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Recovering back better: building urban economic resilience during and after COVID-19 and
Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2020 and 2021:
Land administration and management

COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region

Note by the Bureau of the Working Party

Summary

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat of the Working Party on Land Administration in cooperation with other ECE sub-programmes and other UN agencies worked on the draft "COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region". This document contains the Executive Summary, and sections on guiding principles and structure of the Recovery Action Plan (section I), goals and targets for each policy area (section II) and final considerations (section III).

The Working Party agreed on the draft "COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region" at its Twelfth Session on 31 May 2021.

The Committee will be invited to endorse the "COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region".

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I. Executive Summary

1.   In the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region there are approximately 50 million people living in informal settlements, with a large percentage of them in the Southern and Eastern subregions. These settlements typically have dense populations, limited services, including water supply and sanitation, inadequate transport, unregistered residents, inadequate housing with insecure tenure, and unregistered land rights. Residents have generally low incomes and often have few resources, precarious employment, limited digital connectivity, and include many of society's most vulnerable inhabitants. Overcrowding and housing conditions in informal settlements pose particular challenges to States to ensure the protection of their residents from the pandemic. In addition, residents of marginalized communities are often inadequately included in public vaccination campaigns and frequently, show greater hesitancy to get vaccinated. The economic impact of the pandemic has in particular hit these residents and thus, further increased the many other challenges in their day to day lives.

2.   As noted in a recent UN-GGIM report, "the pandemic has not only created new challenges, but reinforced the pre-existing obstacles to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals - structural inequalities, socio-economic gaps, and systemic challenges and risks and a lack of timely fundamental data and enabling technologies to measure and monitor what is happening where, when, and how."[1] The measures proposed in this *COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region* (Recovery Action Plan) are dealing with both the new challenges, created by COVID-19, and the pre-existing ones.

3.   Addressing the specific challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic within informal settlements is urgently needed, while also addressing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Recovery Action Plan, targeted at national and local governments in the ECE region, provides an extensive list of goals, targets, and actions that can be advanced by governments, local authorities, residents, community leaders, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to help mitigate and/or prevent the COVID-19 pandemic spread. It is also designed to help build back better to achieve greater resilience against future pandemic risks while simultaneously helping to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a particular focus on SDG 11 on sustainable cities and human settlements.

4.   The integration and formalization of these informal communities is a key step in the longer-term resilience building process. A colour coding is used in the Regional Action Plan to visually distinguish different goals: immediate emergency focused goals; short-term emergency related goals; intermediate term goals (blended resilience and emergency focus) and long-term (resilience focused) goals.

5.   The Recovery Action Plan refers to the ECE *Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions*,[2] the separately prepared Policy Briefs covering a number of special topics, and the Assessment Reports prepared for the cities of Tirana, Bishkek, Podgorica, and Skopje. It also relies upon principles discussed within the FAO *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*,[3] and the ECE *Policy framework for sustainable real estate markets*[4], as well as the *WHO Housing and Health Guidelines*[5]. The Recovery Action Plan is informed further

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[1] United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management. "COVID-19: Ready to Respond. The Role of the Geospatial Community in Responding to COVID-19", background document presented at the tenth session of UN-GGIM, 2020. Available at http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-Session/documents/Covid-19_Ready-to-Respond.pdf.

[2] Available at https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/guidelines-formalization-informal-constructions.

[3] Available at http://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf.

[4] Available at https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/policy-framework-sustainable-real-estate-markets-0.

[5] Available at https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241550376.

by the obligation of national and local governments under international human rights law to realize progressively the right to adequate housing for all without discrimination.[6]

6.   The format of this document is built around nine broad policy areas. Under each goal there will be a number of targets. These targets are essentially secondary goals, under the main one. There will be individual actions to help achieve these targets. The nine policy areas are as follows:

(a)   Policy area 1 - Geospatial, land rights, tenure, resource allocation and justice;

(b)   Policy area 2 - Involvement of local communities and local action;

(c)   Policy area 3 - Basic data needs, telecommunication and information technology;

(d)   Policy area 4 - Physical infrastructure, water, sanitation and energy services;

(e)   Policy area 5 - Social and infrastructure services;

(f)   Policy area 6 - Stay at home recommendations, culture and vulnerable groups;

(g)   Policy area 7 - Food, basic consumption & distribution;

(h)   Policy area 8 - Environmental concerns, green spaces, recreation and social events; and

(i)   Policy area 9 - Buildings, construction and land planning.

