

Land Policy Models and Strategies to Make Housing More Affordable

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SUMMARY

Land still represents the most important development resource for municipal and national governments. As urban planning processes mostly rather take place on private properties than on public properties, sustainable land policy has to consider complex connections and correlations between urban planning, land use and property rights including the relevant actors (e.g. housing industry). In developed economies, especially the following challenges are in the main focus: land efficiency (reduction of new land use for human settlement and transportation purposes, increase of intensity of use); affordable housing, mobilization of brownfields; socially-oriented supply of living space especially in large cities; prevention of social fragmentation in cities combined with the development of socially mixed districts as well as climate change adaptation in cities. Successful strategies in all these categories need a targeted use and the appropriate handling of existing and new instruments of land policy. The most important planning, regulatory and fiscal management approaches in German cities and municipalities are presented in this paper. Land policy models in Germany include guidelines on the mobilization and conversion of building land, the qualified urban land use which can be achieved through energy requirements or quality standards in construction projects, and the socially balanced urban development. In the City of Munich for example, the private investors have to use 30 % of new residential areas for people with special housing need (subsidized housing construction). More efficient land use and providing affordable housing is a growing challenge in developing countries, too. Worldwide, 330 million low- and moderate-income households live in substandard housing or are so financially stretched by housing payments that they must forgo spending on essentials like health care and education (World Economic Forum 2014). The article closes with international strategies municipal and national governments have to take to improve their land policy tools and to expand affordable housing.