

HabPost

Updates from
UN-Habitat

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Taking a Knee for Inclusion

Editor's note

Dear Reader,

This is the second iteration of HabPost 2.0, and it is already time for our first special issue. In light of recent events in the US and across the globe following the death of George Floyd, we have all been reminded that racism and discrimination is our problem. UN-Habitat has recently issued a statement on the topic (<https://unhabitat.org/statement-by-un-habitat-on-racism-and-discrimination>), and here at HabPost we are doing our share to put everything back in context and give a voice to affected colleagues. You will (re)discover in this issue why non-discrimination is at the core of the UN's values, and how it drives our work and mission at UN-Habitat. We hope this issue will also provide you with information and resources you might not be aware of, and reinforce the pride you take in your work as a part of the UN family.

In the meantime, we encourage you to remain cautious in your daily routine. While the coronavirus might be "outshined" by other news, it is still very much present and gaining in intensity globally. So keep healthy and strong – "normal" isn't back on the agenda just yet.

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Alerts

COVID-19

The coronavirus continues to cause disruption to the way we work, live, and travel. Here are selected highlights from the international media.

- Cases of coronavirus in **Central and South America have surpassed 1.5 million**, with **over 70,000 deaths**. 1.3 million of these cases are from 4 countries – **Brazil, Peru, Chile and Mexico** – with Brazil now reporting the second-highest number of cases globally (second only to the United States).
- Protests took place against [police brutality in enforcing COVID lockdowns in Kenya](#), with 15 people said to have been killed by the police since the beginning of the curfew.
- According to [Médecins Sans Frontières](#), the coronavirus has taken hold in **Yemen**, exacerbating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. COVID-19 is pushing the country's health system – already beleaguered by five years of war – towards complete collapse. UNOCHA has launched an [appeal](#) for the [Yemen Humanitarian Fund](#), including a high-level pledging event held on 2 June which made an urgent plea to donors to **raise USD 2.4 billion** for relief efforts.
- On 14 June, **China** reported 57 new coronavirus infections, its highest single-day tally in two months, renewing fears of a new wave of infections in the country. 36 of these cases came from Beijing, where strict lockdown measures have been reinstated, with mass testing and contact tracing being carried out in connection to a major fresh food market which appears to be the source of the new outbreak.
- Health experts warn that [disruptions to immunization programmes](#) caused by COVID-19 restrictions and stigma will put the lives of millions at risk.



From our Core to the World: Upholding and Delivering Inclusiveness



“Every day, in our work across the world, we strive to do our part to promote inclusion, justice, dignity and combat racism in all its manifestations.”



António Guterres
United Nations
Secretary-General

On 9 June, the Secretary General stated that “every day, in our work across the world, we strive to do our part to promote inclusion, justice, dignity and combat racism in all its manifestations.” As much as this statement was made in response to recent events, it is also a reflection of some of the oldest principles of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations refers to “human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” not once, but on four separate occasions:

1. As central to the purpose of the United Nations (Article 1.3);
2. As part of the objectives of the General Assembly (Article 13);
3. As a prerequisite for “the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary

for peaceful and friendly relations among nations” (Article 55);

4. As an objective of the Trusteeship System (Article 76.c).

On multiple occasions, important elements of the UN Charter — including human rights and non-discrimination — have been recognized as peremptory norms of general international law. The International Law Commission has observed that a peremptory norm matters because it is a reflection of the fundamental values of the international community and that it should be used to protect those values. As such, a peremptory norm is the most powerful form of international law and can direct the actions of the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as provide a non-negotiable standard for the practice of Member States.