7.   These policy areas cover a wide range of key topics related to pandemic response and the achievement of the SDGs. The primary focus is on how to mitigate and prevent pandemic-related harm to the residents of informal communities. The pandemic does not recognize legal or physical boundaries and crosses these borders easily. As such, building the resilience to pandemics within informal settlements helps the neighbouring formal communities too.

8.   Pandemic prevention, resilience and, mitigation can be accomplished through key actions from local and national governments and communities. To achieve these, good governance and management of land; best use of the built environment; and comprehensive, inclusive, fair and efficient supply of various services are essential. These actions also relate to how we consume and extract natural resources for the built environment, as well as how we engage with nature.

9.   The integration of informal constructions within the economy, formal land markets, legal framework, land planning, and appropriate administrative adaptation will help achieve resilience and the SDGs. Building registers and the address register data were among the most useful datasets for risk analysis and response during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, it is important for each building to be included in the building register, whether it is registered or not in the cadaster. Finally, successful recovery actions should pay close attention to how to best involve local communities, make logical adjustments in social behaviour in response to a pandemic and build individual as well as collective resilience in these difficult and unprecedented times.

10.   The Recovery Action Plan for informal settlements and the work at community level should also be envisioned in parallel with other urban and rural community development needs and activities. In rural areas a focus on safe and sustainable agriculture and rural development and diversification of the rural economy should incorporate the concepts discussed herein.

11.   There are several cross-cutting themes throughout the proposed actions. Those are discussed in more detail within the section on cross-cutting themes and the relevant policy

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[6] Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; relevant reports of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing on informal settlements and the COVID-19: A/73/310/Rev.1, available at https://undocs.org/A/73/310/Rev.1 and A/75/148, available at http://www.undocs.org/A/75/148.

areas. The generalized cross-cutting themes relate to similar actions, considered and applied across many of the individual policy areas and deserve special attention. They are as follows:

(a)   *Data collection and management:* Appropriate decision making relies upon adequate and appropriate reliable data. It is of significant importance to coordinate and plan carefully the data collection phase as to avoid overlapping, gaps, costs, delays etc.;

(b)   *Communication and promotional plans:* Consistent, accurate, inclusive and timely messaging is critical at every step;

(c)   *Participation plans*: Effective local engagement, and public willingness is necessary;

(d)   *Resource allocation and integration:* An effective strategy should incorporate integrated solutions; and

(e)   *Economic benefits, local and political awareness and will*: Success can be achieved with sustained political and resident support.

12.   The implementation of the Recovery Action Plan may vary greatly from country to country and from one informal settlement to another. It should therefore be based on assessment of the local needs, changing nature of the pandemic, the shifting political/social will, availability of resources, and other factors on a case-by-case basis. The timing of potential interventions will be described flexibly. Priority levels should be balanced between local realities, and careful consideration of costs, benefits, and risks.

13.   This Recovery Action Plan shows that appropriate interventions can simultaneously have health, safety and other socioeconomic benefits. The twin goals of increased pandemic resilience and the achievement of the SDGs can be advanced simultaneously. Additionally, a country's disaster preparedness can make all the difference; therefore, greater integration and formalization of the informal communities within the broader formal markets is a critical step in the process of achieving greater pandemic resilience, alongside a more just, equitable and sustainable future.

II.   Structure and guiding principles

A.   Structure

14.   The structure of this Recovery Action Plan identifies goals, targets, and actions that are key to a successful pandemic response. Appropriate local implementation should and is expected to vary in timing, priority and scope, based on the physical and social realities in their communities.

15.   The Recovery Action Plan outlines nine policy areas and each contains one goal. Each goal will have concrete targets, and actions to be taken to reach the targets. Time frames were excluded from the Recovery Action Plan as successful implementation will vary greatly based on socio-cultural context, political/local will, (financial) resources, and the impact of the pandemic and other threats faced by an informal community.

16.   While specific time frames were not presented to allow for greater flexibility at the local level, timings in general are as follows:

(a)   Emergency goals (emergency focused – colour code: *red*)

Categorized targets and action points to reach and secure short-term goals; loosely defined as those to be accomplished in less than 6 months.

