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Opinion

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Assessments on “New Urban Agenda”, “Adequate Housing” and “World Habitat Day 2022”

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to draw attention to the importance of the definition of “adequate housing” in architectural and urban planning processes as set out in the “New Urban Agenda” adopted after the Habitat III Conference in Ecuador in 2016 with the participation of local and national governments, parliamentarians, civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector, professionals and practitioners, scientific and academic circles and other relevant stakeholders. The spatial quality, social and physical qualities of human settlements are of great importance in the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs) at a global scale. The “New Urban Agenda” adopted in 2016 and the “Mind the Gap: Leave No One and Place Behind” in Turkey in 2022, the 15-minute City model and the creation of compact and resilient cities, emphasized in the report titled “Envisaging the Future of Cities” published by UN-HABITAT at the World Habitat Day event, have the potential to be a roadmap for architects and planners to rethink residential areas at different scales based on adequate housing parameters.

Keywords: Habitat III, New Urban Agenda, Sustainable development goals (SDGs), Adequate housing, World Habitat Day 2022

Introduction

On October 20, 2016, Habitat III Congress was held in Ecuador with 30,000 participants from 167 countries. In the declaration booklet published as “Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements For All” within the scope of the Congress, it was stated that the world urban population is expected to almost double by 2050. Therefore, it becomes clear that urbanization strategies are one of the important transformative forces of the 21st century. The New Urban Agenda, which was approved at the UN General Assembly meeting following the congress, has pioneering ideas in the field of architecture and planning.

In the New Urban Agenda, the goals of cities and human settlements include the full realization of the right to adequate housing, the creation of inclusive and accessible settlements where civic participation is encouraged and residents have a sense of belonging and ownership, the empowerment of women and girls, the support of the local economy, the realization of

sustainable and integrated urban and regional development, the promotion of efficient transportation systems, the planning of resilient settlements by reducing disaster risk, and the transition to sustainable production and consumption models. The New Urban Agenda includes findings, recommendations and future plans for the spatial planning of cities and human settlements.

In the concept documents that will contribute to the New Urban Agenda, the definition of “adequate housing” is included in the 20th topic “housing”. Adequate housing is recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in international instruments, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Adequate housing should provide more than four walls and a roof. In order for certain forms of housing to be considered “adequate housing”, a number of conditions must be met. These elements include:



I. Security of tenure. Housing is not adequate if residents do not have security of tenure that provides legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.

II. Availability of services, supplies, facilities and infrastructure. Housing is not adequate if residents do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or garbage disposal.

III. Affordability. Housing is not adequate if the cost of housing threatens or jeopardizes the enjoyment of other human rights by its inhabitants.

IV. Habitability. Housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical security or provide adequate space as well as protection against cold, humidity, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.

V. Accessibility. Housing is not adequate if it does not take into account the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

VI. Location. Housing is not adequate if it is far from employment opportunities, health services, schools, childcare centers and other social facilities, or if it is located in polluted or dangerous areas.

VII. Cultural compatibility. Housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity.

Discussion

In accordance with the definition of adequate housing set out in the New Urban Agenda, all actors, central and local governments, architects and urban planners, who are effective in the production of space in each geography, need to rethink the spatial development

of residential areas. As a result of rural-urban migration, there is a need to evaluate the housing areas that develop on the urban peripheries according to adequate housing criteria, to establish local parameters and to develop spatial solutions [1].

Following the definition of adequate housing that came to the agenda at the Habitat III Conference, a World Habitat Day event was organized by the theme "Mind the Gap. Leave No One and Place Behind" in Balıkesir, Turkey in 2022. In the same year, the World Cities Report published by UN HABITAT with the title "Envisioning the Future of Cities" emphasized urban resilience and compact planning approach. Creating walkable, mixed-use and compact neighborhoods was called the "15-minute city" concept. The location, spatial, social and cultural characteristics of residential areas are very important in ensuring urban resilience. All actors involved in space production need to think and generate ideas on how urban transformation will contribute to the creation of inclusive living spaces in cities, the reduction of inequalities and the realization of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Architects should have a strong voice in adapting all the parameters of adequate housing to planning approaches at different scales [2].

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None

Conflict of interest

None

References

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