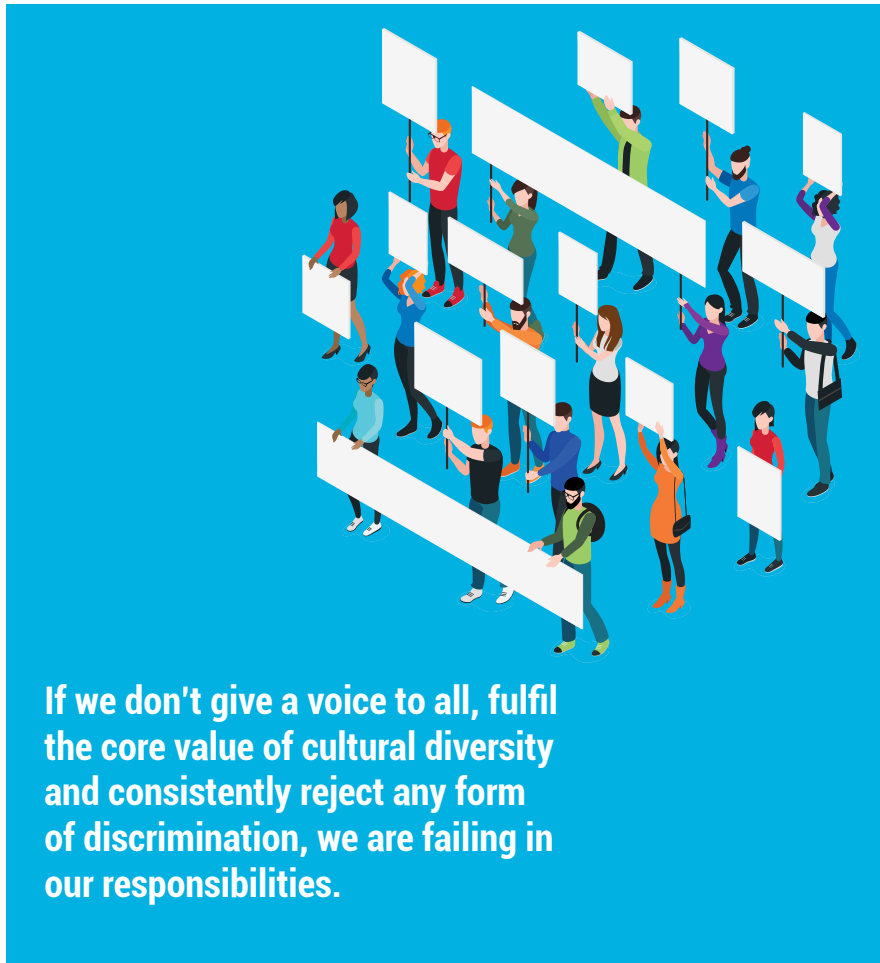
This may sound like an arcane lesson in legal niceties (and to some extent that

may be true), but it's certainly a popular enough topic in many an academic textbook. Some may say that burying human rights and non-discrimination in legal concepts is a means of deflecting attention from what is actually done to deliver them in practice. But for UN-Habitat and the rest of the UN System, human rights and non-discrimination must matter. And they must matter in the following related ways:

First, non-discrimination is a non-negotiable standard for the conduct of Member States. The ways in which they oversee and direct the work of UN-Habitat must reflect this. In particular, the resolutions of the UN-Habitat Assembly should respect, protect and fulfil human rights and non-discrimination. This is not just a requirement to do no harm – although that is also important. It is a responsibility to pro-actively advance human rights and non-discrimination.

Second, the legal status of human rights and non-discrimination mean that they are part of the governing principles and rules of the UN-Habitat Secretariat. These rights and principles directly govern our structures, processes and behaviour. We are all accountable to the Secretary General and the UN's dispute bodies for upholding these standards. We are also all accountable beyond that: there can be no immunity, whether personal or for official actions, for the violation of a peremptory norm. Its violation is also considered to be an offence against all Member States. If we don't give a voice to all, fulfil the core value of cultural diversity and consistently reject any form of discrimination, we are failing in our responsibilities.

The **third** way in which human rights and non-discrimination must matter to UN-Habitat is in our day-to-day work providing technical advice and making recommendations for the adoption of norms and standards by Member States. Achieving human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without



distinction is not something that is an element of, or that is added on to our work. It is what our work is meant to achieve as an outcome. Whether in access to basic services, the provision of adequate housing, the achievement of spatial equity or any other field, our success or failure is judged by whether this is for all, or just for a few.

At UN-Habitat, we have adopted the common human rights-based approach that focuses on marginalised or vulnerable groups and individuals as an important indicator for progress. Age, gender, disability and poverty are the principal markers recognised in our Strategic Plan: while younger generations have less access to resources and less access to decision-making affecting the allocation of public resources, the elderly, women, the disabled and the LGBTQ+ community face challenges from the physical structure and the governance processes that shape our cities. And the poor – whether poor in absolute global terms

or in the relative terms of their own country or region – do not only face challenges affording services but are also frequently underserved by those services even when they can afford them.

UN-Habitat has proposed to judge its activities based on whether they will advance human rights – in particular the economic, social and cultural rights of people. It has also proposed to judge its activities based on whether they advance equality of outcome in the achievement of human rights, in other words whether they address historical discrimination and achieve greater inclusion. As part of the United Nations System, we are unequivocally committed to advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. This commitment drives our work, on behalf of our beneficiaries. But it also serves the personnel and partners of the Secretariat who implement this work.

Recent events in the US have sparked passions and brought thousands of people to the streets. It has affected us globally as a community, but also revived individual concerns. **Yahorina Tench**, intern at the OED, shares her perspective with us.



