



## Conversation and virtual sessions cycle "Covid-19 Contingency: Lessons Learned for the Land "

### "Slums and Social Housing. Impacts and Responses against Covid-19"

#### Concept Note and Program

June 2, 2020

9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Mexico City time

The Ministry of Agricultural, Land and Urban Development (SEDATU), in coordination with CITIES ALLIANCE, the Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH), Habitat for Humanity, the Housing and Habitat Researchers Network of the Americas (RIVHA) and the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), organize the **Webinar: Slums and Social Housing. Impacts and Responses against Covid-19**

## CONTEXT

### COVID-19 in Latin America

COVID-19 crisis is having impacts not only on health but also on other areas, including the economic and social. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), a decrease of at least -1.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected, and an increase by 2020 of people living in poverty (from 186 to 220 million) and extreme poverty (from 67.5 to 90.8 million), generating, as in previous crises, an increase in informal settlements<sup>1</sup>. It should be noted that the crisis affects and will particularly affect urban areas (they have become the epicenters of the pandemic), and in these, precarious settlements, since there is a lack of housing (overcrowding), basic infrastructure (especially water), public services and equipment (health and food, among others). Furthermore, for a large part of the population in these settlements, the "stay at home" policy is a mitigating factor in the crisis, since homes do not have the minimum conditions necessary to guarantee the adequate exercise of the right to housing, and because people have to work in order to survive every day. In addition, the crisis is disproportionately affecting certain vulnerable groups, particularly older adults who tend to have co-morbidities and scarce resources, and women, who tend to do most of the work related to care inside and outside the home, generating overload in their working hours. As if

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<sup>1</sup> Slum Areas and Social Housing: Impacts and Responses of Covid-19 Concept Note (UHPH)

it was not enough, a surge in gender-based violence against women has been detected during the pandemic.

## COVID-19 Mexico

Mexico faces the crisis in vulnerable conditions, not only because it has a high percentage of people with diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, but also because there is a significant number of people in the country who are overcrowded and lack access to basic services, including access to direct, reliable or safe water sources, and gaps in the realization of social rights, including housing, social security, food and education. It is expected that the COVID-19 crisis will have significant impacts on all the habits of life of the Mexican people. According to the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), a decrease in the GDP of between 2 and 6% and a significant loss of jobs is predicted, generating an increase in people in a situation of income poverty (8.9 and 9.8 million people), and in extreme poverty (between 6.1 and 10.7 million people). In addition, for the second quarter of 2020, it is estimated that working poverty (population that cannot afford basic necessities with their salary) will increase from 37.3 to 45.8 percent and the unemployment rate will rise (from 3.3 to 5.3 percent). It is worth mentioning that the CONEVAL estimates that women will be a sector that will have greater disadvantages to face the pandemic (CONEVAL, 2020)<sup>2</sup>.

## Discussion and proposals to COVID19 at a regional level on the issue of housing and habitat

In this context, some key points to consider are identified from the discussions, reflections and responses regarding housing and habitat in different conversations in Latin America:

**Strengthening of Metropolitan Community and Governance:** The mobilization, organization and actions of civil society have been key to address the emergency for the most vulnerable (food supply, solidarity exchanges, health care, water supply, among others); therefore, it is a priority to make visible and strengthen spaces for discussion with the communities of the slums to weave alliances and build collective, multilevel efforts and more integrated responses within the territory.

**Housing and Basic Services Supply and Improvements:** The responses have been diverse, and each context is encouraged to carefully evaluate the set of strategies to be promoted to activate the right to quality housing - adequate, affordable, accessible and adaptable; housing, in the face of the pandemic, becomes the first ring of protection for families. Some of the most discussed and implemented responses include: occupation of vacant land (accessible and/or central and with low climatic risks); alliances with the private sector for the use of empty housing; improvement of neighborhoods with a comprehensive approach based on the recovery of the value created from public investment; diversification of the ways to access

<sup>2</sup>Social Policy within the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic (COVID-19) in Mexico.

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housing, prioritizing self-construction and improvement/ renovation of existing housing (in particular of overcrowded conditions to maintain physical and emotional distance, and access to water that is indispensable to maintain sanitary conditions); alliances with small and medium sized industries through flexible credits to reactivate the economy and to encourage the use of new construction materials that reduce carbon footprint; grace periods in loan and mortgage credit payments; reconnection of basic services to those suspended and application of discounts, subsidies and/or suspension of payments in critical or crisis moments.

**Land:** although not in the center of the discussion, the issue of land has been called as an important topic, and some actions regarding land use are being developed. Such is the case in Argentina where, before the pandemic, work was being done on a National Land Plan, and this initiative is now considered important because families from the land can improve their quality of life. Another example is that of Ecuador where, in response to the crisis, it has been determined, among other things, to reform the Organic Law of Land Occupation to provide alternatives to local governments.

**Reactivation of local economies and food security:** Prioritize mechanisms and projects for economic revival that support informal dynamics, community work and micro and small enterprises. Provide care for residents living in slums, who are often those linked to the city's essential services and are disproportionately exposed to infection. Thinking 'outside the box' and activating local supply chains for food provision, as well as re-imagining the urban-rural relationship, the integration of work and housing in the territory and new economic models that incorporate the social and ecological function of land, social inclusion and climate justice.

