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Ghana: Housing construction must serve the needs of the hard-working people first

ACCRA/GENEVA 9 October 2026 - The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Koldo Casla, today warned housing affordability risks becoming a misnomer if policies are not targeted to address the needs of the working people with low incomes, which in fact are the majority of the population.

In a statement at the conclusion of a 12-day official visit to Ghana, Casla welcomed the adoption of several policies concerning housing in recent years, praised Ghana's diplomatic leadership in relation to reparations for historical injustices, expressed admiration for Ghanaians communal spirit, and showed sincere gratitude to the Ghanaian people for their hospitality and generosity during his visit.

"During the visit, I observed the housing construction and physical transformations taking place primarily in Accra. I could see flashy billboards around the capital promoting real estate investments at stratospheric prices far from reach for the average Ghanaian. Many of these properties remain vacant, which suggests that much of the construction in wealthy parts of Accra seem to meet speculative financial ends other than satisfying the right to adequate housing of the population", the Special Rapporteur said.

The Special Rapporteur urged the Ghanaian Government to come to terms with the fact that general unaffordability of formally built housing gives many Ghanaians no choice but to find their way into informal settlements or to rely on substandard housing.

About 31% of the urban population lives in informal settlements in Ghana, and conservative estimates put the number of people in homelessness at around 100,000, 60,000 of whom would be children.

The Special Rapporteur encouraged the authorities to actively listen to the needs of people living in poverty in the design of public policies.

The threat of forced evictions without prior consultation and proper compensation must end.

More than a third of Ghanaians pay a rent for their homes, and the proportion rises to more than 40% in urban areas. The Special Rapporteur invited the Government to strengthen the Rent Control Department and all relevant institutional mechanisms so they can effectively monitor and limit rent increases and to protect tenants from extortionate rent advances.