

GLOBAL SHELTER CLUSTER STATEMENT ON WORLD HABITAT DAY 2020

Shorter version as statement

Monday the 5th of October is World Habitat Day. This year's theme is **"Housing for All: A Better Urban Future."**

The Global Shelter Cluster joins in advocating with the key messages of this World Habitat Day:

- Adequate housing is a **human right** and a **catalyst for all other fundamental rights. Housing is the building block for people's health, dignity, safety, well-being, and inclusion.**
- Addressing humanitarian shelter needs contributes to the **Sustainable Development Goal 11** target of access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services for all by 2030 and the upgrading of slums.
- The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the power of communities and people's ability to adapt and find local and innovative solutions. It has also shown that it is possible to quickly address housing emergencies as local and national governments provide temporary solutions including:
 - **Short term and emergency accommodation** for people without secure housing through **underutilized spaces and repurposing of buildings.**
 - **Moratoriums on evictions** due to rental and mortgage arrears or **forced evictions of informal settlements** and slums along with **suspension of utility costs and surcharges for the duration of the pandemic.**
 - **Access to buildings, land and open space for essential small businesses, food security, emergency health care and other vital functions** needed while people stay at home.
- Housing is **the shared responsibility** of national and local governments, civil society organisations, private sector, diaspora community, international and national NGOs, and international organisations, and of course the affected community as the main actors in meeting their own housing needs.

This theme comes at the backdrop of major challenges for the shelter and settlements sector. Over the past year, we have seen increased displacement and damage to homes as a result of conflict, natural disasters, or a combination of both, in countries such as **Burkina Faso, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Mozambique** or **Bangladesh.**

The **Global COVID-19 Pandemic** has compounded the shelter and settlement needs of 1.8 billion people living in slums or informal settlements, and 52.9 million in need of life-saving humanitarian shelter interventions. While Shelter Cluster Strategies in the field aim to be comprehensive, **funding constraints** limit partners' capacity to provide **more durable and dignified shelter solutions** that could facilitate the survivors' recovery and simultaneously prevent the spread of the pandemic.

The Global Shelter Cluster Twitter Account is active throughout the day **@ShelterCluster** along with Shelter Cluster partnering organisations such as Interaction, Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council, IFRC, IOM, and UNHCR. Please follow along and tweet your own messages in support of the work that the Shelter Cluster is doing to meet the shelter and housing needs of all people affected by crises around the world on World Habitat Day.