



**Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa,  
President of the Economic and Social Council  
Sustainable Housing: Designing for 7 Generations  
17 November 2025, 3 p.m., UNHQ NY**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Dear colleagues,**

I am pleased to join you at this important meeting and welcome your timely focus on sustainable housing.

“Safe and affordable housing” is a key target of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on *Sustainable Cities and Communities*.

This year’s SDG Progress report<sup>1</sup> warns that the housing affordability crisis affects up to **3 billion people worldwide** — over one-third of the global population.

According to UN-Habitat, this statistic includes not only lack of access to adequate housing but also to secure land tenure, and essential water and sanitation services.

<sup>1</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2025.pdf>



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Close to **1.1 billion people** are living in slums or informal settlements, and 300 million are completely homeless.

The 2024 UN-Habitat Annual Report warns that to meet global housing needs by 2030, **96,000 new housing units must be built every day** — equivalent to one home every second.

With growing populations, rapid urbanization and climate change intensifying vulnerabilities, addressing the issue of sustainable housing is critical to ensure no one is left behind in our pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Excellencies,**

Last week, our leaders adopted the *Doha Political Declaration*, renewing their commitment to the 1995 *Copenhagen Declaration* and the *2030 Agenda*.

The Doha Political Declaration underscores the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate safe, accessible and affordable housing, and calls for inclusive, sustainable urban development.

It also highlights the need for genuine solidarity, effective multilateralism, and inclusive international cooperation to address today's urgent and complex challenges.



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Sustainable housing is a multidimensional issue that requires coordinated action across sectors and stakeholders.

Educators, practitioners and institutions can bring valuable perspectives and solutions.

**Dear colleagues,**

As we build sustainable homes and communities, let us be guided by the wisdom of designing for seven generations - a principle rooted in Indigenous traditions that reminds us to act with care for those who will inherit the world we shape today.

It calls us to look beyond the lifespan of a building or a policy cycle - to imagine the child born a century from now and ask: Will this choice safeguard their right to a safe, healthy, and dignified home?

By weaving traditional and Indigenous knowledge, together with modern innovations, we can create housing that endures – homes that honor the land, strengthen communities, and reflect our shared responsibilities to future generations.



## **Excellencies,**

Both **SDG11** on *Sustainable Cities and Communities* and **SDG9** on *Industry, innovation and infrastructure* will be reviewed in depth at the **2026 High-level Political Forum on sustainable development**, convened under the auspices of ECOSOC.

Your deliberations today will be important contributions to those discussions.

I also encourage you to engage with the work of the Economic and Social Council and its system.

Through its various segments, forums, and meetings, including the **United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**, ECOSOC remains committed to engaging diverse stakeholders to more effectively address sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

I look forward to your discussions and to the ideas that will emerge from this dialogue on sustainable housing – ideas that honor the wisdom of the past while building hope for the generations to come.

Thank you.