

Conference statement - adopted

Global Housing: **Action – not just words**

By 2050 almost three quarters of the world's population will live in urban areas. *The Habitat II Regional Report on housing and urban development in the UNECE region* (2016) identified key challenges in cities: urban sprawl, environmental degradation, climate change, extreme weather conditions and technological advancements (automation and artificial intelligence). These challenges are exacerbated by the demographic problems of ageing, low fertility and migration. Due to these challenges the pressure on infrastructure and social services have increased dramatically. Cities need to become more resilient and ensure they provide affordable adequate and healthy housing and basic infrastructure and transport systems for all.

In the documentary film *Push*, the right to housing around the world is in focus, where it is claimed that there is a severe lack of governmental commitment and an absence of necessary resources. This has created a human rights crisis, with over one billion people affected, where wealthy investors have pursued only their financial interests. (for trailer, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9Q4So4femM>)

We support the 2030 agenda and the UN Sustainable development goals, particularly goal 11. The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Goal 11 focuses on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This is for instance done by ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and transport systems.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/>

Actions

The International Unions of Tenants and its members have agreed to promote the following goals for the next three-year period at its 21st World Conference in Vienna on 4th October 2019.

- Tenant's organisations will monitor progress in achieving affordable, decent housing for all and the implementation of the 2030 agenda, where there are now only 11 years left to achieve the goals.

General rights

- Housing is not a commodity, it is a basic human right.
- Do not let politics or power struggles get in the way of basic human housing needs.
- No eviction without re-housing.
- Everyone should have the right to live in healthy and safe housing.
- Security of tenure should be guaranteed.
- Tenure neutral policies in respect of taxation are crucial.

- Let nobody freeze or suffer from the heat because they cannot afford heating or cooling energy bills.

Economic rights

- Rent negotiation benefits both landlords and tenants.
- No luxury renovations as an excuse for increasing rents.
- Stop skyrocketing rents.
- Consider imposing rental caps where required or necessary.

Settlement planning

- “Touristification” of cities by short term rental platforms must be avoided at the expense of local residents and key workers. Our cities should not be for sale.
- Cooperation between governments and local authorities is essential to plan for current and future housing needs and fight against financialisation.
- To prevent segregation more mixed neighbourhoods should be built.
- Housing shortages is not only affecting the poor but affect everybody.
- Tenant participation in communities is essential.

Societal planning

- Migration and climate changes may affect future housing needs, and planning is therefore needed.
- Housing is a national competency; supranational intervention should be limited to facilitating conditions for effective housing policy.
- Build housing suitable for its population needs, climate and culture.
- Tenants’ rights as consumers must be protected.

The International Union of Tenants (IUT) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit membership umbrella organisation for global tenants’ organisations. It was founded in 1926 in Zürich, Switzerland. Since 1956 its head office has been located in Stockholm, Sweden with a representative office in Brussels since 2008. The organisation consists of 72 national and regional tenant organisations in 47 countries and is financed through membership fees. IUT is a non-party political organisation, working along democratic lines.

IUTs purpose is to:

- Promote the exchange of information and knowledge among its members,
- Safeguard the interests of tenants and to promote affordable and decent rental housing across the world.

IUT considers housing to be a fundamental human right in every society. Housing needs to be addressed locally, nationally and internationally. Affordable and sound housing is one of the safeguards for peace and security, a fundamental pillar in all democratic societies and necessary for labour mobility. Lack of affordable housing and homelessness are major ingredients in social exclusion.