

UN HABITAT

AGENDA ITEM :

Urban Resilience and Reconstruction in Areas
of Prolonged Conflict Focusing on Gaza and
the West Bank

UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL

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1-Table Of Contents

1-Table Of Contents

2-Letter from Secretary General

3-Letter from USG

4-Introduction to the Committee

4.1-Definition of Key-Terms

5-Introduction to the Agenda Item

6-History of the Topic

7-Urban Resilience

7.1-Infrastructure Renovation

7.2-Healthcare Infrastructure in Gaza and The West Bank

7.3-The Impact of Long-term Conflicts on Migration

7.4-The Role of Energy in Urban Development

7.5-Urban Planning

7.6-Ensuring Urban Security in Gaza and the West Bank

7.7-Establishing Community Resilience Centers for Urban Development

8-Questions to be Addressed

9-Bibliography



1-Letter from Secretary General;

Esteemed participants of MUNKFL'25,

As the Secretary General of MUNKFL'25, I warmly welcome you all to the fourth edition of Model United Nations Kayseri Fen Lisesi. First of all, I am pleased to say that we are continuing our work successfully, knowing that we are the pioneers in the MUN culture in Kayseri. We are truly honored to be able to present this precious conference that we have worked on for months. My organizing team has worked tirelessly for this conference, and of course, they did well. Also, special thanks go to my academic team, who also worked tirelessly to make your committees exceptional and engaging. It is with this spirit of dedication and pioneering achievement that we turn our focus to the crucial global challenges facing us today.

The 21st Century has brought about tensions between nations, unprecedented dangers, changes, and challenges that continue to plague the world. However, the United Nations offers a promising path forward. As members of the Model United Nations community, we recognize the imperative of active global engagement and the pivotal role we play in shaping a better future. Therefore, MUNKFL will simulate United Nations committees, providing a platform for delegates to engage in collaborative, competitive, conciliatory, and compromising decision-making processes. Through these simulations, we aim to foster dialogue, diplomacy, and a prioritization of societal needs in addressing pressing global issues.

May this experience leave you more prepared to lead, more committed to dialogue, and more confident in the role you can play in shaping the world around you.

Sincerely,

Taylan Emir Tav



3-Letter From Under Secretary General of UN-HABITAT;

Honorable Delegates of United Nations Human Settlements Programme,

First of all, welcome to the MUNKFL'25 committee. My name is Zehra Azgın. I will guide and assist you through the process of “Urban resilience and reconstruction in areas of protracted conflict with a focus on Gaza and the West Bank”. I am honored to guide you and to be the Under Secretary General of the MUNKFL'25 UN-HABITAT committee. I sincerely hope that the topics we will discuss in the committee will broaden your horizons, that free and original ideas will be produced and shared, that discussions will increase our level of knowledge and take us one step further. This study guide will be a kind of guide for you. you should do research and study the study guide in detail in order to reach the necessary and sufficient level of knowledge. Each of you will represent the member states as a delegate in this committee and I am confident that you will do so successfully and that appropriate discussions will take place and solutions to problems will be found. UN-HABITAT is a committee working to make cities safer, more resilient, and sustainable. Our expectation from this conference is that you create an environment for free discussion and produce long-term solutions to increase urban renewal and resilience in the Gaza and West Bank regions. I hope you have a productive, active, and enjoyable time during the conference. You can contact me for anything you want to ask.

Sincerely

Zehra Azgın

Under Secretary General of United Nations Human Settlements Program



4-INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Human Settlements Program UN-Habitat is the United Nations program for human settlements and sustainable urban development. It was established as a result of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I) held in Vancouver in 1977. UN-Habitat is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. It is the focal point within the UN system for all urbanization and human settlements issues. It works with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities. It reduces inequality, discrimination, and poverty. UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. Its normative work sets standards, proposes norms and principles, shares best practices, monitors global progress, and supports the development of policies related to sustainable cities and human settlements. It also works in partnership with governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, civil society organizations, foundations, academic institutions, and the private sector to achieve lasting results in overcoming the challenges of urbanization.

The UN-Habitat Data and Analysis Unit (DAU) currently monitors and coordinates more than 374 urban observatories worldwide. The objectives of the global observatory network it has developed are as follows:

-Improving the collection, management, analysis, and use of information to formulate more effective urban policies.

- Improving the flow of information across all levels for better urban decision-making processes.
- Promoting broad-based consultation processes to help identify and integrate urban information needs.
- Providing information and analysis to all stakeholders for more effective participation in urban decision-making processes.
- Establish a global network of local, national, and regional platforms for sharing information on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

4.1-Definition of Key-Terms

Urban Development: Urban development is development of cities and other urban areas as drivers of economic and social development.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure is the set of facilities and systems that serve a country, city, or other area.

Migration: Migration is the movement of people away from their usual place of residence to a new place of residence, either across an international border or within a State

Urban Security: Urban security encompasses the comprehensive safety and well-being of individuals within urban environments, acknowledging the intricate interplay between tangible threats and the perception of security

Community Resilience: Community resilience is the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions.

5-INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA ITEM

The West Bank is located on the western bank of the Jordan River and is the larger of the two Palestinian territories that make up the State of Palestine. Located in the Levant region of West Asia, the West Bank is an inland region close to the Mediterranean coast. It borders Jordan and the Dead Sea to the east, and Israel to the south, west, and north.

The city of Gaza, located in the Gaza Strip of Palestine, is the most populous city in Palestine. Since 1967, this region has been under Israeli occupation, which is considered illegal under international law. This long-standing occupation has caused extensive damage:

- Roads, buildings, and bridges have been destroyed repeatedly.
- Access to clean water has been restricted.
- Thousands of people have faced housing problems because their homes have been destroyed or damaged.
- The functioning of various public institutions has been disrupted.
- Poverty has increased, leading to a rise in migration, which has become one of the main reasons for the decline in urban resilience.

Today, the situation in the occupied West Bank is rapidly deteriorating. The territory envisaged for a future Palestinian state is shrinking, and the illegal occupation continues.

Many people are being displaced in northern cities and refugee camps. Since the start of the war in Gaza, attacks by settlers have increased frequently. The escalation of violence is leading to the forced displacement of more and more people.

Additionally, these conflicts are causing increased famine in the regions where they occur. These conflicts lead to malnutrition.

The long-standing conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank are diminishing urban resilience and development day by day, and these issues must be resolved. UN-Habitat aims to ensure urban resilience and reconstruction. UN-Habitat develops tools and methods for these situations, such as the Urban Well-being Initiative and the national urban exemplars approach.

It is an organization that will ensure the reconstruction of war-torn areas and that new buildings are resilient and durable. UN-Habitat works not only on urban resilience but also on psychological and urban resilience.



6-HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

The Gaza-Israel conflict is a local part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that began in 1948 with the displacement or expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinians from their homes.

Approximately 200,000 of these Palestinians settled as refugees in the Gaza Strip. This conflict has led to an increase in irregular and unplanned settlements and a decline in urban resilience. The 1993 Oslo Accords divided the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C. Conflicts in the 2000s resulted in the destruction of many homes and buildings. As a result of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, health services in Gaza came to a standstill, with hospitals facing increasing shortages of medicines and medical supplies. The destruction of various health facilities and the inability to produce technical equipment contributed to this problem.

Over the years, various international organizations such as UNICEF, WHO, WFP, and UN-HABITAT have provided support for resilience and relief in the ongoing conflicts in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian State faces many challenges, including urban decay, regional and administrative fragmentation, and financial constraints. The main reasons for these challenges include low tax collection rates, the ongoing political impasse between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, an extremely centralized administrative system resulting from years of occupation, and a fragile population structure. UN-Habitat has been working since 2003 to improve human settlement conditions through the Special Programme for Human Settlements

for the Palestinian People. Developing projects and providing housing support for families who lost their homes between 2008 and 2009, and in 2015, working with UNDP to create a long-term spatial vision for Gaza and the West Bank

In 2025, UN-Habitat announced the launch of a new early recovery and resilience-building project in the Gaza Strip. This project aims to respond to housing needs in crisis-affected areas and provide technical expertise and support for rebuilding more resilient and sustainable communities, as part of UN-Habitat's broader efforts.



