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From Plastic Waste to Adequate, Sustainable and Affordable Housing for All

African population stands at 1,4 billion people with an estimated 540 million people living in urban areas, and around 60 % of them – 324 million people - live in informal settlements in inadequate homes. Assuming that on average 5 people live in one home, a deficit of adequate housing could be estimated at 64 million units today.

Between 1990 and 2017 African countries imported around 230 Mt of plastics. Most of these plastics has ended up in dumping sites across African cities after their uses and reuses and creating the biggest environmental concern as local governments are not equipped to process the waste. In 2019, Shelter Afrique stated that Africa needs 1.4 trillion USD to plug adequate and affordable housing deficit.

The huge housing deficit on one hand and the huge amount of plastic waste in Africa can be seen as both a huge challenge and a tremendous opportunity to expand economic activity, create millions of jobs and promote environmental sustainability.

UN-Habitat has been working with OTHALO, a start-up company in Norway that has developed a technic to use recycled plastique to produce building components. The technology and process are very innovative. Once plastic waste is recycled, it is shredded and mixed with other elements including non-flammable materials and used to produce building components like walls, floors and roofs. OTHALO system can be used to build up to 4 floors. A 60 sqm home will need 8 ton of recycled plastic. A factory with one production line produces 2800 housing units annually.

In partnering with UN-Habitat, OTHALO wants to make sure that their technology responds to the needs of the final users. The short video that we are launching today present the idea behind and the unlimited potentials: <https://youtu.be/uu0inpxmCzw>

With OTHALO technology, it is possible to use one challenge - **plastic waste** - to address another challenge - **huge housing deficit** – while mitigating climate change. The process also addresses climate change as the only GHG emitted are produced during transportation of the building materials.

"If we do not intervene, we are going to see the surge in slums and substandard dwellings across Africa" Andrew Chimphondah, managing director and chief executive officer of Shelter Afrique.

"As we celebrate this year World Habitat Day, UN-Habitat is partnering with OTHALO to promote adequate, sustainable and affordable housing for all" Victor Kisob, Assistant Secretary-General & Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

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