(b)   Short-term goals (emergency related – colour code: *gold*)

Categorized targets and action points to reach and secure short-term goals; loosely defined as those to be accomplished in less than 1 year.

(c) Intermediate term goals (blended resilience and emergency focus – colour code: *green*)

Categorized targets and action points to reach and secure intermediate-term goals. The greater complexity is expected to loosely require 6 to 18 months to accomplish.

(d) Long-term goals (resilience focused – colour code: *blue*)

Categorized targets and action points to reach and secure long-term goals. The greater complexity and nature of the solutions are expected to loosely require more than 1 year to accomplish, often from 1 to 5 years.

17.   Individual targets/actions are colour coded according to immediacy of its components. A *red* circle next to a target/action means it has emergency components; a *gold* circle refers to short-term components; a *green* circle to intermediate components; and a *blue* circle to long-term components. Many of the targets and actions will show multiple coloured circles, an indication that a given target or goal may have an emergency, short, intermediate and/or long-term components.

B.   Guiding principles

18.   This Recovery Action Plan incorporates a flexible, comprehensive, and people-centered gender sensitive approach to developing appropriate COVID-19 pandemic response. It is crucial that any plan and implementation programme must be appropriate and accepted by the local community. The character of the informality of the constructions, local culture, governmental, legal, scientific, environmental and economic realities need to be balanced. Local community members, officials and other stakeholders must communicate effectively at every stage of the plan to achieve the greatest benefits.

19.   Many United Nations publications cover topics directly related to the guiding principles of this Recovery Action Plan, in particular, the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* and their guiding principles on responsible tenure governance.[7]

20.   This Recovery Action Plan is also based on the following guiding principles:

(a)   Comprehensiveness

21.   There is no group of measures that can achieve complete protection from all pandemics (or by extension, all the myriad of threats that face humanity in the twenty-first century). The optimal outcome, therefore, is a comprehensive and integrative set of policies and behaviours that balance the dangers of a specific pandemic viral threat (COVID-19 in this instance), with the realities of our world. Specifically, we focus on those measures that are central to informal settlements in the ECE region, where risks are more acute, information is limited, and oftentimes political will, social will or trust is less. There should be a balance between these realities and culture, competitive societies, the economic engines upon which they depend, science and the limitations in the natural resources of the earth. The actual situation at a given moment (viral specifics, spread risks, number currently infected and hospitalized, death rate etc.) balanced with the socio-environmental realities, will drive our decision making at all levels.

22.   Simultaneous cross-sectoral approaches are necessary. One-dimensional solutions may lead to undesired or unexpected results. These solutions often address symptoms of the problem, and can miss the complexity of the blended socio-cultural, socio-economic, and related pure science nature of the myriad of threats facing us and the planet upon which we depend. This Recovery Action Plan should therefore be considered in its entirety. All goals and targets should be understood in the context of a need for targeted national and local policies, logistical solutions, appropriate resource allocation, creative scientific problem

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[7] Available at http://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf.

solving, a need for good leadership, and socio-cultural adaptability. This is true even if their operational implementation may (and should) differ widely across the globe. We should employ the range of tools at our disposal, and the appropriate local ways to reduce pandemic threat, understanding that no culture, people or informal settlement is the same.

(b) Learning and flexibility

23. Policies should encourage and embrace best practices and emerging innovations. They should allow for flexibility in approaching various informal settlement challenges. All pandemic threats will raise issues related to culture, society, faith, economics, and governance, and so will the solutions. The greater the direct connection to how people live and what they value, the more adaptive the need will be in responding to pandemic or other wide-scale threats if interventions are to be successful.

24. Overregulation should be avoided as it can lead to unintended negative effects. Overregulation can also ignore the necessary procedures for pandemic safety due to a lack of resources and capacity, as well as "social will" and communication, especially in poorer countries. A flexible balanced set of solutions needs to be implemented and adapted to the nature of the pandemic or natural threat and local realities. This relies on appropriate, evidence-based and consistent communication at all stages.

(c) People-centered and human rights-based approach

25. It is vital that pandemic response be interlinked with social policies that promote the well-being of society; respect, protect and fulfil human rights; support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; help reduce social inequality that can lead to unrest; and help scientifically address the true nature of the threat. To consider any global human health crisis (or even climate change) in narrow technocratic terms is insufficient. To view things narrowly invites opposition and failure despite the best of intentions.

