

A high-angle photograph of a large, semi-circular conference hall. Numerous people are seated at long, light-colored wooden tables arranged in a semi-circle, facing a stage at the far end. The room has wood-paneled walls and a large projection screen on the stage. The text "United Nations Conference on Trade and Development" is overlaid in white on the top left, and "UNCTAD" is in large white letters across the center. At the bottom, "MUNUC 38" is in large white letters, and "Model United Nations of the University of Chicago" is in blue text.

United Nations
Conference on Trade and
Development

UNCTAD

MUNUC 38

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

CHAIR LETTERS

Dear Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome each and every one of you to MUNUC 38! I am Kaan Alp (or simply just Kaan, my parents actually call me Alp but people have trouble pronouncing that name right so I use Kaan), and I am a rising fourth-year majoring in business economics and minoring in environmental science. I was born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey, but I currently reside in Chatham, NJ, while studying at the University of Chicago. I am native/fluent in English and Turkish, and know a conversational level of Spanish. I participated in 3 MUN conferences in Turkey as a delegate during my high school days, so I have been in your shoes! I am a proud member of University of Chicago's travel TEAM and have served as an assistant chair in the committee "The Fall of The Cholas" in ChoMUN XXVI, a co-chair in "G77" in ChoMUN XXVII, and as a crisis director in "Rise of the Fallen: Mongolian Empire, 1259" in ChoMUN XXVIII. I will remain in the travel TEAM and serve as a crisis director in the committee Castilian War of Succession next year. In my free time, I love to eat food, drive cars, hang out with friends, watch comedy shows, run track, go to the gym to work out, and play basketball, table tennis, or football (the globally recognized one).

Although economic growth is the primary focus of this committee, it is not the whole story. Accordingly, be cognizant of the environmental effects of the policies we are supporting as we handle global concerns like the housing crisis and the TIR Convention. None of us on the dais expect you to be a specialist on the subject, however, we do anticipate that each of you will

contribute fresh and practical ideas to encourage productive discussion and resolutions that can provide insight into environmental and economic issues.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to reach me at kaacik@uchicago.edu. I am eager to see what all of you will bring to the table next February!

Sincerely,

Kaan Alp Acik

Chair

kaacik@uchicago.edu

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNUC 38! My name is Andy Cheng, and I will be your Chair for United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). I am so excited to work with Kaan and our lovely ACs to bring all of you a memorable conference experience. I am currently a fourth-year undergraduate at the University of Chicago, pursuing a double major in Public Policy Studies and Political Science. I had the pleasure at MUNUC 37 and 36 to work with our Kaan on EPA, 1977-1980, and ICJ, 1948, both specialized agencies committees.

I'm an active part of MUN here at UChicago. Apart from chairing for MUNUC, I will also be co-crisis director with Kaan for Castilian War of Succession, 1975 for ChoMUN, our collegiate conference. I was born and raised in Shanghai, China, making me proudly trilingual – English, Mandarin, and Shanghainese. I am also part of other on-campus organizations such as the badminton club, as well as working as a student photographer for Housing & Residence Life. I spent this past summer working at the Chicago Project on Security and Threats on national security-related research.

This committee is mainly concerned with economic development, but that is not the entire story. As we are addressing international issues such as the TIR Convention and the housing crisis, also be mindful of the environmental impacts of the policies that we are advocating for. Although both topics encompass discussions of technicalities, none of us on the dais expects you to be experts in the matter. What we do expect is each of you bringing to the table novel and realistic

proposals to support fruitful debate and resolutions that can shed some light on economic and environmental policies.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to me at andycfy@uchicago.edu. I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you!

Sincerely,

Andy Cheng

Chair

andycfy@uchicago.edu

HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

Ever since the Industrial Revolution, the world has undergone significant economic and social changes. Along with the prospects promised by globalization comes drastic socioeconomic disparity in the world. Granted, economic development has been instrumental in uplifting millions, if not billions, out of poverty; however, economic inequality is still deeply felt by a significant portion of the world, and disproportionately by populations living in less developed countries. Therefore, it is of utmost concern for us, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to promote equitable socioeconomic outcomes for all through international trade and social development initiatives.



UNCTAD headquarters at the Palais de Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.¹

¹ Mourad Ben Abdallah, “UN Building E View.” (Sep 15, 2012), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:UN_Building_E_View.JPG.

TOPIC A: REFORMATION OF THE TIR CONVENTION

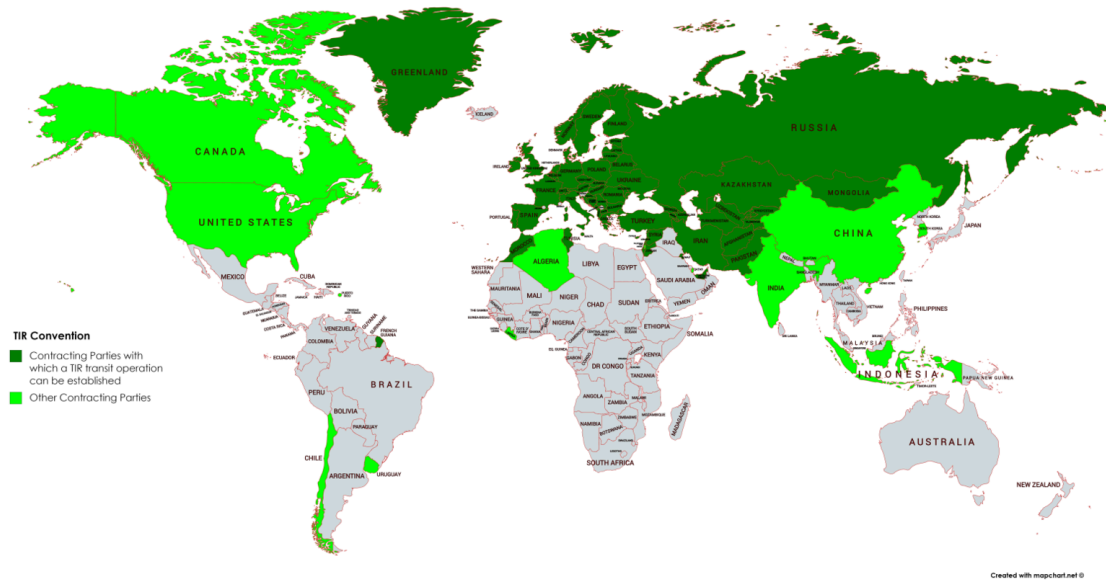
Statement of the Problem

Background on the TIR Convention

Trade is a vital component of ensuring the smoothness of everyday life. This reality makes it essential that trade regulations are kept consistent across member nations. As such, customs officials (who are responsible for monitoring goods flowing in and out of a State) in each State have historically implemented national controls and procedures when products have crossed the borders of one or more States during international road transportation. National security requirements (such as **guarantee**, **bond**, and **import deposit**) were often imposed to cover the potential duties and taxes at risk while the goods were in transit through each territory, and while these requirements varied from State to State, they often involved inspecting the load at each national frontier. When implemented in each transit nation, these policies resulted in significant costs, delays, and disruptions to international travel.

