

LAW REVIEW**Salient features of 2007 housing policy**

The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007 seeks to promote various types of public-private partnerships for realizing the goal of Affordable Housing For All with special emphasis on the urban poor. The new Policy has been formulated keeping in view the changing socio-economic parameters of the urban area and growing requirement of shelter and related infrastructure.

Since the policy was last revised in 1998, the urban housing sector has been facing emerging challenges with regard to availability of affordable shelter, growth of slums, and gaps in provision of basic services to the urban poor. The urban housing shortage has been estimated at about 24.7 million units at the end of the 10th Five Year Plan (2006-07). 99% of the shortage pertains to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Groups (LIG) categories. All these aspects were considered in a Conference of Housing Ministers' of State and Union Territories in November, 2004 and it was decided to update the National Housing and Habitat Policy with emphasis on urban housing and improved habitat. A Task Force was constituted in January, 2005 and a National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy was drafted.

One of the buzz phrases of the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy 2007 is sustainable development of habitat in the country with a view to ensuring equitable supply of land, shelter and services at affordable prices to all sections of society. Given the magnitude of the housing shortage and budgetary constraints of both the Central and State Governments, the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007 focuses the spotlight on multiple stake-holders namely, the Private Sector, the Cooperative Sector, the Industrial Sector for labour housing and the Services/ Institutional Sector for employee housing. In this manner, the Policy will seek to promote various types of public-private partnerships for realizing the goal of "Affordable Housing for All".

Other salient features of the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007 are:

- . Focus of the Policy is on affordable urban housing with special emphasis on the urban poor.

- . Role of Housing and provision of basic services to the urban poor has been integrated into the objectives of the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).
- . Special emphasis has been laid on Scheduled Castes / Tribes / Backward Classes / Minorities, empowerment of Women within the ambit of the urban poor.
- . The Policy focuses on a symbiotic development of rural and urban areas in line with the objectives of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act.
- . Within the overarching goal of "Affordable Housing for All," emphasis has been laid on urban planning, increase supply of land, use of spatial incentives like additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR), Transferable Development Rights, etc., increased flow of funds, healthy environment, effective solid waste management and use of renewal sources of energy.
- . Encouraging integrated townships and Special Economic Zones.
- . 10-15% of land in every new public/private housing projects or 20-25% FAR whichever is greater to be reserved for EWS/LIG Housing through appropriate spatial incentives.
- . Private Sector to be permitted land assembly within the purview of Master Plans. Action Plans for urban slum dwellers and special package for cooperative housing, labour housing and employees housing is to be prepared.
- . States to be advised to develop 10 years perspective plan for housing of EWS/LIG.
- . Policy gives primacy to provision of shelter to urban poor at their present location or near their work place.
- . Approach will be in-situ slum rehabilitation. Relocation will be considered only in specific cases.
- . Micro finance institutions to be promoted at state level to expedite flow of finances to urban poor.
- . Model municipal laws to be prepared by the Central Government.
- . Detailed city maps to be prepared based on GIS, aerial survey and ground verification.

- . Use of proven cost effective technology and building materials to be encouraged.
- . Development of mass rapid transit system at sub-regional level envisaged.
- . Green cover for cities to be encouraged for balanced ecological development.
- . All States to be encouraged to develop a "Habitat Infrastructure Action Plan" for all cities with a population of over one lakh.

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