But for me, being bi-racial is representative of unity between two different races. I am double, not half. So for the part of me that is black, I matter

“ In light of the recent Black Lives Matter movement, I have felt inspired to point out that “matter” is the minimum. Black lives shouldn’t just matter, they should be valued, respected and liberated. For far too long, we have been unconscious of the systemic racism around us. Of course, decades ago someone like me who is bi-racial may not have existed in certain parts of the world or would have been hidden or denied by the white side that made me. But for me, being bi-racial is representative of unity between two different races. I am double, not half. So for the part of me that is black, I matter. But mattering is the minimum: if in principle my whiteness is supposed to be valued, respected and liberated, then why can’t the same apply to my blackness? I am the same person, after all.

Many do not realize how the death of George Floyd connects them with others across the globe or affects them personally. There is a domino effect at play. “An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”, said Martin Luther King Jr. The United Nations, which was founded 75 years ago, committed itself to ensuring peace, security and unity amongst nations. I feel that the sheer existence of systemic racism and oppression of black people globally is a violation of the foundations that created this family. We see this violation in police brutality in the US, the disproportionate killing of young black people in Brazil, and more recently COVID-19-driven xenophobia in China. And there are many more examples across the globe in healthcare, education, and housing, among others.

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I do believe that it is our responsibility as individuals to support the Black Lives Matter movement. And as far as we at UN-Habitat are concerned, we should learn to engage in challenging conversations that we are not used to, and aspire to actively make a difference. Diversity and inclusiveness should be the norm and standard, for the goal is not to ignore colour, but to see it, respect it, and honour it.

Yahorina Tench,
Business Engagement and Sustainable Finance Intern, OED



Vacancies

Role
Associate Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P2
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
26 June 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Programme
Management Officer,
Human Settlements,
P3
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
26 July 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Senior Technical
Writer/Editor (for
Roster)
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
23 June 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Urban Planning
Specialist
Duty Station
Cairo, Egypt
Deadline
29 June 2020
[Apply Here](#)



Role
Consultor para
realizar actividades
de Diseño Gráfico
Duty Station
Mexico City, Mexico
Deadline
18 June 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Research and
Programme Portfolio
Development Intern
Duty Station
Nairobi, Kenya
Deadline
25 June 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Role
Senior Programme
Officer, Human
Settlements, P5
Duty Station
Sana'a, Yemen
Deadline
7 July 2020
[Apply Here](#)

Upcoming events and corporate calendar



UN HABITAT



Project Launch: Building Urban Climate Resilience in South-Eastern Africa (10:00-12:00 EAT)

In partnership with the Adaptation Fund, UN-Habitat will implement climate adaptation projects following a participatory resilience planning process in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Comoros. The launch will bring together government representatives and key stakeholders to discuss the multifaceted challenges and opportunities for resilience building in the region. A link to this online event will be shared by the organizers.



First 2020 Session of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat (09:00 EAT)

UN-Habitat's first virtual Executive Board meeting will take place on Monday 29 June. Among the key issues to be considered by the Executive Board at its first session of 2020 are: financial, budgetary and administrative matters; status of and discussions on the draft annual work programme; draft budget of UN-Habitat Foundation for 2021; status of implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN-Habitat Assembly at its first session; elections of officers of the Bureau of the Executive Board.

All participants need to pre-register online for this virtual session [here](#). Online registration will close on Saturday, 20 June 2020 at midnight EAT. An information note for participants is available [here](#).

Other organizers



World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is an occasion to celebrate the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution, to build empathy and understanding for the plight of refugees and to recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives. Under the theme "Every Action Counts" UNHCR will lead a day of observance to remind the world that everyone, including refugees, can contribute to society and that [Every Action Counts](#) in the effort to create a more just, inclusive, and equal world. Find more information on World Refugee Day at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/>.



Using Data to Support Women Migrants and Refugees During COVID-19 (17:00 CET)

This session, organized by Devex and Facebook, is part of a series of 10 practical virtual events to create a better understanding of gender-related issues highlighted by the pandemic and to share important lessons learned about how data can help inform better responses to the crisis. The event will discuss the impact of COVID-19 on displaced women and girls, exploring how data can help ensure more effective responses to the pandemic, taking into account their specific problems and needs. More information and registration [here](#).



Global Consultations on Harnessing Climate and SDG Synergies for a Better and Stronger Recovery from Covid-19 (09:00-11:00 EST)

Hosted by the UNDESA and UNFCCC Secretariats, in partnership with the European Union, this final virtual session of a series of three will focus on strengthening synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to recover better and faster from COVID-19 and accelerate enhanced climate action and transitions to sustainable development. Find more information [here](#).



