

# UN Habitat: Affordable Housing



## BunnyMUN III

L.B. POLY – October 19, 2024

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# HEAD CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Tika Jonnum and I'm so excited to be your co-Chair! I'm currently a senior at LB Poly High School and part of the PACE program. I've been in Model UN since freshman year and I had a great time co-chairing last year at Jackrabbit MUN!

I also love international affairs/politics and traveling! My bucket list includes Japan, Thailand, and India (if you have any additions let me know)! Outside of school, I like playing volleyball, guitar, and cooking, mostly Italian food.

This topic is very intricate and I can't wait to hear your ideas and possible solutions! To have a good flow of debate, please make sure to research your country's policy. From past experience, committee is always more fun when everyone participates! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me! I am more than happy to help out with position papers or any general questions!

Sincerely,

Tika Jonnum

UN Habitat | Co-Head Chair | [tikajonnum@gmail.com](mailto:tikajonnum@gmail.com)

# HEAD CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Andy Rojas and I am a senior in the PACE program at Long Beach Polytechnic High School. I joined Model UN my junior year and helped a crisis room at Jackrabbitt MUN. I enjoy debating and Model UN has grown my interest in debating world problems.

I love listening to music and playing music. I am in the LB Poly Marching Unit and I play the mellophone which is the marching band version of the french horn. Some of my favorite music artists are Vacations, Kali Uchis, and Daniel Caesar.

I look forward to your creative solutions and a passionate debate! Make sure to research your country to be well prepared for debate and make sure to participate to have a fun conference.

Sincerely,

Andy Rojas

UN Habitat | Co-Head Chair | [rojasandy35@gmail.com](mailto:rojasandy35@gmail.com)

# VICE CHAIR LETTER

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Corina Frank and I'm a Senior at Long Beach Polytechnic High School. I joined MUN my Junior year after I helped out in a crisis room for Jackrabbitt MUN. I love MUN because it's expanded my worldly knowledge and improved my speaking skills.

Some things you may like to know about me are that I am on the soccer team, I'm the president and founder of our own Long Beach Poly Crumbl Club, I hold other cabinet positions in other clubs, not just MUN, such as Persian Club and LEÍA.

My ultimate goal is to expand my love of MUN to you middle schoolers and for you guys to enjoy your time here at Bunny MUN III.

P.S if you have any questions email me.

Sincerely,

Corina Frank

UN Habitat | Vice Chair | [corinafranko7@gmail.com](mailto:corinafranko7@gmail.com)

# HOW TO MUN

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So, you're probably wondering: How do I prepare for debate? Well, here are some starting points to begin your country research!

1. Read through this background guide
  - a. find your country in Bloc Positions (pg. 14) and read that paragraph
2. Look for information on your country in the CIA World Factbook and BBC Country Profiles, linked here:
  - a. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>
  - b. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country\\_profiles/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/default.stm)
3. Look at the Questions to Consider (pg. 17) and try to answer them (do some research on the internet!)
4. Do more research on the internet for:
  - a. previous country actions
  - b. previous NGO and United Nations actions
  - c. possible solutions

During the committee, all delegates will present an “opening statement.” This is a short introductory speech and will only last about 30 seconds to 1 minute—nothing too bad! You can practice and time your speech using a timer.

These opening statements are written beforehand. They don't have to be memorized, either. You can print or write your speech, then read off the paper.

Your opening statement should include:

1. Your country's position on the issue at hand
2. What your country has done in the past
3. Possible solutions that align with your country's position
  - a. This is what you will discuss in the main part of the committee! Including this in your opening statement is a great way to let other delegates know where you stand.

# COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

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The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The main documents outlining the mandate of the organization are the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, Habitat Agenda, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and Resolution 56/206.

As our towns and cities grow at unprecedented rates setting the social, political, cultural and environmental trends of the world, sustainable urbanization is one of the most pressing challenges facing the global community in the 21st century. In 1950, one-third of the world's people lived in cities. Just 50 years later, this proportion has risen to one-half and will continue to grow to two-thirds, or 6 billion people, by 2050. Cities are now home to half of humankind. They are the hub for much national production and consumption – economic and social processes that generate wealth and opportunity. But they also create disease, crime, pollution and poverty. In many cities, especially in developing countries, slum dwellers number more than 50 per cent of the population and have little or no access to shelter, water, and sanitation. This is where UN-Habitat is mandated to make a difference for the better