7-URBAN RESILIENCE

What is Urban Resilience?

The measurable ability of any urban system, together with its residents, to maintain continuity despite all shocks and stresses, to adapt positively towards sustainability, and to transform.

Resilience is the catalyst for sustainable urban development. When cities face shocks, it ensures that development gains are not lost and that city residents can thrive in a safe environment while coping with major challenges such as climate change and rapid urbanization.

A resilient city assesses, plans for, and takes action to prepare for and respond to all sudden and slow-onset, expected and unexpected hazards, wars, and disasters.

Gaza and the West Bank are regions that have experienced serious infrastructure and urban problems alongside years of conflict. Measures need to be taken to increase urban resilience and sensitivity in these conflict zones.

7.1-INFRASTRUCTURE RENOVATION

Urban resilience requires reconstruction, but there are obstacles to reconstruction in areas of long-term conflict:

- The high cost of reconstruction
- The inability of municipalities and administrations to reorganize these areas
- The violence of the conflict and political uncertainty preventing and halting projects
- Difficulty in repairing infrastructure damaged by war
- Increased migration problems and population growth due to long-term conflicts, which complicate reconstruction
- Inability to rebuild due to economic weakness
- Along with all these obstacles, the public's despair and failure to provide the necessary support and participation for projects is also a major obstacle.
- To ensure urban development:
- Capacity building programs should be implemented for municipalities.
- Projects must be publicized and developed to encourage public support and participation.
- Infrastructure strengthening activities should be prioritized to increase resilience.
- Transition to sustainable energy production projects should be made to save energy and reduce costs.

The Role of UN-HABITAT in Reconstruction;

Urban renewal requires various approaches, such as the redevelopment of abandoned areas, densification and strengthening strategies, diversification of economic activities, preservation and reuse of heritage, revitalization of public spaces, and strengthening service delivery. UN-Habitat's flagship program "Inclusive Communities, Developing Cities" aims to promote shared prosperity by supporting governments and urban actors in building more inclusive, green, and resilient cities, neighborhoods, and communities through urban renewal. UN-Habitat works with international think tanks, academia, and professional organizations to develop standards, global guidance, and principles for urban renewal. It collaborates with sister organizations such as UNESCO and WHO. UN-Habitat supports national and local governments through specialized technical and advisory services, such as spatial development plans, legal instruments for participatory land regulation, and financial mechanisms for capturing land value, to develop the spatial, legal, and financial framework necessary for implementing urban renewal projects.

The prolonged conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank have caused numerous problems in urban development. Frequent recurring conflicts in Gaza disrupt planning processes. There are access difficulties, such as restrictions on the entry of most basic construction materials. Water scarcity in the West Bank and Gaza, and the damage to networks, force reconstruction to start from scratch. The region is highly dependent on international organizations, and the state's revenue sources are limited. Social resilience has weakened as the community is under constant threat. At this point, UN-HABITAT has the following tasks and applications:

- Preparing technical reports on the level of damage to infrastructure
- Presenting settlement plans and zoning proposals for reconstruction
- Designing safer and more sustainable settlement models
- Establishing women's centers and community centers in Gaza and the West Bank.

7.2-The Impact of Long-term Conflicts on Migration

Migration is defined as the movement of people from one place to another for economic, social, political, and cultural reasons. In regions experiencing prolonged conflict, migration often becomes inevitable; people are forced to leave their homes due to security concerns, the collapse of infrastructure, and the lack of shelter and basic services. Such displacement is accompanied by both internal and external migration.

In areas of chronic conflict, such as Gaza and the West Bank, migration is not only a physical process of relocation, but also means the breakdown of the social fabric, the cessation of economic activity, and the fragmentation of the urban structure. Conflicts, the destruction of neighborhoods, damage to infrastructure, and security risks cause people to move quickly and

collectively to areas they perceive as safe. This process becomes both a major obstacle to urban reconstruction and a shaping dynamic. Past major migration crises;

- 1948-Nakba

Israel's declaration of independence on May 15, 1948, in historic Palestine marked the beginning of a series of disasters for Palestinians that have continued for decades. Within approximately one year, more than 750,000 Palestinians were forced to leave their lands. This situation led to the breakdown of urban structures and social fragmentation. Gaza and the West Bank have been hit by a massive influx of refugees.