Countries had difficulties striking a balance between trade policies that exclusively protected their well-being and those that best served the flow of international trade. Therefore, in an attempt to mitigate the transport and operational difficulties that arose from the failure to balance these two extremes, the TIR **convention** was created.² The TIR also sought to provide customs administrations with an international system of control that would replace conventional national procedures, all the while successfully safeguarding the revenue of each state that handled the transportation of goods.

² United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), “History of the TIR System,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/transport/tir/history>.



The global outreach of the treaty.³

What exactly is this elusive TIR (long form: The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR **Carnets** (TIR Convention, 1975)) system? UNECE defines the **treaty** as “one of the most successful international transport conventions and [it] is so far the only universal Customs transit system in existence”.⁴ Europe is a key player in this treaty as it is one of its 78 total contractors at the moment. Moreover, the treaty encompasses all of Europe as well as North Africa, the Near and Middle East, and more regions, as shown by the figure above. Additionally, the TIR system is authorized for use by about 30,000 operators, and around one million TIR transports are performed annually, showcasing the volume of trade that flows as a direct product of the implementation of the treaty.

³ Wikimedia Commons, “TIR Convention Map, April 2018,” accessed July 8, 2025, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TIR_Convention_Map_April_2018.png.

⁴ UNECE, “TIR: Customs Transit System,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/transport/tir>.

Issues with TIR Implementation

Though the treaty's premise is well-defined and worth investing in and exploring, the process of implementing its vision has been rocky. One problem is ensuring that the treaty continuously adapts to changing borders and transportation needs of various populations. The treaty must remain compatible with contemporary requirements and other modes of transportation, especially in the technological age, in which tech developments have risen to an unprecedented pace. On the other hand, TIR's pillars for optimal functioning are securing vehicles or containers, prioritizing international guarantees, the TIR carnet (which is "One single document, security elements, proof of guarantee, printed and distributed by the **IRU**"), mutual recognition of customs and control, and controlled access.⁵ These are principles that function best when trade networks are relatively small, such as in 1975 when the treaty was established. However, the global **trade volume** is significantly higher now. To give some insight, the world trade volume was \$893 billion in 1975 when the TIR was first convened. By the end of 2024, that trade volume value ballooned up to north of \$24 trillion according to WTO (all values according to the volume index).^{6,7,8} This unprecedented increase in trade volume and frequency rendered TIR's methodical approaches outdated.

⁵ André Sceia, *The TIR System and the European Union* (UNCTAD, 2018), accessed July 8, 2025, https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/cimem7p26_Andre%20Sceia_en.pdf.

⁶ World Trade Organization (WTO), "World Trade Statistical Review 2023," accessed July 8, 2025, https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/statistics2023_e.htm.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.



The WTO logo.⁹

Another major issue about the treaty is ensuring the consistent security of the system. To ensure that customs taxes and duties are paid on products while they are in transit, the TIR Convention uses a system of guarantees. Consequently, the TIR Convention's efficacy depends on maintaining its integrity, which includes guarding against fraud and ensuring the reliability of guarantees. This means that if even one TIR member does not endorse this interlinked guarantee system, the entire structure will be pushed to the brink of collapse. For example, in 2013, the Russian Federal Customs Service (RFCS), with minimal notice and without first consulting the other **Contracting Parties** as mandated by the TIR, wanted to implement further national guarantees in addition to those stipulated in the TIR Convention. This effectively indicated that Russian customs authorities did not recognize the TIR Carnet. The RFCS's ruling was upheld by civil courts, and this ruling caused major delays and lines at crossings, and hindered international trade to, from, and through Russia. This resulted in major economic repercussions for the Russian Federation's major trading partners, the road transport sector, and several other TIR Contracting Parties. The nations that were most impacted, according to the quantity of TIR journeys, were Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania, and Turkey.¹⁰

⁹ Wikimedia Commons, "WTO Logo," accessed July 8, 2025, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WTO_logo.jpg.

¹⁰ UNECE, "UNECE Continues to Be Worried about the Functioning of the TIR Convention in the Russian Federation," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/press/unece-continues-be-worried-about-functioning-tir-convention-russia>.

Landlocked Central Asian countries were also severely hampered by RFCS's practices as they faced increased barriers to international trade.¹¹

Consequently, the entire TIR carnet, which relies on the collaboration of all TIR endorsers, became null and void. Hence, it is paramount to revamp the carnet and the entire convention as a whole to minimize countries' incentives to circumvent its stipulations for individual gains and agendas. Another integral issue with TIR is the unequal voting power amongst its members. There are some key differences between participating nations as a result of the TIR Convention's structure, especially concerning voting rights. To give a brief overview, the Administrative Committee operates under the terms of the TIR Convention and was created by the provisions of **Article 58**. As the highest body of the Convention, it oversees its implementation and examines and approves TIR Convention changes. Each state that is represented at an Administrative Committee session and is a party has one vote when proposals are put to a vote. The TIR Convention gives the Union sole authority over customs. A two-thirds majority of the parties present and voting must approve amendments to the TIR Convention. To make a decision, a quorum of at least one-third of the participating states must be present.

The unequal voting representation issue of customs and economic union, on the other hand, involves the European Union not having the same voting rights as its member states, which severely limits its ability to influence convention decisions. The EU hosts 27 member states as of 2025, which means the Union being stripped of its right to vote on administrative measures effectively disqualifies the input of 27 countries simultaneously. To illustrate how staggering this is, if all of these countries were a part of TIR and had individual voting rights, they would have

¹¹ Ibid., UNECE

constituted over a quarter of the votes! Henceforth, democratic shortcomings like these in TIR's administrative body threaten the convention's efficacy and long-term legitimacy.¹²

¹² European Commission, "Proposal for a Council Decision on the Position to Be Taken on Behalf of the European Union within the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52024PC0227>.

