

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF ARCHITECTS  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVATION FORUM  
Madrid, 18-20 May 2022**

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Adequate housing is an essential right, as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also a prerequisite for social and economic development, health and equal opportunities.

Today, a housing crisis challenges well-being worldwide, displacing many and threatening social cohesion.

Only 13% of the world's cities have affordable housing. Too many people must resort to informal and unsafe housing solutions. In OECD countries, home prices have been growing three times faster than incomes in the past 20 years. The fallout from COVID-19, coupled with climate change and other global crises, is making matters worse.

We have the tools to address this challenge. Environmentally sustainable housing reduces energy poverty and strengthens durability. Progressive and inclusive land governance, spatial and financial planning, and ambitious regulations are key to achieving adequate and affordable housing for all.

The United Nations is committed to mainstreaming urbanisation and housing issues across all our work, with the Sustainable Development Goals as our blueprint.

I thank the Affordable Housing Activation Forum and look forward to their contribution to this global effort.