

### **Round table (3) on Housing and Slum Upgrading**

The right to adequate housing (as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living) is enshrined in many international human rights instruments. Most notably among these are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. During the 1990s, the right to adequate housing gained further increasing recognition among the human rights community, and many governments adopted or revised housing policies to include various dimensions of human rights. The common used 7 criteria of housing adequacy are: security of tenure, availability of services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy.

Rapid urbanization puts a largely increasing stress on the housing sector and land. By 2030, about 40% of the world's population, will need proper housing and access to basic infrastructure and services such as water and sanitation systems. The situation in developing countries is even more difficult with governance and human resources deficiencies challenges, as well as the regulations and institutional frameworks. And so, the failure of construction and urban planning sectors, formal housing and land delivery to match the increasing demands of housing has resulted in a huge shortage that led to urban sprawling and the development of informal settlements in different contexts. And unless radical efforts are done to provide affordable housing options and legalize and provide land tenure, the numbers of slum dwellers will keep on increasing and cities will carry on more burdens.

However, rapid urban growth poses many challenges to city authorities, if not well managed, cities can also become generator of new vulnerabilities adding risk to disasters. Today, almost a billion people – in some cities, up to 80% of the population - live in slums or marginal and informal settlements without access to basic services and often on high-risk areas. In addition, failed infrastructure, environmental degradation and challenges posed by climate change - including sea level rise - make many urban dwellers more vulnerable to natural hazards.

During this discussion, the following issues would be tackled for a better understanding of the topic:

- Housing policies
- Slum upgrading and prevention policies
- Security of tenure
- Access to adequate housing
- Access to drinking water, sanitation and drainage
- Access to clean domestic energy
- Access to sustainable means of transport
- Land use planning and building codes
- Resilience, risk reduction and rehabilitation

**To register to this roundtable, please fill in the registration form until: 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2014.**