

India's engagement with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat)

- In 1976, India played a pivotal role in establishing the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and has since continued its consistent support to the organization. India has been engaged with United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) since its inception. **Dr. Arcot Ramachandran**, an Indian, was the first Executive Director of the UN Commission on Human Settlements (UNCHS) from its inception in 1978 to 1993. India hosted the 11th session of UNCHS in 1988 during that period and the first Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Human Settlements (APMCHHS) in 2006.
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is the nodal ministry dealing with India's engagement with UN-Habitat. India's High Commissioner to Kenya, H.E. Mr Rahul Chhabra is accredited as the Permanent Representative of India to UN-Habitat.
- India hosts the Permanent Secretariat of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) in New Delhi.
- UN-Habitat is among the four implementing agencies to implement a US\$ 270 million housing project funded by Government of India to build 43000 houses for internally displaced persons in northern and western provinces of Sri Lanka. Agreements to award work to the agencies were signed at the High Commission of India, Colombo in July 2012. An MoU had earlier been signed between the governments of India and Sri Lanka in January 2012.
- India makes an annual financial contribution of US\$ 150,000 to the General-Purpose Funds of UN-Habitat.

UN-Habitat Assembly

- Subsequent to a decade-long reforms of the governing structure of UN-Habitat, the first session of UN-Habitat Assembly (UNHA) was held in Nairobi from 27-31 May 2019. The UNHA was attended by over 2,900 participants from 127 Member States. India was elected as a member of UN Habitat's 36 Member Executive Board. Programme of the UNHA included national statements, high-level strategic dialogue, panel discussions, exhibition on the theme, several side events as well as global business and stakeholder meetings.
- The UNHA recognized the unprecedented rate of urbanization as 'a challenge as well as an opportunity' and concluded with adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on the theme "Innovation for a Better Quality of Life in Cities and Communities" and adopted five resolutions covering a range of topics, including on: safer cities; capacity building for implementing the New Urban Agenda (NUA); achieving gender equality through UN-Habitat's work to support inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements; enhancing urban rural linkages for sustainable urbanization, and on UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023. There was also a decision on arrangements for the transition to the new governance structure of UN-Habitat. The second session of the UNHA will be held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 June 2023.

Presidency of the Governing Council

- Minister for Urban Development, Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation and Information & Broadcasting Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu visited Kenya in May 2017 to participate in the 26th Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat held in Nairobi. India was unanimously elected as the President of the Governing Council of the UN-Habitat for a period of two-years (2017-19). Minister chaired the 26th Session of Governing Council which had the theme 'Implementing the New Urban Agenda'.
- Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs participated in the 9th session of World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018 and met Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif as the President of Governing Council of UN-Habitat. He also attended United Nations' High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2018 and met the ED.

India's Housing & Urbanization Agenda

- India has launched major initiatives for the urban sector, which are aimed towards strengthening the urban system to enable it to play a more positive and significant role in national economic development and in improving access to services to the entire population. The Smart Cities Mission envisages development of 100 smart cities to enhance the quality of urban life and to provide a clean and suitable environment. The Mission for Rejuvenation and Transformation of 500 cities with above 100,000 population aims to create infrastructure that has a direct link to provision of better services to the people. The Heritage City development and Augmentation programme intends to support core infrastructure aimed at revitalization of heritage sites and nearby areas. The National Urban Livelihood mission envisages citizens to be adequately skilled to gain beneficial livelihoods and to contribute to the economy.
- Such specific urban development related Missions are further supported by special programmes such as Make-in-India, Digital India, Skilling India and Start up India which all together aim to reinvigorate and re-energize the cities as engines of economic growth and empowerment and as centers of improved quality of life. In addition, for promoting a symbiotic and ecologically sustainable rural urban continuum for ensuring integrated development of rural and urban settlements, a National Rurban mission is under implementation. This Mission is aimed at making the villages smart by creating Rurban clusters through the application of Urban Planning concepts for development of infrastructure and basic services.
- In the context of India's commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda, with focus on 'sustainable cities and human settlements for all', India has evolved an agenda that would enable the transformation of India in its economic as well as social tenets.

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