

Housing as a Human Right: Regional Insights and Strategies for the Arab World

Monday 15 December, 15:45 – 17:00 Doha Time (Gallery 1)

This Session will be held in Arabic (Arabic/English simultaneous translation provided)

Background and objectives:

Adequate housing is both a basic human right and a cornerstone of sustainable social development. As reaffirmed in the Copenhagen Declaration and in the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2), access to adequate housing underpins poverty eradication, decent work, and social inclusion, while advancing broader goals of social justice, human dignity, and resilience.

In the Arab region, these global commitments intersect with mounting pressures: rapid population growth and urbanization, conflict and climate-related displacement, economic volatility, and entrenched inequalities. Demand for affordable, well-located housing is rising, while many younger people face growing barriers to secure tenure and homeownership. Structural gaps in housing systems, high levels of informality, and uneven access to basic services risk deepening inter-generational and spatial inequalities.

This session positions adequate housing as a strategic lever for poverty reduction, employment creation, and social integration in the Arab region. It will draw on regional evidence, including national housing profiles to highlight links between housing, labour markets, education, health, and social protection.

The discussion will explore policy options to narrow generational gaps in housing access and wealth, promote regional cooperation and capacity-building, and reinforce housing as a driver of social justice, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

Main Topics for Discussion:

- Adequate housing as a pillar of social development – linking poverty reduction, decent work, and social inclusion.
- Key housing pressures in the Arab region, including informality, displacement, and inter-generational inequality.
- Using national housing profiles and other data to inform evidence-based, inclusive housing policies.
- How housing policies shape wider outcomes in jobs, education, health, and social protection and reduce inter-generational gaps in housing access, tenure security, and wealth.

Moderator

- **Dr. Mahmoud Fathallah**, Director, Housing, Water Resources and Disaster Risk Reduction, League of Arab States

Key-note speaker:

- **Eng. Abir Zaatari**, Housing Expert and Research Coordinator at the Beirut Urban Lab/American University of Beirut

Panelists

- **Eng. Nafissa Hashem**, Advisor to the Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Egypt
- **Dr. Ali Hassan**, Undersecretary, Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Public Works and Highways, Yemen
- **Dr. Elhadi Abdella Abodafair**, Secretary General of National Housing Fund, Sudan
- **Eleonora Serpi**, Associate Programme Management Officer, Land, Housing and Informal Settlements Section, UN-Habitat