**Ethiopia**

*The purpose of the Housing Rights and Human Rights Brief is to provide a succinct overview of housing rights and human settlements-related human rights within a specific country. It is designed for project designers to familiarize themselves with the human rights situation in the country that they are working in. The Housing Rights and Human Rights Brief is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of all human rights, yet to provide an overview of housing rights and other human settlements-related human rights within the national and the UN Delivering as One contexts. Further, this Brief is not intended to cover the entire legislative and regulatory framework of the country concerned.*

*The Brief outlines specific articles of the Constitution, national and local legislation, and other human settlements-related policies and acts. It further explains specific international legal commitments, with particular emphasis on the key conventions that the country has signed and/or ratified. UN reviews and recommendations, particularly the Universal Periodic Review process, are also outlined. The final section provides information on previous UN-Habitat projects in the country and links for further information and elaboration.*

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**Revision History**

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| Revision | Date | Author |
| *1* | *23/11/2015* | *SN* |
| *2* | *26/06/2016* | *SG* |
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**Summary**

Ethiopia is governed under its Constitution which was enacted in 1994. The Constitution provides for fundamental human rights and freedoms among them, the right to protection against eviction of Ethiopian peasants from their possession. The Constitution also contains Social Objectives, of which it is stated that to the extent the country’s resources permit policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians, access to clean water and housing. It also provides for the right to privacy and freedom from searches of the home.

The Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction is in charge of policy development and research related to the housing sector. Ethiopia also has a Growth and Transformation Plan which has put the housing sector as one of the most important pillars in the development process.

Ethiopia has ratified most of the major human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which includes the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

UN review mechanisms have taken notice of a housing shortage in Ethiopia, overcrowding, poor quality of accommodation, the lack of basic services, and the high percentage of the urban population living in slums. Recommendations have included measures to ensure access to adequate and affordable housing for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. UN-Habitat projects in the country have included sustainable transport solutions and empowerment of urban women entrepreneurs through housing development and land ownership.

**Legal Framework**

***Constitution[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Ethiopia is governed under its Constitution which was enacted in 1994. The Constitution provides for fundamental human rights and freedoms, among them, the right to protection against eviction of Ethiopian peasants from their possession under Article 40. The Constitution also contains Social Objectives, of which it is stated that to the extent the country’s resources permit policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians, access to clean water and housing under Article 90. Article 26 provides for the right to privacy and freedom from searches of the home.

‘Article 26: Right to Privacy

1. Everyone has the right to privacy. This right shall include the right not to be subjected to searches of his home, person or property, or the seizure of any property under his personal possession. […]”

‘Article 40: The Right to Property

[…] (4) Ethiopian peasants have the right to obtain land without payment and the protection against eviction from their possession. The implementation of this provision shall be specified by law.’

‘Article 90: Social Objectives

1. To the extent the country's resources permit, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security. […]’

**Government**

***Political System***

Ethiopia is a federal parliamentary republic with the Prime Minister as the head of government. The government of Ethiopia exercises executive power while legislative power is exercised by the Parliament.

***Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction[[2]](#footnote-2)***

The Ministry of Urban Development, Housing and Construction undertakes research and studies relating to urbanization. The Ministry is also providing support to urban centers to facilitate their development role. The Ministry is organized in various departments and bureaus to enable the effective discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

***Housing Development and Government Buildings Construction Bureau***

The Housing Development and Government Buildings Construction Bureau is a bureau under the Ministry of urban Development, Housing and Construction. It was reestablished in 2010 in a way that enables it to contribute in poverty reduction through facilitating design of low-cost houses,  to carry out capacity building, follow-up and monitoring, fill the gap between housing demand and supply, to augment the saving culture of the people, improve old areas and creating job opportunities.

***Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP)(2011-2015)[[3]](#footnote-3)***

‘3.5 Enhancing expansion and quality of social development

Expanding human capital and improving human development outcomes is still a central pillar strategy of Growth and Transformation Plan. The Government has been taking measures to improve the human resource development as healthy, productive, and trained human resource is essential for the implementation of government policies, strategies and programs. The main ingredients of this pillar are higher education and adult education, better primary health care, better and closer access to safe water and sanitation facilities, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, better food security and nutrition, and housing conditions.’

**Judiciary**

No relevant decisions regarding housing could be sourced.

**International Conventions[[4]](#footnote-4)**

The State has ratified most of the major human rights conventions, including the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which includes the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living.