History of the Problem

Origins of the TIR

World War I and World War II had resounding effects on Europe's economic landscape. Palpable infrastructure damage touched many major cities in Europe. Structures such as roads, bridges, homes, and businesses were greatly damaged by the wars. Such damage meant that Europe needed to revitalize its economy through many avenues, leaning into international trade being a key step of this process.¹³ To alleviate these problems, under the direction of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the TIR transit system was created in response to the post-World War II economic revival in Europe.

Even though the most contemporary form of TIR, the focus of this committee, was signed in 1975, the first ever TIR Agreement was concluded in 1949 (4 years after WWII ended), with signatories of Denmark, France, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, and the United Kingdom. The agreement was tested for a decade (so until 1959), and all signatories of the 1949 agreement believed the benefits of it far outweighed its shortcomings. As a result of this Agreement, the first TIR Convention was established in 1959. Afterward, the present Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) succeeded the 1959 Convention and went into effect in 1978.¹⁴

¹³ Study.com, "Economic & Political Reconstruction in Europe After WWII," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/economic-political-reconstruction-in-europe-after-wwii.html>.

¹⁴ eTIR, "United Nations Global Border Crossing Facilitation Solution," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://etir.org/united-nations-global-border-crossing-facilitation-solution>.

IRU International Road Transport Union

CARNET TIR *

6 volets BX80500000

1. Valable pour prise en charge par le bureau de douane du départ jusqu'au 01-03-2020 inclus
Valid for the acceptance of goods by the Customs office of departure up to and including

2. Délivré par
Issued by **Saudi Automobile Association Co. SAA - Code SAU/998**
P.O. Box 63348 - 11566 RIYADH - 51222 ARABIA
TEL NO : +966 11 4753131 EXT : 3404

3. Titulaire
Holder **AB International Transport (SAU/098/0007)**
Al isha street, Riyadh, KSA

4. Signature du délégué de l'association admettrice
et carnet de cette association
Signature of authorized official of the issuing
association and stamp of that association.

5. Signature du secrétaire
de l'organisation internationale
Signature of the secretary
of the international organization.

6. Pays de départ
Country/Countries of departure **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (SAU)**

7. Pays de destination
Country/Countries of destination **Oman (OMN)**

8. No(s) d'immatriculation du (des) véhicule(s) routier(s)
Registration No(s) of road vehicle(s) **RAH02147**

9. Certificat d'agrément du (des) véhicule(s) routier(s) (No. and date)
Certificate of approval of road vehicle(s) (No. and date) **SAUTIR0008**

10. No(s) d'identification du (des) conteneur(s)
Identification No(s) of container(s) **MAXU154786 8**

11. Observations diverses
Remarks **(Heavy or Bulky Goods) or (High Value Goods)**

12. Signature du titulaire du carnet
Signature of the carnet holder **Mohammed**

* Not covered by the Convention TIR, 1975. Bénéficie sous les auspices de la Convention douanière des Nations Unies pour l'Europe.
Not covered by the TIR Convention, 1975. Operates under the auspices of the United Nations Customs Convention for Europe.

A snapshot of what a TIR Carnet signature looks like.¹⁵

New Developments in Commerce Transit

The TIR Convention remains one of the most successful international transport conventions (and, in fact, the only universal customs transit system in existence), which has undergone numerous amendments since its approval in 1975 to keep it current and in line with the demands of the road transport industry. However, significant structural, technical, political, and economic developments have occurred in recent decades. For example, the EU has expanded, and the accompanying growth of the computerized Community Common Transit System (NCTS) in the EU's 27 Member States and surrounding nations has taken precedence.

¹⁵ Saudi Automobile & Touring Association (SATA), "TIR Carnet and Its Life Cycle," accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.sataclub.com.sa/en/tir/tir-carnet-and-its-life-cycle>.

Numerous regional transit programs, which are frequently built and carried out under the guise that the TIR process is too expensive for transportation providers in many developing nations, especially those in Central Asia that are largely landlocked (e.g., Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan). Additionally, the markets for freight transportation have begun to undergo a fundamental restructuring, and cargo transportation, which had been done by sea for an extensive period, no longer requires the same mode of transportation to be traded worldwide. The usage of containers and other intermodal transportation units for land transportation is growing. Therefore, the owner of the shipment, or an alliance of independent maritime, aviation, road, rail, and inland water transport operators, must oversee the transit shipment or cargo and ensure that it operates efficiently.

Further, the overall commerce procedures and documentation required for both public and private reasons are much more extensive than customs transit systems. All systems must now comply with applicable international regulations and be integrated with, or at the very least compatible with, these other systems (such as banking, security controls, sanitary, **phytosanitary**, counterfeiting, import and export procedures).

It is vital to note how the functions of customs services vary in "developed" and "developing" market economies. Customs transit and import processes are often quite stringent in the latter countries. Therefore, a truly global transit system needs to consider both kinds of systems and economies.

Lastly, various national, bilateral, and worldwide security initiatives aim to address the global supply chain security issue and, to some extent, "**monopolize**" it. However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that due to the ineffectiveness of these checks and the associated expenses, customs officials cannot inspect every loading unit of cargo. Rather, "authorized", that is,

trustworthy operators and shippers, are given more accountability by customs authorities, who transfer cargo and security control from customs (governments) to the private sector (the shipper and the forwarder).

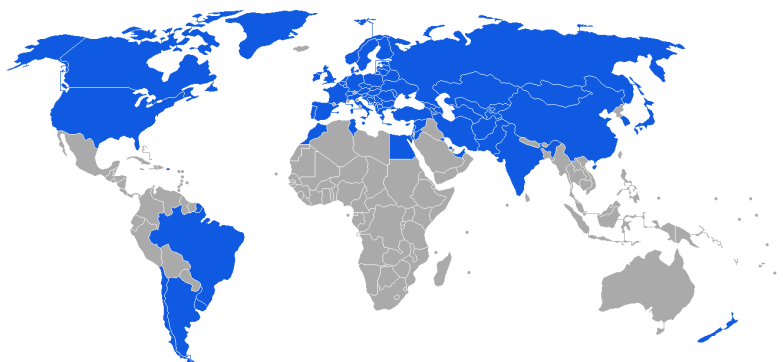
All these ramifications call for a strategic evaluation of the current TIR system in light of a deeper comprehension of market demand as perceived by its numerous stakeholders, including shippers, logistics and transport companies, and customs authorities.¹⁶

¹⁶ eTIR, “United Nations Global Border Crossing Facilitation Solution,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://etir.org/united-nations-global-border-crossing-facilitation-solution>.

