



IV REGIONAL HOUSING FORUM 2026

From Diagnosis to Action

Transforming Housing Markets in Latin America and the Caribbean

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The 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum continues the regional dialogues promoted by the IDB Group in Washington (2022), Ecuador (2023) and Mexico City (2024).



A Defining Moment for Housing in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) face a defining moment to transform their urban development and housing policies into true engines of inclusion and resilience. In the final stretch of the 2030 Agenda, and after the first decade of the New Urban Agenda, it is imperative to assess progress and, above all, to identify the structural gaps that continue to limit access to adequate housing.

LAC is the most urbanized developing region in the world: 81.2% of its population lives in urban areas (ECLAC, 2018). Approximately 35% live in metropolises, and 14.2% of the regional population is concentrated in six megacities of more than 10 million inhabitants, which increases pressure on urban infrastructure, land, basic services, and housing markets.

81.2% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean lives in urban areas, making it the world's most urbanized developing region.

In 2012, housing deficits affected nearly 45% of households in LAC (Bouillon, 2012). More than a decade later, the region has about 69.5 million dwellings with some form of deficit: 15.1 million have a quantitative deficit (22%), and 54.4 million have a qualitative deficit (78%) (Sánchez, 2024).

Trends That Expand Housing Demand

- Household formation: the IDB Housing Value Chain Studies show sustained pressure on housing demand.
- Migration: the migrant population rose from 7 million in 1990 to nearly 15 million in 2020, of which 76% corresponds to intraregional movements (UNDP IDB, 2023).

The combination of these factors pushes the horizon for closing the housing gap beyond three decades (IDB, 2020).

78% of the regional housing deficit is qualitative; the primary challenge is no longer just building new housing, but improving the existing housing stock.



Demographic Changes and Household Composition

Urbanization has profoundly transformed the territorial structure of the region. Over the past 20 years, the number of cities with 300,000 to 500,000 inhabitants has doubled, and cities with 1 to 5 million inhabitants have increased by 50%, evidencing the growing prominence of medium-sized cities. Many have expanded their boundaries into metropolitan areas, increasing demand for urban land, infrastructure and housing (UN-HABITAT, 2018).

Households have also changed. Between 2010 and 2022, average household size decreased from 3.9 to 3.4 people, although lower-income households remain the largest. Nuclear households reduced their share from 53.6% to 47.2%, non-family households rose from 11.5% to 14.7%, and single-parent households headed by women grew from 17.2% to 31.1% (ECLAC, 2023).

In 2022, 88.6 million people aged 60 and over were registered, representing 13.4% of the regional population. By 2030, this group is expected to reach 114.9 million inhabitants, or 16.5% of the total population (ECLAC, 2023). Aging is not homogeneous across countries and implies differentiated housing demands in terms of location, accessibility, dwelling size and care services.

Given the insufficient supply of adequate solutions, especially for lower-income households, a significant share of the population meets its needs through informal self-construction, frequently associated with construction deficiencies and limited access to infrastructure and basic services.

Understanding the speed and characteristics of the demographic transition in each country is a fundamental input for designing housing policies that are more relevant, inclusive, and resilient, and articulated with access to transportation, employment, education, and health.

At least 120 million people in LAC live informally: 21% of the region's urban population.



Regulations and Institutional Framework

In LAC countries, a wide variety of legal instruments and public policies define obligations, responsibilities, and rights regarding housing within the framework of the State's responsibility to progressively guarantee access to adequate housing through regulation, financing, and land management tools.

Implementing urban and housing policies largely depends on institutional capacity and the quality of governance at different levels of government.

Three Structural Challenges (IDB, 2020)

- Local fiscal sustainability: while OECD cities self-finance 60% of their expenditure, cities in the region barely cover 30% with their own revenue, due to low property tax collection (0.4% of GDP) and limited use of land value capture.
- Territorial and sectoral coordination: fewer than half of the region's 54 metropolitan areas have formal governance bodies, creating regulatory gaps and a disconnect between national policies and local implementation.
- Citizen participation: engagement rates in municipal councils do not exceed 8%, and digital technologies for transparency remain in early use.

Strengthening urban governance requires consolidating the technical and financial capacities of local governments, promoting metropolitan coordination mechanisms, improving territorial information, and expanding citizen participation.

