

Asia-Pacific Housing Forum 8

December 7 – 9, 2021 (Venue: Bangkok, Thailand)

Theme: Building Forward Better for Inclusive Housing

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, the Asia-Pacific Housing Forum has gathered under one roof major stakeholders engaged in seeking solutions to affordable housing issues and promoting decent housing as a driver of economic growth. Since the inaugural conference in 2007, more than 7,200 participants have not only shared common ground but also presented diverse views through insightful plenaries and engaging tracks. The seventh Asia-Pacific Housing Forum in September 2019 was the largest-ever with more than 2,300 participants across the main events, side events and preliminary lead-up events at country level.

The eighth Asia Pacific Housing Forum will take place between **December 7 – 9, 2020** in Bangkok, Thailand, with the theme **“Building Forward Better for Inclusive Housing”**. The regional housing forum is part of a Global Housing Forum series organized by Habitat for Humanity in collaboration with partner organizations and institutions. Other regional forums will be held in Latin America and the Caribbean (May 17-21, 2021), Europe and Eastern Europe (November 2021); and in Africa and the Middle East (2022). The main topics and connecting thread in all four regional forums will revolve around actions on adequate housing and cities as a sustainable recovery pathway after COVID-19. The events will be leveraged to promote innovations, sharing promising ideas and enable more connectedness and collaboration among partners to improve policies and practical solutions that increase access to safe, decent and affordable housing. Due to the current global pandemic situation, the event will be held either fully virtually or in hybrid form. If hybrid, participants will have the opportunity to join virtually or physically, and all measures will be taken to ensure the safety of participants.

Typically, participants include government representatives, influential business leaders, policymakers, donor agencies, academics, urban planners, architects, property developers, key representatives from international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, social enterprises, housing finance organizations, technology companies, youth organizations, researchers, and advocates.

OBJECTIVES:

- Inspire a new vision for more inclusive, healthy and resilient cities and human settlements;
- Strengthen anchoring of international commitments to SDGs and climate change in national and municipal priorities.
- Build collaboration between organizations with the capacity to impact and scale up the low-cost, affordable housing sector in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Recognize and act on the importance of housing as a driver of inclusive economic growth, resilience and sustainability in human settlements.
- Promote, celebrate and reward innovative and high impact affordable housing initiatives in the Asia Pacific region

THEME

The theme of “**Building Forward Better for Inclusive Housing**” highlights the urgent need for solutions in building truly sustainable and affordable housing through an inclusive approach in light of the devastating impact of COVID-19 that has further exacerbated the housing crisis. Even before COVID-19, a range of barriers, gaps, and exclusions existed across political, social, economic and environmental systems that limit opportunities for people to live in adequate housing.

As countries face the repercussions of the pandemic, the housing sector can be a key driver for economic, social and environmental recovery. There is an urgent need for building forward better in a greener, safer and in a more resilient and inclusive way. The role of housing in driving this recovery in a more sustainable and inclusive way will be covered in the following four tracks. These tracks have been developed after extensive consultation with housing sector players and careful analysis of the most pressing global and regional issues concerning access to decent and affordable housing:

- Building resilient cities and communities
- Innovative housing solutions and technologies
- Advancing sustainability in the housing sector
- Financing affordable housing

PLENARIES, TRACKS AND TOPICS/SESSIONS

Plenary 1: Housing as an economic driver for rebuilding the economy

Emerging economies struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic may be significantly underestimating how important the building and construction sector is for their economies. Housing construction and renovation contributes significantly to the economy and job creation among the poor. The sector also generates demand for materials and related services. Strategic support for the development of affordable quality housing, particularly in developing economies with huge informal housing markets, increases the ability of households, community, governments, and the private sector to invest in housing, thereby helping speed up economic recovery and improving access to housing at lower incomes. This session will highlight how inclusive strategies and stimulus policies directed towards housing markets, can support community and economic resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Plenary 2: Leveraging inclusive partnerships to deliver affordable housing at scale

Creative and inclusive partnerships between the public sector, private sector and civil society organizations have proven to be crucial in addressing the affordable housing challenge. These partnerships prioritize housing solutions that are affordable and adapted to local needs. The most successful ones leverage the strength of each partner and are built on a shared vision that puts people at the center of solutions. Nonetheless, forging effective multi-stakeholder relationships requires a deep analysis of partner’s capacities and underlying motivations and a high level of trust. Join this session to gain insights from organizations on promising practices and lessons learned in addressing collaboratively the challenge of providing affordable housing at scale.