Past Actions

Resolution 49

Some attempts have been made to resolve the complexity of logistical, financial, and legal issues discussed in the previous sections, especially in the latter stages of the 20th and early stages of the 21st centuries. The first of these attempts came on March 3rd, 1995 when 34 of the carnet's signatories accepted “**Resolution** No. 49: Short-term Measures to Ensure the Security and the Efficient Functioning of the TIR Transit Regime”. In essence, this resolution aimed to address the extent of smuggling and customs fraud within the TIR transit system's structure. Moreover, the resolution was committed to protecting the TIR transit system, which promotes commercial growth, especially the international flow of commodities. Signatories also believed that the only way to protect the TIR transit system is for all of its participants, such as customs authorities, national guaranteeing and carnet issuing associations, the IRU, and insurance companies, to work together and take coordinated action, with an open exchange of information on all system-related matters. Some of its clauses articulated the following:



*Global outreach of the IRU.*¹⁷

¹⁷ Wikimedia Commons, “IRU Members,” accessed July 8, 2025, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:IRU_members.png.

1. “In order to facilitate the detection of fraudulently discharged TIR Carnets and to accelerate the discharge procedure, Contracting Parties may wish to create, as far as possible, and in line with national requirements, centralized offices or procedures for the administration of TIR Carnets.” The goal here is to optimize the procedure of exporting goods without compromising the safety of the entire system.
2. “Contracting Parties should institute accelerated discharge and search procedures for the transport of sensitive goods.” The goal is again to further maximize the efficiency of the exportation process.
3. “Contracting Parties and the IRU shall take all necessary steps to ensure the early re-introduction of the "Tobacco/Alcohol" TIR Carnets together with guarantees in a fixed sum, which reflects the potential charges at risk.” The goal here is to make sure that tobacco and alcohol transport, which is a process that can be halted due to country-specific customs procedures, to bypass that hurdle as much as possible.
4. “Contracting Parties ensure, through appropriate national regulations, that Customs offices of destination or exit return TIR Carnet vouchers No.2 to the centralized offices or the Customs offices of departure or entry as soon as possible and no later than five working days following the completion of the TIR operation.”¹⁸ The goal here is to put the export process within a specific time frame to avoid unnecessary delays.

¹⁸ UNECE, “Resolution No. 49: Introduction of a Harmonized Certificate of Approval for Special Vehicles,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/DAM/tir/resol/documents/res49e.pdf>.

Strengthening Resolution 49

Seven months later, “Recommendation: Introduction of a Control System for TIR Carnets” was adopted to strengthen the measures taken in Resolution 49. The most important reason for this update was that international insurers would only be willing to continue their insurance coverage if additional short-term measures were put in place by Customs authorities, despite the Contracting Parties' efforts to better regulate the operation of the TIR transit regime under the IRU's efforts. Hence, the recommendation was headlined with a clause that handled the “short-term” nuance that insurers desired. More specifically, the clause stipulated the following:

1. “Customs authorities should transmit to the competent national guaranteeing associations, if possible via central or regional offices, by the fastest available means of communication (such as fax, electronic mail), and if possible, on a daily basis, at least the following information in a standard format with respect to all TIR Carnets presented at Customs offices of destination, as defined in Article 1 of the Convention: TIR Carnet reference number; Date and record number in the Customs **ledger**; Name or number of the Customs office of destination; Date and reference number indicated in the certificate of termination of the TIR operation (boxes 24-28 of voucher No. 2) at the Customs office of destination (if different from (b)) Partial or final termination; Termination of the TIR operation certified with or without reservation at the Customs office of destination without prejudice to Articles 8 and 11 of the Convention; Other information or documents (optional) and page number.”¹⁹ The purpose of all these intricate details is to

¹⁹ UNECE, “Resolution on SafeTIR,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/DAM/tir/resol/documents/safetir-e.pdf>.

clear up confusion amongst Carnet members as much as possible and optimize the process of global trading.

Introduction of an Identification System

Ultimately, five years after both of these articles were adopted, “Recommendation: Introduction of an Identification (ID) Number of the TIR Carnet Holder in the TIR Carnet” was adopted in order to meet the rapidly increasing demand for international trade. The recommendation primarily stressed the necessity of providing an official and uniform identification system for TIR Carnet holders as soon as possible, pending the implementation of pertinent TIR Convention amendments. The most important of these was a clause that stipulated the following:

A recommendation that all Contracting Parties accept the following format for an ID number for TIR Carnet holders, who are individuals who have been authorized to use TIR Carnets by Annex 9, Part II of the TIR Convention: "AAA/BBB/XX...X," where "AAA" is a three-letter code of the nation where the individuals using TIR Carnets are authorized per the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) classification system (Appendix 1), and "BBB" is a three-digit code of the national association through which the holder of the TIR Carnet has been authorized following the classification system established by the relevant international organization to which the association is affiliated, allowing for clear identification of each national association.²⁰ The goal here is to again clear up confusion amongst Carnet

²⁰ UNECE, “Recommendation No. 10: Pre-Declaration of Information,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/DAM/tir/resol/documents/rec0010.pdf>.

members by the use of country and region-specific codes that are simple enough to be memorable by the masses.

Possible Solutions

This resolution attempted to address barriers to trade by making the process of moving goods through countries more efficient. Nevertheless, problems persisted as described in the previous parts of this guide. As such, more solutions need to be developed. These solutions should address the intricacies of the convention's time efficiency, fraud risk, and lack of digital integration. Some actions to address these problems could be the following:

Full integration of digital carnets, or eTIR, will enable real-time tracking, expedite customs checks, and eliminate lost or falsified documents with the transition from paper to computerized TIR carnet processing. Studies reveal paperless transit can significantly lower anomalies while increasing efficiency, and the UNECE's eTIR international system already offers safe, automated data transmission between national customs systems. There will also be controls based on risk and "**Green Lanes**": Classify shipments as high- or low-risk using pre-arrival risk assessment techniques, then route low-risk cargo via expedited "TIR Green Lanes." Central Asian TIR members have already embraced this strategy, which reduces inspections for trustworthy operators and shortens border-crossing periods from days to hours.²¹

Strengthening the guarantee chain will become a new focal point. Expanding the network of authorized guarantee groups, enforcing timely claim settlement, and improving guarantee management transparency will fortify financial guarantees. By integrating guarantees into the eTIR platform, customs will be able to check coverage and minimize disputes rapidly.