# TOPIC SYNOPSIS

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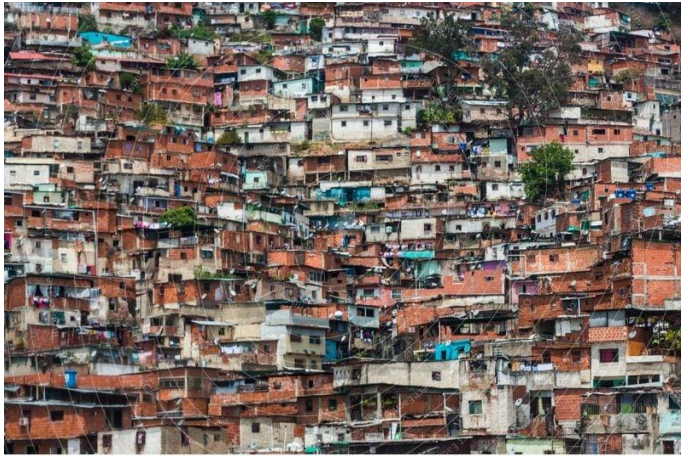
150 million people across the globe are homeless. The United Nations Habitat estimates that 3 billion people will become homeless by 2030. It is also reported that one in four people live in harmful conditions that are threats to their health, safety, and prosperity. UN Habitat aims to have adequate housing for all by placing affordability, sustainability, and inclusiveness as priorities for the urbanization process. The need for affordable housing is at an all time high and is becoming a worldwide crisis. Delegates will discuss the core problem of unaffordable housing and create solutions in order to construct a society where people can afford houses.



# BACKGROUND

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## Global Housing Crisis



Around 1.6 billion people worldwide lack adequate housing and this may rise to 3 billion people by 2030. Housing can technically be considered affordable if its cost is below the 30 percent of the household income. According to the U.S Department of Housing and

Urban Development, if a family pays more than 30% of their income for housing, it is considered a burden. Many countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Italy have percentages above the allotted 30%. Socioeconomic factors such as high cost of living, inadequate pay, and income gaps are some of the main causes for displacement and/or crowded housing. The National Low Income Housing coalition revealed that there is a lack of affordable housing as 7.2 million homes have become too expensive for low income renters. These houses have become unaffordable because low income renters make 30% or lower of the average income of their area. The demand for housing will only continue to increase as the United Nations predicts that 66% of the world's population will live in Urban areas.

## Defining Affordable Housing

Affordable housing not only means being below 30% of the household income, but also being physically adequate and fit for human habitation. Affordable housing is

an important measure of a community's economic well-being. It's fundamental to reducing poverty, improving equal opportunities, and guaranteeing sustainable growth

### **Sustainability**

Affordable housing has been on the decline and home ownership has begun to drop alongside it. According to Sustainable Housing, a California-based nonprofit for affordable housing owners, environmental, and equity organizations, “buildings globally use 35% of resources, 40% energy use, consume 12% of the world’s drinkable water, and produce 40% of carbon emissions,” which is also said to mostly come from homes. With house prices rising and insufficient resources millions of people are left without homes. Also, the cost of labor, land, and material has increased worldwide causing houses to become affordable to the people who want to rent or buy with an average income. Material prices have gone up because of inflation, global trade disputes, and sustainable resources. In developing countries, it is estimated that 40% of the population of fast developing cities are housed in squatter communities. Cities growing at exponential rates are often not in line with urban planning.

Environmental factors also play into these rapidly rising numbers. Increased urban sprawl has contributed to loss in air, water, and sanitation quality. In order to have more space to build houses, cities will have to expand and cause even more loss of natural habitat. This will also cause an increase in greenhouse emissions and reduced quality of air and water. Cities, in order to solve the issue, do tend to take this route of expanding the amount of land used for housing. As cities expand, the housing areas become further and further from the city’s business district. The residents who tend to live in these furthest areas from the city must travel further distance to get to their workplace, also contributing to global emissions.

### **Consequences of Costly Living**

It is estimated that around 40% - in some cases, 75% - of the population of fast-growing cities in developing countries are housed in squatter settlements without basic services. Slums often have inadequate access to safe water, sanitation, and quality of life. Today the number of people living in slums regarding developing countries is close to 881 million. In Sub-Saharan Africa 59% of the population lives in slums, more than any other region in the world. There are several aspects to housing



that impact health, including affordability, stability, quality and safety, and the surrounding neighborhood. Home design and structure significantly influence housing quality and may affect both mental and physical health. or

housing quality and inadequate conditions — such as the presence of lead, mold, or asbestos, poor air quality, and overcrowding — can contribute to negative health outcomes, including chronic disease and injury. Physical and structural housing conditions discussed above disproportionately impact children, older adults, individuals with physical disabilities, and low-income individuals. Children's behaviors, such as hand-to-mouth activity, may increase their exposure to home pollutants that may influence growth, development and survival rate. So as you can see the need for affordable housing is dire, decadent housing is detrimental to the general population.

# UN INVOLVEMENT

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As the population exponentially grows, by 2030, there will be a necessity for 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units every day. Since UN Habitat's establishment in 1975, the program has worked in fields of environmental studies, global political warfare, and urban planning to help better the availability of adequate housing, utilizing the UN Habitat's own Global Housing Strategy. UN Habitat has been monitoring countries of refugees and counties in financial crisis to assist these countries with the right knowledge and supplements to allow for livable shelter for the inhabitants in need.

