

UN HABITAT: Environmental Mandate & Activities

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Environmental mandate

General Assembly res. 40/199 (17-12-1985), UN-HABITAT Commission res. 10/3 (16-4-1987) and UNEP GC decisions 14/3 (18-6-1987,) and 22/2 (7-2-2003) to present a joint progress report of the Ex. Dir. Of UNEP and UN-HABITAT to the two governing Councils, including: key developments in cooperation between the two agencies; cooperation in the areas of assessment, policy development and implementation; cooperation that has taken place in the regions; future opportunities for cooperation.

Urban environmental issues are increasingly important for both UN-HABITAT and UNEP. UN-HABITAT is recognizing the importance of the state of the local environment for the social and economic development of cities, especially where it concerns the urban poor. Issues such as water, sanitation, waste and transport are of key interest to UN-HABITAT. It is also recognized that human settlements worldwide have a critical and increasing impact on environmental issues at both the national and global levels, and UNEP is closely involved in this aspect.

In 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) further reinforced the international community's commitment for sustainable urban development and poverty reduction. UN-HABITAT's normative and operational responsibilities are well reflected in the outcomes of the 2002 WSSD, specifically in one of its 'partnership implementation commitments': The "Coalition for Sustainable Urbanisation", linking closely with the goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals: Ensure Environmental Sustainability, particularly its target 11: improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by year 2020.

Environmental activities

Within UN-HABITAT four main sub programmes can be identified: Shelter and Sustainable Human Settlements Development; Monitoring the Habitat Agenda; Regional and Technical Cooperation; Financing Human Settlements.

Particularly in the area of environment, UN-HABITAT assists local authorities on Basic Urban Services, such as waste management, water, sanitation; and Sustainable urban mobility and transportation issues; Urban poverty and environment nexus through capacity building, providing technical advise, guidelines, tools, etc.