26. There are large differences across the ECE region with respect to levels of economic development, legislative and organizational structures, housing and the built environment, informality, leadership, culture, history, faith, resources, and climatic conditions. This is even more true for informal settlements. Informal settlements are at even greater risk, relative to these aforementioned factors, due to generally weaker social cohesion, lower incomes and resources, precarious employment and access to basic utility services, socio-cultural biases, and lesser access to education and other basic services. The Recovery Action Plan has universal relevance to the ECE region, and properly incorporating most goals and targets into policies at both the national and local levels is urgent. However, to achieve optimal outcomes, local socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, and geographical contexts must be blended into any implementer thought processes when designing and implementing locally specific measures to respond to a pandemic and threat. At the core must be the effective participation of those living in the informal settlements in the decision making on response measures and policies affecting them, from policy design stage to implementation to evaluation.

C.   Policy areas

Policy area 1 - Geospatial, land rights, tenure, resource allocation and justice

Goal 1   Informal settlements are formalized and brought into the economy and formal land markets in a just, efficient, and sustainable manner, allowing for broader socioeconomic progress, justice, and the empowerment of the people, especially those in vulnerable and marginalized situations.

Target   Red, gold, green and blue circles

> 1.1.   The land registries and geospatial databases include informal communities and ownership rights to foster greater socioeconomic integration between formal and informal residents over time.

Target   Red, gold, green and blue circles

1.2   Informal constructions are formalized in a fair, efficient, transparent, and inclusive manner, empowering residents, supporting social and economic inclusivity and better pandemic responses.[8]

Target   Red, gold, green and blue circles

1.3   The legal rights and justice systems are efficient and adequate for the needs of informal residents. They should support sustainable development, foster greater efficiency and integration of labour and land markets, defend housing, land and property rights, be responsive to capital markets, be equitable and inclusive, and should provide adequate protections for human rights, gender equality and dignity.

Target   Gold, green and blue circles

1.4   The institutions underpinning land, labour and capital economics and health safety concerns are improved to better address pandemic threats and foster economic growth, fairness, and inclusivity.

Policy area 2 - Involvement of local Communities and local action

Goal 2   Local community-based organizations, coordinated with a city-level team, respond to the pandemic in coordination with government ministries, and medical, professional, and aid organizations of all kinds.

Target   Red and gold circles

2.1   Social and community groups are relied on or formed, if there is no active community group in an informal settlement that could be mobilized to respond to pandemic-related threats, and to engage residents and address the specific needs of the community.

Target   Gold and green circles

2.2   Local charities, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations and donors coordinate where possible to respond to pandemic threats and assist in solving community specific challenges.

Target   Red circle

2.3   Community-based information campaigns provide accurate data to informal settlements residents, and information is disseminated through the most efficient channels, in a timely manner and in detail appropriate to the specific local challenges brought on by the pandemic threat.

Policy area 3 - Basic data needs, telecommunications and information technology

Goal 3   The people are empowered to cope with a pandemic by leveraging and making the relevant information technologies easily available.

Target   Red and gold circles

3.1   Mobile phone technologies are utilized to their potential to fill the information gaps among residents, provide social contact and act as a tool for the dissemination of critical information and governmental instructions.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

3.2   Viable decentralized employment and teleworking options while expanding internet service affordably in all informal settlements.

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[8]   For more information see ECE (2019) Guidelines for the formalization of informal constructions, available online from: https://unece.org/housing-and-land-management/publications/guidelines-formalization-informal-constructions

Target   Red and gold circles

3.3   Informal settlements residents have easy access to education and communication from a variety of electronic sources.

Policy area 4 - Physical infrastructure, water, sanitation, hygiene and energy services

Goal 4   The public physical infrastructure, water and sanitation networks, and energy grids adequately, sustainably and equitably support the informal communities.

Target   Red and gold circles

4.1   The physical road and transportation network is adequate and safe for emergency services (paved, necessary width for vehicles, etc.). When possible, it should be flexible enough to safely accommodate differing modes of travel (mass transit, foot traffic, bicycles etc., as appropriate); sufficient for economic integration with the formal community; and can accommodate pandemic related social distancing.

