United Nations publications and guidelines for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic:

- (a) **Cities and all human settlements are central to building better:** By 2050 at least 70 per cent of the world's population will live in cities – so the *place* that is our cities as much as the *agency* of cities become ever more fundamental to the human habitat and it follows therefore that multi-level governance involving intergovernmental agencies, national and local government and stakeholder partnerships will be fundamental
- (b) **Cities cannot flourish without well-functioning housing systems.** Physical distancing and lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting increase in people working from home have increased the importance of neighbourhood in shaping the everyday urban life. As historic pandemics adapted housing to ensure minimum standards of light, ventilation and sanitation, the COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to reinforce such measures and adopt new ones to avoid overcrowding. Cramped and poor-quality housing has proved to be a major factor in the spread of the virus, calling on the need for flexible housing, and reconfiguration and retrofitting of housing and informal settlements.
- (c) **Housing, mobility, environment, economy and culture are interrelated and require integrated responses:** The changes in the way that city residents interact with their urban environment at the neighbourhood level in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to public spaces and mobility, have led to the rethinking of how neighbourhoods should be planned to build back better. Specifically, the “15- minute city” concept, whereby residents can meet most, if not all, of their daily commitments and essential needs within a short walk or bike ride from their home.

<sup>19</sup> OECD, *Building for a better tomorrow: Policies to make housing more affordable* (Paris, 2021). Available at <http://oe.cd/affordable-housing-2021>.



# THE REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

# The regional action plan<sup>20</sup>

This Regional Action Plan provides a coherent framework for addressing the multi-faceted challenges to housing affordability and sustainable urban development in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and housing shortage. It sets out policy options, goals, targets and actions for guiding local and national development efforts in the UNECE region until 2030 and for scaling up international cooperation.

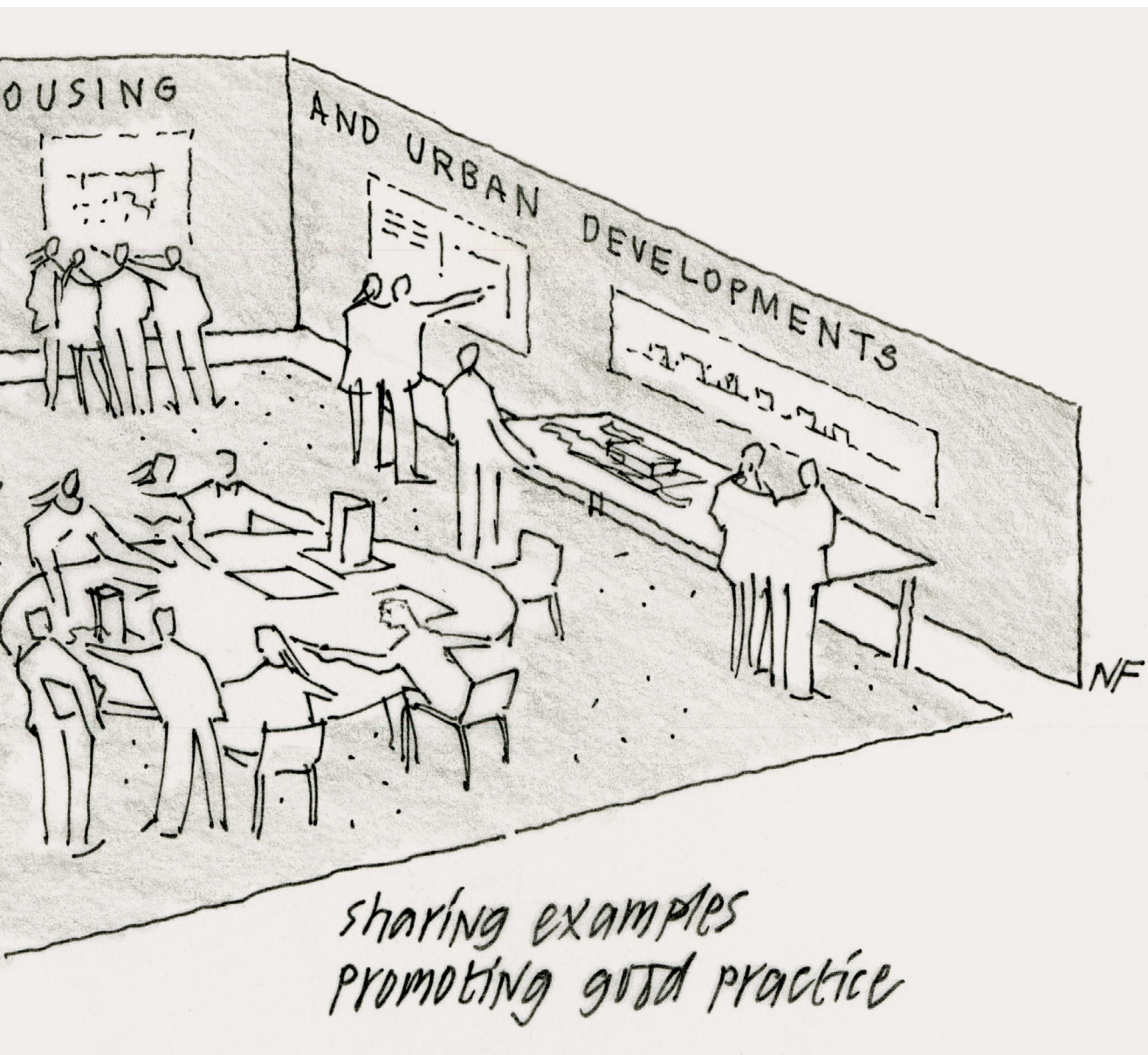


<sup>20</sup> Section III contains the action plan “Place and Life in the UNECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in the region, city, neighbourhood and homes” endorsed by UNECE member States in 2021 at the eighty-second session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management (ECE/HBP/208).

## A. Over-arching principles

The following over-arching principles underline the commitment of UNECE to advance #Housing 2030 and form the basis of the UNECE Regional Action Plan:

- (a) From United Nations COVID-19 guidance documents:
  - ▷ Principle E: Cities are central to building better;
  - ▷ Principle F: Cities cannot flourish without well-functioning housing systems;
  - ▷ Principle G: Housing, mobility, environment and economy are interrelated and require integrated responses.
  
- (b) From the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing:
  - ▷ Principle A: Environmental protection;
  - ▷ Principle B: Economic effectiveness;
  - ▷ Principle C: Social inclusion and participation;
  - ▷ Principle D: Cultural adequacy.