- The First and Second Intifada period

During this period, thousands of families were displaced along with military operations. The lands began to be fragmented.

- The period between 2008 and 2023

Repeated bombings in Gaza and the West Bank forced hundreds of thousands of people into temporary displacement. Most homes were damaged, and social resilience began to weaken. Urban planning stalled, and destruction continued to increase.

Constant waves of displacement have created extreme overcrowding, particularly in refugee camps, leading to inadequate infrastructure, unplanned growth, and a permanent housing crisis. The social consequences have been as devastating as the physical destruction. The weakening of social solidarity networks, inequalities in access to education and health services, and chronic poverty have made the social fabric fragile. Economically, it has increased unemployment rates and made the population more dependent on international aid. When all these factors are considered together, migration is not merely a population movement but also a phenomenon that affects the region's urbanization process, social cohesion, and economic resilience. UN-Habitat provides technical support to local authorities in the West Bank on urban planning, land management, and infrastructure development. It also implements social programs, community centers, and neighborhood improvement projects to reduce vulnerability in communities that have been forcibly displaced or are at risk of displacement. It works to protect housing and property rights. Through this comprehensive approach, UN-Habitat contributes to addressing migration in the West Bank not only as a humanitarian crisis but also as a planning and rights-based development issue.

7.3-Healthcare Infrastructure in Gaza and The West Bank

UN-Habitat works to support cities and their partners in developing adequate urban planning systems, processes, and tools, with the aim of placing health outcomes at the center of urban development efforts and creating healthy cities for all.

Planning and design in cities and regions play a central role in preventing disease and creating healthier environments. Conscious actions in city and regional planning can

contribute directly or indirectly to improving overall health and well-being. Health is influenced by many factors, most of which are beyond the control of the health sector.

Years of conflict in Gaza have severely damaged the healthcare infrastructure. From the past to the present, serious problems have been encountered in the field of healthcare. The 1948 conflict resulted in the forced displacement of more than 1.7

million Palestinians from Gaza, and the situation of the remaining population in terms of access to even the most basic human needs reveals the extent of this conflict. In Gaza, Israel's embargo has caused serious socio-economic and health problems to emerge.

As a result of the blockade,

the official existence of the Ministry of Health has not been sufficiently functional when considering the conditions of the people living in occupied Gaza, and the health system's ability to provide services and respond to medical emergencies has been reduced. The ongoing occupation and attacks have reduced the chances of children, women, young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities to survive, both physically and psychologically, causing irreversible traumatic processes for individuals. The ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip has negatively affected the capacity of the health sector. Between 2006 and 2018, hospital equipment, the number of nurses and doctors have decreased significantly, and while there are only 30 hospitals, conditions in these hospitals are inadequate. Due to the lack of basic infrastructure materials, maintenance and restoration work in various health facilities has become impossible. The vast majority of civilians affected by the armed conflicts occurring at regular intervals have suffered limb loss and physical disabilities, necessitating not only primary healthcare services but also a sustainable healthcare system. The deteriorating living conditions caused by the attacks have been further exacerbated by the fact that healthcare facilities and hospitals have become largely unusable. By 2014, 33 hospitals had been destroyed in the Gaza Strip, 6 hospitals and 11 health centers were damaged in 2021, and 950 buildings, including homes and health centers, were destroyed in 2022, highlighting the severity of the damage in the health sector. These demolitions have also created major obstacles to urban renewal and reconstruction. Following the clashes that began on October 7, 2023, Israel has restricted the passage of humanitarian aid needed by the vast majority of the population to a standstill. The disproportionate measures taken have pushed the humanitarian crisis in Gaza to unprecedented levels, leaving the population without access to clean water, facing food shortages, and with energy resources depleted to the point of bringing health services to a standstill.

