

## Improving Urban Resilience in Informal Settlements Thematic Workshop

Date: 24 November 2020  
Time: 9:30 – 12:00 CET  
Platform: Zoom  
Languages: English, Russian

### Rationale

The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the need for cities to improve their resilience capacities against present and future risks. Cities must reconsider their responses to demands for access to opportunities quality of life, environmental sustainability, as well as fair distribution of goods and services. In this context, the current crisis has further brought to light informal settlements as highly impactful with respect to the urban and peri-urban fabric. They are at the forefront of containing and monitoring of transmission, and need to be better integrated into cities' resilience strategies. However, this integration of informal settlements is hindered by weak infrastructure and spatial planning, limited access to goods and services, and a lack of adequate data on dwellings and inhabitants.

Recovery from the ongoing crisis entails rethinking the ways such vulnerabilities are addressed and vulnerable communities engaged. This means retrofitting existing and developing new infrastructures in ways that account for new set of risks while pursuing co-benefits and positive trade-offs. This suggests looking closer at how to bring to vulnerable communities integrated approaches to resilience such as nature-based solutions, while rethinking the financing and Public-Private partnerships to harness resources.

To understand how resilience strategies can be practically utilized in informal settlements, UNECE Housing and Land Management Unit, the UNECE nexus on Smart Sustainable Cities for All Ages, and the Global Environmental Policy Program of the University of Geneva organize jointly this thematic workshop on “Improving Urban Resilience in Informal Settlements.”

This event brings together leading experts and policymakers with the objective of discussing best practices, policies and monitoring frameworks. The workshop will focus on how to improve the inclusion of informal settlements into the urban fabric through better infrastructure and spatial planning; improvement of systems integration; and efficient financing and engagement of public and private actors.

## Programme

Moderated by

**Mr. Alexandre Hedjazi**, Director, Global Environmental Policy Program,  
University of Geneva

**Mr. Matteo Tarantino**, Lecturer and Senior Research Associate, Institute for  
Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva

9:30 Opening

**Ms. Gulnara Roll**, Secretary to the UNECE Committee on Urban Development,  
Housing and Land Management

9:40 Keynote

**Mr. Spiro Pollalis**, Harvard University Zofnass Program for Sustainable Infrastructure  
*Challenges and Opportunities towards Upgrading Informal Settlements*

10:00 **Panel 1: Nature-Based Solutions**

**Mr. Joni Baboci**, Advisor to the Mayor for Urban Planning, Tirana, Albania  
*Implementing Nature-Based Solutions in Cities*

**Ms. Leonie Lisa Meier**, UNECE Forestry and Timber Division  
*The Role of Tree in Cities*

Discussion

10:40 *Break*

10:45 **Panel 2: PPPs for Upgrading Urban Infrastructure**

**Mr. Pedro Neves**, UNECE PPP Working Group  
*PPPs for the Improvement of Informal Settlements*

**Ms. Eva Bufi**, CEO of Ardana Consulting  
*PPPs for Upgrading Infrastructure in Informal Settlements*

**Ms. Irina Zapatrina**, Ukrainian PPP Development Support Center  
*Challenges towards the Implementation of PPPs*

Discussion

11:30 Conclusions

12:00 End of Workshop

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