## B. Objectives

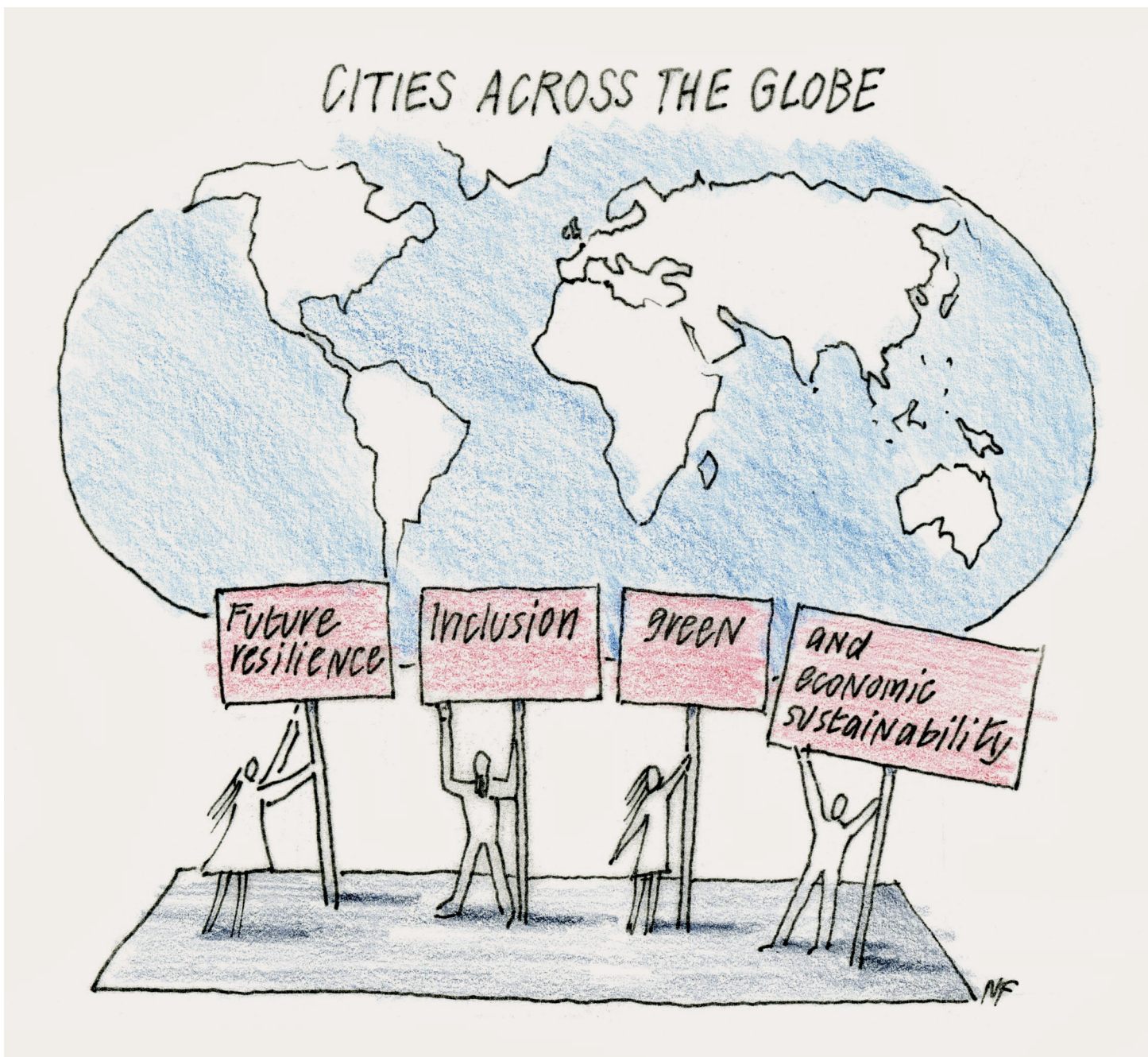
The Regional Action Plan aims at achieving the following objectives:

- (a) To build capacity within and between Member States in respect of policy development, organization, design and implementation.
- (b) To encourage effective strategic policy development and implementation.
- (c) To build capacity within and between cities in respect of policy development, organization, design and implementation through the *Forum of Mayors*.
- (d) To shape housing systems that generate access to adequate and affordable housing.
- (e) To establish networks of cities, agencies and stakeholders.
- (f) To research on, document and disseminate best practices through governmental, city and academic networks and through the *ECE Charter Centres of Excellence*.
- (g) To encourage accountability through the establishment of peer-to-peer review and *ECE Charter excellence awards in practice*.



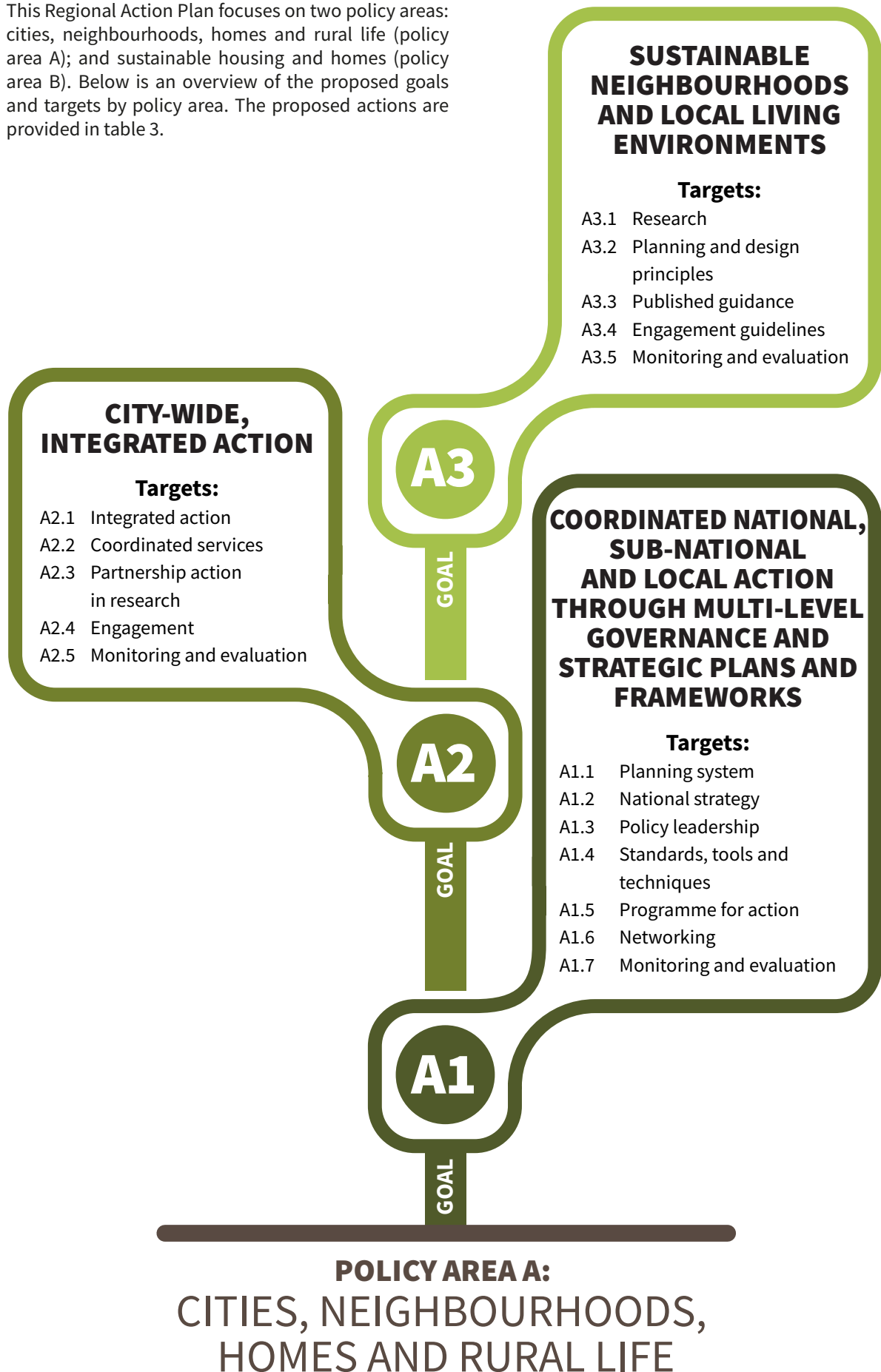
These objectives are consistent with the United Nations policy brief “COVID-19 in an urban world”, which recommends upscaling actions in the following three areas:

- ▶ Tackling inequalities and development deficiencies
- ▶ Strengthening the capacities of local actors
- ▶ Pursuing a green, resilient and inclusive economic recovery.



## C. Policy areas, goals, targets and actions

This Regional Action Plan focuses on two policy areas: cities, neighbourhoods, homes and rural life (policy area A); and sustainable housing and homes (policy area B). Below is an overview of the proposed goals and targets by policy area. The proposed actions are provided in table 3.