Target   Gold, green and blue circles

4.2   There is safe, adequate, affordable and equitable access to clean water, sanitation services, and hygienic infrastructure. Over time, climate resilient water and sanitation measures as well as energy efficiency ones should be practically applied once economic feasibility is achieved, or donor funds become available to fill resource gaps.

Target   Gold, green and blue circles

4.3   Adequate energy services are provided to residents of informal settlements incorporating affordability, improvement of energy efficiency (renewable energy where applicable), sustainability and performance standards practical to the specific local context and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. The availability of such energy services creates greater community resilience to pandemic and other threats in addition to greater equity, stronger economic opportunity, and helps safeguard human rights for societies most vulnerable.

Policy area 5 – Social and infrastructure services

Goal 5   Essential services are supplied to residents safely and adequately, overcoming the challenges of the pandemic threat.

Target   Red circle

5.1   Health service provision is sufficient to meet public need[9] for typical demand and has adequate expansion capacity for the pandemic response in place.

Target   Red and gold circles

5.2   Emergency service provision is sufficient to meet public need and is scalable for rapid expansion capacity for pandemic threats.

Target   Red and gold circles

5.3   Appropriate community level health education is accepted at the local level.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

5.4   The financial wellbeing of the community is preserved and the pandemic threat to stability is overcome with timely intervention and proper planning.

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[9] Food and Agriculture Organization. *The contribution of social protection to economic inclusion in rural areas* (Rome, 2020). Available at http://www.fao.org/3/cb2458en/CB2458EN.pdf.

Policy area 6 - Stay at home recommendations, culture, and vulnerable groups

Goal 6   To balance stay at home recommendations with the social and economic realities facing the local culture, diverse populations, and vulnerable groups.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

6.1   The cultural and demographic characteristics in informal settlements are taken into account so that diversity and language barriers experienced by residents of informal settlements do not create an additional hazard to appropriate pandemic response.

Target   Gold and green circles

6.2   Stigma, bias, prejudice, gender-based discrimination, and human rights abuses against residents of informal settlements are eradicated and the protection of human rights is increased by governments during any health crisis.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

6.3   Low-income residents and vulnerable groups are adequately supported such that food and staple goods are provided and there is access to credit during peak pandemic periods and the necessary support to be able to comply with stay at home or quarantine protocols is available.

Target   Gold and green circles

6.4   The safety, values and culture of the informal settlement residents are preserved without undue loss of life.

Policy area 7 - Food, basic consumption and distribution

Goal 7   To ensure the adequate and safe manufacture, and distribution of food, basic consumption goods, and medical supplies.

Target   Red and gold circles

7.1   Adequate safe access to food and basic goods with appropriate social distancing measures is provided by those involved in the distribution of food, medical supplies, and basic goods.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

7.2   Adequate safe access to food and basic goods with appropriate social distancing measures is provided by those involved in the production of food and basic goods.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

7.3   Minimal corruption, black market profiteering, and critical worker shortages, all of which could hamper both the public and private response to a pandemic.

Target   Gold and green circles

7.4   Local authorities and communities are prepared to deal with labour supply shortages in a pandemic and to support informal settlements residents.

Policy area 8 - Environmental concerns, green spaces, recreation and social events

Goal 8   Provide for safer enjoyment of the environment, green spaces, recreational and social activities.

Target   Red and gold circles

8.1   Outdoor recreation, sports and music events, and social gatherings are available and safe for everyone.

Target   Gold, green and blue circles

     8.2   Recreational travel, hospitality and tourism services are provided to visitors and residents in a manner that puts no one at undue risk.

Policy area 9 - Buildings, construction and land planning

Goal 9   Viral spread risks posed by commercial, public buildings, educational facilities, informal homes, and other constructions are controlled.

Target   Red and gold circles

     9.1   Large and intensely utilized commercial, educational, and public facilities are safe (hospitals, medical centers, government buildings, schools, transport hubs, shopping centers etc.) are operated safely.

Target   Gold, green and blue circles

     9.2   Sustainable adequate housing is available for all classes of informal settlement residents.

Target   Red, gold and green circles

     9.3   Roads, foot paths and choke points have lower peak traffic.

III.   Final considerations

27.   The following final considerations were formulated in the process of preparation of the Recovery Action Plan. These considerations suggest broad courses of action on future implementation of proposed goals and targets that may vary based on local context.