Plenary 3: Boosting Inclusive governance and cross-sectoral collaboration

The interconnected crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ever-present effects of climate change are multi-dimensional, and present wide-ranging social, economic, and environmental challenges for countries and communities. Providing healthy, safe, secure and affordable housing to growing populations will only be possible if public efforts (inter-governmental, horizontal and vertical) are aligned and the most vulnerable are given a voice in design and implementation processes. There is need for governance systems that are guided by a whole-of-society approach and adopt inclusive, participatory, and partnership-based decision-making processes. Join this session where experts will share perspectives of how effective multi-level, multi-stakeholder governance and cross-sectoral collaboration are central to addressing the urgent need for adequate and affordable housing

Plenary 4: Integrating housing in national development strategies and recovery plans

Around the world, 1.6 billion people live without adequate shelter and in the Asia Pacific region, an estimated one third of urban dwellers live in slums or slum-like conditions (ESCAP and UN-Habitat, 2015). Effective responses to the housing challenge will yield benefits beyond the housing sector itself, as housing drives urban development and is a key sector for generating employment and economic growth. It also directly impacts the health and wellbeing of the population and has a direct impact on environmental sustainability. This session will provide a platform for the high-level exchange of experiences and views on the progress and challenges related to the implementation of sustainable housing and urban development in the Asia-Pacific region. It will serve as a call to action for both national and local governments to ensure that housing is at the center of urban agendas and is integrated in national development strategies, as well as in recovery plans.

Track 1: Building resilient cities and communities

Cities and communities in the Asia Pacific region are experiencing the impact of rapid urbanization and climate change. At the same time, cities have also become the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic. Future climate change and sustainability initiatives will also begin from cities. Building inclusive, healthy, resilient, and sustainable cities requires intensive, coordinated policy responses and investment choices at both national and local levels in partnership with communities. This track focuses on how city leaders can gain new insights and explore the possibilities for transformation while shaping recovery efforts by working across divisions in partnership with the local community and business leaders.

Fostering inclusive cities through slum upgrading

People living in overcrowded slums and informal settlements are provided poor quality infrastructure, unconnected to trunk systems. COVID-19 has exacerbated their substandard living conditions and simple preventive measures such as handwashing and social distancing are a luxury in such areas, threatening more than one billion people worldwide. Those living in slums and informal settlements are also most vulnerable to the economic consequences of widespread lockdowns – as work in the informal economy is impacted. The majority of the poor also use their homes as a place of work. Integrating slums within city plans can foster inclusive development. This session will discuss

neighborhood upgrading through the provision of inclusive infrastructure, housing improvements, and other strategies to promote spatial, social, and economic inclusion of people in informal settlements.

Securing land, housing and property rights for all

Housing accounts for more than 70 percent of land use in most cities, yet 1 billion people in cities around the world lack secure land rights. Where security of tenure exists, families are more likely to invest in their home and neighbourhood improvements, leading to positive human and community development. Secure tenure also empowers communities to demand basic services from their governments like electricity, water and sanitation. Cities around the world are implementing innovative approaches to addressing insecure land and property rights faced by residents especially those in informal settlements. This session will highlight innovative tools and approaches for making secure tenure a reality for all. It will also highlight how community, local geospatial and demographic data collection on land, housing, and socioeconomic data of residents empowers vulnerable communities to advocate for recognition, push back on evictions and marginalization, plan for disasters and health crises, and work with local authorities to access public and private services to advance economic and social well-being.

