

DRAFT

# Dignity by Design Principles

## Towards a Vision of Built Environments Where Everyone Thrives and Rights are Realised

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There are implications for human rights at all stages of the **built environment lifecycle**: from land acquisition, planning and financing, through design, construction, management and use, to demolition and re-development. Adhering to a human rights approach, based on the inherent dignity of every person, will enable progress towards just, resilient and healthy built environments.

The private sector has a major influence over the built environment. There is a clear need for strategic collaboration and interventions to ensure that the role of the private sector advances, rather than undermines, human rights. This will require a greater shared understanding of the relationships and leverage between different actors, as well as the amplification and creation of innovative policy and strategies.

To advance this journey, IHRB is launching a consultative process to develop and implement Dignity by Design Principles. The draft Principles provide a vision for dignity and respect for human rights throughout the built environment lifecycle, followed by practical recommendations for action by the full range of actors involved.

To ensure that the Principles are embraced by as broad a coalition as possible, IHRB is committed to working with stakeholders to elaborate on each of the proposed Dignity by Design Principles and galvanise action to put them into practice.

The Principles draw on international human rights standards (see page 4 for references). They are applicable at the level of individual projects as well as at the level of wider urban areas.

## Overarching Principles

Throughout all stages of the built environment lifecycle:

- All human rights standards are upheld, including the cross-cutting principles of transparency, accountability, participation and non-discrimination.
- Everyone has the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and lives. This includes women, children, minorities, migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, older persons and others whose perspectives are often excluded.



### 01 LAND

- No-one is forcibly evicted from their home, in accordance with international standards.
- Land acquisition is carried out with meaningful consultation and following due process.
- Indigenous and cultural rights are protected.



### 02 PLANNING & FINANCE

- The right to adequate housing is respected – including security of tenure, affordability and habitability.
- All neighbourhoods have access to adequate infrastructure, public space, transportation, and employment opportunities.
- Systemic and past injustices are taken into account.
- Resilience to climate-related and other disasters is strengthened, with an emphasis on participation and social cohesion.
- Development processes are corruption-free.



### 03 DESIGN

- The built environment expands inclusion and accessibility, regardless of age, ability, race, gender and other factors.
- The built environment has a positive impact on physical and mental health.
- Design seeks to open rather than close space for the realisation of all human rights and the protection of human dignity.



### 04 CONSTRUCTION

- Construction workers' rights are respected in accordance with ILO standards, at all tiers of the construction process - by lead companies and sub-contractors.
- Materials are selected and sourced responsibly, with regard to their social and environmental impacts.
- Buildings are structurally safe, putting an end to the preventable loss of life in building collapses and fires.



### 05 MANAGEMENT & USE

- Everyone, including marginalised communities, has healthy, safe and accessible spaces to live, work and be at leisure.
- Tenants are free from harassment.
- Technology is harnessed in a way that safeguards digital rights including privacy and freedom of expression.



### 06 DEMOLITION & REDEVELOPMENT

- Vacant land is seen as an opportunity to realise communities' needs, while land-use changes prioritise community consultation over financial speculation.
- Building materials are re-used and recycled responsibly.
- No-one is forcibly evicted from their home, in accordance with international standards.

## Recommendations

Implementing these Draft Principles will involve action by a range of actors, in cooperation with others and cognisant of the wider context in which they are operating. The actions below summarise important steps by actors across the built environment lifecycle that will help to realise the Principles.

As a starting point, all actors should adhere to international human rights standards, and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.



### ***Municipal governments should:***

Protect human rights through the adoption and enforcement of local laws and policies, as well as measures to ensure accountability and transparency; maximise residents' participation in the decisions that affect their lives; consider the full spectrum of rights and full geography of the urban area in planning and zoning decisions; and ensure that investment is channeled in the public interest.



### ***Investors and developers should:***

Shift investment in the built environment towards responsible investment that is closely aligned with locally-defined priorities and adds value to the communities where it is deployed; and shift investment away from an "extractive" approach that is focused narrowly on short-term profit-maximization without adequate consideration for adverse human impacts on the ground.



### ***Architecture and design firms should:***

Design with the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups and neighbouring areas in mind; engage local communities in a meaningful way from the outset of any project and throughout its lifecycle; take the human rights record of clients into account when deciding to accept a contract and use any leverage over clients proactively to advance human rights; and support policy initiatives that strengthen dignity in the built environment.



### ***Construction and engineering companies should:***

Ensure respect for all workers' rights in direct operations and throughout the subcontracting chain; avoid corruption and conduct thorough due diligence on all business partners; source materials with consideration for their social and environmental impacts; mitigate disruption to local communities during the construction process; and ensure that buildings are environmentally resilient and structurally safe.



### ***Building maintenance and servicing companies should:***

Ensure that all workers' rights are respected – including those employed by subcontractors – in the maintenance, servicing, cleaning and security of buildings.



### ***Technology companies should:***

Respect digital rights, including the rights to privacy and freedom of expression; seek to expand access to the benefits of technological innovation in urban areas; and ensure transparency, accountability and non-discrimination in the collection and use of data.

# International Human Rights Standards and Frameworks

## International Human Rights Standards

- **International human rights - all standards:** The full spectrum of United Nations standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights - [www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights](http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights)
- **Land:** Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on land as a “cross-cutting issue that impacts directly on the enjoyment of a number of rights” - [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/LandAndHR/Pages/LandandHumanRightsIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/LandAndHR/Pages/LandandHumanRightsIndex.aspx)
- **Forced evictions:** “Forced evictions” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ForcedEvictions/Pages/Index.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ForcedEvictions/Pages/Index.aspx)
- **Indigenous peoples:** UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - [www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html)
- **Adequate housing:** Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/toolkit/Pages/RighttoAdequateHousingToolkit.aspx>
- **Infrastructure - right to water and sanitation:** Right to water and sanitation - [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/InstrumentsWater.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/ESCR/Pages/InstrumentsWater.aspx)
- **Health:** Right to physical and mental health - [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet31.pdf)
- **Labour standards:** International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and standards - [www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations](http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations)
- **Migrant workers:** International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families - [www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx)
- **Privacy:** Right to privacy in the digital age - [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/DigitalAge/Pages/DigitalAgeIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/DigitalAge/Pages/DigitalAgeIndex.aspx)

## International Frameworks

- **UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights:** Guiding principles for the implementation of the “protect, respect and remedy” framework on business and human rights - [www.ohchr.org/en/issues/business/pages/businessindex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/business/pages/businessindex.aspx)
- **UN Sustainable Development Goals:** Seventeen global goals through to 2030 with associated targets, covering poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice - [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/)
- **New Urban Agenda:** Adopted at UN Habitat III (United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development) in Ecuador in 2016 - <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>
- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Prevention:** Endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2015 - [www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework](http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework)