

## Summary of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10): 8-13 February 2020

The tenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10) took place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), from 8-13 February 2020. More than 18,000 participants registered online for the Forum, during which six dialogue sessions unpacked the theme of “Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation.” High-level representatives from the host country and the UN system opened WUF10 at an official ceremony on Sunday, 9 February.

The week began with five Assembly meetings of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), constituency groups that previously provided input to the Habitat III process, namely women, youth, grassroots, and the World Assembly for Local and Regional Government. Dialogues, roundtables, special sessions, side events, networking and training events, press conferences, report launches, an art installation, tree planting and exhibitions took place at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre and at various venues around Abu Dhabi during the week. A ministerial roundtable and several special sessions convened to discuss concerns and share examples of sustainable and inclusive urban policies and practices. Roundtable sessions were held with all the major stakeholder groups to hear their views about urban development.

At the close of WUF10, delegates adopted the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, the main outcome document of the meeting.

This report provides a summary of WUF10 high-level events and a selection of roundtable, special sessions and Sustainable Urban Development Now (flagship launch) sessions.

### A Brief History of the World Urban Forum, UN-Habitat and Human Settlements Issues

The first UN Conference on Human Settlements took place in Vancouver, Canada, from 31 May to 11 June 1976. This meeting led to the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, which officially established the UN Centre for Human Settlements as the major UN agency mandated by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to pursue the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. In resolution 56/206 on 21 December 2001, the General Assembly transformed the UN Centre for Human Settlements into UN-Habitat.

In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided that the WUF, designated as an advisory body, would be a “non-legislative technical forum in which experts can exchange views in the years when the UN-Habitat Governing Council does not meet.” The WUF provides opportunities for debate and discussion about the challenges of urbanization and operates as an open-ended think tank.

The WUF aims to further advance the outcomes of several UN conferences on sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) that was adopted at the Habitat III conference in Ecuador in 2016.

### Expectations of this Meeting

UN-Habitat organizes and runs the World Urban Forum (WUF) every second year as the world’s leading gathering on urban issues. Each session of the Forum focuses on the objectives of:

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- raising awareness of sustainable urbanization among stakeholders and constituencies, including the general public;
- improving the collective knowledge of sustainable urban development through inclusive open debates, sharing of lessons learned, and the exchange of best practices and good policies; and
- increasing coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders and constituencies for the advancement and implementation of sustainable urbanization.

### *Origins of the Process*

#### **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

**(HLPF):** The 67th session of UNGA adopted resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF on 9 July 2013. It decided that the HLPF, consistent with its intergovernmental, universal character, will provide political leadership, guidance, and recommendations for sustainable development, and will follow up and review progress on the implementation of sustainable development commitments. Seven HLPF sessions have convened, the first in September 2013 and subsequent sessions in July each year at UN Headquarters in New York. The HLPF has a system of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in which countries present their progress toward the SDGs, and a global review of selected SDGs is conducted each year. SDG 11 on sustainable cities was reviewed at the HLPF in 2018. IISD-RS coverage of the 2018 HLPF coverage can be found at <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/sdg-11-review-at-hlpf-emphasizes-role-of-cities-in-achieving-2030-agenda/>

**Habitat Conferences:** UN Habitat conferences take place every 20 years. UNGA convened Habitat I in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. The conference recognized that shelter and urbanization are global issues to be addressed collectively, and created the UN Center for Human Settlements.

Habitat II convened from 3-14 June 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, adopted by 171 governments during the Conference, outlined more than 100 commitments and strategies to address shelter and sustainable human settlements, emphasizing the themes of partnership and local action. The Habitat Agenda set the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and the sustainable development of human settlements. The Conference also reaffirmed its commitment to the full and progressive realization of the right to adequate housing.

Habitat III took place from 17-20 October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, after a series of three preparatory committee meetings to prepare a draft negotiated text. Following negotiations, Habitat III adopted the NUA, a global, non-binding agenda for making cities safe, sustainable and resilient.