Improving access to housing for women and vulnerable groups

Gender equality in property rights is a critical human rights issue and a key driver of overall economic development. However, women continue to have limited rights to healthy, safe and adequate housing. COVID-19 highlighted the deep social and economic inequalities of our societies which disproportionately affect women and other vulnerable groups. A UN report on [COVID-19 and women and girls](#) also revealed a spike in domestic violence during lockdowns. This session will discuss women's role in economic development and how access to adequate housing for women can be strengthened. It will also highlight how gender equality can be mainstreamed in initiatives to address housing as a means to achieving sustainable urbanization.

Building resilience through provision of urban infrastructure and basic services

Infrastructure and basic services are the foundation and delivery vehicle of a functional and resilient urban environment. They also sustain and improve the health, livelihood, and general living environment of urban residents. However, many cities in the Asia Pacific region face inadequate urban services and deficits in basic urban infrastructure such as water, sanitation and wastewater management, solid waste management, energy and transport. Inadequate urban infrastructure and urban basic services was already a huge challenge before the COVID-19 pandemic hence sustaining and improving the provision of and access to urban infrastructure and services is vital. More than ever, effective services and quality infrastructure are required in cities, especially in slums and informal settlements, and for the poor and vulnerable communities. During this session, a panel of experts will discuss priority actions needed to ensure access to quality affordable infrastructure and basic services for all.

[Track 2: Innovative housing solutions and technologies](#)

Demand for housing continues to outpace supply as the world's population expands and materials costs rise making it more challenging to build affordable homes. Current housing development plans

have proved inadequate and thankfully there is a recognition that new innovations can be instrumental in responding to the lack of quality homes. This track will explore ways in which the growing need for affordable housing solutions can be addressed using innovative housing policies, solutions and technologies.

Advancing entrepreneurial shelter solutions

Market-based solutions complement governments efforts in addressing the mounting challenges of affordable housing demand. To achieve scale and close the existing housing gap, private sector markets must be catalyzed to provide affordable finance options for low-income segments and develop innovative affordable construction technologies and materials. Startups have proven to be quite successful in cracking open challenging problems and can be a key driver in meeting the housing needs of low-income markets. During this session, start-ups and entrepreneurs from Southeast Asia and from the Andean region of South America will share lessons learned on what it takes to enter the affordable housing sector and their contributions to closing the gap.

Low-cost affordable housing technologies

Many low-income and middle-income families dream of owning a home but are generally unable to access the housing market due to prohibitive costs. However, construction costs can be cut down by using alternatives to conventional methods and inputs. The effective utilization of locally available building materials, minimizing design waste and good management practices for new and incremental building should be taken into consideration for housing to be not only affordable, but also sustainable. This session will discuss the need for adoption of cost effective, innovative and environmentally friendly technologies that can enable construction of houses at an affordable cost.

Enhancing design and construction skills through digitalization and innovative technologies

Across all types of businesses, it has become clear that the world will look different as we move beyond the COVID-19 crisis to the next normal. The construction sector has also adapted, and industry players have shifted to remote ways of working as they seek to survive and thrive. Designers and engineers are relying even more heavily on digital collaboration tools and contractors are looking to online channels for monitoring their employees' productivity, ordering construction materials, managing resources and maintaining cash flow through online applications. This 'new normal' will require an upgrade of the skillset of construction workers. During this session, experts will discuss how digitalization and innovative technologies can be harnessed to enhance design and construction skills in order to foster productive employment in the construction sector.

Addressing housing vulnerabilities through rental housing

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the lack of affordable, healthy and secure housing options for urban poor and migrant workers in cities. In countries like India, rental housing is gaining emphasis as a response to the needs of the urban poor and migrant communities who rely almost exclusively on rental housing. Many low-income households prefer rental housing since they often cannot afford expenses associated with homeownership or prefer to live close to areas offering income generation opportunities. Despite rental housing being an essential and preferred option for millions of people in cities of the developing world, it has remained a neglected area of many national housing policies which often focus on promoting home ownership. At the same time, legal frameworks need to reflect that affordable housing should not be a fully commercialized good and renters' rights need to be

protected to assure social inclusion. This session will examine options for strengthening rental housing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to formalize and create inclusive rental markets and diverse approaches to delivering affordable rental housing in accessible locations.