Ninety percent of Gaza's residents have been forcibly displaced, over 60 percent of the infrastructure has been destroyed, and the death toll has exceeded 40,000. The attacks have caused widespread destruction, particularly in health facilities, with 38 hospitals destroyed and 88% of health centers completely out of service. These circumstances have affected not only urban destruction but also people's psychology and social life. To ensure the reconstruction of infrastructure, the following should be prioritized: Repair of destroyed or damaged clinics and health centers, Deploying **mobile clinics** to populations unable to access healthcare due to fragmented urbanization, establishing public health units, and implementing **urban logistics planning**, Committees and projects that increase community participation in protecting healthcare infrastructure, Implementing practices such as **cooperation with**

international organizations and building more resilient health facilities will strengthen the infrastructure and contribute to the preservation of the urban structure.

7.4-The Role of Energy in Urban Development

Regardless of its source, energy is a crucial factor for development. It is essential for transportation, industrial and commercial activities, buildings and infrastructure, water distribution, and food production. Urban areas consume 75% of global primary energy and require an uninterrupted energy supply. To minimize the ecological footprint of cities while promoting universal development, energy distribution must be made sustainable, more inclusive, and equitable. UN-HABITAT's critical areas of intervention include developing sustainable urban energy plans, strategies, policies, and legislation to ensure a gradual transition to a low-carbon economy and environmentally friendly urban infrastructure and services.

The long-standing conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank have severely weakened the region's energy infrastructure, creating ongoing vulnerability and leaving a profound impact. Constant bombardments, restrictions, and mobility barriers have caused power plants and transmission lines to be regularly damaged or rendered inoperable. In Gaza, repeated targeting of electricity generation facilities since 2006, periodic fuel import restrictions, and security concerns preventing network maintenance crews from accessing the field have led to prolonged power outages that directly affect daily life in the region. In the West Bank, the conflict environment and administrative fragmentation have slowed the reconstruction of energy infrastructure; in some areas, frequent breakdowns occur due to limited maintenance capacities. All these conditions have caused instability in many essential systems, from health services and water infrastructure to digital communications and economic activity, seriously weakening urban resilience. To minimize these problems due to restrictions on fuel imports to Gaza, it is necessary to resort to and promote renewable energy methods, combine multiple renewable energy sources to cope with intermittent energy production, and overcome source-specific shortages such as solar energy at night or wind energy during calm periods. To revitalize the aging energy infrastructure, Developing smart technologies to increase energy efficiency and save energy, Raising awareness among the local population and ensuring community support and participation in energy projects, and Offering another solution to intermittent electricity supply by helping to balance variable electricity production with end-user needs through smart grids (electricity grids that balance supply and demand). These grids are also more efficient in transmission and distribution, thereby reducing energy loss.

Cities must establish robust policies and standards to develop sustainable urban energy systems and reduce the use of unsustainable technologies and practices. Governments should foster collaboration between local and international partners to strengthen local companies' access to knowledge, expertise, and markets. Governments in developing countries should consider public-private partnerships to develop energy systems, as they cannot cover the

current costs alone. To enable each city to adapt to its own local characteristics, authorities must design decentralized energy systems and infrastructure and also have specific legislation and tax systems to encourage sustainable energy use or reduce and discourage the use of polluting, inefficient technologies and consumption habits.



A photo from the Gaza region

7.5-Urban Planning

UN-Habitat supports sustainable and inclusive urban planning and design by developing normative work, providing technical support in the formulation of urbanization policies and strategies, building local capacity, and offering context-specific solutions and services based on inclusive and participatory processes. Its approach to urban planning and design emphasizes preventive and problem-focused planning, promotes phased planning starting with ensuring adequate access to basic urban services, particularly water and sanitation, and links planning to financial capacities. When combined with modern technology, better urban planning can solve many of the problems cities face and lead them to prosperity. Clearing debris piles to provide road access, reviewing property records, building temporary housing models with infrastructure, and repairing health, water, and energy lines reduce the destructive effects.