**New Urban Agenda:** The NUA adopted at Habitat III aligns with many of the SDGs, including SDG 11 on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In preambular text, the NUA also sets out aims to end poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2), reduce inequalities (SDG 10), promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), achieve gender equality (SDG 5), improve human health and wellbeing (SDG 4), foster resilience (SDGs 11 and 13), and protect the environment

(SDGs 6, 9, 13, 14 and 15). The Agenda promotes a vision for cities that is grounded in human rights, and recognizes the need to give particular attention to addressing multiple forms of discrimination, including discrimination against people in slum settlements, homeless people, internally displaced persons, and migrants, regardless of their migration status.

The “Quito Implementation Plan for the New Urban Agenda” comprises the major part of the outcome document. The Plan includes three sections: transformative commitments for sustainable urban development; effective implementation; and follow-up and review. The section on implementation emphasizes the need for establishing strong urban governance structures, planning and managing urban spatial development, and accessing means of implementation.

The UN Secretary-General reports on implementation of the NUA every four years, with the first report submitted during UNGA’s 72nd session (2017-2018). Habitat III proposed to hold the fourth UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat IV) in 2036.

**WUF:** WUF1 took place from 29 April to 3 May 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya, on the theme of sustainable urbanization, and discussions focused on: the effect of HIV/AIDS on human settlements; violence against women; basic services and infrastructure, including provision of water and sanitation; and the need for secure tenure. Subsequently, WUF sessions have been held every two years with themes ranging from “Sustainable Cities — Turning Ideas into Action” to “Implementing the New Urban Agenda.” It was only replaced by Habitat III in 2016, in Quito, Ecuador. WUF sessions have previously convened in: Barcelona, Spain; Vancouver, Canada; Nanjing, China; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Naples, Italy; Medellín, Colombia; and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. IISD-RS coverage of WUF3 can be found at <https://enb.iisd.org/crs/wuf3/>, of WUF7 at <https://enb.iisd.org/wuf/wuf7/>, and of WUF9 at <https://enb.iisd.org/wuf/wuf9/>, the first Forum to convene since the adoption of the NUA.

### **Report of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10)**

#### *Joint Opening of WUF10 Assemblies*

The joint opening of WUF10 Assemblies took place on Saturday, 8 February. Welcoming delegates, moderator Nesreen Barwari, University of Duhok, Kurdistan, emphasized all stakeholders’ commitment to ensuring sustainable urban development and leaving no-one behind, and called for creating cities of opportunities by learning from, and supporting, each other.

Opening the session, Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed, Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport, welcomed participants to Abu Dhabi, encouraging the forum to engage in “masterpiecing” through an exchange of views and experiences throughout the week.

Leah Namugerwa, Fridays for Future and Urban Youth Assembly representative, urged: more action and implementation, particularly against climate change; representation of children



**Falah Al Ahababi**, Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport, and **Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, preside over the flag-raising ceremony at the start of WUF10.

and youth in decision making; and resilient cities based on an understanding across cultures and generations.

Violet Shivutse, Huairou Commission and Women's Assembly representative, highlighted challenges faced by women in cities, including recognition as stakeholders in policy making, and called for a role for women in monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the NUA.

Rose Molokoane, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and Grassroots Assembly representative, called for strong partnerships between local governments and grassroots movements. The latter, she argued, identify challenges and collect data that are essential to the implementation of the NUA.

Arsalaan Ahmed, HSBC Amanah and Business Assembly representative, said the public sector must create an enabling environment to foster innovation, and that the world could look to Islamic finance as an example of an alternate model of capital market.

Mohamed Boudra, President, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments representative, said a model of sustainable development with strong roots in culture and heritage is necessary to achieve the required societal transformation.

Siraj Sait, UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise, noted the need for multi-stakeholder platforms that put forward evidence-based and pro-poor solutions.