²¹ UNECE, "SPECA Meeting on eTIR and eCMR," November 24, 2021, accessed July 8, 2025, <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/SPECA%20ALEXOPOULOS%20eCMR%20eTIR%2024%20November%202021%20.pdf>.

Meanwhile, the treaty will aim to increase worldwide coverage and compatibility: In line with regional trade agreements, it will expedite the admission of key commercial partners, such as China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Increased involvement promotes the adoption of IT interoperability standards and operational best practices, while also expanding the system's footprint. These additional measures should establish a solid basis point to revamp the TIR convention in line with modern-day needs.

Bloc Positions

As of June 29, 2025, there are 78 contracting parties to the TIR Convention (77 states plus the European Economic Community). Below is an alphabetical list of all current members of the TIR Carnet system:²²

Afghanistan

Albania

Algeria

Argentina

Armenia

Austria

Azerbaijan

Belarus

Belgium

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bulgaria

Canada

Chile

China

Croatia

Cyprus

Czech Republic

²² International Road Transport Union (IRU), “Digitalisation Seminar,” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.iru.org/join-us/events/digitalisation-seminar-2018-09-05>.

Denmark

Egypt

Estonia

European Economic Community (EU)

Finland

France

Georgia

Germany

Greece

Hungary

India

Indonesia

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

Iraq

Ireland

Israel

Italy

Jordan

Kazakhstan

Kuwait

Kyrgyzstan

Latvia

Lebanon

Liberia

Lithuania

Luxembourg

Malta

Mongolia

Montenegro

Morocco

Netherlands

Norway

Oman

Pakistan

Poland

Portugal

Qatar

Republic of Korea

Republic of Moldova

Romania

Saudi Arabia

Slovakia

Slovenia

Spain

State of Palestine

Sweden

Switzerland

Syrian Arab Republic

Tajikistan

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Tunisia

Turkey

Turkmenistan

Ukraine

United Arab Emirates

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

United States of America

Uruguay

Uzbekistan

This is how these countries are grouped in terms of their geographic locations and stances on how the treaty should be maximized:²³

European Union / Common Transit Area

- All 27 EU members are Parties; the EU itself is a Party too. TIR is used chiefly for movements to/from the EU (not within the single customs territory).
- Common Transit Convention (CTC) participants that are also TIR Parties: EU-27 + Norway + Switzerland + Türkiye + Serbia + North Macedonia + United Kingdom + Ukraine + Georgia.

²³ United Nations. "16. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention)." XI.A.16, Transport and Communications - Customs Matters. Geneva, 14 November 1975. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/MTDSG/Volume%20I/Chapter%20XI/XI-A-16.en.pdf>.

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

- 5/5 members (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia) are TIR Parties.

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

- 10/10 members (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) are TIR Parties, a near-complete TIR bloc across West/Central Asia.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

- 5 of 6 are Parties (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait). Bahrain is the only GCC state not on the current UN Party list.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

- 3 of 8 are Parties (Afghanistan, India, Pakistan); Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka are not.

Levant / Middle East (non-GCC)

- Parties include Iran, Iraq (joined 2023), Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Syria, Türkiye.

Central Asia

- All five (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) are Parties.

Caucasus

- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia are all Parties.

Western Balkans

- Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia are all Parties.

East Asia

- China, Republic of Korea, Mongolia are Parties. (TIR does not apply to Hong Kong/Macao per China's territorial declaration.)

Africa

- North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia are Parties;
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Liberia is a Party.

Americas

- Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Canada, and the United States are all Parties.

Glossary

Article: A chapter of a UN-affiliated organization's official document.

Bond: A form of security that a borrower uses to get money from investors, promising to pay them back via certain stipulations in the future

Carnet: An international customs document that temporarily allows countries to clear customs without paying duties and other import taxes.

Contracting Parties: A person, company, or other institution that is entering into a legally binding contract.

Convention: An agreement between states to get something done, less formal and small scope.

Green Lanes: Rural unpaved roads and pathways that are designed to engage in natural activities.

Guarantee: A written assurance that formally declares that a particular service will be delivered at a specified time.

Import Deposit: A method of restricting importation by requiring money for the importer to be deposited at customs whenever a good is delivered

IRU: International Road Transport Union

Ledger: A collection of financial accounts, usually stored in the form of digital books.

Monopolization: The act of a company/firm taking over the entire revenue that a sector (e.g., utility distribution) generates, dictating all the prices in that sector without competition.

Phytosanitary: Adhering to the health and well-being of plants within the confines of international trade.

Resolution: Formal expressions of will and opinions consisting of a preamble and operative portion.

Trade Volume: A parameter that aggregates the value of any good one can imagine that was involved in a transaction featuring at least two countries.

Treaty: An agreement between states to get something done - more formal and encompassing

UNECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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TOPIC B: HOUSING AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Statement of the Problem

Land Resources

Land resources don't just mean the topsoil that we see, but also encompass a multitude of different natural resources. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission defines land and land resources to be “the near surface climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology [...], the near-surface sedimentary layers and associated groundwater and geohydrological reserve, the plant and animal populations, the human settlement pattern and physical results of past and present human activity, such as terracing, water storage or drainage structures, roads, buildings, etc.”²⁴ In short, land resources include virtually all air, land, water, and infrastructure that is on land.

All resources available to humans are finite. Land resources, certainly, are no exception to that rule. Even since the Industrial Revolution, land use has been transformed drastically. Farmlands turned into factories and railroads, and cities grew at unprecedented rates. Urbanization is also coupled with massive population growth. At the onset of the 19th century, there were just over one billion people in the world, and the vast majority lived outside urban spaces.²⁵ In 2023, 4.61 billion people—more than half the world—lived in urban areas.²⁶ This

²⁴ United Nations ESCWA, “SD Glossary,” n.d., <https://www.unescwa.org/sd-glossary/land-resources#:~:text=Land%20and%20land%20resources%20refer,%2C%20rivers%2C%20marshes%20and%20swamps>

²⁵ How many people on Earth? world population 1800-1938 | CEPR. Accessed July 11, 2025. <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/how-many-people-earth-world-population-1800-1938>.

²⁶ Ritchie, Hannah, Veronika Samborska, and Max Roser. “Urbanization.” Our World in Data, February 21, 2024. <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization>.

massive influx of population has led to dramatic changes in urban landscapes around the world. To accommodate the larger urban populations, cities have grown quickly over the past two centuries, a process which social scientists have come to call “**urban sprawl**.” Urban sprawl can look different from city to city, but this always results in the creation of huge suburban spaces that surround the urban centers of cities.