At the national level, not all countries have updated housing policies and laws linked to their development plans. Leasing laws, bankruptcy laws, and local civil codes need review to unlock robust rental and mortgage housing markets. The IDB works with countries to build these legal frameworks and increase participation by developers, commercial banks, and investment funds.

Finally, recent natural disasters in the Caribbean, Venezuela, and Colombia underscore the need to update building codes to protect households from hurricanes and earthquakes.



Macroeconomic Context and Access to Financing

The region projects 2.1% growth for 2026, which is insufficient to close income and productivity gaps (Ayres and Juvenal, 2026). Although inflation is under control and borrowing costs have improved, average public debt of 59% of GDP and rising interest payments exert critical pressure on government finances.

The OECD, ECLAC, and CAF identify a critical financing gap of US\$99 billion per year to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the region, aggravated by productivity that in 2023 reached only 33% of the OECD average.

A historic opportunity exists in the energy transition and the technological revolution: the region concentrates nearly 50% of the world's lithium and 35% of its copper. Seizing it requires strong institutions, legal security, and robust environmental governance, accompanied by investments in infrastructure, land-use planning, and urban services.

These constraints translate directly into housing markets. A regional comparative study indicates that households earning up to one minimum monthly wage cannot access social housing (World Bank, 2022). Limited mortgage credit and microfinancing for the informal sector, combined with limited development of public-private schemes and risk-mitigation mechanisms, hinder effective efforts to reduce the housing deficit.

Overcoming this bottleneck requires strengthening the financial system, deepening local markets, reducing high intermediation margins, and expanding household financial education (OECD et al., 2024).

Closing the housing gap will require US\$1.38 trillion (21.9% of regional GDP), making the mobilization of private capital essential.



Generation of Information

Reliable, timely, and comparable information on housing supply and demand is fundamental to designing evidence-based policies, targeting subsidies, territorial planning, and developing financing instruments. It also reduces information asymmetries and increases certainty for public and private investment.

The heterogeneity of methodologies, sources, and technological platforms has created fragmented, poorly interoperable systems. Limitations persist in integrating data from cadastres, administrative records, censuses, household surveys, financial systems, and real estate markets, making it difficult to build comparable indicators and monitor the housing market's evolution.

During the XXXIV MINURVI General Assembly, held in Bridgetown, Barbados, in December 2025, the joint work of the IDB and ECLAC was recognized as advancing toward a consolidated regional methodology for measuring the housing deficit, and it was agreed to promote, together with national statistical institutes, the incorporation of the indicators required for its application.

The new Housing and Urban Intelligence (HUI) platform integrates over 3,000 indicators, 18 country profiles, and more than 500 official sources to promote evidence-based public policies.

Strengthening national housing information systems is a priority for improving decision-making and coordination between public and private institutions. A harmonized information infrastructure would improve subsidy targeting, strengthen financing mechanisms, facilitate evaluation of results, and reduce market information barriers.

Open access to standardized information also increases transparency, promotes competition, and creates a more favorable environment for housing investment.



Resilience

Latin America and the Caribbean face a multidimensional housing crisis, manifested in the proliferation of informal settlements, uncoordinated urban expansion, and a critical affordability gap. Various programs implemented in the region have yielded lessons that help identify four strategic pillars (De Mendiola et al., 2023).

01 **Housing Resilience**

Incorporating resilience criteria reduces households' physical, economic, and social vulnerability to natural disasters. Policies can be strengthened through resilient housing, updated building codes, new construction processes, and structural retrofitting.

02 **Resilient and Integrated Urban Development**

It is no longer only about delivering housing units, but about managing territory in a multidisciplinary way, integrating housing with mobility, public space, urban services, and economic opportunities.

03 **Community-Led Socio-Urban Transformation**

The success and permanence of investments depend on residents' degree of ownership, making them key actors from co-design through implementation of their habitats.

04 **Innovation and Financing as Catalysts**

Innovation resolves the triad of affordability, resilience, and inclusion: from new materials and industrial construction processes to flexible financial mechanisms for populations with informal incomes.



Gender and Diversity Factors

Women —particularly those who head households— Afro-descendants, indigenous populations, LGBTQ+ people and persons with disabilities face disproportionate barriers to homeownership and experience the consequences of housing insecurity more acutely (IFC, 2019; Baker, 2021).