In closing remarks, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, called for WUF10 to be an action-oriented and inclusive meeting, noting that implementation happens primarily at the local level. She commended the organizers for making this the first WUF where more than half of speakers are women.

### **Assemblies**

UN-Habitat convened five Assemblies on Saturday. These were the Assemblies for Youth, Women, Business, and Grassroots, and the World Assembly for Local and Regional Governments. Three of these Assemblies are summarized below.

**URBAN YOUTH: First Segment of the 'Youth and the Decade of Action' High-Level Panel:** Leah Namugerwa called for urgent climate action, adding it is the first common crisis humanity has ever faced. Isaac Mutisya Muasa, Mathare One-Stop Youth Centre, Kenya, said challenges facing youth, such as a unemployment, can be turned into opportunities in urban areas. Kristian Mjøen, Trondheim Municipality, Norway, spoke of various initiatives globally to promote youth engagement at the local level. Jennie Moore, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Canada, said young people are driving a cultural shift towards a sustainable economic system. Juan Ramón Lazcano de la Concha, Vice Mayor, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, described how his municipality sought to engage youth in cultural matters in consultations on how to better use urban space. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), said the UN must gather fresh ideas from the youth as well as empower them to put pressure on politicians.

**Breakout Sessions:** Groups convened on: livelihoods in the blue and green economies; youth, peace and security; innovation and information and communication technologies; SDGs, cities and youth; governance; climate action in cities; the New Urban Agenda+5; and culture and public spaces. Participants discussed many pathways for youth to best contribute to the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs in cities, including through: new curricula in schools to bridge the digital divide among youths; consulting with young people on how to engage them using



Panelists, moderators and partners pose for a group photo during the opening plenary of the Urban Youth Assembly

e-governance tools; and best practices in urban planning to foster youth-friendly public spaces. Participants highlighted, among other initiatives, various educational efforts to promote awareness of the SDGs in countries such as Russia and India.

**Second Segment of the ‘Youth and the Decade of Action’ High-Level Panel:** Christine Knudsen, UN-Habitat, underlined that youth are leading the way in making cities sustainable. Stefan Germann, Botnar Foundation, said frontier technologies can be harnessed to improve the wellbeing of adolescents and young people in cities. Senegalese rapper Didier Awadi said that culture and music can be used to engage youth in sustainable development processes. Mohamed Maliki Bin Mohamed Rapiee, International Youth Center, Malaysia, said youth should be seen as having potential, pointing to the Malaysian Yellow Ribbon programme that gives young ex-convicts second chances. Maria Fernanda Rojas, Bogotá, said youth are rejecting the economic system adults have left them. Yosuke Nagai, Accept International, added that many youths in extremist organizations must not be left behind. Adil Sait, BuroHappold Engineering, said both structural and social change are needed to make cities more aid-responsive.

**Closing Session:** Sharmaarke Abdullahi, UN-Habitat, presented a draft ‘WUF10 Children and Youth DeclarAction’ which calls on governments and local authorities to improve the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs. Representatives from the breakout sessions proposed adding new language to the document based on the discussions that took place in their respective groups. They suggested, for example, that the DeclarAction call for the digital transformation of urban spaces, as well as for education systems that prepare young people for green jobs.

**GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS: Opening:** Beth Chitekwe-Biti, SDI, and Mino Ramarason, Huairou Commission, moderated. The session highlighted grassroots achievements since WUF9. Violet Shivutse shared experiences in disseminating the NUA among local communities and empowering these to select priority issues and participate in related decision making. Rose Molokoane emphasized the role of community-led data collection in enabling engagement with local and national governments. Kerstin Sommer, UN-Habitat, highlighted the importance of leveraging local solutions, involving grassroots movements in all policy areas, and engaging the private sector.