**Migrations:** The migrant population, often in a situation of invisibility and with difficulties in accessing rights and work opportunities, is an extremely vulnerable segment in the context of the pandemic, and it is essential to develop a specific approach in housing and neighborhood improvement policies, connected to socioeconomic integration programs.

**Violence and gender:** In slums and informal settlements, the central impact of the pandemic generates an excessive care burden on women and girls, where already before the health crisis, women spent between 22 and 42 hours a week on domestic work and caregiving activities, receiving a lower salary for such work. In addition, it is important to address and understand the conditions of domestic violence, especially among women, who have faced higher levels of violence during the pandemic and have activated different support mechanisms.

## CONVERSATION OBJECTIVES

- Identify the impacts of Covid-19 in Slums and the responses that have been formulated and implemented based on these, from various sectors in Latin America and with emphasis on Mexico.

- Understand and support the role of Housing at the center of the impacts and responses to Covid-19, within the framework of slum areas.

## KEY QUESTION

What immediate responses to address the crisis at different levels of government can be articulated and expanded to promote deep transformations in the long term in the Slums in Mexico?

## SESSION STRUCTURE

**Introduction** (9.00 - 9.22 | 22 '), includes:

### 09.00 - 09.01 (1 ') *Start*

- Session Recording Announcement.
- Request to keep microphones silent.
- Announcement of chat availability for exchanges and ask to speak In charge of:  
**SEDATU - Martha Peña**

### 09.01 - 09.04 (3') *Welcome*

- Name the coordinating ministries and organizations
- Cycle objective
- Theme of the opening discussion.
- Presentation of the speakers: Brief introduction. In charge of:  
**SEDATU - Martha Peña**

### 09.04 - 09.10 (6 ') *International Outlook*

- Addressing components of the Vulnerability of Slum Areas in Latin America and the Caribbean, in line with Housing Laboratories (LAVs) focused on Slum Areas and COVID-19.  
In charge of: **CITIES ALLIANCE - Anacláudia Rossbach, Regional Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean**

### 09.10 - 09.16 (6 ') *National Perspective - Urban Improvement Program*

- How to generate comprehensive interventions to counteract the consequences of health crises?

In charge of: SEDATU - Carina Arvizu, Undersecretary of Urban Development and Housing

**09.16 - 09.22 (6 ' ) Local Perspective - Characterization**

- Social and Urban Environment Characterization of Irregular Settlements in the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara

In charge of: METROPOLITAN INSTITUTE FOR PLANNING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF GUADALAJARA (IMEPLAN) - Mario Silva, Director General

**Discussion (09.22 - 10.22 | 1h)**, includes:

**09.22 - 10.22** Debate<sup>3</sup> guided by a **Main Key Question:**

**What immediate responses to address the crisis at different levels of government can be articulated and expanded to promote deep transformations in the long term in the Slums in Mexico?**

**SPECIAL GUESTS** for a conversational exchange

- **Civil Society Perspective:** HABITAT FOR HUMANITY MEXICO - Lacmi Rodríguez Amaya, National Executive Director.

*Housing as the center of the mitigation strategies against the health and economic crisis in Slums.*

- **Civil Society Perspective:** HABITAT INTERNATIONAL COALITION (HIC) - María Silvia Emanuelli, Coordinator of HIC Latin America, Mexico.

*Local Governments: guidelines relevant for the attention to Slums.*

- **Government and Private Initiative Perspective:** INSTITUTE OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING FUND FOR WORKERS (INFONAVIT) - Samuel Valenzuela, Senior Manager of Self-production.

*Social Production of Habitat: "ConstruYO INFONAVIT" program.*

- **Academic Perspective:** HOUSING AND HABITAT RESEARCHERS NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS (RIVHA) - Héctor Becerril, CONACYT Professor.

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<sup>3</sup> This discussion will be organic and horizontal, to encourage the active and dynamic participation of the Special Guests, without visual support.

*Co-production: building practice communities for the comprehensive improvement of slums.*

- Local Perspective: MUNICIPALITY OF ACAPULCO, Mayor Adela Román, Ocampo.
- Local Perspective: POPULAR URBAN MOVEMENT - Jaime Rello, Representative.

*COVID-19 within the Mexican Context: Impacts and Responses.*

- International Outlook: GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - Ruth Jurberg, Manager.

*Slums in Rio de Janeiro: responses against Covid-19.*

- International Outlook: UN HABITAT, Javier Torner

**Moderator:** CITIES ALLIANCE - Anacláudia Rossbach, Regional Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean

**Closing** (10:22 - 10:30 | 8 '), includes:

**10,22 - 10,27** (5')

- Summary of issues addressed, main topics, challenges, alternatives.

In charge of: GIZ - Auribel Villa Avendaño. Senior Advisor for Urban Planning. CiClim Project.

**10.27 - 10.30** (3 ') Final messages, recognitions, closing. In charge of:

SEDATU - Martha Peña