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| [Treaty Description](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$PlaceHolderMain$dgReports$ctl00$ctl02$ctl00$ctl03','')) | [Treaty Name](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$PlaceHolderMain$dgReports$ctl00$ctl02$ctl00$ctl04','')) | [Signature Date](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$PlaceHolderMain$dgReports$ctl00$ctl02$ctl00$ctl05','')) | [Ratification Date, Accession(a), Succession(d) Date](javascript:__doPostBack('ctl00$PlaceHolderMain$dgReports$ctl00$ctl02$ctl00$ctl06','')) |
| Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment | CAT |  | 14 Mar 1994 (a) |
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | CCPR |  | 11 Jun 1993 (a) |
| Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women | CEDAW | 08 Jul 1980 | 10 Sep 1981 |
| International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination | CERD |  | 23 Jun 1976 (a) |
| International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights | CESCR |  | 11 Jun 1993 (a) |
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families | CMW |  |  |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child | CRC |  | 14 May 1991 (a) |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | CRPD | 30 Mar 2007 | 07 Jul 2010 |
| Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees | Refugee Convention |  | 10 Nov 1969 (a) |
| Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees | Protocol Relating to the Status of refugees |  | 10 Nov 1969 (a) |

Ethiopia has not signed:

* International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

**UN Agencies**

UN review mechanisms have taken notice of a housing shortage in Ethiopia, overcrowding, poor quality of accommodation, the lack of basic services, and the high percentage of the urban population living in slums. Recommendations have included measures to ensure access to adequate and affordable housing for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups.

***Universal Periodic Review***

*The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. The UPR is a significant innovation of the Human Rights Council which is based on equal treatment for all countries. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. The UPR also includes a sharing of best human rights practices around the globe. Currently, no other mechanism of this kind exists.*

First UPR (2009)[[5]](#footnote-5)

The report of the Working Group noted the progress made by the government of Ethiopia to guarantee most basic rights of the Ethiopian populations such as health, education and housing.

‘Recommendation 70: Request necessary technical assistance to build its capacity to deal with the issues and challenges faced in the fields of education, infrastructure, health, housing, agriculture, and ensuring food security.’

Second UPR (2014)[[6]](#footnote-6)

‘Recommendation 155.57: Continue increasing the access of women to employment, participation in public life, education, housing and health.’

‘Recommendation 155.58: Redouble efforts aimed at increasing women’s access to employment, participation in public life, education, housing and health.’

‘Recommendation 155.59: Continue to increase women’s access to employment, public life, education, housing and health.’

***Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014)[[7]](#footnote-7)***

*The Report provides a comprehensive review of the Human Rights situation in a given country and is presented to the Human Rights Council.*

The Report noted that there were significant discrepancies in the improvement of the situation of women in the different regions. It recommended that Ethiopia continue to increase their access to employment, public life, education, housing and health.

The Report also noted that in 2012, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples received allegations concerning agricultural development in the lower Omo valley associated with the construction of the Gilgel Gibe III hydroelectric project, as well as the Government’s villagization programme. According to the information received, resettlement of indigenous agro-pastoralist groups was under way in the lower Omo valley and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region to make way for the Government’s proposed development plans for the regions. The resettlement was reportedly part of the Government’s larger villagization programme instituted in at least four other regions. The villagization programme reportedly consisted of the relocation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists and the shifting of cultivators into sedentary villages where they were supposedly provided with improved social services, housing and infrastructure. However, numerous concerns had been raised, including that the Government had failed to obtain the consent of affected indigenous groups prior to resettlement and the lack of services provided at resettlement sites.

***Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2012)[[8]](#footnote-8)***

*The Committee specifically reviews states that have ratified the ICESCR on their compliance with the rights enshrined in it, including the Right to Adequate Housing.*

‘20. The Committee was concerned about the acute housing shortage in Ethiopia, overcrowding, the poor quality of accommodation, the lack of basic services, and the high percentage of the urban population living in slums.

Recommendation: Ethiopia to take urgent measures to ensure access to adequate and affordable housing with legal security of tenure for everyone, introduce a public housing scheme, build more low-cost housing for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, and take priority measures for homeless persons and persons living in sub-standard housing in shanty towns. The State party was requested to include in its next periodic report information on the extent and the root causes of homelessness in the State party. The State party’s attention was drawn to general comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing.’

‘21. The Committee was also concerned about reports that the Voluntary Resettlement Program, as described in the State party report, entailed the forced eviction of thousands of people in various regions of the State party, who were relocated to villages that lacked basic infrastructure, such as health clinics, clean water supplies and schools, as well as agricultural assistance or food assistance.