**Panels:** In a panel on the impact of grassroots partnerships and tools in NUA implementation, speakers highlighted: government-led committees for the development of villages; community-led data collection as a support to permanent partnerships between local and national levels; sharing of community-level data collection practices across countries, including youth in data collection; capacity building for climate resilience in communities; and technology as an enabler for sharing best practices. They also stressed the importance of educating policy implementers and of community resilience funds.

In a panel on benchmarking grassroots needs and opportunities to ensure sustained participation, speakers shared experiences about: uses of science-based tools, such as social and environmental surveys, and collaboration between academia and communities to develop new research tools in support of sustainable urban settlements; training youth to document communities’ stories; and consideration of grassroots communities as agents of change instead of objects of charity.

A panel on building meaningful partnerships heard stories from: women’s cooperatives in Nepal that provide low-interest



Participants confer during the Grassroots Organizations Assembly

rate loans to women and youth and are based on a nationwide network that works closely with the government and private sector; a UN-Habitat-supported project in Malawi improving livelihoods through urban infrastructure; and a community-managed fund in Ghana providing loans for ablution facilities, supported by multi-partner research, multi-stakeholder financing, and participatory implementation.

In a panel on cultural adequacy and innovative approaches against inequality and exclusion, panelists highlighted: new technologies, such as social media, for informing groups of their rights and for enabling communities to engage in policy processes; focusing on training and skills development; and ensuring participation of government representatives in community-led initiatives. They also called for emphasis on slum improvement and security of tenure over slum upgrading and displacement.

#### Key Recommendations and Outcome

**Conclusions:** Breakout sessions discussed: ensuring inclusion

of grassroots needs, solutions and initiatives in the current development framework; building meaningful partnerships to incorporate bottom-up innovations into the implementation of the NUA and SDGs; and shaping the role of grassroots organizations in supporting diversity and cultural sensitivity.

In reporting back, on inclusion, participants highlighted, *inter alia*: institutionalization of engagement spaces; ensuring that communities understand the benefits of development projects and are aware of national legal and policy frameworks and the SDGs; additional resources for project implementation; and documenting and scaling up good practices at the community level.

On partnerships, participants identified: planning for meaningful engagements; training, education and information for grassroots groups; equality in decision making; and adequate collection and storage of data to inform policymaking. On diversity and cultural sensitivity, participants stressed the need for capacity building that “goes both ways.”

**Closing Panel:** Sheela Patel, SDI and SPARC India, said the recommendations represented “the struggle for recognition, acceptance and learning from each other that governments and grassroots groups can do together.” Hajah Zuraida Kamaruddin, Minister for Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, said her government’s policies are based on the acknowledgement that engaging people is crucial for bringing needed changes. UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif issued a call for action to support the UN Decade of Action, saying “the local level is where plans are implemented.”

**WORLD ASSEMBLY FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** In opening remarks, UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif and Mpho Moruakgomo, Commonwealth Local Governments, emphasized the need for actionable commitments by city and regional governments. Sharif suggested that at WUF11 in 2022 focus should be on “what we have done” rather



A view of the room during a panel discussion of the Grassroots Organizations Assembly

than just “what we should do.” The Assembly was divided into three “moments,” consisting of two roundtables each.

**1st Moment:** Interventions in the first roundtable, on ‘global partnerships and initiatives for sustainable urbanization,’ came from the International Union of Public Transport and Mayors of Polokwane, Tehran, Utrecht, and Soria. Speakers called for mainstreaming culture into the VNRs for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and creating multi-level alliances to institutionalize NUA implementation strategies.

A second roundtable, on ‘how urbanization affects and is affected by culture and innovation,’ featured interventions from the Instituto de Investigación de Vivienda y Hábitat and local government leaders of Tunis, Sala, Sakha Republic, and Barcelona. Emphasis was placed on how experiences of cities are different for women and sexual minorities, and the challenge of ensuring technology is used to promote inclusion and justice rather than multiplying existing economic inequalities.