For example, UN habitat, along with the reconstruction program of Yemen, had began urban rehabilitation of housing units in Yemen beginning in 2018. They have worked on around 600 low income housing units to provide for thousands of people to have adequate housing. UN habitat has also been working to educate engineers on skills like carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and construction management. More recently, working alongside the UNHCR ( United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ), UN habitat has been working on providing sufficient housing to refugees in West Darfur, who have been under attack by the Sudanese government's Arab militia forces. UH habitat has been actively working to create a framework for affordable house building for displaced people beginning in 2021 in this region.

Regarding the overall impact the UN Habitat has done in its efforts to provide affordable housing, around 30 countries prevented forced evictions through support from UN-Habitat in partnership with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; 43 countries implemented new housing policies

based on technical advice from UN Habitat; and the UN Habitat is currently assisting over 90 countries with housing crisis.

Establishment of the Global Housing Foundation, that is in partnership with UN Habitat. The mission of GHF is to provide affordable housing for the working poor community. This NGO has fostered collaborations from all over the world, in hopes of improving the housing situation for future generations.

# BLOC POSITIONS

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## **African Bloc:**

African countries are one of the hardest hit by rising homelessness with one of the causes being majorly because of poverty, especially rural poverty and inequalities. Recently, climate change has been shown to increase the risk of homelessness and disaster-related displacement – especially within some African countries, along with Asia, which already account for about 60 percent of an increase in the world's population living within slums. Currently there are many countries in Africa which have started working on affordable housing programmes such as requiring employers to provide housing allowances to their workers. Although some African governments in Sub-Saharan Africa have also placed measures such as regulating interest rates and assisting those who can't afford to pay for homes, that is a great step forward for people living within unsuitable housing conditions.

## **Asia-Pacific Bloc:**

Asia-Pacific island nations are struggling with the exponentially increasing demand for housing, especially in urban areas. Due to not having the economic means, many are forced to relocate to overcrowded and potentially unsafe areas where they are less likely to receive basic necessities; for example, clean water, safe air quality, and hospital care. To aid in this endeavor, government-based initiatives such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) focus on providing affordable housing. In multiple island nations tourism has led to an influx of inflation in cities, inevitably

raising the prices of homes. Sadly many natives can not afford to live in their own countries anymore due to the cost of living.

### **Western European:**

Western Europe has experienced an increase in homelessness and poverty due to problems such as the increasing cost of houses, limited space within certain European countries and inflation not matching an average person's salary. Throughout recent years the price of properties has risen to as high as 47%, making affordable houses difficult to come by in Western Europe. There has especially been a rise in youth homelessness. Steps have been taken in order to reduce this rising number of homelessness and poverty through passed policies such as National Social Policy which aims to minimize people's lack of affording property.

### **Middle Eastern Bloc:**

The Middle East has been faced with many setbacks due to the many wars that currently plague this region. Therefore, it is a constant struggle to find and maintain affordable housing, with many homeowners spending more than one-third of their income on rent. An innovative solution has been very prominent. "micro-apartments," which help maximize space usage. However, the problem of tailoring these needs to lower income families still persists, and in the meantime many more people are displaced.

### **Latin American Bloc:**

Latin America and the Caribbean have placed measures in order to combat poverty but have shown that inequality still continues to pose a problem for these countries. Climate change is seen to have major negative effects, especially within

small developing islands that are vulnerable when presented in natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Currently there has been an increase in concentrating having direct funding community groups dealing with housing opportunities, housing subsidies and upgrading city-wide informal settlements and is still going on to this day.

### **North American and Oceania Bloc:**

North American countries and the Oceanic region have had issues with affording mortgage grants and also issues with land availability. Since COVID, the demand for housing, specifically larger housing units, has increased exponentially ; Yet, the supply of housing land available is relatively low. In the United States and Canada, the cost of homes has been rising faster than the household income has been able to rise, meaning year over year, it has become harder to afford housing. In Canada, the percentage of income spent on housing ranges from 30% to as high as 43%. In the United States, the range is 30% to as high as 50% of annual income. Australia has faced mainly issues with the amount of land available to build housing, considering the continent's rigid or harsh topography.



# QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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1. How should homeless or displaced people be relocated (In refuge, in gentrification, in environmental hazards, etc.)?
2. What are the main causes from which the affordable housing crisis stems from?
3. In which ways can the construction of wealthy neighborhoods and properties be discouraged?
4. How does the socioeconomic status of a country affect its displaced communities?
5. How do ongoing war-conflicts affect the housing situation per country?
6. How does redlining affect housing conditions per country?

# References

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## **More on Adequate Housing Rights through UN-Habitat:**

"Human Right to Adequate Housing." Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, [www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing/human-right-adequate-housing](http://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing/human-right-adequate-housing).

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"Yemenis Benefit from Adequate Housing Project." UN-Habitat, 30 Nov. 2022, [unhabitat.org/news/30-nov-2022/yemenis-benefit-from-adequate-housing-project](http://unhabitat.org/news/30-nov-2022/yemenis-benefit-from-adequate-housing-project).

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## **More on Past UN Action:**

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"Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing." United Nations, 2020, [press.un.org/en/2020/soc4884.doc.htm](http://press.un.org/en/2020/soc4884.doc.htm).