**POLICY AREA B:**  
**SUSTAINABLE HOUSING**  
**AND HOMES**



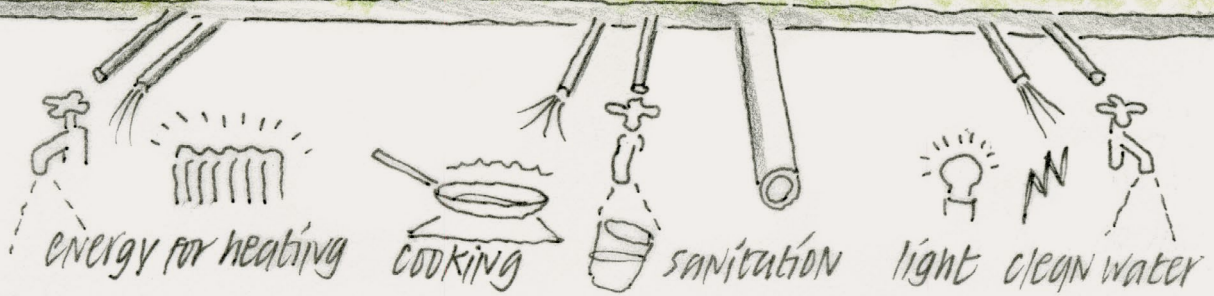
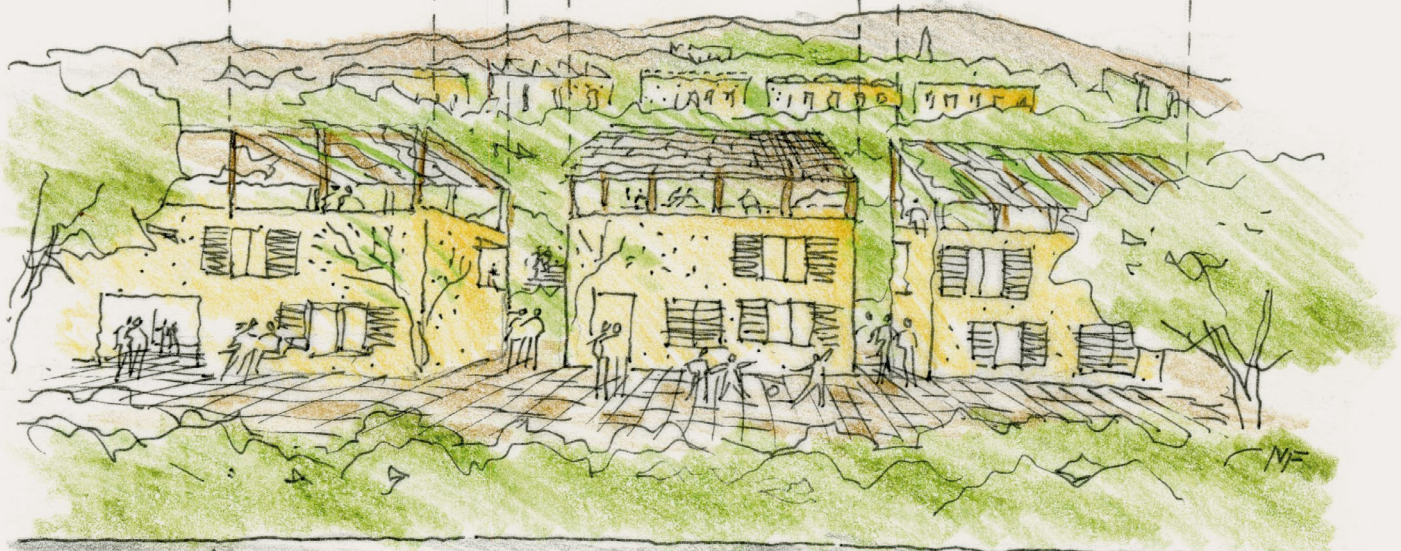
To build capacity within and between member states in respect of policy, development, organisation, design and implementation.

TABLE 3 PLACE AND LIFE IN THE ECE – A REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2030

<b>POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE</b>			
<b>Goal A1: Coordinated national, sub-national and local action through multi-level governance and strategic plans and frameworks</b>			
<b>Rationale: Living in urban, peri-urban and rural environments and putting homes at the centre of policy and actions is key to delivering on the SDGs, addressing climate change and building back better in post-COVID-19</b>			
<b>Target</b>		<b>Action</b>	
<b>A1.1</b>	Planning system: A planning system for affordable and inclusive housing outcomes	<b>A1.1.1</b>	Support integrated and sustainable human settlement planning, territory and management.
		<b>A1.1.2</b>	Coordinate land use, land market, planning, design and development processes and approvals.
<b>A1.2</b>	National strategy: A national housing strategy for tackling housing, health and climate change challenges	<b>A1.2.1</b>	Develop national housing policies that take into account social need and territorial distinctiveness and support the protection and enhancement of environmental, landscape, historical and cultural heritage.
		<b>A1.2.2</b>	Develop and coordinate a national plan across levels of government, market sectors and stakeholders to support energy decarbonisation.

## POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE

<b>A1.3</b>	Policy leadership: Policy leadership integrates and coordinates measures for implementing strategic action	<b>A1.3.1</b>	Support cooperation between government agencies within and between countries.
		<b>A1.3.2</b>	Provide effective housing policy leadership which coordinates different disciplines, interests and organizations involved in health, housing and climate planning.
		<b>A1.3.3</b>	Develop capacity through legislation, strategic programmes, including VNRs and VLRs, investment and management with implementation targets for 2030.
<b>A1.4</b>	Standards, tools and techniques: Standards, policy toolkit and inclusive design principles for affordable, adequate and accessible housing	<b>A1.4.1</b>	Support research, good practice, project implementation and design.
		<b>A1.4.2</b>	Ensure compliance with and enforcement of regulations and remove unnecessary procedural barriers to energy efficiency.
		<b>A1.4.3</b>	Encourage housing and land tenure policies that support social justice developed through deliberative and democratic processes based on expert knowledge, data collection, transparent reporting of statistics, and extensive and inclusive public debate.
<b>A1.5</b>	Programme for action: A programme of well-defined actions and resources	<b>A1.5.1</b>	Improve the promotion and market uptake of innovative solutions including knowledge of deep-renovation technologies among tenants, housing providers and private owners.
		<b>A1.5.2</b>	Promote national policies and programmes that encourage residents of informal construction to formalise and upgrade their dwellings.
<b>A1.6</b>	Networking: A network for sharing good practices	<b>A1.6.1</b>	Enable stakeholders in the private and public sectors to play a role in achieving affordable and inclusive housing.
		<b>A1.6.2</b>	Support diversification in the renovation supply-chain to improve performance in energy and resource efficiency in order to accelerate decarbonisation.
		<b>A1.6.3</b>	Support up-skilling of the supplier and contractor workforce to ensure innovation and delivery in renovation and development.
<b>A1.7</b>	Monitoring and evaluation:	<b>A1.7.1</b>	Develop a systematic and evidence-based monitoring system for adequate, affordable and accessible housing to understand housing needs in private ownership, private rental, not for profit and co-operative housing to inform policy solutions.
	A monitoring and evaluation programme	<b>A1.7.2</b>	Assemble data on housing and homelessness using common international standards to ensure data comparability between Member States and make these data and national statistics available in order to support policymaking, research and economic development.