(a)   Informal settlements are more vulnerable to pandemics

28.   Informal settlements in the ECE region tend to increase the risks of pandemic spread by their very nature. The people living in these communities commonly endure inadequate living conditions, live in areas with high population density, and have a widely dispersed service-oriented employment base (often residents have two or three jobs). They generally tend to rely on inadequate service provision (including energy, water and sanitation) and have more limited healthcare, and less access to education. There is a general lack of good demographic and spatial data, heavy concentrations of minorities and vulnerable groups, and generally low incomes coupled with limited resources. There is commonly a history of government mistrust by residents of informal settlements, social bias and public prejudice against persons living in them. All these factors increase the risks of pandemic spread within these informal settlements and by extension, the surrounding formal communities too. There is the potential for a more sustained outbreak due to more difficult and less certain containment options.

(b)   Authorities must act to make informal settlements more resilient

29.   The potential for suffering created by a pandemic is greater in almost every way within informal communities. The historical inability, misunderstanding or reluctance to solve the root causes of informality has created the current situation. The relevant actors should find a way to supply adequate housing to meet the changing needs of the population; gather and retain necessary information; allow for the formalization of existing informality (along with effective registry and cadaster enhancement); provide the appropriate level of services; and ensure tenure security, justice, equity, fulfilment of human rights, and effective governance. These refinements will limit the creation of new informal communities and prevent the expansion of some persistent social, economic, environmental and health/safety shortcomings.

(c)   **The Recovery Action Plan is designed to support initiatives to meet pandemic challenges**

30.   The *COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Informal Settlements in the ECE Region* is designed to highlight appropriate goals, targets, and actions to minimize or prevent the harmful effects of a pandemic and respond to the challenges of COVID-19, in particular. It is designed to build resilience in both the built environment and social structures of informal settlements. It is also designed to assist in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs as well as to respond to the call by Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary General, to build back better from the pandemic, and promote human rights, justice, equity, and transparency. It is envisioned to assist in harmonizing formal and informal communities within their cultural, environmental, and socio-economic settings, which allows for easier achievement of all SDGs.

31.   The Recovery Action Plan aims to address the key aspects of the challenges related to fighting a pandemic. However, the structure, depth and focus of this document is not exhaustive and comprehensive. Some of them are discussed below.

(d)   **The Guidelines on the formalization of informal constructions to support concrete positive action**

32.   Formalizing informal settlements is a key component in creating a more resilient and sustainable city that is flexible in its resistance to future pandemics. The guidelines provide an effective tool to start the formalization process in a structured way and should be adjusted as appropriate to meet local political, environmental, legal, physical, economic, and local realities. Cross-cutting mapping and geospatial/demographic data collection for all policy areas should be coordinated with the formalization process.

IV.   Epilogue

33.   Implementation of the Recovery Action Plan in a local context may vary greatly from country to country, region to region, and informal settlement to informal settlement. It could also vary based on the changing nature of the pandemic threat, shifting political/social will, alterations in the available resources, and other changes in the nature of the challenges facing residents and local authorities alike. For this reason, the specifics of implementation of the various goals, targets, and actions were not discussed in detail. The timing of when and how they should be applied was described assuming that these can be implemented in a flexible manner as appropriate. Priority levels should be determined based on cost/benefit studies, be inclusive of local authorities, local resident groups, faith-based groups, along with national and city governments and NGO stakeholders as appropriate. Without ensuring the active participation of those targeted by policy measures, a very targeted local context, top-down implementation plans are often less efficient and less effective. As such, most of these local implementational aspects are left for greater discussion and consideration by the parties involved.

34.   Implementation of the Recovery Action Plan for informal settlements needs adequate funding and investment. A clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism with two to three key performance indicators per each of the strategic areas make it easier to raise funds for the implementation. The socioeconomic benefits analyses, mentioned in the study, could provide guidance on where the priorities should be put first, in case of limited funding.

35.   This Recovery Action Plan is meant to show where appropriate interventions can simultaneously have health/ safety and socioeconomic benefits. It showed where pandemic resilience, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs can be achieved, which will benefit everyone over time. The Goals, Targets and Actions described herein, coupled with careful analysis of the specific local challenges and resources will hopefully result in more effective and appropriate interventions. Greater integration and formalization of the informal communities within the greater national landscape will potentially provide innumerable benefits for all.

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