

Workshop on Incremental Housing



October 2014, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Government officials from national institutions in disaster management, housing and construction, representatives of finance institutions, donors and development practitioners participated in a two day workshop entitled 'Designing & Financing Incremental Housing' held in Colombo. Organized by UN-Habitat at the request of the European Union Delegation in Sri Lanka, the forum discussed the principles and advantages of incremental housing.

It has been observed that housing and settlements in most Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, tend to commence on a small scale and grow in quality and scale with increasing family size, needs and financial ability of the

households. During the recent past, this incremental process of development was overlooked by donors and development practitioners, particularly in the context of post-disaster and post-conflict assistance. Planned settlements and housing with little space for incremental growth have been the norm for development assistance.

The main objectives of the two day workshop were to explore the concepts of incremental settlement planning and housing design and discuss the available options for financing incremental growth. The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Matthias Nohn, Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at Harvard University, an urban economist and planning expert. The two day programme covered four essential aspects for a balanced approach in urban settlement planning: community development, financial intermediation, supporting policies and physical planning.

Housing design where housing is viewed as a process and alternate models for designing expandable starter homes was presented by Mr. Nohn. Possible incremental infrastructure and layout considerations and options were debated by the participants under aspects of physical planning. The need for pro-poor delivery systems for housing finance and approaches in finding the right mix were highlighted by the forum while the need to create an enabling environment and the role played by government in supporting inclusive development was emphasized.

Funding for the workshop was provided by the European Union, Government of Australia and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through the housing recovery project "Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing", currently being implemented by UN-Habitat and SDC in the North and East of Sri Lanka. The programme is supporting the reconstruction of 4,600 houses and community infrastructure facilities through a participatory process in collaboration with families, communities and local government authorities.

For workshop material, please visit: <https://app.box.com/s/yf1lid16puo18uupk2vt>