upgrading informal settlements



## POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE

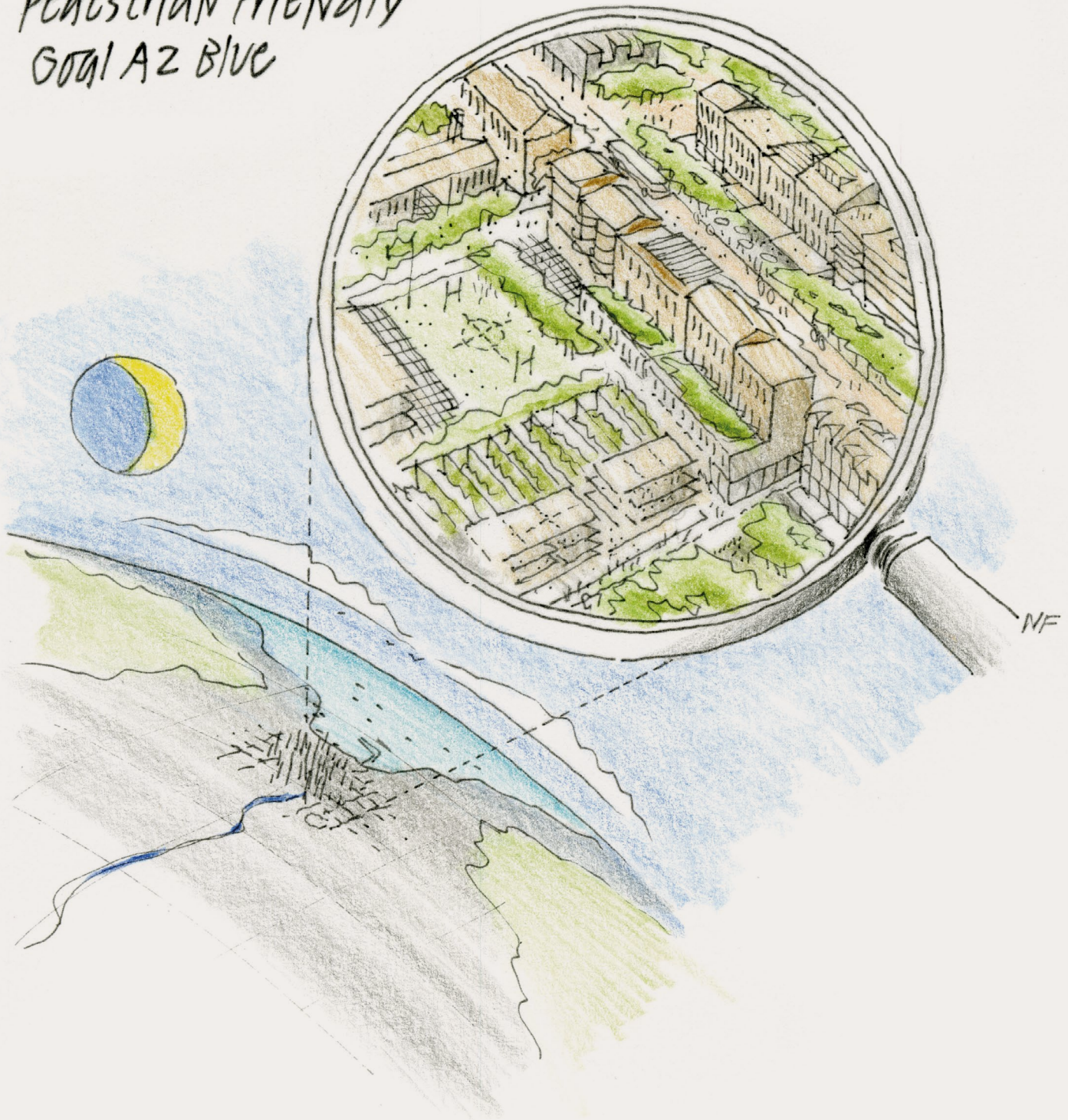
### Goal A2: City-wide, integrated action

#### Rationale:

**Living in urban, peri-urban and rural environments and putting homes at the centre of policy and action is key to delivering on the SDGs, combatting the climate emergency and building back better to combat the effects of the pandemic and the climate emergency**

	Target	Action	
A2.1	Integrated action: Integration of planning and action at the local and national levels in consultation with communities	A2.1.1	Provide policies and action plans for city-wide and equitable access to health services and housing interventions directed to vulnerable groups.
		A2.1.2	Develop policy instruments to provide support to community groups to assist front-line responders in times of crisis.
		A2.1.3	Support compact urban development and prevent suburbanisation and sprawl.
		A2.1.4	Coordinate spatial and urban mobility planning to promote energy-efficient urban form with a variety of land uses and mix uses (compact city model) including affordable and social housing in green, walkable neighbourhoods that minimise dependence on car use.
		A2.1.5	Support smart city concepts (evidence-based), integrated policies and plans to support inclusion, including socially mixed communities, resource efficiency, and resilience to climate change and disasters.
		A2.1.6	Promote integrated spatial planning and mix-uses that support the efficient spatial distribution of economic activities, the improvement of technical and social infrastructure, urban regeneration, integrated urban renewal and affordable housing.
		A2.1.7	Encourage spatial planning through the compact city model that includes policies to efficiently distribute economic activities, improve technical and social infrastructure and services, urban regeneration, affordable housing and addresses urban sprawl.
		A2.1.8	Encourage appropriate density in housing settlements through compact city policies to prevent urban sprawl and give priority to housing settlements with sustainable and integrated transport systems and green infrastructure.
A2.2	Coordinated services: Mutually supportive delivery of services and development across cities and regions	A2.2.1	Ensure city-wide access to essential public services for effective responses to and recovery from pandemic, social inequalities - housing and climate challenges.
		A2.2.2	Promote inclusive, collaborative and responsive governance across jurisdictions and levels of government.
		A2.2.3	Ensure response and recovery measures fit local context and adopt stimulus packages to maximise subnational and city-wide responses.
		A2.2.4	Encourage investment in research and innovation in all aspects of sustainable housing.
		A2.2.5	Encourage the development of housing stock based, as much as possible, on local solutions, labour and local materials in design, construction, refurbishment and maintenance, to contribute to local employment and the circular economy.

compact city - neighbourhood -  
mixed uses - high density - walkable  
pedestrian friendly  
Goal AZ Blue



## POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE

<b>A2.3</b>	Partnership action in research: Partnership action deliverables in the form of research, initiatives and investments for sustainable development across cities and regions	<b>A2.3.1</b>	Develop and implement capacity-building programmes on housing, urban planning and land management issues for all stakeholders – including investment and finance stakeholders - and provide public spaces for cultural and social activities.
		<b>A2.3.2</b>	Encourage energy efficient housing design, maintenance and retrofitting that, promotes healthy living; encourage the implementation of universal standards design principles in order to increase the usability of homes for all people across generations, gender and disability divides and encourages socially mixed communities.
		<b>A2.3.3</b>	Increase the proportion of low-energy housing units also as a part of an integrated urban regeneration.
<b>A2.4</b>	Engagement: Integrated engagement between government, stakeholders and communities	<b>A2.4.1</b>	Improve transparency and enable effective community engagement in civil society and local government responses.
		<b>A2.4.2</b>	Support key stakeholders to develop and manage affordable and inclusive housing with effective regulation, standards, strategic investment, capacity building and expertise.
		<b>A2.4.3</b>	Develop accountable, inclusive and transparent engagement with citizens setting targets for monitoring implementation and evaluating outcomes and enable all relevant stakeholders, including local communities, private and public sectors to play a role in achieving sustainable development and affordable and inclusive housing goals.
		<b>A2.4.4</b>	Develop capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management.
		<b>A2.4.5</b>	Develop and implement capacity-building programmes on housing, urban planning and land management issues for all stakeholders – including investment and finance stakeholders - and provide public spaces for cultural and social activities.
<b>A2.5</b>	Monitoring and evaluation: A monitoring and evaluation programme	<b>A2.5.1</b>	Assemble reliable and robust urban data and statistics and support the transition from a linear to a circular economy.
		<b>A2.5.2</b>	Intensify the regional and international exchange of experience and cooperation in housing, urban planning and land management.

The sprawling city - energy consuming  
social alienation -  
anti-pedestrian.



## POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE

### Goal 3: Sustainable neighbourhoods and local living environments

#### Rationale:

**Local living environments require locational proximity to goods and services, social networks economic well-being and transportation accessibility.**

	Target	Action
A3.1	Research: Published research guidance on the size, composition, population, services and environment of sustainable neighbourhoods	A3.1.1 Provide local neighbourhood access to essential public services including health.
		A3.1.2 Require affordable and inclusive housing in all new developments.
		A3.1.3 Make waste and water management an integral part of sustainable housing strategies and policies.
		A3.1.4 Promote and monitor integrated urban development and regeneration which brings workplaces and services into closer spatial relation to housing, while taking into account potential dangers and hazards and resilience to climate change.
		A3.1.5 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for disadvantaged population groups.
		A3.1.6 Develop socially mixed communities and avoid social segregation, gentrification and gated communities.
		A3.1.7 Encourage integrated urban development and regeneration with workplaces and services brought into closer spatial relation to housing, while taking into account potential dangers and hazards.
		A3.1.8 Promote urban settlements that use clean and renewable energy, and proactively take into account climate change.
A3.2	Planning and design principles: Agreed and published planning and design principles for sustainable neighbourhoods	A3.2.1 Housing design should support local climate resilience and climate-resilient infrastructure projects.
		A3.2.2 Adopt green housing policies and integrate them into sustainable urban and territorial development policies.
		A3.2.3 Promote the use of universal design principles in order to increase access to adequate housing and the ability to live independently for all.
		A3.2.4 Emphasize the development of public spaces for economic cultural and social activities.
		A3.2.5 Design and maintain houses and neighbourhoods to enhance the emotional wellbeing of people, including the involvement of local communities in this process.
		A3.2.6 Provide green spaces around and within housing areas, including areas that provide habitat for wildlife, space for leisure, sport and urban agriculture.
		A3.2.7 Encourage healthy living through high-quality design, maintenance and retrofitting.

## POLICY AREA A: CITIES, NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOMES AND RURAL LIFE

<b>A3.3</b>	Published guidance: Published guidance on the mix of private, rented, affordable and cooperative housing provision in neighbourhoods	<b>A3.3.1</b>	Assemble fragmented and underused land into coherent parcels to be used for housing to ensure more coherent and timely development.
		<b>A3.3.2</b>	Encourage construction of multifamily housing, promote integrated public transportation and facilitate the use of clean vehicles in order to counteract urban sprawl and save energy.
		<b>A3.3.3</b>	Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for disadvantaged population groups.
		<b>A3.3.4</b>	Develop and review policies and procedures for integrated urban renewal and housing maintenance, including utility systems and green investments in the sector.
		<b>A3.3.5</b>	Ensure that waste management is treated as an integral part of sustainable housing strategies, including in housing construction, housing demolition and household living, with the encouragement of re-use, recycling, and composting.
<b>A3.4</b>	Engagement guidelines: Guidance on the principles of community engagement	<b>A3.4.1</b>	Develop support – preparedness actions or instruments - for neighbourhood volunteering to augment frontline responders in crisis response.
		<b>A3.4.2</b>	Focus social protection and value creation on the communities and especially for the most vulnerable and marginalised urban groups.
		<b>A3.4.3</b>	Empower and support households to determine their own housing outcomes and realise their right to adequate housing.
		<b>A3.4.4</b>	Provide appropriate technical and financial mechanisms for support to housing stakeholders and ensure the feasibility and affordability of energy efficiency measures, including for the most vulnerable parts of the population.
		<b>A3.4.5</b>	Develop capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management.
		<b>A3.4.6</b>	Where possible and appropriate, assist people living in informal and low-income settlements to have access to adequate infrastructure and services.
<b>A3.5</b>	Monitoring and evaluation: A monitoring and evaluation programme	<b>A3.5.1</b>	Develop and publish best practice case studies in the 20-minute neighbourhood.
		<b>A3.5.2</b>	Develop and publish best practice case studies in the last mile ecosystem.

Public space - GREEN AREA  
biodiversity - sports facilities.





N/E



## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

### Goal B1: Governance

#### Rationale:

**Good governance shapes the functioning of different actors in housing systems. It promotes decision making, policy development and implementation that is well informed, expert and participatory while being accountable and transparent.**

	Target	Action
B1.1	National leadership: High level government commitment to affordable, healthy and climate neutral housing and living environments as a central pillar of urban policy	B1.1.1 Provide clarity of vision in a comprehensive, long-term national housing strategy that sets goals, targets and actions to ensure households have access to adequate, secure, accessible and affordable housing.
		B1.1.2 Provide government leadership and empower local administrations to champion, inspire, inform and execute affordable and inclusive housing policy.
		B1.1.3 Ensure that strategic and task orientated public investment is periodically evaluated and adjusted to address dynamic demographic, housing, finance and land market conditions and maintain social-wellbeing, inclusion and economic stability.
B1.2	Integrated policy: Integrated, coordinated and monitored policy efforts for visible, responsible and accountable governance	B1.2.1 Provide government leadership and empower local administrations to champion, inspire, inform and execute affordable and inclusive housing policy.
		B1.2.2 Establish dedicated long-term funding and coordination of implementation across multiple layers of government through legislative authority, intergovernmental funding agreements and public purpose partnerships.
B1.3	Evidence-based processes: Evidence-based, multi-stakeholder planning processes that combine local and national housing needs assessments, investment plans and development delivery	B1.3.1 Provide long-term, evidence-based, multi-stakeholder planning involving local and national authorities to devise 'housing needs assessments', with the ambition of setting targets for the delivery of a range of housing options, including social, public or cooperative housing in their area.
		B1.3.2 Provide rigorous monitoring of and reporting on the adequacy of affordable housing provision, with attention to the needs and voices of vulnerable households.
		B1.3.3 Investigate, evaluate and support business models for affordable housing, supported by regulatory, investment, subsidy and taxation provisions.

