

# **SELF-MADE CITIES**

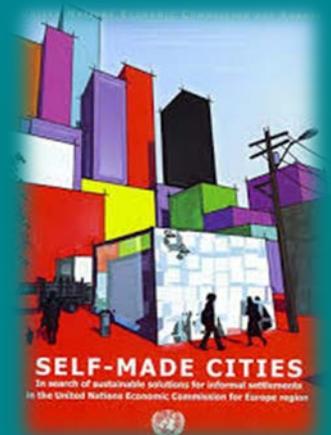
**In search of sustainable  
solutions for informal  
settlements in the UNECE  
region**

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# What is Informal Settlement?

A residential area in an urban locality developed with no legal title to land and/or construction/operational permit; non-compliant with urban plans and/or minimum housing and/or infrastructure standards; institutional arrangements

Other characteristics: location, size, degree of illegality, demographics, spatial organisation.



# Variegated forms of urban housing informality

- ❖ Squatter settlements on public/private land
- ❖ Settlements for refugees and vulnerable people
- ❖ Upgraded squatter settlements
- ❖ Illegal suburban subdivision on public/private land
- ❖ Squatter flats, dilapidated dwellings, shared flats, primitive first generation industrial houses



# The triggers of IS

- ❖ **Socio-economic and administrative changes**
- ❖ **Rapid urbanisation and migration to major cities**
- ❖ **Civic conflicts**
- ❖ **Poverty and socio-spatial disadvantage**
- ❖ **Inefficiency of traditional government administration (outdated plans, cumbersome procedures; housing shortages and land speculation)**



## Conventional pathways to IS

- ❖ Legalization (land tenure status, e.g. Turkey). Problems: technical-financial, political-administrative
- ❖ Regularisation and *in situ* upgrading (land and real estate registration and infrastructure provision). Problems: weak sectoral and government integration, physical-technical vs social issues
- ❖ Resettlement and relocation (social housing, soft loans, e.g. Spain and Portugal). Problems: very costly; unmet expectations.

Most solutions are add-hoc, reactive, small-scale



# Rethinking and supporting local practices

- ❖ A massive reaction to high cost of formality
- ❖ A symptom of outdated public policies; *laissez-faire* policies and their administration
- ❖ A 'hothouse' of cultural creativity, economic invention and social innovation.
- ❖ Exceed what one expects to find in a formal city
- ❖ Addressing city-wide or national constraints



# Improving IS from inside and out: Good principles and practice patterns

- ❖ **Treat ISs as you find them; improvise with tools**
- ❖ **IS actions need to be supported by concrete regulations framed by sustainability commitments**
- ❖ **No IS solution without socio-spatial inclusion at the city scale (e.g. Brazil's City Statute)**
- ❖ **IS actions implemented within a broader context of public policies - housing, transport, economic development, spatial planning; land tenure policy - rather than meeting standards**

# Good principles and pathways to transformed IS

- ❖ **Strengthen community capacity** (resource and knowledge management, negotiation skills, ability to contest adverse actions)
- ❖ **Ensure IS process is collaborative and multilevel** (government as a partner among other partners to support development strategies of the IS inhabitants)
- ❖ **Exchange of information, developing new methodologies; building capacity and critical reflection exercises**



**Thank you!**

