

A publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Friday, 14 February 2020 | Vol. 125 No. 20 | Online at: <https://enb.iisd.org/wuf/10/>

## WUF10 Highlights

On Thursday, WUF10 concluded with a closing ceremony during which the WUF10 outcome document, the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, was presented.

### Closing Plenary

Following a performance by Al Ayalla dancers, moderator Amira Mohammed welcomed delegates to the closing ceremony and introduced a video of the highlights of WUF 10.

Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed, Abu Dhabi Municipalities and Transport, thanked all teams who worked on WUF10, including the 500 volunteers, for their tremendous effort, and said the richness of the Forum's agenda had made it a success. Suggesting that the goal should not be masterplanning cities but "masterpiecing" them, he expressed his best wishes for WUF11.

In a video message, President of the UN General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande commended WUF10 for marking one of the first events of the UN



Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed, Abu Dhabi Municipalities and Transport

Decade of Action. He described culture and innovation as key for promoting socially cohesive, peaceful, and resilient societies, noting that culture plays a critical role in fostering human rights and peaceful coexistence, and called for greater access to education and fostering creative thinking to help societies adapt to current challenges in the global economy. He described the New Urban



Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed, Abu Dhabi Municipalities and Transport; Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat; Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Poland; Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice; Katarzyna Smetek, Polish youth representative



**Mukhisa Kituyi**, Secretary-General, UN Conference on Trade and Development

Agenda (NUA) as one of the most important blueprints to achieving sustainable cities, and called for innovation to become more climate resilient and better prepared for disaster recovery and risk reduction, which he said is particularly important in world heritage conservation.

Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General, UN Conference on Trade and Development, said the world is now taking stock of the “triple promise of 2015,” noting “we are falling behind.” He called for identifying new levers of change, noting the focus on the “cultural base that determines what happens in our communities” as a welcome addition to the conversation. He described being inspired by seeing people from different backgrounds talking to each other, and expressed hope that goodness will thrive over short-term illwill.

Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) on the UN’s 75th Anniversary, said that we are at a “difficult juncture in history” where “geopolitics are back with a vengeance,” adding that the UNSG will launch a global consultation on the future of international cooperation in coming months. He underlined the importance of the WUF10 theme, noting that unmanaged urbanization exacerbates violence, climate change, and polarization.



**Martha Delgado Peralta**, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly



**Henry Murillo Salazar**, Latin American Network of Persons with Disabilities and their Families

Henry Murillo Salazar, Latin American Network of Persons with Disabilities and their Families, said cities must integrate accessibility as a basic principle in local and regional governance, reminding that: the NUA is committed to addressing all forms of discrimination; persons with disabilities represent 15% of the world’s population; and accessibility is a human right. He congratulated the cities that signed the Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities during the WUF10 Roundtable on Persons with Disabilities, including Barcelona, Helsinki and Abu Dhabi.

Martha Delgado Peralta, President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, said the Forum’s outcome document, entitled Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, had been prepared by a “well-balanced” group of national governments and stakeholders. Siraj Sait, Noon Center for Equality and Diversity, Abeer Sajwani, Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Transport, UAE, Christine Knudsen, UN-Habitat, and Delgado Peralta then took turns reading the outcome document which, among others, listed the voluntary actions and commitments that emerged during WUF10.

Participants then watched a sand art performance by Shaima Al Mughairi narrating the history of WUFs, followed by a symbolic hand-over between WUF10 and WUF11 hosts, and a video launching WUF11.

Congratulating delegates on a successful Forum, Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak, Minister of Funds and Regional Policy, Poland, called for turning its momentum into action. She noted that, by 2050, 68% of the world’s population is projected to be urban and that, therefore, urban policy affects the majority of people. Reminding that, as per the UN Charter, one of the roles of the UN is to “achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character,” she urged achieving this in line with UN-Habitat’s Strategic Plan, the SDGs and the NUA. She invited all delegates to Poland, suggesting



**Małgorzata Jarosińska-Jedynak**, Minister of Funds and Regional Policy, Poland

Katowice, the host of WUF11, “has a great story of urban transformation to tell,” and said the host country’s priorities will include just transformation and leaving no one behind.

In her closing address, UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif noted WUF10 had achieved a remarkable number of milestones, including in terms of quality of the presentations and exhibitions, and gender balance among the speakers. Sharif recognized a call from all participants to leave a legacy of a better future for all and urged passing on the current peace and health achieved thanks to the sacrifices of past generations to ensure that future ones will be able to enjoy these “ingredients of happiness.” She said that the co-dependency of culture, innovation, and cities gives rise to the best of human achievement, and suggested this WUF had paved the way for accelerating the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs. Announcing that 169 nations had been represented at WUF10 and reporting on 71 bilateral meetings by UN-Habitat’s executive team during the Forum, Sharif called on all member states to integrate the urban dimension into their development plans and commended the work of local governments and their commitments in signing up for Voluntary Local Reviews and for helping each other.

Closing the Forum, Sharif thanked the organizers and all participating countries, organizations, and constituencies, and called on all to accelerate actions, in the face of the climate emergency, and ensure the implementation of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

#### ***Abu Dhabi Declared Actions - Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation***

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, compiled by a WUF10 advisory group, brought together voluntary actions and commitments by all stakeholder groups in



**Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director, UN-Habitat

support of the NUA and SDGs. The document presented participants’ perspectives on the relationship between culture, innovation, and urban development, including:

- that culture is fundamental to identity, heritage, and is an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanization;
- that cities are the incubators of social, economic, environmental, political, and cultural progress;
- that there is a need for stronger commitments to safeguarding cultural heritage and accelerating an integrated approach to the implementation of the NUA;
- that linking data, innovation, and advances in science and technology with policy is critical for implementing the NUA and achieving the SDGs; and
- that further action and commitments by actors at the local, national, and global levels is welcomed in support of the NUA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions document lists the diverse commitments made at WUF10 by international organizations, national governments, local and regional governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and other groups. The full text of the document can be found [here](#).

The *WUF Bulletin* summary will be available on Saturday, 15 February 2020 [here](#).



The flag lowering ceremony at WUF10