Economic barriers —lower wages, unpaid care work, and informal employment— overlap with institutional and cultural obstacles such as inheritance practices, institutional discrimination, land market inequality and biases in public policy (Deere et al., 2012; Libertun et al., 2020).

50.3%

of women in LAC are employed, 25 percentage points below men.

25%

of landowners in Latin America are women, in both urban and rural contexts.

59%

of women in LAC in non-agricultural jobs are informally employed, making it harder to document income.

1 in 3

Latin American women is affected by gender-based violence in vulnerable living conditions.

Indigenous families living in urban areas are 90% more likely to lack access to adequate housing. In LAC, 52 million households have at least one person with a disability, and nearly 7 out of 10 of these households are vulnerable to poverty (García Mora et al., 2021).

These gaps show that the housing deficit does not affect the population uniformly. Housing policies can incorporate approaches to inclusion, accessibility, interculturality, and non-discrimination that respond to the specific needs of different population groups.



2026 IV Regional Housing Forum: From Diagnosis to Action

The 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum builds on previous regional forums and guides the discussion from diagnosis to implementing concrete solutions. Its purpose is to strengthen countries' capacity to design and implement more inclusive, resilient, evidence-based housing policies.

In this edition, the meeting will explore cutting-edge methodologies for measuring the housing deficit and applying emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and industrialized construction. It will also address alternative financing and production models to address quantitative and qualitative gaps, with an emphasis on segments traditionally excluded from the formal market: young people, single-person households, informal workers, older adults and vulnerable populations.

Thematic Axes



New Information Tools



Expansion of Coverage



New Construction Trends



New Financing Mechanisms



Coliving, Lofts and Rental Housing



Role of Development Banks



Attention to the Qualitative Deficit



New Information Tools to Address the Housing Deficit

The availability of timely, standardized, and interoperable information is a requirement for designing evidence-based policies and for efficiently mobilizing public and private resources. When systems use different methodologies and standards, data comparability declines, making it harder to evaluate results and target interventions.

The regional reference methodology for calculating the housing deficit has not been comprehensively updated since 1996. Although several countries have implemented adjustments independently, this has fragmented measurement criteria and complicated comparative analysis, limiting the ability to accurately assess policy effectiveness and optimize resource allocation to areas with the greatest lag.

The regional agenda marked a milestone with the launch of the Housing and Urban Intelligence (HUI) platform in 2025, developed by the IDB in collaboration with ECLAC and the OECD. This tool integrates, organizes, and disseminates critical indicators on housing, urban development, and territorial systems in the region to catalyze strategic decision-making through rigorously comparable, up-to-date, and harmonized data.

Likewise, in December 2025, the IDB and ECLAC developed a consolidated regional methodology to measure the housing deficit, advancing toward a more homogeneous and comparable assessment of housing needs across Latin America and the Caribbean.

During the 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum, the Housing and Urban Intelligence platform and the new methodology for calculating the housing deficit will be presented.



Expansion of Coverage to Underserved Populations

Over the past decades, the region has experienced profound demographic, social, and economic transformations that have modified the structure and needs of housing demand (ECLAC, 2024). Tools that adequately characterize the population are a fundamental input for designing policies, programs, and urban and financial instruments.

Demographic, labor, and territorial transformations are changing traditional demand profiles, creating population segments that conventional housing policies still serve insufficiently.

- The informal economy: high labor informality remains a major barrier to housing finance. Lacking traditional proof of income, this population is automatically excluded from bank mortgage credit.
- Single-person households and young people: the growth of these households has increased demand for smaller, well-located and flexible homes, while supply remains concentrated in two- or three-bedroom typologies.
- Older adults: accelerated population aging demands solutions that offer universal accessibility, care services, and proximity to urban and health facilities, which remain limited today.
- Urban areas: the challenge is serviced land. High land prices push lower-income households to the peripheries, where they have less access to transportation, employment, and urban services.
- Rural areas: the deficit is primarily qualitative and requires technical assistance and solutions tailored to local territorial and climatic conditions (Sánchez, 2024).

