



## **Draft Concept Note: Parliamentarians Roundtable: Turning urban commitments into national action: the parliamentary path to housing for all**

### **Abstract**

Housing is one of the most pressing challenges facing governments at national, regional, and local levels today. Rising housing costs, chronic supply shortages, and growing informal settlements are reshaping urban demographics, fueling social tensions, and constraining economic mobility. In developing countries, rapid urbanization, climate-related hazards, and inadequate infrastructure intensify these challenges, driving the expansion of informal settlements and heightening social tensions. These pressures generate political and economic demands for reform, placing urban law and regulatory frameworks at the centre of national development priorities.

Parliamentarians play a pivotal role in shaping the legislative, policy, and financial frameworks that determine access to adequate housing, land, and basic services. Through law-making, budget approval, oversight, and representation functions, they can advance reforms that expand housing access, regularize informal settlements, strengthen resilience to climate risks, and promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable cities.

The Parliamentarians Roundtable at WUF13 will provide a high-level platform for exchange, showcase legislative innovations, and catalyze parliamentary action aligned with global commitments, including the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.

### **Background and Rationale**

Housing is one of the most pressing challenges facing governments at national, regional, and local levels today. Rising housing costs, chronic supply shortages, and growing informal settlements are reshaping urban demographics, fueling social tensions, and constraining economic mobility. In developing countries, rapid urbanization, climate-related hazards, and inadequate infrastructure intensify housing challenges, driving the growth of informal settlements and heightening social tensions. These pressures not only affect living conditions but also generate political and economic demands for reform, placing urban law and regulatory frameworks at the centre of national development priorities. Across the world, these pressures are redefining public discourse, activism and policy priorities, highlighting housing as a key driver of social and political change.

Parliamentarians play a pivotal role in shaping the legislative, policy, and financial frameworks that determine access to adequate housing, land, and basic services. Through their law-making, budget approval, and oversight functions, parliamentarians have a unique opportunity to drive effective national responses to urban challenges; shaping laws that promote greater access to adequate housing, regularize informal settlements, strengthen resilience to climate risks, and promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable cities. Through their representation function, parliamentarians can also ensure that the needs of all, most notably groups in marginalized and vulnerable situations, are considered.

The Parliamentarians Roundtable at WUF13 will continue the partnership between UN-Habitat and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), building on the momentum of the previous roundtable held at WUF12 in Cairo in 2024. It will provide a high-level platform for parliamentarians to exchange experiences, showcase legislative innovations, and articulate policy commitments aligned with the WUF13 theme, the COP29 Declaration on Multisectoral Action Pathways (MAP) to Resilient and Healthy Cities, the outcomes of the Open-Ended Working Group on Adequate Housing for All, and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) and UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026–2029.

The Roundtable is conceived as the culmination of a structured pre-WUF parliamentary engagement process and as a catalyst for sustained parliamentary action beyond WUF13, including contributions to the 2026 global reviews of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.

## Goal

To strengthen the role of parliamentary leadership and collaboration in advancing policy and legislation towards adequate affordable housing for all as well as safe, resilient and sustainable cities, including mobilizing parliamentary contributions to the outcomes of WUF13, including the COP 29 MAP Declaration and the Baku Call to Action.

## Overall Objectives

- To strengthen the role of parliamentarians in advancing housing and sustainable urban development through legislation, policy oversight and budgetary action, in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, SDG 11 and related global urban commitments.

## Specific Objectives

- To facilitate dialogue among parliamentarians on legislative and policy reforms needed to scale up adequate housing and urban resilience, particularly in the context of climate change.
- To highlight parliamentary roles in enabling financing, land governance, and inclusive service delivery.
- To generate parliamentary recommendations and commitments aligned with the WUF13 theme for inclusion in the Baku Call to Action.
- To promote follow-up parliamentary actions to translate WUF13 outcomes into national legislation, policies, and budgets.

## Format and Participation

**Format:** High-level Parliamentarians Roundtable

**Duration:** 120 minutes

## Agenda

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>15:33 – 15:45</b> | <b>Opening</b><br>Local 2030 – UN-Habitat<br>Keynote – Inter-parliamentary Union   |
| <b>15:45 – 16:15</b> | High-level Panel Discussion  |
| <b>16:15 – 16:45</b> | Country Interventions  |
| <b>16:45 – 17:15</b> | Open multi-stakeholder dialogue  |
| <b>17.15 – 17.30</b> | <b>Closing</b><br>Synthesis and key recommendations<br>Closing remarks by UN-Habitat Executive Director<br>Next steps by Moderator |

## Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced peer-to-peer learning among parliamentarians on legislative, policy and oversight approaches to advancing adequate housing, land governance, climate resilience and inclusive urban development.
- Strengthened parliamentary engagement in shaping national policy and legislative frameworks that support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, SDG 11 and the outcomes of the Open-Ended Working Group on Adequate Housing for All.
- Greater recognition of the role of parliaments in enabling financing, accountability and inclusive governance for housing and sustainable urban development, particularly for populations in vulnerable or marginalized situations.
- Strengthened collaboration between UN-Habitat, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and parliamentary networks to support sustained parliamentary engagement on urban development.
- Parliamentary recommendations and commitments aligned with the WUF13 theme reflected in the Baku Call to Action, with pathways for follow-up through national legislative, policy and budgetary processes.

## Expected Outputs

- Summary report of the Parliamentarians Roundtable, capturing key messages, parliamentary perspectives and recommendations.
- Compilation of parliamentary good practices and legislative innovations related to housing, urban resilience, land governance and inclusive urban policies.
- Consolidated parliamentary inputs to inform the Baku Call to Action.
- Identification of priority areas and mechanisms for continued parliamentary engagement with UN-Habitat and IPU beyond WUF13.



## Roles and Responsibilities

- **UN-Habitat:** Overall coordination, technical support, documentation, and alignment with the WUF13 stakeholder engagement process, and mobilization of parliamentary participation.
- **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU):** Co-organization and advisory support, and mobilization of parliamentary participation.
- **National and Regional Parliaments:** Active participation, sharing experiences, and follow-up on commitments.

## Linkages Beyond WUF13

The Parliamentarians Roundtable will anchor continued parliamentary engagement through annual consultations, contributions to the monitoring and review of the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11, and collaboration on the implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2026–2029.