Addressing emergency - image of a city under emergency



essential services are resilient

NF

## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

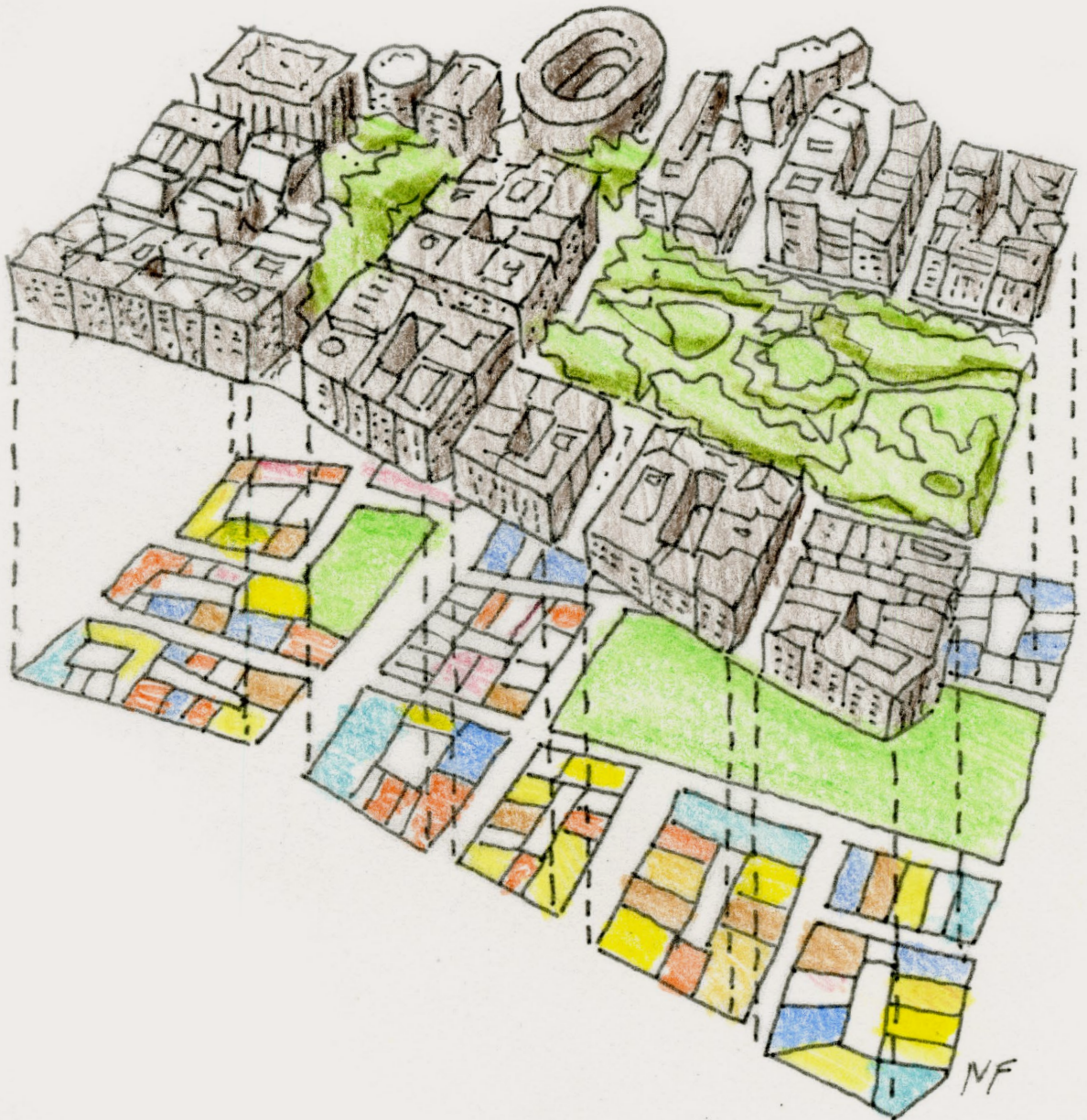
### Goal B2 Land policy

#### Rationale:

**Better, fairer housing outcomes can be secured through effective land policies such as public land banking and leasing, land readjustment, land value capture and tax instruments and by combining these instruments through effective neighbourhood and city planning.**

	Target	Action
<b>B2.1</b>	Vision and strategy: A purposeful vision to achieve quality urban development, through long term strategic plans, land banking activities, development promotion and regulation, social inclusion and sustainability.	<b>B2.1.1</b> Develop long term land strategy for the operation of public land agencies for effective land resource use for affordable and climate neutral living environments in order to achieve sustainable development, consolidate fragmented land, activate underutilised sites and allocate suitable land for long term lease or conditional sale.
<b>B2.2</b>	Delivery: Affordable and social housing planned and delivered through strategic planning, land use regulation and allocation, and development approvals.	<b>B2.2.1</b> Designate specific land uses areas for affordable and social housing development in strategic urban plans, through zoning requirements and/or development conditions, to meet projected housing needs and address housing market deficiencies or backlogs.
<b>B2.3</b>	Land market mechanisms: Purposeful land markets that ensure affordable and sustainable residential development through site acquisition, land exchange, sales and leases through strong co-operation between affordable housing providers and residents	<b>B2.3.1</b> Legislate to empower public land agencies to participate in land markets through land purchase, site preparation, lease and release to ensure affordable housing supply outcomes and climate-neutral living environments.
		<b>B2.3.2</b> Direct long-term lease of public land to social housing providers to ensure that allocation addresses local needs and that lease costs are affordable and can be indexed appropriately over time.
		<b>B2.3.3</b> Ensure that redevelopment of brownfield and greenfield sites includes an allocation on a basis of the need, to be owned and/or managed by social landlords.
		<b>B2.3.4</b> Use land taxation, bonuses and value capture mechanisms to promote the provision of affordable and climate-neutral housing developments.
<b>B2.4</b>	Innovation: Innovation best practice in affordable, climate-neutral residential development through a network of developers, planners, builders, providers, management and residents	<b>B2.4.1</b> Conduct competitions and collaborative strategies for available land judged on the basis of social inclusion, climate neutrality, affordability and access.
		<b>B2.4.2</b> Promote the use of spatial, cadastral and land registration information and services to create an environment conducive to investment in housing and the security of land and housing tenure.

UGANDA POLICY - MIX OF LAND USES.



## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

### Goal B3: Finance and funding

#### Rationale:

**Appropriate financial, fiscal and taxation frameworks, together with purposeful housing delivery models and consumer support can enable policy makers to shape housing finance systems to ensure investment expands and protects affordable housing opportunities.**

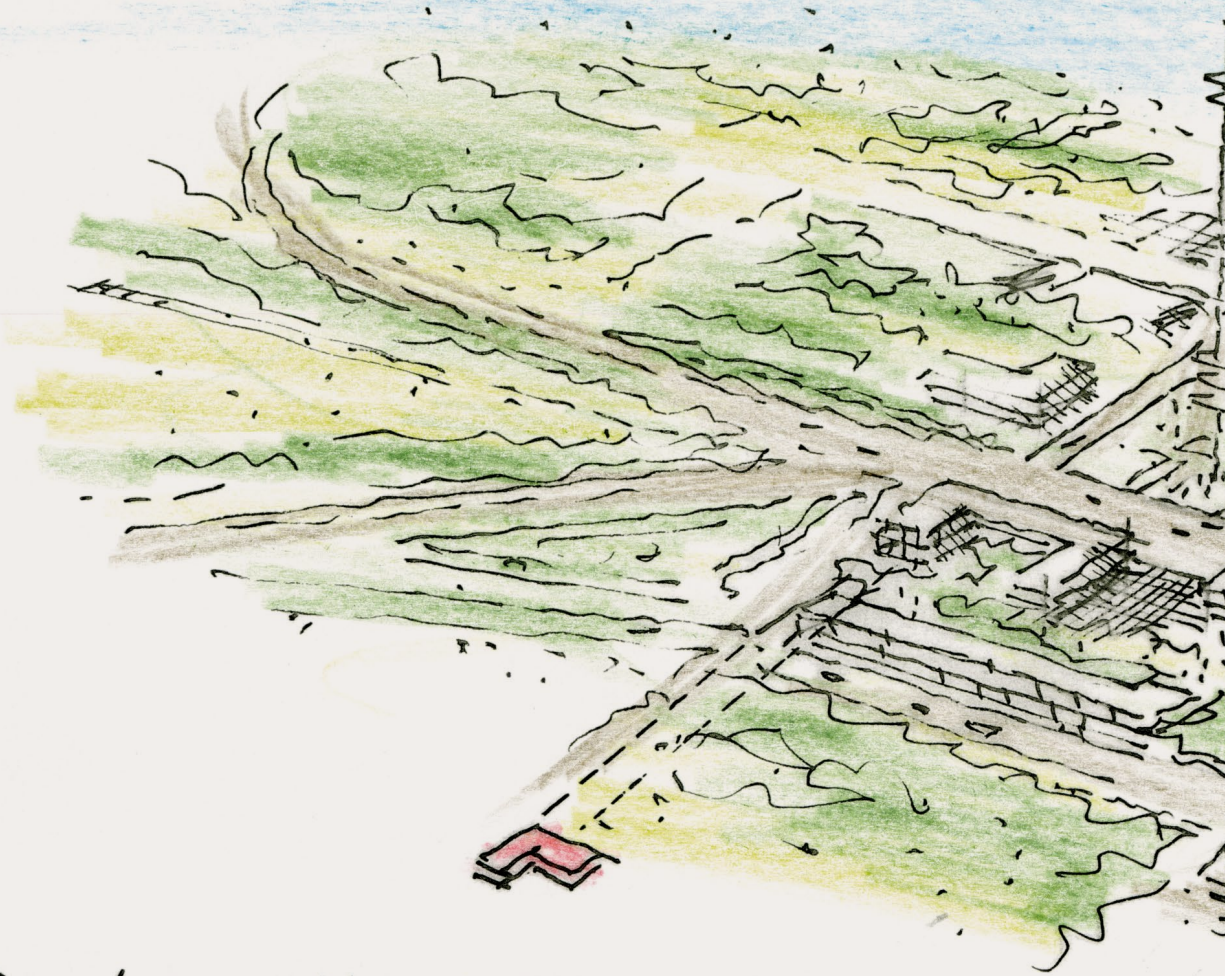
	Target	Action
B3.1	Financial regulation: Regulated national finance systems in order to expand investment in affordable and sustainable housing and address housing needs	B3.1.1 Regulate finance systems to promote housing market stability and prioritise sustainable investment to expand the supply of climate neutral, affordable and inclusive housing.
		B3.1.2 Legislate and implement long term rent setting and indexing systems to promote affordability and security while sustaining long term investment in supply and quality provision.
		B3.1.3 Modify state aid rules to support purposeful public investment in social housing provision that shapes better housing markets and addresses locally identified housing needs not met by market mechanisms.
B3.2	Investment: Investment prioritised through housing delivery models that have affordable, sustainable and needs based allocation as their core purpose supported by a range of regulatory, funding and financing tools	B3.2.1 Develop, support and enforce the implementation of responsible credit norms and standards, (e.g., deposit ratios, loan to income and loan to value ratios) which prioritise access to first home buyers, prevent over-indebtedness and also stabilise house markets.
		B3.2.2 Encourage long-term investment in affordable housing supply, maintenance and renovation, and discourage investment strategies that erode housing affordability, quality and security.
		B3.2.3 Establish dedicated and revolving cycles of investment in affordable housing, which are insulated from fluctuations in the availability of finance from governments and financial markets in order to support social and economic wellbeing and play a counter-cyclical role.
		B3.2.4 Use long-term public investment in the form of equity, grants, long term loans, interest rate subsidies, guarantees and insurances to ensure and accelerate affordable housing supply and innovation, improve energy efficiency, promote economic stability and ensure access for people excluded from local market processes.
		B3.2.5 Promote investment in sustainable housing through private and public investments, public-purpose partnerships, and other means of financing.

## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

<b>B3.3</b>	Frameworks, funds and capacities: The establishment of effective financial frameworks, public purpose financial intermediaries and revolving funds that channel investment towards expanded access to affordable, adequate and sustainable housing	<b>B3.3.1</b>	Establish special purpose financial intermediaries to support households and affordable housing providers that may otherwise have limited access to the private market.
		<b>B3.3.2</b>	Develop and support financial investment frameworks and their compliance that channel long-term low-cost investment to social and affordable housing assets.
		<b>B3.3.3</b>	Improve the capacity of households to afford decent housing, by stabilizing housing prices, improving and securing household incomes and, when required, provide adequate assistance in the payment of housing costs..
		<b>B3.3.4</b>	Encourage stable, fair rent setting and indexing systems which support adequate, well-maintained and affordable provision.
<b>B3.4</b>	Mechanisms and instruments: New legal mechanisms that shield residents from excessive financial risks and burdens as a consequence of the design and enforcement of credit norms, consumer protection, financial literacy and regulation of financial products. Taxation instruments that support and promote affordable, adequate and sustainable housing outcomes.	<b>B3.4.1</b>	Prevent and mitigate the risks to households associated with predatory lending and over-indebtedness.
		<b>B3.4.2</b>	Design and enforce taxation codes to encourage the efficient use and more equitable distribution of land and dwellings; discourage speculation in land and housing markets; and attract investment in recognised affordable housing projects.
		<b>B3.4.3</b>	Take specific measures to counteract housing speculation in order to protect scarce affordable housing resources.
		<b>B3.4.4</b>	Provide assistance to households who are unable to afford decent housing.

## FINANCE AND FUNDING

create different kinds of affordable housing opportunities - climate neutral and inclusive.

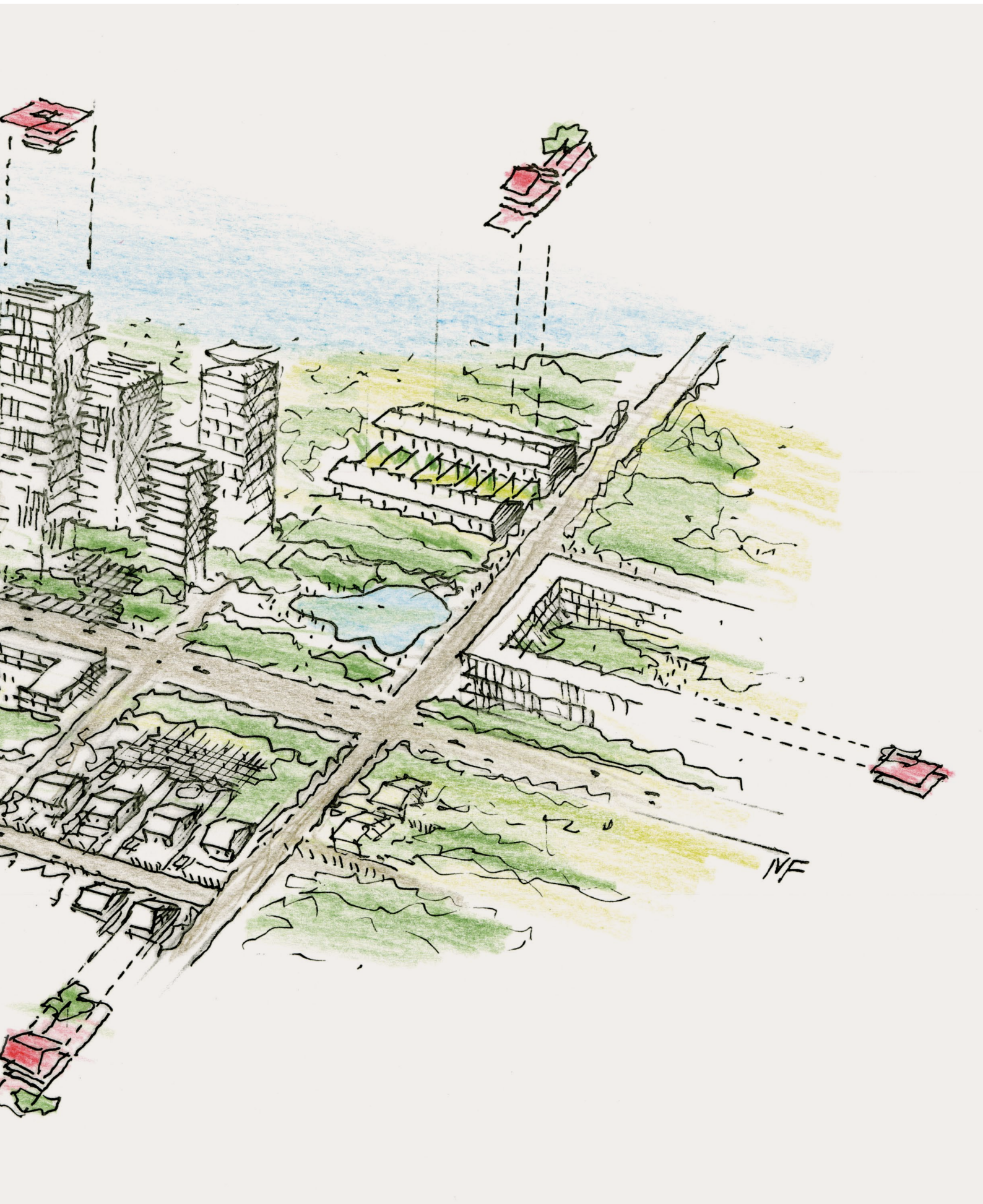


Regulate national finance systems to extend investment.