During the 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum, we will analyze international experiences and policy instruments to expand access to housing solutions for groups traditionally excluded from the formal market, incorporating differentiated approaches to financing, urban design, and housing production.



New affordable construction trends

One of the axes of the 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum will be to analyze the potential of construction industrialization and new technologies to increase sector productivity, improve housing quality, and expand the supply of affordable solutions. Shifting more of the construction process to controlled industrial environments helps reduce waste, improve quality control, and shorten execution times.

It's not just about building faster; it's about applying advanced manufacturing processes that create economies of scale and transform social housing from an expensive, slow product into an agile, scalable solution.

This transformation is enabled by technologies such as 3D concrete printing and volumetric modular construction, with the central message that affordability must be synonymous with quality. By integrating circular materials, such as biopolymers and recycled aggregates, through prefabrication techniques, teams can reduce execution times by up to 40% (Baptista et al., 2024).

This speed is not only a financial indicator; it is a response to accelerated urbanization, allowing families to access solid assets in months rather than years, without sacrificing design standards, thermal comfort, or structural safety.

During the Forum, we will present innovations that ensure infrastructure resilience against extreme events and redefine the parameters of comfort and livability. By optimizing every link in the value chain, from digital design to final assembly, we expand the possibilities of offering more accessible, financeable solutions for lower-income households.

Scaling these systems requires updated regulatory frameworks, effective coordination between public and private actors, technical standards that recognize new materials and processes, and financing mechanisms that reduce adoption risks.



New Financing Mechanisms

Financial technology companies (Fintech) are expanding access to financing through digital technologies, data analysis, and artificial intelligence, enabling credit assessment and marketing models that are more flexible than traditional ones (IDB Invest, 2025). In parallel, cooperatives and housing microfinance are being reasserted as drivers of the popular economy.

The Fintech ecosystem has more than 3,000 active companies in the region (3,069 as of the end of 2023), representing growth of over 340% since 2017 and reflecting a greater capacity to develop solutions for segments traditionally excluded from the banking system (Finnovista and IDB, 2024).

In the housing sector, Proptech companies are introducing new models for credit origination, real estate market analysis, asset management, digital leasing, fractional investment, and housing project management. Currently, around 88% of Proptech solutions focus on home buying and selling processes (Laguyas et al., 2022).

Beyond digital innovation, microfinance continues to play a fundamental role in expanding access to financing for low-income households and informal workers, particularly through products that support progressive housing improvements, extensions, and assisted self-production.

Financial innovation does not replace the public sector; instead, it requires appropriate regulatory frameworks, risk-mitigation mechanisms, and financing schemes that enable solutions to scale to lower-income segments.



New Housing Trends: Coliving, Lofts and Rental Housing

Demographic changes, greater labor mobility, smaller household sizes, and barriers to homeownership are driving the emergence of more flexible housing models. In this context, the concept of Housing as a Service (HaaS) has emerged, viewing housing as a service adaptable to different stages of the life cycle and to households' changing needs.

This shift responds to a demographic and economic reality in which labor mobility and financial uncertainty make long-term mortgage debt, for many, an anchor rather than an asset. Coliving and senior living emerge as alternatives that reduce costs by sharing infrastructure and encourage social interaction through shared spaces and services.

The revitalization of urban centers is driven by lofts and professionalized rental housing instruments that contribute to urban regeneration. Transforming underutilized commercial or industrial infrastructure into residential spaces makes it possible to take advantage of serviced land —areas that already have transportation, services, and employment— and avoids unnecessary peripheral sprawl.

By professionalizing rentals through specialized operators and institutional management schemes, a high-quality supply is guaranteed, with constant maintenance and legal security, allowing young people and migrant workers to access strategic locations previously out of reach under the traditional purchase model.

Finally, reusing and rehabilitating existing built stock is one of the strategies with the greatest potential to reduce material consumption, construction-related emissions, and urban sprawl (UN-Habitat, 2021).

These models expand the housing solutions portfolio and complement traditional homeownership schemes with more flexible, affordable, and sustainable alternatives.



Scaling Solutions Through Development Banks

The magnitude of the housing deficit and the limitations of traditional financial markets require development banks (DBs) to participate proactively to correct market failures, expand access to financing, and mobilize public and private investment in the housing sector.