Recommendation: The State party was urged to ensure that the relocation of people is done on a voluntary basis, following prior consultation, to provide adequate compensation or alternative accommodation to those people that were forcibly evicted, and to guarantee that people living in relocation sites were provided with basic services (including drinking water, electricity, and washing, sanitation and transportation facilities) and adequate facilities (including schools and health-care centres).

***United Nations Country Team (UNCT)[[9]](#footnote-9)***

*The UNCT ensures inter-agency coordination and decision-making at the country level. The main purpose of the Country Team is for individual agencies to plan and work together, as part of the Resident Coordinator system, to ensure the delivery of tangible results in support of the development agenda of the Government.*

The UN Country Team's work fully supports six out of the seven pillars of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and focuses on Sustainable Economic Growth and Risk Reduction; Basic Social Services; Governance and Capacity Development; and Women, Youth and Children.

***United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)[[10]](#footnote-10)***

*The UNDAF is the strategic programme framework that describes the collective response of the UN system to national development priorities. The UNDAF forms the overall framework for the UNCT’s work between 2012 and 2015.*

According to the Report, the Government of Ethiopia had an ambitious plan to cover 65% of the total urban population with housing and basic services by 2009/10. With regard to reducing slum areas, it planned to reduce by 35% but achieved only by 40% in 2009/10. The focus of the government, in regard to urban development, is on support to small and medium scale enterprises, the expansion of micro-financial institutions and community based urban works programs.

Moreover, to improve the urban living environment and urban poverty, the government has introduced a number of interventions that include reducing urban unemployment to below 20%, support for small and micro enterprises through various programs such as microfinance institutions and micro-enterprises, pursuing improved urban land management, the implementation of solid waste disposal and water-borne sewage disposal systems, as well as improving rural-urban linkages.

**UN-Habitat[[11]](#footnote-11)**

UN-Habitat has worked on a number of projects in Ethiopia.

Total value of UN-Habitat investments (2008-2013): US$ 3,631,600

Total number of UN-Habitat projects (2008-2013): 2 projects

Main donors: UNEP/GEF and Spain

Implementing partners: UNEP/GEF, UNEP/DTIE, ITDP, TRL, UITP, GIZ, World Bank, AFD

In the period between 2008 and 2013, UN-Habitat only had regional projects in Ethiopia.

UN-Habitat projects in Ethiopia include:

Promoting Sustainable Transport Solutions for East African Cities (2011-2015)

This is a project to create the technical and institutional basis for implementing metropolitan sustainable transport networks and systems and establish a demonstration corridor for sustainable mobility.

Programme Empowering Urban Women Entrepreneurs Through Housing Development and Land Ownership in Ethiopia and Mozambique (2008-2012)

This was a project to establish a revolving fund for affordable land and housing development; to implement a pilot housing project in a selected expansion area of Manica; and to establish a credit guarantee fund to facilitate the process. This was part of a regional project in Ethiopia and Mozambique.

**Further Information**

* Constitution of Ethiopia (not official translation): <http://www.ethiopia.gov.et/web/Pages/Constitution>
* Growth and Transformation Plan: <http://www.iea.org/media/pams/ethiopia/Ethiopia_GTP_2010to2915.pdf>
* OHCHR Convention Ratification Status: <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>
* Universal Periodic Review: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/ETSession6.aspx
* Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014): http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/109/38/PDF/G1410938.pdf?OpenElement
* CESCR: <http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=9&DocTypeID=5>
* UNCT: <http://et.one.un.org/>
* UNDAF:<http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/ethiopia/drive/EthiopiaUnitedNationsDevelopmentAssistanceFramework_2012to2015.pdf>
* UN-Habitat Ethiopia Summary: <http://unhabitat.org/ethiopia/>
* UN-OHCHR: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>
* UN-Habitat: <http://unhabitat.org/>
* Universal Periodic Review: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx>
* Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/Pages/HousingIndex.aspx>

1. <https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ethiopia_1994.pdf> (not official translation) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.mwud.gov.et/web/guest/duties-and-responsibilities [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.iea.org/media/pams/ethiopia/Ethiopia\_GTP\_2010to2915.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://indicators.ohchr.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/101/47/PDF/G1010147.pdf?OpenElement [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/077/54/PDF/G1407754.pdf?OpenElement [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/109/38/PDF/G1410938.pdf?OpenElement [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Concluding Observations, E/C.12/ETH/CO/1-3

   http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=9&DocTypeID=5 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://et.one.un.org/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/ethiopia/drive/EthiopiaUnitedNationsDevelopmentAssistanceFramework\_2012to2015.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. http://unhabitat.org/ethiopia/ [↑](#footnote-ref-11)