
UN-Habitat Guidelines on Submitting Human Interest Stories to the Communications Section

UN-Habitat is a centre of excellence, a solutions agency and leader on sustainable urbanization with a presence in over 90 countries.

To promote the IMPACT of UN-Habitat's global work we need web story submissions that include:

1. Human interest story (docx file),
2. Captioned photos (photos as attachments and written captions preferably embedded or included at end of the story),
3. Suggested social media with partners' handles (put below the captions in the submitted web story docx file).

1. High quality news and human interest stories:

Dynamic personal stories with **quotes from project beneficiaries** about how a **recent** UN-Habitat intervention has improved their and their communities' lives

- Identify the challenges that are being addressed
- Describe the UN-Habitat interventions
- Provide details and statistics about the specific outcomes of the UN-Habitat interventions – **including beneficiary numbers/timelines/funding**
- **Name and quote** from donors/partners
- Never wait to write the story – it should be written and submitted the same day or **latest one day** after the intervention/site visit.
- Save/name the story file as yearmonthday_ projectname_location_draft webstory eg 20200725_ BlockByBlock_Afghanistan_Draft Webstory and send to the communications team for editing.

Why write human interest stories?

One of the key ways to communicate the breadth, importance and impact of our work, our expertise and knowledge is through stories which can be used by the press, on the UN-Habitat website, the newsletter, the annual report, donor reports and on social media.

People-centred stories demonstrate the impact UN-Habitat and partners have in improving beneficiaries' lives to the public, donors and the authorities. They also illustrate the challenges being faced and overcome and how UN-Habitat supports people to help themselves.

Ideally they should feature an individual, family or community and explain what the impact was using clear examples, fact checked statistics and numbers and direct quotes. They should also include reference to partner organisations or funders, and if possible a quote from these partners.

They can then be broadened to explain the scale of UN-Habitat's work. The stories must be compelling and comprehensible to the general public.

Getting the story

In order to see results and meet the beneficiaries the story should be set in the community where the project is taking place. Communications colleagues in country should conduct the interviews and send material (including photos). For staff visiting an area, UN-Habitat local staff or NGOs can often suggest who to interview and arrange meetings and provide translation.

1. When interviewing the person, explain you are from UN-Habitat and ask if you can write about them and take photographs. There is a consent form that should be signed.
2. Start by **writing down** basic details – **the spelling of their names, age, where they are from.**
3. Then take time to get the story. **Never assume you will be able to come back or follow up later.**
4. Talk to a range of people to get a wider view of the project, such as other family members and community members or the head of the community.
5. As much as possible get concrete details about the improvement in their lives, the difference the intervention has made to their family and the community – **how it was before and how it is now.**
6. **Focus on the impact** – and what makes the initiative interesting, innovative or unique.
7. If you do not already know, find out from UN-Habitat colleagues about the bigger picture, number of beneficiaries, source of funding (naming donors is crucial) and project timelines. Here you can use a quote from a UN-Habitat official and/or Government official to contextualize the story.

Another approach is to tell the story of a UN-Habitat staff member or implementing partner describing their day and their work – this can be in the first or third person.

The above applies for meetings as well. When in workshops and meetings, find a participant with an interesting history or background and interview them – and start the story off with them. Don't forget to get a good photo – preferably with the person outside (where the light is better) doing something interesting.

Cut out technical language and UN or urban planning jargon. **This is a story meant for ordinary people to read.** Do make sure you **get the spellings of names and places right**, explain where a place is and do quote the beneficiaries directly.

Keep the story to under 700 words and make the opening paragraph and headline compelling and punchy.

Apart from conventional, third person stories, you can also think about first person accounts, blogs and interviews.

2. Submitting the story

The story must be submitted with **compelling photographs from the project, city** or community for each news story.

It must include vivid photos telling the **story** of the project in the field: This means 2 – 4 high quality photographs showing a range of shots **including close ups of beneficiaries** and **wider shots contextualizing the intervention** (with people in the photos) that **tell the story** of this project and how it has changed people's lives.

- Save/name each photograph jpeg file as:
Yearmonthday_UNHabitat_Project name_location
e.g. 2 x images taken on 25 July 2020 must be filed as: 20200725_UNHabitat_BlockByBlock_Afghanistan1
20200725_UNHabitat_BlockByBlock_Afghanistan2
- Each photo needs a caption in the present tense: with names of people in the shot, basic project description/context, location and date (in UN style: 20 August 2020).
- Include photographer's name in the UN style: [UN-Habitat/2019/photographer's name].
- Embed the caption in the photographs metadata if you can (see UN-Habitat photo stylesheet) or submit the captions below the story in the same file and we will embed captions at Nairobi office.
- Please do not insert the photos in the word document – **they should be attached to the email separately as high resolution jpegs.**

3. Suggested social media text

Facebook, twitter and Instagram text with partner handles:

- These can be submitted in the same doc.x file as the story
- Please include partner handles for each channel – indicated who should be tagged – project funders / beneficiary groups.

Please send your story (with captions and social media text) and photos **as attachments** in an email with:

Email Subject line: **Draft webstory + name of project and location:**

To: Susannah Price: susannah.price@un.org

CC: tom.osanjo@un.org