7.6-Ensuring Urban Security in Gaza and the West Bank

Urban conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, combined with the current conflict environment, further exacerbate security issues. The dense and unplanned settlement structure, narrow streets, and lack of infrastructure hinder the movement of emergency response teams, while damaged or destroyed buildings pose additional risks to civilians due to explosive remnants and the risk of collapse. Frequent interruptions to basic services—water, sewage, electricity, and health infrastructure—contribute to both a weakening of public order and increased social tensions. In the West Bank, the divided road network, checkpoints, and movement restrictions limit people's daily lives and access to services, reinforcing a sense of insecurity within cities. The sudden and intense settlement of displaced populations in cities increases social pressure due to housing, employment, and service shortages, making urban security more fragile. Therefore, the region's urban structure interacts with the dynamics of conflict, playing a role in exacerbating security problems at both the physical and social levels.

The success of UN-Habitat's work in the field of security depends particularly on successful partnerships with local governments. By working in the field of security, UN-Habitat identifies and mobilizes various local partners that can contribute to reducing insecurity. By forming local security coalitions, UN-Habitat encourages communities to take action for security in their own areas.

The solution to urban security issues in conflict and crisis zones such as Gaza and the West Bank must include both short-term risk mitigation measures and long-term resilience strategies. First, physical hazards such as rubble must be cleared urgently and safe corridors established. This is crucial for ensuring civilian safety and advancing reconstruction efforts. The planned establishment of temporary shelter areas and the implementation of community-based protection mechanisms will enhance urban security in the medium term. In the long term, resilient spatial planning, safe building standards, green and sustainable infrastructure investments, along with the participation of local communities and civil society in the processes, economic revitalization and employment programs, and increased social resilience are the fundamental elements that make urban safety permanent.



7.7-Establishing Community Resilience Centers for Urban Development

Community resilience centers are important structures that strengthen the social, economic and psychological capacities of communities living in crisis and conflict zones. In areas affected by protracted conflict, such as the West Bank and Gaza, these centers ensure that local people are aware of and prepared for emergencies and crises. The support they provide in areas ranging from health care, education and cultural activities to economic development programs and community organizing increases the capacity of the community to rebuild itself. Furthermore, by strengthening solidarity and social capital among community members, these centers enable individuals and groups to become resilient to crises and contribute to the empowerment of youth and women. Thus, community resilience centers play a critical role in the long-term sustainability and well-being of both individuals and communities.

Some of the community resilience centers that have already been built and are still operating in Gaza and West Bank:

1-UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)

this project is one of the most important programs aimed at increasing the resilience of communities to crises, strengthening social services and community engagement that is still effective today

2-UNDP Supporting Transformative Resilience in Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza

The aim is to strengthen social and economic resilience, facilitate access to local services and diversify economic opportunities.

3-Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS)

Strengthening health infrastructure in the region and supporting community resilience to potential crisis situations.

4-NGOs such as DanChurchAid and WeWorld have implemented community-based resilience projects in the West Bank and Gaza, contributing to local community preparedness for crises, empowering youth and women, increasing economic opportunities and supporting community organizing.

As a result, all of these projects make the society more resilient and conscious against crises and provide material and moral support for the development of urban structuring. community resilience centers are of great importance not only for resilience but also for the preservation of identity and cultural memory

8-Questions To Be Addressed

1. What are the effects of the prolonged conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank on urban resilience and development?
2. What are the effects of the migration that occurred after the long conflicts in the region on the country's infrastructure and other countries?
3. What solutions would be effective and implementable in the long term to restore urban development in the conflict zones in the West Bank?
4. What solutions should the state and other countries pursue through international cooperation to restore the region's lost energy infrastructure?
5. How can urban resilience centers established or to be established in conflict zones be designed, and what are their effects on public awareness?
6. What steps should be taken to ensure urban security in conflict zones?
7. What measures can be taken to improve the health infrastructure that has been damaged by years of destruction?
8. What rapidly implementable risk reduction measures can be established to enhance urban security in Gaza and the West Bank?
9. How can educational programs and awareness projects that encourage local community participation be designed to increase energy efficiency?
10. When hospital capacity is insufficient, what logistical and technological solutions can be developed to make mobile health services more effective?
11. What long-term housing models can be implemented to alleviate the housing crisis of the constantly displaced population?
12. How can a new model of cooperation be established between international funds, local governments, and the private sector to accelerate reconstruction with limited resources?

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