**2nd Moment:** The first roundtable, on ‘the role of urban and territorial policies in preserving cultural heritage,’ saw remarks from the Ministry of Housing and Local Governments of Malaysia, and local government leaders from Banjul, Kalmar Region, Madrid, Kitchener, Tawau, and Deir Nbouh on: reorienting public interest towards culture; legal approaches to heritage preservation; and efforts to promote culture and inclusion through housing.

The second roundtable, on ‘local and regional governments,’ role in maximizing the relationship between tradition, culture,

and sustainable urbanization’ heard remarks from mayors and officials from Dortmund, Esplugues de Llobregat in Barcelona, and Turkistan. They agreed that while culture has been regarded as a source of division in cities, it has now been proven to drive innovation and build resilience. They highlighted how technologies such as traffic digitalization, public internet access, and environmental monitoring have boosted urban economies. The International Federation of Library Associations, Cities Alliance, and Habitat for Humanity International noted that cities have always been “melting pots” of culture and tradition. They said these provide both opportunities and complexities, and that urban development needs to be inclusive.

**3rd Moment:** The first roundtable, on ‘how can local and regional governments shape new technology for the future of their communities?’ featured speakers from Kismu, Tirana, Acapulco, Subang Jaya, and Cairo. They explained how technology can streamline citizen engagement, that technologies should be adapted to local environments, and that there are technological solutions for cities of all income levels.

The ‘innovation and culture for the achievement of the global goals’ roundtable included representatives from World Enabled, Qena, Bulawayo, Barcelona Metropolitan Area, and Bogotá.. Speakers underscored the importance of communities: taking “ownership” of development efforts; and seeing the benefits of public spaces and how cultural promotion can create jobs. They also encouraged promoting civic behavior and recognizing modern sources of culture such as street art and gaming.



A view of the room during the World Assembly for Local and Regional Organizations



The opening ceremony with hosts **Won Ho** and **Youssef Abdulbari**

### **Official Opening**

The opening ceremony took place on Sunday, and began with a live performance of the UAE national anthem, followed by an opening act by hosts Won Ho and Youssef Abdulbari and a musical performance by the host country.

Falah Mohammad Al Ahbabi, Chairman of the Department of Municipalities and Transport, Abu Dhabi, noted that WUF10 is the first conference of its kind to be held in the Arab region. He pointed to mass migration and technological progress as two trends demanding a “renewed understanding of locality,” which includes safety, inclusiveness and social cohesion.

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, via video, said that urbanization continues to feature high rates of inequality, and called for all stakeholders, including local governments, to partner with the UN to tackle the climate emergency.

Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan, said the shared goal for cities to become more compact and sustainable between now and 2050 is threatened by environmental change, a technological

revolution, as well as mounting political rivalries and violence. He added that organizational cultures in “communities of knowledge” constitute another significant constraint, suggesting that several international organizations are “still reflections of a different world.”

Warning that, “as long as the planet keeps heating, no people will be spared from suffering,” Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama emphasized the need to make urban living synonymous with sustainability. He stressed that addressing climate change serves citizens’ interests today, and called on every nation, city and community to join Fiji in achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif commended Abu Dhabi for hosting the first WUF in the Arab region, highlighting participation by more than 80 ministers, 70 mayors, and 18,000 delegates from 140 nations. Noting that “SDG 11 is where all of the SDGs come together,” she called for turning urbanization into a net positive contributor to life on earth.

Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Sharif officially launched WUF10, followed by a video on the WUF10 theme of ‘culture and innovation.’

In further remarks, Ernesto Ottone Ramírez, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), emphasized the contributions of culture to addressing challenges of peace, environmental protection, and migration. Eduardo López Moreno, UN-Habitat, stressed the need to plan for both growing and shrinking cities. Thembi Nkadimeng, Mayor of Polokwane, called for strengthening the capacity of local governments to implement the NUA. Elisa Ferreira, European Commission, shared the EU’s progress on building its urban agenda, developing a people-based definition of cities and settlements, and fostering global city-to-city cooperation. Martha Delgado Peralta, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, and President of the first UN-Habitat Assembly, said the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan seeks to support cities in tackling challenges such as inequality, exclusion, and conflict.