[Track 3: Advancing sustainability in the housing sector](#)

Rapid economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region has lifted many countries out of poverty. This has however come at the cost of increased use of natural resources, growing greenhouse gas emissions and waste production. The building and construction sector, including residential buildings, is a large contributor to still growing greenhouse gas emissions and the depletion of resources, as their construction, usage and demolition are not optimized for resource use or circularity. This track will examine the multiple functions of housing as both a physical and socio-cultural system, as well as ways in which the environmental, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of housing sustainability can be harmonized to ensure sustainable and equitable cities.

Greening the housing value chain

The urban population in the Asia Pacific region is growing faster than in any other region. The region is home to four of the of the top ten carbon dioxide emitting economies, and ten of the most polluted cities in the world. It is estimated that 11% of global annual carbon emissions are generated by construction, renovation and demolition. These embodied or “upfront” carbon emissions result from materials and construction processes along building lifecycles (World Green Building Council, 2019), So how can we meet the aspirations for safe, adequate, affordable housing for our growing population without destroying the environment? Join us in this session as experts discuss how greening the entire value chain of building a home can help reduce costs and impacts in the short and long term. The session will also highlight how consumers can be encouraged to drive market demand for the adoption of resource efficient housing design and what government policies need to be in place to promote this.

Launch of ADB’s Housing for Resilience knowledge product

Globally, over a billion people – about one out of every 7 people – have no access to decent quality housing. Of them, nearly 600 million, or 60%, live in Asia, in informal or otherwise poor-quality housing. The Pandemic has laid bare the fragile relationship between people’s living environment. Since it is the often case during times of crises, the housing policy debate has come to the fore, and many questions are being asked about the past actions – and inactions – of governments and development institutions that may have fueled the housing issue. This Housing for Resilience knowledge product is a first step towards developing a housing sector strategy for the Asian Development Bank and its developing member countries to spur meaningful contribution to the ultimate goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Climate-smart solutions for resilient housing

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster prone in the world. Natural disasters and climate change related impacts exacerbate housing problems in the region, especially for the urban poor who are disproportionately affected by flooding, extreme heat, tropical cyclones, storm surges, landslides, sea-level rise and coastal erosion. At the same time, residential and commercial construction in cities

consumes vast amounts of energy, resulting in the Asia-Pacific region being one of the fastest growing emitters of greenhouse gases globally. In light of these challenges, how can local governments and residents adapt their housing to a changing climate while making housing affordable, safe and resilient to disasters? Please join this session as experts discuss options for building new housing, but also retrofitting housing structures that are resilient and affordable.

Rethinking the urban space

Cities have been profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting an urgent need to rethink cities' development in different dimensions - social, cultural, economic, and environmental. COVID-19 has shown that today's cities were not designed to cope up with infectious diseases. The pandemic has laid bare how spatial inequality is manifested in the form of slums/informal settlements and exposed the latent inadequacies like insufficient public space or limited access to healthcare that contribute to the spread of disease. Interdisciplinary thinking and greater collaboration between urban planners and public health leaders is needed to bring new perspectives and features that promote healthy and safer neighborhoods. This session will delve into ways diverse urban actors can work collectively to make cities greener, more liveable and designed around health, safety and well-being of residents.

Track 4: Financing affordable housing

Financing affordable housing is still a major issue in most Asia-Pacific countries as they struggle to house their rapidly growing populations. Adequate financing structures and funding are therefore critical to addressing the affordable housing challenge. This track will examine financing instruments of different actors in both public and private sectors for funding affordable housing.

Leveraging public sector mechanisms for affordable housing financing

The session will highlight the need for investments in the housing sector considering its contribution to nations' GDPs and how it serves as an economic sector in itself. The session will cover the need for public sector mechanisms, such as land-based financing instruments, subsidies, credit guarantees, and policy tools for promoting affordable and equitable access to housing. It will simultaneously draw on the lessons and insights from countries successfully adopting such public policy instruments.