Learning

UN Competency-Based Interview (CBI) Training for Panel Members:

This online self-paced training course will allow participants to gain an in-depth understanding of competency-based interviews, learn about their roles as panel members, and access interview questions and useful templates. It can be completed in four to five hours, or more slowly, over a maximum of two months. It includes a certificate of completion, which is a requirement for staff to serve on interview panels. CBI is also a mandatory module in the new [e-Management Certificate](#).

All UN Secretariat staff with fixed term, continuing or permanent contracts, and those scheduled or expected to participate as an interview panel member are eligible to take part. Register online [here](#).

Resource Management for Certifying Officers: The Department of Operational Support has launched a new self-paced online training programme in Inspira for Certifying Officers. The course focuses on resource management to ensure more effective and efficient delivery of mandates. The course synthesizes the knowledge requirements across different subject including recruitment of consultants and individual contractors, acquisition of goods and services, management of voluntary contributions, and official travel. Any interested Secretariat staff members can register via Inspira, course number LMS-6257.

For questions, write to dos-cdots@un.org.

UN Blue Line: UN Blue Line is a new leadership hub offering a range of self-paced digital learning resources, including all e-Management Certificate modules, a leadership and management toolkit as well as various reference materials to help UN leaders and managers deal with everyday responsibilities and challenges.

Online resources are available to all UN personnel regardless of grade or functional role. Register for the UN Blue Line through the UN System Staff College [here](#).

Career coaching: Secretariat staff can now schedule up to three sessions with a career coach! Whether you are struggling to adapt to these changing times, need advice on better ways to interact with your team or want to explore whether career decisions should be made now or postponed, talking to a career coach can help. Sessions are confidential, and all coaches are trained, with a deep knowledge of the UN system. Access more information on eligibility and sign up through the HR Portal [here](#).

LinkedIn Learning - Foundations of Leadership and Management for UN Staff:

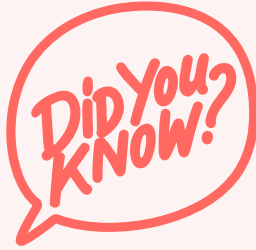
This collection offered through LinkedIn Learning provides a curated learning path of recommended courses that will help you develop key leadership and managerial skills aligned with the UN System Leadership Framework. It comprises 27 courses grouped under 5 key foundations: managing for results; building and nurturing teams; transformation change through co-creation; thinking and leading strategically; and encouraging integrity, inclusion and respect. Access all the courses free of charge [here](#).

A fun video from UN Geneva on the do's and don'ts of video conferencing:

As webinars and virtual meetings continue to be central to our daily working lives, some tips on navigating the world of videoconferencing are available [here](#).

Together: This summer, the UN will pilot Together, a new mentoring programme. It will pair mentees and mentors via an online platform based on preferences. Consider sharing your UN story and help others navigate their careers – become a mentor! Or meet and learn from someone new – become a mentee! Watch an introductory video to the programme [here](#), and learn more about how you can be involved [here](#).



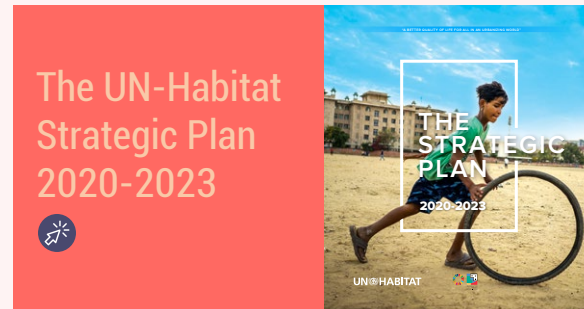


Social inclusion is at the heart of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and is one of the organizational priorities that underpin all areas of the work we carry out. Committing to socially inclusive development means ensuring everyone can benefit equally from progress. This particularly means ensuring that vulnerable and marginalized groups, including ethnic and other minorities, are not engaged incidentally, but are specifically targeted through a **human rights-based approach** to sustainable development.

In line with [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan necessarily seeks to address inequalities and discrimination in human settlements:

“Human rights inform and interconnect all the outcomes of the Strategic Plan. UN-Habitat applies the human-rights-based approach to address inequalities and discrimination, reaching those who are furthest behind first by placing power relationships in human settlements at the heart of its analysis and action.”

Here are some useful resources to better understand the framework of human rights and inclusivity at UN-Habitat and the wider United Nations:



But also...

- [UN-Habitat Flagship programme on Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities](#)
- [UN-Habitat Flagship Programme on Inclusive cities: Enhancing the positive impacts of urban migration](#)
- [Video: An Introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [UN Resources on Equality and Non-Discrimination](#)



Participate!

Want your story featured? Submit your ideas or reach out to us at unhabitat-habpost@un.org.

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