Resource Distribution

Various degrees of suburban development and social support networks have led to grossly uneven resource distribution between urban neighborhoods and suburbs. Just taking Chicago as an example, Evanston has a median household income of \$95,766, whereas Riverdale has a median household income of \$18,530, not even one-fifth of that in Evanston.²⁷ Household income is merely one singular metric and factor when we look at the multifaceted inequalities that urban dwellers experienced.²⁸ Higher income often directly translates to better education, public transportation, utilities, and financial institutions, which better prepare future generations growing up in more affluent neighborhoods for success. Lower-income neighborhoods and suburbs, however, tend to envelop residents in a **poverty trap**, resulting in worse social outcomes.

“Poverty trap” is a term that social scientists often use, and it is an important social issue that merits long-term solutions. However, it is also important to look at the multitude of issues that exist in the short term in order to provide immediate relief to disadvantaged groups around

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: Evanston City, Illinois. Accessed July 11, 2025.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/evanstoncityillinois/RHI225223>.

²⁸ “Map of Median Household Income in Chicago Neighborhoods.” Metopio. Accessed July 11, 2025.
<https://metop.io/insights/agqp>.

the world. One of the most immediate solutions is the provision of affordable housing and reformation of land management practices.

Affordable Housing and Land Management Policies

Affordable housing is scarce for lower-income populations for a multitude of factors. The most basic explanation can be traced to the rapid urbanization that the world experienced. This problem is somewhat a self-reinforcing issue, as urbanization attracts people to cities, the people then settle in urban spaces, promoting investment into urban spaces. This therefore attracts more people to cities, completing the cycle. Continued high demand for housing in cities and suburbs allows land developers to charge higher and higher prices for housing, which leads to highly inflated prices for housing in urban spaces.

However, that is merely one underlying piece to the affordable housing puzzle. **Gentrification**—whether intended or not—has seen existing residents become priced out and replaced by higher-income newcomers, whose investment in these neighborhoods leads to heightened rental and purchase prices, discouraging and disabling lower-income residents from entering the neighborhood. Historically, affordable neighborhoods often become exclusionary and unaffordable to many.

Complicating matters further are the rather inadequate land management policies that have allowed and even encouraged predatory practices from developers and gentrifiers alike. Taking China for example, in preparation for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government encouraged land developers to construct many mega-projects in and outside Beijing. However, many buildings that had not been finished by the time the Olympic Games started

ended up abandoned in an unfinished state, their concrete bodies littering the horizon in many Chinese cities.



One example of many abandoned construction projects in China.²⁹

China's case may have been an extreme one, but it outlines some fundamental issues with the land management policies many countries have in place nowadays. Developers have long been allowed to manipulate the housing market, in particular, the affordable housing market, as they wish, while governments do too little to stop them. Moreover, existing zoning regulations and building codes in many urban areas unintentionally restrict affordable housing development. Strict density controls, single-family zoning, and lengthy permitting processes limit the ability of cities to adapt quickly to changing housing needs, thereby keeping supply chronically low and prices high.

²⁹ Kelter, Frederik. "Crumbling Buildings and Broken Dreams: China's Unfinished Homes." Al Jazeera, October 31, 2023.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2023/10/31/crumbling-buildings-and-broken-dreams-chinas-unfinished-homes>.

As a United Nations committee focused on trade and development, we need to realize and properly address these fundamental issues that prohibit a significant portion of the world population from attaining desirable social outcomes. Equitable access to affordable housing and sustainable management of land resources are crucial to achieving our 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Comprehensive, targeted reforms are crucial to ending urban inequalities short-term and long. The ongoing crisis in affordable housing and land management urgently requires international collaboration and collective action to ensure inclusive and equitable cities for current and future generations to come.

History of the Problem

The Development of Urban Areas

Urban growth and development did not happen overnight. From the early days of the Industrial Revolution to the 1900s, the population influx into urban spaces spelled immediate trouble for many cities. The global north, being the first to reap the benefits of industrial growth, was also the first to experience urban poverty and “slumification”. In a matter of decades, major European and American cities doubled and tripled in size. With urban planning lagging by decades, land developers rushed to build rows and rows of **tenements** intended to pack as much of the inbound factory workers into as small a plot of land as possible.



*Tenement housing in New York City in the 20th century.*³⁰

But even then, the rate of housing provision was unable to match the rate of urban population growth, which meant significant overcrowding and more and more chaotic housing

³⁰ Evans, Walker. “New York, New York. 61st Street between 1st and 3rd Avenues. House Fronts.” The Library of Congress. Accessed July 18, 2025. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017732874/>.

construction. Without a formal urban policy in mind, most of these working-class districts lacked access to clean water, sewers, and waste disposal systems. Sanitation and hygiene were near luxuries for many of the newly arrived in these cities. Over time, the poorly-constructed tenements often become derelict, eventually becoming the foundation for future inner city ghettos.

As the Industrial Revolution spread to less-developed nations and the global south, these parts of the world quickly developed their unique versions of inner cities. If one were to take a walk through Hong Kong or Manila, one will still encounter rows and rows of chawls and slums juxtaposed against modern structures. Even in Europe and the US, tenements still make up a significant portion of the urban skyline in many early industrial sites that have been forgotten.

Post-War Growth

Then came the world wars. Being a main theater during both world wars, many European cities suffered heavily from artillery and aerial bombardment. But an oft-neglected factor in the housing crisis was the cessation of housing construction. With all the resources diverted to the war effort, there were none left to support housing construction.



*Dresden, Germany, after bombing raids in 1945.*³¹

After the Second World War, as the world returned to relative peace, urban spaces grew at an unprecedented pace. Thanks to the Eisenhower administration, interstate highways were built, which allowed many middle-class families to move from densely packed cities to suburbs, directly causing urban sprawl. In the meantime, American cities have also become much more car-centric and much less walkable. Trees gave way to townhouses, and neighborhood shops by parking lots.

Racial Segregation

Exacerbating the housing crisis was racial segregation. One agent for racial segregation in housing was zoning regulations. By restricting the type of housing that can be built in certain areas to single-family homes, only wealthier families can become homeowners. Zoning laws, combined with the long-time racial income gap, meant that single-family zones were comprised mostly of affluent white families. Redlining was another tool that aided in further segregation. In

³¹ Cartwright, Mark. "The Bombing of Dresden in 1945." World History Encyclopedia, April 8, 2024. <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2412/the-bombing-of-dresden-in-1945/>.

denying mortgages and investments to neighborhoods with a majority of racial minority groups, racial minorities are further enclosed in the poverty gap.