The IDB Group strengthens this model of sectoral intervention by co-financing and co-investing with development banks across the continent. Through guarantees, subordinated debt schemes, and technical assistance programs, this institutional synergy shares risks, strengthens capacities, and creates conditions that facilitate private sector participation.

01 Deepening of Capital Markets

Moving toward resilient financial ecosystems, where development banks act as an anchor of trust through thematic issuances and strategic liquidity contributions.

02 Sustainable Infrastructure and Productive Assets

Deployment of resources for the technical, legal, and financial structuring of projects and direct financing in urban infrastructure and sustainable housing.

03 Financial Inclusion and SME Productivity

Reducing barriers to credit access through risk mitigation and second-tier operations conditioned on digitalization and productivity.

04 Governance and Public Policy Implementation

Acting as the executing arm and fiduciary partner of the State, safeguarding transparency and facilitating the scaling of pilot projects into national programs.



Attention to the Qualitative Deficit: Improve What Already Exists

Considering that approximately 78% of the housing deficit in LAC corresponds to qualitative deficiencies, the 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum will present the publication “Comprehensive methodology for addressing the qualitative housing deficit in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

The publication proposes a seven-pillar strategy that integrates resilience and legal security to complement traditional new-housing production policies by placing greater emphasis on improving the existing housing stock. The objective is to transform informal habitats into resilient and safe environments, enabling vulnerable families to access adequate housing without being displaced from their social and economic support networks.

To operationalize this vision, the methodology proposes Comprehensive Technical Assistance (CTA) as a central component. This methodology goes beyond architectural design: it outlines multidisciplinary support, including structural diagnosis, sustainable materials management, construction supervision, and financial education for families.

By standardizing these services through social business models and digital tools, CTA reduces risks for development banks and microfinance institutions, improving intervention quality and increasing the likelihood that investments generate sustainable improvements in habitability, resilience, and patrimonial value.

78% of the region's housing deficit is qualitative: improving what already exists is the fastest, most cost-efficient way to expand access to adequate housing.



Objectives of the 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum

Strengthen regional dialogue and the exchange of experiences on policies, instruments, and innovations that improve the functioning of housing markets in LAC and promote solutions to address the quantitative and qualitative housing deficit.

The Forum will promote the exchange of experiences and collaboration among governments, the private sector, multilateral organizations, academia, and civil society. This synergy is articulated through four strategic areas.

01 Innovation and Evidence

Promote standardized information, comparable methodologies, and analytical tools to strengthen evidence-based decision-making, supported by an updated, comprehensive methodology for measuring the housing deficit.

02 Expanding Access

Design a roadmap to integrate historically excluded populations —young people, informal workers and older adults— diversifying supply with rental, coliving and senior living models.

03 Technology and Productivity

Identify and promote the adoption of emerging technologies. Artificial intelligence and industrialized construction are economic necessities to reduce costs and accelerate the housing response.

04 Resilience and Improvement

Consolidate attention to the qualitative deficit as a strategic regional priority, presenting a new strategy based on seven pillars to improve the existing housing stock.

With this approach, the Forum will strengthen regional cooperation, promote knowledge exchange, and provide technical input for designing and implementing public policies to expand access to adequate, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable housing in LAC.



Structure of the Program

The 2026 IV Regional Housing Forum proposes a shift from the traditional construction model toward systemic industrialization and the use of artificial intelligence, and addresses the convergence of financial and real estate technology that is redefining investment opportunities and market access.

The IDB Group's role in this regional architecture is that of a catalytic actor: its function goes beyond conventional financing to enable markets and ecosystems where the traditional financial sector still lacks presence or appetite.

The program will feature keynote conferences on the challenges and tools of housing policy in LAC, artificial intelligence in the sector, productivity and employment, and the presentation of the new UN-Habitat housing agenda, along with seven thematic panels covering the full cycle of housing policies.

PANEL 1	Measuring to Transform: New Information Tools to Address the Housing Deficit in LAC
PANEL 2	New Housing Trends
PANEL 3	New Construction Trends
PANEL 4	New Financing Mechanisms
PANEL 5	Unserved Population and Gentrification
PANEL 6	Role of Development Banking in the Housing Sector
PANEL 7	Attention to the Qualitative Deficit: Improving What Already Exists



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