

## PLGS REPORT



**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) Annual Report

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2020  
PLGS REPORT



**POLICY,  
LEGISLATION,  
AND GOVERNANCE SECTION**

# ANNUAL REPORT

# Foreword



**Shipra Narang Suri**  
*Chief - Urban Practices Branch*

Since January 2020, UN-Habitat has undergone an organizational restructuring process and initiated the implementation of a new Strategic Plan (2020-23), both in the shadow of COVID-19 which has emerged as a global crisis of a type and scale unseen in recent times.

Under the new organisational structure, the work on Policy, Legislation and Governance has been consolidated within a new Section of the same name. This Section is one of five sections/units that comprise the Urban Practices Branch (UPB), which in turn is located in the Global Solutions Division of the Agency. Other Sections/Units within UPB are: Urban Planning, Finance and Economic Development; Urban Basic Services; Land, Housing and Shelter; and Human Rights and Social Inclusion.

The Urban Practices Branch (UPB) is the normative hub of UN-Habitat as well as home to most of the Agency's large global programmes. It is the tools and methodology production and skills centre of UN-Habitat, developing normative guidance and cutting-edge tools through communities of urban practice, providing technical and policy advice approaches and methodologies to government and partners, and mainstreaming them throughout the programme portfolio. It also ensures that the cross-cutting area of safety and the social inclusion issues of human rights; gender; children, youth, and older persons; as well as disability, are developed and mainstreamed across the agency.

It has also set up communities of practice to integrate the normative and operational work of the agency.

Within this setup, the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) has successfully established its own community of practice, key workstreams, programmes and projects at local, national, and global levels. The 2020 PLGS Annual Report shows how these are implemented and overseen by a dedicated team of colleagues who have also had to navigate the additional challenges brought about by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

This first PLGS Annual Report is a testament to how much can be achieved even under the most difficult of circumstances. Between the lines of the report, the numbers in the tables and the areas on the maps, there is the unmistakeable energy of a group of people who are committed to the Agency's mandate, who are motivated by their collective achievements, and who also believe strongly in taking care of each other and "leaving no one behind".

There is a lot to be proud of here - yet, of course, much remains to be done. The Policy, Legislation and Governance Section has established itself firmly in the UN-Habitat family as a pacesetter and innovation hub for normative work, and with this it has established a solid foundation on which great things will continue to be built.



**Remy Sietchiping**  
*Chief - Policy, Legislation and Governance Section*

I am pleased to present this Annual Report, the first produced by UN-Habitat's Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) – one of five sections / units in the agency's Global Solutions Division's Urban Practices Branch. In collaboration with other parts of UN-Habitat, PLGS supports national and subnational governments and other partner organizations in the development of knowledge management systems and toolkits, capacity building and policy dialogues, and advisory services.

Because the PLGS has now reached a critical juncture in its new position within the Urban Practices Branch, following the agency's restructuring process and through its substantial progress and development into a 'centre of excellence' on policy, legislation and governance issues in sustainable urban development, this Annual Report has an increased importance and relevance. It showcases the work and achievements attained during a year that has been extraordinarily challenging for everyone around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the way PLGS operates; in the 12 months reviewed in this report, the pandemic forced us to make many decisions and workplans based on limited travel options, almost no face-to-face group meetings and few opportunities to talk directly to the communities that we serve.

The impacts of this on PLGS's work are explained in the first part of the report, along with an overview of UN-Habitat's new organizational structure and progress on the PLGS Community of Practice.

Despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic, PLGS has had a productive year and the second part of this report presents details on the performance of all workstreams: policy; legislation; governance, metropolitan management, and urban-rural linkages. As always, finances and budgeting are of critical importance and the third part of this report has comprehensive details on that as well as a section that introduces the PLGS team. Ultimately, PLGS personnel have been agile and have adapted well by devoting their energy to making the section's work relevant internally and to many partners.