Use of financial technology solutions to expand access to affordable housing

A fast-evolving healthy financial ecosystem can lead to a new generation of financial intermediaries that harness technology's power, employ new business models, adopt innovative and leaner customer acquisition and credit assessment processes. These developments within the broader financial inclusion space warrant the case for looking for additional distribution channels that hold the potential of furthering the cause of safe, secure, and affordable housing among low-income households. The session will discuss a few of the partnerships in this space and highlight how financial technology solutions increase access to housing finance among low-income families and help improve housing conditions.

Promoting best practices in housing and cash transfer programming

Cash transfer programming is increasingly being used as humanitarian response tool for providing in-kind assistance to people affected by disasters. A cash program aims at reestablishing shelter and settlements, either through facilitation of construction or support for community self-recovery. Understanding the role of local markets and how market systems can be optimized to ensure resilience of the market to withstand a disaster and its capacity to respond to a disaster is vital in a successful cash program. This session will discuss how cash can be used as a response tool to facilitate self-recovery processes within communities in reaching standards for building back better and building resilience for future disasters.

Innovative cooperative housing financing options

Co-operative housing represents an important part of the housing market in many countries. Their prime objective is to provide good quality and affordable housing in the interests of their members, and not to maximize profit for developers or shareholders. They are thus able to provide housing at costs that are below the price of a similar home in the open housing market. Despite their important role in providing affordable housing, housing cooperatives face numerous challenges such as unfavorable conditions in the financial and housing markets, and inadequate legal framework. Join this session to hear how different groups are using innovative financing tools to raise capital for their cooperative housing initiatives.

PLEASE SEE DRAFT PROGRAM IN THE NEXT PAGE

DRAFT PROGRAM

SIDE EVENTS (November 29 - December 3, 2021)			
DAY 1 (Side Events) – November 29, 2021			
Land Tenure and Land Value Capture Training Course (2hrs)			
DAY 2 (Side Events) – November 30, 2021			
Youth Congress (2 hrs)	Land Tenure and Land Value Capture Training Course (2hrs)		
Day 3 (Side Events) – December 1, 2021			
Innovations Awards (Category 1, 2 & 3) – 3hrs	Land Tenure and Land Value Capture Training Course (2hrs)		
DAY 4 & 5 (Side Events) – December 2-3, 2021			
Land Tenure and Land Value Capture Training Course (2 hrs per day)			
MAIN HOUSING FORUM (December 7-9, 2021)			
DAY 1 (Main Housing Forum)			
Opening Plenary			
Plenary 1: Housing as an economic driver for rebuilding the economy			
NETWORKING BREAK			
Building Resilient Cities and Communities 1. Fostering inclusive cities through slum upgrading	Innovative housing solutions and technologies 1. Advancing entrepreneurial shelter solutions.	Advancing sustainability in the housing sector 1. Greening the housing value chain	Financing Affordable Housing 1. Leveraging public sector mechanisms for financing affordable housing
NETWORKING BREAK			
2. Securing land, housing and property rights for all	2. Low-cost affordable housing technologies	2. Launch of ADB’s Housing for Resilience knowledge product	2. Use of financial technology solutions to expand access to affordable housing

DAY 2 (Main Housing Forum)

Plenary 2: Leveraging inclusive Partnerships in Affordable Housing Delivery to achieve scale

3. Improving access to housing for women and vulnerable groups	3. Enhancing design and construction skills through digitalization and innovative technologies	3. Climate-smart solutions for resilient housing	3. Promoting best practices in housing and cash transfer programming
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NETWORKING BREAK

Plenary 3: Boosting Inclusive governance and cross-sectoral collaboration

NETWORKING BREAK

NETWORKING DINNER AND INNOVATIONS AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

DAY 3 (Main Housing Forum)

Plenary 4: Integrating housing in national development strategies and recovery plans

4. Building resilience through provision of urban infrastructure and basic services	4. Addressing housing vulnerabilities through rental housing	4. Rethinking the Urban Space	4. Innovative Cooperative housing financing options
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NETWORKING BREAK

Closing Plenary