**Falah Mohammad Al Ahbabi**, Chairman of the Department of Municipalities and Transport, Abu Dhabi

## Dialogues

### DIALOGUE 1: Urbanization, Culture and

**Innovation:** Opening the first dialogue on Monday, moderator Jason Pomeroy, Pomeroy Studio, reflected on the juxtaposition of culture and innovation, noting that culture tends to be formed by the past and innovation is influenced by the future.

During introductory remarks, Ernesto Ottone Ramírez, UNESCO, questioned why young and poor people do not feel incorporated into city planning processes, and posited that unless lasting values about heritage and culture are instilled into young people, a generation of urban dwellers could lose their identity.

Using Abu Dhabi as example, Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, UAE, emphasized the relationship between residents and their past, and integrating diversity into urban processes. Saskia Sassen, Columbia University, warned about the tendencies of land grabbing by the wealthy and feeling uncomfortable with the complexities of informal settlements.

Luis Monreal, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, suggested that market forces often prevail in urban spaces to the detriment of culture and heritage. Beth Chitekwe-Biti, SDI, described informal communities as counter-cultural forces formed through exclusion, and said city planners mostly create urban areas for those with resources, to the exclusion of poor and young people.

Tim Stonor, architect and planner, said that when cities are planned, streets are often ignored as sources of social life and culture, as are technology and inclusivity.

During the first half of the dialogue, Ottone Ramírez emphasized that cities should be planned with the lasting qualities of life in mind, including family life and recreation. Monreal suggested communal areas act as a space for rebuilding the morale of the community, and coming to terms with grief and loss after disasters. Sassen described cities as complex spaces where, counterintuitively, it is those without power that often drive economic growth. Al Kaabi stressed including diverse cultural elements such as street food and beautiful walkways, and documenting oral histories to capture cultural identities from the past. Chitekwe-Biti noted that local authorities struggle to allow informality because they consider it an obstruction to mobility.



Luis Monreal, Aga Khan Trust for Culture



Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, UAE

On how cultural diversity can enrich cities, Ottone Ramírez pointed to the unique outlook of indigenous knowledge, which sees cultural heritage as part of an indivisible whole. Stonor noted the importance of “spatial culture,” suggesting that street networks can either divide or connect the city. Monreal responded that culture emerges informally regardless of the built environment. Sassen warned against the ability of the financial sector to speculate on real estate in major cities. Chitekwe-Biti spoke of the democratizing power of technology, noting that slum dwellers use smart phones to collect data that can inform policy making.

In response to questions from the audience, Monreal said politicians should be educated on the long-term requirements of creating culture, and Chitekwe-Biti said cultural policies can be elitist, often disregarding the culture created in “spaces of exclusion.” In closing remarks, UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif said that it is important to reflect and transform other dimensions of culture, such as the culture of “managing the global and the environment,” as we embark on the final decade to achieve the SDGs.

**DIALOGUE 2: Implementing the New Urban Agenda to Drive Sustainable Change:** This dialogue also convened on Monday. Jasmine Pang, Branding Shanghai, moderated the session and introduced UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif, who called on all stakeholders to build a global coalition for fairer globalization, stressed the importance of a One-UN approach, and encouraged participants to share experiences to develop a concrete action framework focused on areas with the largest possible impact.

In a keynote speech, Mariana Mazzucato, University College London, suggested there is a need to reshape governance mechanisms and implement a mission-oriented approach that “brings purpose back to the center of how we do economics” and “tilts the playing field” to reward behavior that supports the SDGs.

Martha Delgado Peralta, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, noted: the challenge of applying urban policy lessons in cities of



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

different scales; the importance of correct pilot project sizing; and the necessity of effectively communicating with communities.