More than anything, the pandemic has emphasized the differences between people with resources to cope with crises and those without. For agencies such as UN-Habitat and the PLGS, this divide has re-emphasized the importance of the ongoing work to be done to close this gap. PLGS looks forward to being at the forefront of addressing public health concerns as they relate to sustainable urban development and future policymaking, legislative reform, and how these events will impact future governmental decision-making processes.

# Table of Contents

FOREWORD.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VII
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	VIII
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	14
2. URBAN POLICY.....	25
3. URBAN LEGISLATION.....	54
4. URBAN GOVERNANCE.....	73
5. METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT.....	81
6. URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES.....	92
7. FINANCE.....	107

# List of Figures

FIGURE 1	Percentage of PLGS Total Funding by Workstream/thematic area . . . . .	12
FIGURE 2	Percentage of PLGS total funding by institution. . . . .	12
FIGURE 3	A timeline of the development of PLGS chapter to the Cities and Pandemic report	22
FIGURE 4	Countries supported by UN-Habitat with Urban-Rural Linkages Development . . .	93
FIGURE 5	Top ten donors and development partners in 2020 (in millions USD): . . . . .	107
FIGURE 6	Budget vs Expenditure 2020 (in millions USD). . . . .	108
FIGURE 7	Funding by thematic area/workstream . . . . .	108
FIGURE 8	PLGS Funding Sources and their Distribution in 2020 . . . . .	109

# List of Acronyms

<b>AACID</b>	Andalusian Agency for International Cooperation for Development
<b>ACCD</b>	Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament
<b>ASOARES</b>	Colombian Association of Metropolitan Areas
<b>CLES</b>	South African Research Chair in Cities, Law and Environmental Sustainability
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease-2019
<b>CoP</b>	Community of Practices
<b>DMO</b>	Douala Metropolitan Observatory
<b>DUHD</b>	Department of Urban and Housing Development (Myanmar)
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>GSNUP</b>	Global State of National Urban Policy
<b>GTF</b>	Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments
<b>HLP</b>	Housing, land and property
<b>HLPF</b>	High-level political forum
<b>IALS</b>	Institute for Advanced Legal Studies
<b>ICLEI</b>	Local Governments for Sustainability
<b>IFURL</b>	International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages
<b>IG-UTP</b>	International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Planning
<b>INDCs</b>	Intended nationally determined contributions
<b>IUD</b>	Integrated urban development
<b>KAS</b>	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
<b>MAETUR</b>	Urban and Rural Land Development and Equipment Mission (Cameroon)
<b>MOLIT</b>	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (South Korea)
<b>MoRUD</b>	Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (I.R Iran)
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NUSP</b>	Niger State Urban Support Programme
<b>NUA</b>	New Urban Agenda
<b>NUP</b>	National urban policy
<b>NUPP</b>	National urban policy programme
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
<b>PLGS</b>	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section
<b>PPE</b>	Personal protective equipment
<b>PSUP</b>	Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme
<b>ROAF</b>	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa
<b>ROAP</b>	UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

<b>SANITA</b>	Urban Development and Sanitation Programme (Guinea)
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SPA</b>	Special planning area
<b>UPB</b>	Urban Practices Branch
<b>UCLG</b>	United Cities and Local Governments
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNDA</b>	United Nations Development Account
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNSCN</b>	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
<b>UNSG</b>	United Nations Secretary General
<b>URA</b>	Urban-Rural Assembly
<b>URL</b>	Urban-rural linkages
<b>URP</b>	Urban-rural partnerships
<b>VLR</b>	Voluntary local reviews
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary national reviews
<b>WMD</b>	World Metropolitan Day
<b>WUF</b>	World Urban Forum



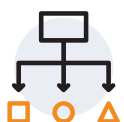
# Executive Summary

UN-Habitat's first Policy, Legislation and Governance (PLGS) Annual Report highlights the section's implementation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 for 2020. The Annual Report features the section's and its partners' contributions and results realized across various key programmes and projects at the local, national, regional and global levels between November 2019 and the end of 2020. The report highlights projects by global, regional, and country programmes, various normative tools, knowledge products, participation at the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), as well as other events, workshops, and experts group meetings organized and participated in by PLGS personnel across the section's workstreams.