A stark reminder of racial segregation is Chicago's infamous O'Block. Initially a service stop for local railroads, what is now Greater Grand Crossing was turned into an amusement park, White City, which went bankrupt in 1933 due to the Great Depression. Subsequently, there was a large influx of African American populations and the creation of the "black belt" stretching from 61st to 71st street. Eventually, the city built multiple low-income housing complexes in the impoverished black-dominant ghetto, which resulted in further concentration of criminal activities.³²

Megacities

Urban growth eventually culminated in the creation of megacities and megalopolis systems. Megacities are typically defined as major cities "whose total metropolitan area contains a population of more than 10 million inhabitants."³³ London and New York were the earliest megacities to emerge, and quickly following suit were East Asian, South Asian, and South American megacities such as Tokyo, Shanghai, Mumbai, and São Paulo. Megalopolis systems, on the other hand, refer to "a highly urbanized region that encompasses a vast network of cities and suburbs," which is most commonly used to refer to the megacity corridors on the eastern seaboard of the US and along the Great Lakes.³⁴

³² "Greater Grand Crossing." Chicago Gang History, January 13, 2023.

<https://chicagoganghistory.com/neighborhood/greater-grand-crossing/>.

³³ "Megacity." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed July 18, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/megacity>.

³⁴ Link, Sharon. "Megalopolis: EBSCO." EBSCO Information Services. Accessed July 18, 2025.

<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/megalopolis>.

As cities grow in size, public transportation must also grow to accommodate, but that seldom is the case. The American urban doctrine of car-centrism has led to many suburban communities without adequate, if any, public transportation, leaving the lower-income residents stranded in transit deserts. In the global south, explosive urban population and area growth in the past century have had even more profound effects on its urban residents.



*Informal settlements next to railroads in Mumbai, India.*³⁵

³⁵ Saienko, Roman. Urban Slum and Railway Tracks in Mumbai, India. Accessed July 20, 2025. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/urban-slum-and-railway-tracks-in-mumbai-india-28672606/>.

Past Actions

Poverty and slums brought about by the Industrial Revolution posed serious challenges to the urban landscape in the 19th century. Overcrowding, limited public services, and the lack of hygiene have rendered the lives of the emerging working-class residents miserable. Worse yet, the rapidity of industrialization and urbanization meant new challenges arose for industrial cities on a daily basis, and made it difficult for the sluggish bureaucratic machines to keep up in regulatory efforts. In fact, even in the earliest cities to industrialize, initial policy responses to the myriad social issues didn't emerge until the late 19th century and early 20th century. Even then, these policy responses were localized and lagging, and there was no systematic, top-down policy framework. To put it bluntly, no early industrialized society knew what to make of the new industrial cities.

Early Legislation

One of the earliest pieces of urban legislation was New York City's 1879 housing legislation, the "Old Law," enacted due to pressure from grassroots reform efforts. However, the Old Law only had a limited impact on housing conditions in New York. Eventually, at the turn of the century, due to efforts from then-governor Theodore Roosevelt, New York passed the Tenement Housing Act of 1901,³⁶ or colloquially known as the "New Law," which required windows, toilet facilities, and fire escapes for all the rooms inside tenement buildings.^{37,38}

³⁶ "Catalog Record: Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Sessions of the Legislature." Laws of the State of New York passed at the sessions of the Legislature 124th sess.:v. 1 (1901). Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003020495>.

³⁷ "Catalog Record: Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Sessions of the Legislature." Laws of the State of New York passed at the sessions of the Legislature 124th sess.:v. 1 (1901). Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003020495>.

³⁸ Apmann, Sarah Bean. "Tenement House Act of 1901 - Village Preservation." Village Preservation - Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, April 12, 2024. <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2016/04/11/tenement-house-act-of-1901/>.

Apart from its success in improving the quality and safety of tenement buildings, the New Law has also had lasting effects on architectural design in many parts of the city that are still seen today.



New Law tenement building in New York City.³⁹

Interventions in the Second Half of the 20th Century

Western Europe

In the wake of the destruction from the world wars, Western European countries ravaged by the wars have turned to housing provision out of necessity. At the time, mostly guided by Keynesian economic policies, which emphasized the need for state intervention in the market, many of these Western European states built state-subsidized housing complexes that are

³⁹ Ibid.

affordable and accessible to many. Germany and Sweden, for instance, focused on co-op housing, while the UK built entire satellite cities to combat overcrowding.⁴⁰

The United States

As U.S. cities were unscathed from war, the country was in less dire need for housing. As a result, the construction of houses and apartment buildings was delegated to the private sector with limited oversight and intervention from the Federal Housing Administration. One of the consequences was the displacement of racial minority groups from perceived “blighted” neighborhoods, which has led to further income and wealth divide between ethnic groups.

The Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, and China

In the Soviet Union, its satellite states, China, and other socialist countries, the answer to homelessness was fundamentally similar to that of Western Europe—government provision. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Soviet Union began building low-cost housing complexes *en masse*, nicknamed *Khrushchyovkas*, which quickly found its way into the Eastern Bloc and China. Although constructed at a massive scale and effective in eliminating homelessness, most of Soviet-style housing ignored any form of urban planning in its implementation and led to many *Khrushchyovkas* distant from basic social services.

⁴⁰ “New Towns - UK Parliament.” New towns. Accessed July 25, 2025.
<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/towns/overview/newtowns/>.



*Soviet-era buildings in Kiev, Ukraine.*⁴¹

The Global South

Attempts at government provision in the global south, however, were much less successful. Despite the best of intentions, many housing experiments in South Asia and Africa were plagued by limited budgets and corruption, and as a result, had limited positive influence on the housing market.

The Privatization of Housing

Beginning in the 1970s and early 1980s, thanks to Milton Friedman's new classical economics and a worldwide shift to neoliberal policies, the housing market became heavily deregulated and privatized. The neoliberal shift was primarily voluntary in the global north, but rather forced onto the global south. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

⁴¹ Messori, Erik, and Nicole Di Ilio. Life inside a Kiev Khrushchyovka: Soviet architecture in Ukraine, February 25, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2019/2/25/life-inside-a-kiev-khrushchyovka-soviet-architecture-in-ukraine>.

the two primary agencies for global economic development, compelled many less-developed countries to adopt Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that mandated cuts to public spending, which manifested in cuts to housing and urban development subsidies.