Responsible credit norms & standards.

Priority to first time buyers.

State aid rules.





## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

### Goal B4: Climate-neutral housing

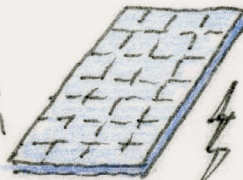
#### Rationale:

**There are many climate policy tools (e.g., regulation, policy initiatives, funding and financial incentives, and trainings) that can help realise climate neutral and affordable housing solutions at the home, neighbourhood, city and regional level.**

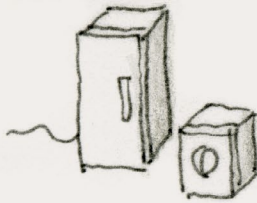
	Target	Action
B4.1	National strategies: National strategies to promote climate neutral, inclusive and affordable living environments, with commitment from stakeholders and legislative, regulatory and investment implementation actions	B4.1.1 Develop commitment between government and stakeholders to energy transition and affordability, through a national plan and/or a strategic agreement.
		B4.1.2 Increase efficiency of administrative procedures to reduce hurdles and bottlenecks, provide long-term technical and policy development certainty to market actors and remove unnecessary regulatory and procedural barriers to achieving energy efficiency.
		B4.1.3 Encourage spatial and mobility planning that promotes energy-efficient homes, neighbourhoods, cities and regions, in green, socially inclusive, and walkable neighbourhoods which minimise car dependency.
B4.2	Financial tools: Fiscal and financial tools to accelerate and shape effective, housing systems that deliver affordable, inclusive and energy-efficient housing	B4.2.1 Ensure sufficient investment in climate-neutral living environments through grant programmes, financial intermediation, loans and tax incentives.
		B4.2.2 Invest directly in low carbon affordable housing and renovation, by providing soft or long-term loans to well-regulated social and affordable housing providers that commit to and implement environmental and social goals.
		B4.2.3 Ensure affordability of renovation outcomes for low-income households through a range of strategies and instruments including cost-efficient renovation, long term loans, revolving funds and rent assistance.
B4.3	Regulation: Regulations requiring the re-use and renovation of existing buildings over replacement with new structures	B4.3.1 Formulate short-term and longer-term responses to inadequate and informal housing, overcrowding and homelessness.
		B4.3.2 Use legislative, regulatory and investment frameworks to implement to ensure cost-effective renovation and affordability of outcomes for housing providers and their residents.
		B4.3.3 Use regulation and policy to re-use and renovate existing buildings, wherever possible, rather than building new.

# ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING

solar power



energy efficient appliances



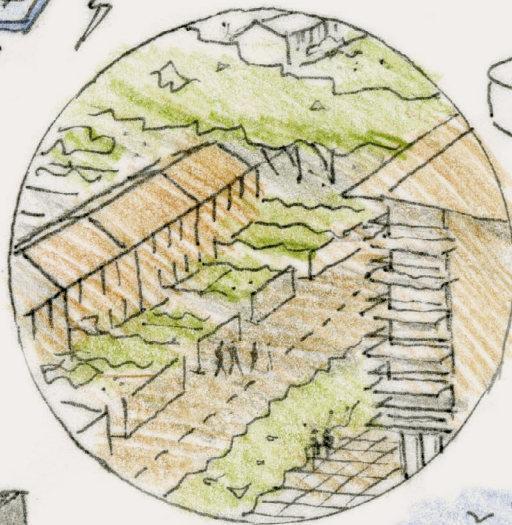
building materials  
low embedded carbon



rainwater collection

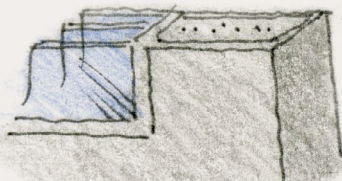


walkable neighbourhood



fresh air

high performance windows & walls



low flow water fixtures



access to nature

## POLICY AREA B: SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMES

<b>B4.4</b>	Innovative renovation: Renovation processes that do not displace nor place cost burden on residents and employ grants, long-term low-cost investment and assistance to residents	<b>B4.4.1</b>	Disseminate knowledge of deep-renovation technologies widely among tenants, housing providers and private owners.
		<b>B4.4.2</b>	Support capacity development in suppliers and contractors in pursuit of productive techniques and a trained and skilled workforce.
		<b>B4.4.3</b>	Improve knowledge of deep-renovation possibilities and innovative solutions among tenants, housing providers and private owners.
		<b>B4.4.4</b>	Design and conduct suitable competitions to advance technological awareness of energy efficient solutions that are affordable for residents.
<b>B4.5</b>	Standards, tools and techniques: Building standards, technologies, processes and supply-chains that promote climate neutral living environments	<b>B4.5.1</b>	Reduce the carbon footprint of the housing sector by life-cycle reduction of energy use of buildings in housing design, material supply, manufacturing, construction, maintenance, refurbishment, and, where appropriate, demolition processes.
		<b>B4.5.2</b>	Develop and monitor objective standards of energy efficiency for investment, builders, managers and residents for all typologies of residential construction, renovation and use.
		<b>B4.5.3</b>	Enable the creation and registration of homeowners' associations empowered with energy efficiency responsibilities.
		<b>B4.5.4</b>	Share and promote good practice and the roll-out of appropriate technological developments in renovation supply-chains to improve the energy- and resource-efficient outcomes, reduce costs, accelerate delivery and simplify installation and operation.



# NEXT STEPS

# Next steps

This Regional Action Plan is meant to inspire action and provide the basis for plans and activities to increase the contribution of affordable housing to sustainable urban development in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the face of climate change. It will be implemented on a voluntary basis. The UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management invites member States to consider how they could contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan.

Some countries may choose to develop voluntary national action plans or adopt targeted measures for improving housing affordability based on the Action Plan. UNECE, working in collaboration with Housing Europe and UN-Habitat, could assist countries in developing such plans and measures by facilitating policy dialogues and capacity-building activities.

The three organizations will bring the work to the attention of other relevant actors, such as the private sector, inviting them, without obligation, to implement actions where they already or could play a role. In this context, public-private partnerships are widely regarded as an effective way to disseminate knowledge and insights into the three-pronged affordable housing, sustainable development and green economy approach.

The Action Plan is also intended as a tool for communication with other sectors and for awareness-raising. The Committee will monitor progress in sustainable urban development and affordable housing as a part of its programme of work. The secretariat will work with the network of UNECE Charter Centres to develop proposals for disseminating, monitoring and evaluating work within the context of the Action Plan for the consideration of the Committee. The Committee will prioritise and incorporate relevant actions identified in the Action Plan into annual lists of activities, ensuring that the Action Plan and the UNECE programme of work on Housing and Land Management are fully aligned.

## Place and life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030

Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes

Cities, which are home to over half of the world's population, are at the forefront of disasters. Many are still besieged by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had adversely impacted the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The pandemic also highlighted the need to rethink urban planning. The "Place and Life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan 2030: Tackling challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate and housing emergencies in region, city, neighbourhood and homes" helps cities in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region and beyond address the complex challenges caused by disasters, including pandemics, climate change and housing emergencies. It provides a coherent framework, with policy options, goals, targets and actions for guiding local and national development efforts in the UNECE region until 2030 and for scaling up international cooperation.

The Regional Action Plan was prepared by the secretariat of the Housing and Land Management Unit of the UNECE Forests, Land and Housing Division. UNECE is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. Its major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. The UNECE Housing and Land Management is the secretariat to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management. The Committee works to promote

- affordable, adequate and climate-neutral housing, including for those with special needs and vulnerable population groups;
- compact, inclusive, circular, resilient, smart and sustainable cities; and
- transparent and efficient land use and property registration.

Find out more about the UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit at [www.unece.org/housing](http://www.unece.org/housing).

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