Khadija Ahmadi, Mayor of Nili, shared her city's successes in empowering women and ensuring local infrastructure projects are co-implemented with communities.

Sergey Levkin, Department of Urban Development Policy of Moscow, stressed that successful city projects are not possible without community participation, drawing on examples of metro construction, housing renovation, and street pedestrianization in Moscow.

Sameh Wahba, World Bank, underscored three priorities for effective urban development: helping municipalities generate their own revenues; avoiding spatial inequalities and land value capturing; and finding innovative ways to attract private sector finance.

Noting that 30-70% of migrants into urban areas live in illegal settlements, Sheela Patel, SDI, asked how cities will deal with rapidly growing populations over the next decade.

Marjeta Jager, European Commission, highlighted the European Green Deal's and the Commission's areas of emphasis for implementing the NUA, including participatory management



**Marjeta Jager**, European Commission

approaches, city twinning, innovative financing, and employing culture as an enabler for cooperation.

On practical experiences with 'leaving no-one behind,' panelists identified: fostering a sense of solidarity among cities for redistributing financing; including internally displaced persons in city decision making; and including participatory processes in criteria for financial support.

Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, said the "future of cities is not set in stone" and that, through the NUA, cities can uplift people today while safeguarding future generations. He stressed that climate impacts entrench inequality and are drivers of urbanization by pushing vulnerable rural communities to the perceived safety of cities.

Ricky Burdett, London School of Economics, highlighted that many cities are growing well beyond their administrative boundaries, meaning municipal authorities must work with regional and national governments to address their challenges. He noted the example of London's Green Belt as a mechanism for limiting urban sprawl.

Wendy Pullan, University of Cambridge, said excessive private development often destroys public spaces by favoring certain sectors of society and called for public spaces to be prioritized alongside housing and infrastructure in city planning.

Cyrille Pierre, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, stressed: the importance of preserving social linkages; promoting capacities of local governments; and creating mechanisms to collaborate with local communities.

Joyce Msuya, UNEP, said UNEP looks at urbanization as a way to work with member states based on a systems approach, in areas such as waste, energy, food, and sustainable consumption and production as an opportunity to achieve change at scale.

Mounir Tabet, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), said crises in the region have also brought an opportunity to build back better, both for infrastructures and social fabrics.

Mami Mizutori, Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, explained her agency's work in the past decade to raise awareness about the need for a paradigm shift in disaster risk reduction in cities, from "reaction to prevention."

In the discussion, panelists addressed issues including: the need to avoid working in silos; communicating with communities using language they understand; dignity as a core consideration in development efforts in the Arab region; and the benefits of preparations for one type of disaster for responding to others.

**DIALOGUE 3: Tradition and Modernity: a creative convergence for sustainable cities:** This session convened on Tuesday. The dialogue comprised two sections, each with keynote speeches and a panel moderated by Joan Erakit, American writer and journalist.

Laila Robledo, Municipality of Malvinas Argentinas, noted the importance of sharing knowledge through intergenerational dialogues and warned that urban sprawl can lead to fragmentation and inequality. Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance, UAE, said Abu Dhabi's 2030 strategy reflects a vision for a knowledge-based economy, infrastructure



Laila Robledo, Municipality of Malvinas Argentinas

development, expanded manufacturing, reduced oil dependence, and environmental sustainability. He called for cities to enhance tradition while also innovating to create growth and prosperity.

In the panel discussion, Katherine Kline, General Assembly of Partners (GAP) Older Persons, emphasized that accessibility and inclusivity solutions can be found by reaching out to older residents. Joyati Das, University of Melbourne, highlighted that young people are not a homogenous group and said that cities that meaningfully include them can benefit from their skills as “digital natives.” Reda Ismail Thabet and Namet Ismail Thabet, students at Al Amal School for the Deaf, shared their experiences of participating in a Minecraft video game course that allowed them to help design accessibility solutions for public parks. Tatu Gatere, BUILDHER, shared her work to overcome barriers to women receiving technical training, noting the importance of working with partners comfortable with listening to local voices. Ahmad Zaki Sarfaraz, Mayor of Kabul, underscored the value of neighborhood-level planning and consulting with communities when designing projects.