The Executive Summary features highlights from the PLGS workstreams and programmes during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, including an overview of UN-Habitat's newly adopted organizational structure, progress on the PLG Community of Practice, and the impact of COVID-19 on the ongoing PLGS work.

The second part of the Annual Report presents details on the performance of all workstreams, including: policy; legislation; governance, metropolitan management; and urban-rural linkages. The third part has details on budget and financing and introduces the PLGS team.

## NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



In January 2020, UN-Habitat underwent an organizational restructuring process following the approval of this by the Executive Board in October 2019. The aim was to ensure UN-Habitat effectively implements its mandate to support Member States in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Under the new structure, four new divisions were established.

The Global Solutions Division includes the Programme Development Branch and the Urban Practices Branch. Within the Urban Practices Branch are the five sections/unit: (1) Policy, Legislation and Governance, (2) Urban Basic Services, (3) Land, Housing and Shelter, (4) Planning, Finance and Economic Development, and (5) Human Rights and Social Inclusion Unit.



## TENTH SESSION OF THE WORLD URBAN FORUM (WUF10):

In February 2020, UN-Habitat, in partnership with the Abu Dhabi's local authorities and the Government of United Arab Emirates (UAE), convened the WUF10, the first one in its type held in the Arab world. The PLGS team organized and actively participated with several experts group meetings, side and networking events, and bilateral meetings. Of those, it is worth mentioning the Expert Group Meeting on the Global State of Metropolis; the networking event "Beyond the Metropolis: Inspiring and innovative initiatives to strengthen territorial management in worldwide metropolises and regions"; the side event "Urban-Rural Nexus: Challenges and innovations to govern land, municipal and ecosystem services,

on the fringes of resource constrained cities and small towns"; the Voices from Cities Session "First compendium of case studies for the implementation of the Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and Framework of Action"; the SDG in Action Session "Innovative national and local urban policies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the New Urban Agenda"; side events to launch the Law and Climate Change toolkit, the Slum Upgrading Toolkit and the publication titled *Effectiveness of Planning Laws: Comparative Analysis (Sub-Saharan Africa/Land-Rich Developed Countries)*; among others. More than 200 people participated in these different PLGS events and sessions.



## PROGRESS ON PLGS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The PLGS formed the **Community of Practice (CoP)** to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, networking, awareness-raising and capacity building between UN-Habitat personnel working on policy, legislation and governance-oriented projects. The goal of the CoP is to establish a professional network of practitioners and experts to learn, inquire, resolve issues and seek information from one another's experience that is primarily focused on policy, legislation and governance issues.

In 2020, the PLG hosted three CoP sessions that were well attended and have inspired new opportunities of collaboration with other sections as well as regional and country offices from 2021. The sessions provided a platform to share the section's normative tools, knowledge products and project progress both at global and country levels, and they also provided an opportunity to exchange lessons and best practices in the fields of policy, legislation and governance. The PLGS is also involved in other Communities of Practices within the agency through designated focal points.



## EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON PLGS OPERATIONS

Like many organizations, UN-Habitat and the PLGS have been impacted by COVID-19. The section adopted “new normal” working conditions and hosted over 10 online webinars with the inclusion of external partners, to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on urban-rural linkages, food systems, national urban policies, metropolitan management and biodiversity, and green markets. In addition to the webinars, the PLGS continued to support virtual learning, training and capacity-building workshops for the national urban policy, MetroHub and urban-rural linkages programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and the Middle East.

Also, Urban Law Days and World Metropolitan Day (WMD) were commemorated through virtual trainings and webinars held jointly with universities and local organizations in Colombia, El Salvador, Spain, the United States, and the United Kingdom, among other countries. The PLGS also redirected National Urban Policy Programme funds and Andalusian Agency of International Cooperation for Development grant, United Nations Development Account Project to support the implementation of COVID-19 relief initiatives and demonstration projects in Myanmar, Nigeria, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iran.



Yangon, Myanmar handwashing station © UN-Habitat



## PLGS IN 2020



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