Decreased funding, combined with the rapid privatization of housing and land development, spelled trouble. Increasingly, access to housing has become less and less of a public good and rather a financial asset. Land developers have since also jumped onto the financialization bandwagon, backing securities and trust funds with mortgages, culminating in the 2008 Financial Crisis. In the meantime, due to increasing socioeconomic gaps between the upper class and the working class and rising real estate prices, evictions have become more common. Consequently, more and more people were driven to slums and other informal settlements, which are now home to more than one billion people worldwide.⁴²

⁴² UN Habitat Annual Report 2020. Accessed July 25, 2025.
https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2021/05/annual_progress_report_2020_final.pdf.

Possible Solutions

It is crucial for UNCTAD to recognize the gravity of both the affordable housing shortage and neoliberal land policies. Available for UNCTAD are a few pathways of possible solutions. In the short term, it is crucial to make currently available housing units accessible to more people. This can be done in the form of rent control. In the long term, to promote equity and improve social outcomes, there is merit in promoting inclusionary zoning practices, banning predatory mortgages, and legislating for the protection of marginalized residents.

It is equally important for the world to rethink our current approach to land management. Instead of being swayed by the lure of immediate financial gains from real estate developers, world leaders should actively work toward improving the quality of life of all their citizens, in particular, marginalized communities that have historically been victimized by inequitable public policies. But most importantly, UNCTAD should take the lead in systematic reforms to current housing and land management practices that UN member states engage in. This reflects our constant adherence to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 11, “Sustainable Cities and Communities.” UNCTAD should be at the forefront in confronting unsustainable and inequitable policies adopted around the world, and our valued UNCTAD members should set the examples for the rest of the world to follow suit.

Bloc Positions

Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg

These countries prioritize compact, transit-oriented development and strong climate adaptation across metropolitan regions. They lean toward circular-economy zoning, green belts, and stringent energy codes for buildings. It is common practice to back robust rental protections and social housing with sophisticated land value capture mechanisms.

Austria, Germany, Switzerland

These countries emphasize meticulous regional spatial plans, strict land-use controls, and high-quality public transport integration. They typically promote cooperative/social housing and brownfield redevelopment over greenfield sprawl. Support for performance-based building standards and nature-based flood management can be found commonly. They lean toward fiscally disciplined municipal investment and transparent land markets.

France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Malta

The above nations prefer balancing heritage conservation with urban regeneration and infill housing. Heavy emphasis on climate adaptation for heat and drought, water reuse, and coastal resilience. They are often in support of inclusionary zoning and renovation of aging stock, with strong anti-speculation measures.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

These countries align closely with EU *acquis* while pushing e-governance and digital land registries. They invest heavily into energy retrofits in Soviet-era blocks and district heating modernization. They are proponents of rail and bus-based public transit.

Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary

They primarily use EU funds for rail, tram, and multimodal hubs, while managing car-centric legacies. Emphasis on industrial site recycling, and mixed views on rent regulation, but growing interest in affordable rental supply. Huge proponents of progressive instead of sweeping reforms in policy spaces.

Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia

These nations seek stronger metropolitan coordination and capacity building for plan enforcement. Emphasis on flood risk reduction, seismic retrofits, and cross-border corridors. They often support urban regeneration with EU co-financing and anti-corruption tools. Prioritize social inclusion and service upgrades.

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia

These countries focus on aligning planning law with EU standards and regularizing informal settlements. Favor donor-financed infrastructure and utility modernization. Promote strategic spatial plans to guide private investment. Emphasize wastewater treatment, air quality, and inclusionary zoning.

United Kingdom and Ireland

There is much debate regarding planning streamlining versus local control, with pressure to upzone and unlock housing supply. They are strong proponents of strengthening design codes, net-zero building standards, and active travel networks. They also favor land value capture pilots and infrastructure financing reforms.

Canada and the United States of America

These two nations pursue zoning reform and there exists much local autonomy. They invest heavily in transit renewal, lead pipe replacement, and climate resilience, with growing

interest in land value capture. There are both federal incentives for and state/provincial variation in policy reform.

China and the Republic of Korea

Both pursue high-density, transit-oriented urban growth. Growth in China is guided more by the government, while Korea by the market. Both countries are exploring the concept of smart cities and developing heat-mitigation methods. There is continued urban renewal with tighter environmental standards.

India, Pakistan, Indonesia

This group of nations has faced rapid urbanization that resulted in massive slums. Cities are moving toward digitized cadastres, property-tax reform, and land value capture to finance infrastructure. Coastal flooding, riverine risk, and heat action planning have historically driven climate investments.

Argentina, Chile, Uruguay

Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay prioritize inclusionary housing and neighborhood upgrading through participatory planning. They have experimented heavily with rapid transit as a public transit approach. Metropolitan governance, performance data, and targeted subsidies help steer investment. Public-realm improvements and coastal resilience remain headline initiatives.

Ukraine, Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia

They undergo reconstruction and modernization of Soviet-era microdistricts, district heating, and water-scarce systems. Public transport renewal are another focus of former-Soviet nations in order to counter car-centric sprawl.

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt

They have historically invested in giga-projects and master-planned new districts. In particular, North African nations focus heavily on public transit. All of these countries have prioritized energy efficiency and district cooling. Municipal finance reforms, stronger tenant protections, and standards for worker housing are gaining traction.

Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, Iran

Displacement and fiscal stress have shaped housing demand and overstretched urban services. Priorities include water security, solid waste management, and rebuilding critical transport. There has been increasing anti-speculation measures and climate-resilient standards.

Israel, Turkey

Both countries have looked into smart city planning and public transit expansion. There has been much brownfield redevelopment and mixed-income housing near transit. Green building standards, heat mitigation, and better construction oversight are priorities.

Afghanistan, Liberia

Afghanistan and Liberia focus heavily on humanitarian shelter and disaster risk reduction. Informal settlement regularization and tenure clarification are pursued where feasible. Often, external partners help fund community-led upgrades and maintenance. Durable service delivery and local capacity take priority over state-led megaprojects.

Glossary

Gentrification: A process in which a lower-income area (often in a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy people who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses, and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually lower-income residents.

Poverty trap: A situation in which a low-income individual is unable to escape from poverty.

Tenements: An apartment building meeting minimum standards of sanitation, safety, comfort, and usually located in a city.

Urban sprawl: The spreading of urban developments (such as houses and shopping centers) on undeveloped land near a city.

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