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A Practical Guide for Conducting:

Housing Profiles

Supporting evidence-based housing policy and reform





Photo montage of a model of favela Paraisópolis inside the favela itself, showed at the Bienal de Arquitetura de Sao Paulo, 2009

Acknowledgments

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Foreword



This book fills an important gap in the theoretical library and practical toolkit relating to housing analysis. As rapid urbanization, population pressures, the land squeeze and the unprecedented growth of slums and informal settlements increasingly define the urban form in so many developing countries - never has the need for trenchant and comprehensive analysis of housing been more urgent.

As this Guide states, "Providing adequate housing to millions of low income households globally and particularly in urban centres is one of the greatest challenges facing society". Right now, and projected into the near and medium future, millions of people do not, and will not, enjoy, or be able to lay claim to their basic human right to adequate housing. Unless concrete steps are taken by governments and city authorities, the situation can only get worse spelling the advent of further social dissatisfaction and inequality.

Not only is housing about rights and equality, but there is little doubt that it plays a fundamental role in economic development and poverty reduction. Furthermore, public and private investments in housing will shape the form, structure and future of cities in years to come.

As this Guide repeatedly emphasises, a national Housing Profile can be the first step to inform and engage policy and decision-makers, and provide them with the evidence needed to design their choices and support critical decisions. Indeed, developing a Housing Profile needs to be seen as the basis for a broad housing sector reform that aims to improve its overall performance. Clearly, the performance of a nation's housing sector, its impact on cities and towns, and the living conditions of poor households is a key concern not only of national public policy, but it is also central to the agenda and international mandate of UN-HABITAT.

This is important reading for our partners engaged in the housing sector. I urge all in the housing sector, whether technical or non-technical, private or public, as well as those responsible in government, members of civil society and the media, to engage with more vigour in this pressing quest.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director
UN-HABITAT

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