In a keynote address, Sandra Piesik, architect, said that, to ensure harmony between the built environment and the climate, architects should emulate indigenous peoples’ capacity to listen and collaborate with nature.

Andrea Carmen, Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council, noted successful partnerships between modern cities such as Vallejo, California, and nearby indigenous tribes.

Jitendra Bothara, Miyamoto New Zealand, noted several issues with merging tradition and modernity in the engineering field, including a bias against traditional knowledge.

Julianne Polanco, California Office for Historic Preservation, said storytelling celebrates cultural diversity, and recounted that her organization documents the history of immigrant communities in California.

Ege Yildirim, International Council on Monuments and Sites, called for a long-term perspective to cultural heritage, noting that “the creative genius of today is the heritage of tomorrow.”

The panel then responded to questions from the audience on how to tackle historical preservation with limited financial



Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance, UAE

resources, and why modern architecture incorporates traditional aesthetics and knowledge in some countries more than in others.

In closing remarks, Mahmoud Sharawi, Minister for Local Development, Egypt, said years of internal conflict has negatively impacted the country’s heritage, and described policies aimed at combining Egypt’s millenary culture with modernization.

**DIALOGUE 4: Frontier Technologies and Innovation for Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Smart Cities:** Jasmine Pang moderated the session, which was also held on Tuesday.

Francesca Bria, University College of London, suggested the digital transition will require “deep thinking” to avoid new monopolies of power that require new taxation regimes and trade regulations, and mass unemployment. She referred to a “black box society” where data is aggregated and mined by a few players, and called for governance that is built on public engagement, ethical digital standards and transparency.

Khalid bin Abdul Samad, Minister for Federal Territories, Malaysia, detailed smart-city blueprints and strategies in Malaysian cities, and suggested being “smart” means utilizing cutting-edge technologies that include governing the way smart cities are developed.

Marta Eugenia Juárez Ruiz, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UNEP and UN-Habitat, described progress in her country towards cleaner, safer and more sustainable cities, and said this requires the adoption of appropriate policies that eliminate inequalities with tailor-made local solutions.

Ernest Nsabimana, City of Kigali, described his city’s efforts to become more sustainable and resilient through developing a smart-city masterplan with UN-Habitat, saying the objective is to use technology to support people, including through e-government portals and a new smart phone developed in Rwanda in 2019.

In a follow-up segment, Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the UN’s 75th Anniversary, warned that the world faces a “fundamental and tragic paradox,” where some governments are no longer pursuing global solutions to predicaments such as climate change



**Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond**, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the UN's 75th Anniversary

and mass migration, and said that now is a defining moment to avoid far-reaching consequences.

Haoliang Xu, UN Development Programme (UNDP), described a smart city project in the Maldives, and said the immediate challenge is to include countries at different stages of development into the global smart-city narrative.

During a panel, Meera Al Shaikh, Smart Dubai, presented on her office's work, including the citizen-centric Dubai Happiness Agenda, digital inclusion guidelines, and ethical artificial intelligence principles. She invited cities to join the Smart Cities Global Framework.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif lamented that many smart-city concepts tend to focus more on technology than outcomes for people, and called for a redefinition based on good-quality neighborhoods, nature-based solutions, and traditional approaches to resource management.

Martine Abel-Williamson, World Blind Union, highlighted that people with disabilities represent 15% of the world's population, and 80% of them live in poverty and face barriers to participation.



**Martine Abel-Williamson**, World Blind Union

Noting that 1.8 billion people lack formal identification and are therefore excluded from the democratic process and digital economy, Alby Bocanegra, Mastercard, urged understanding connectivity as a right.

Calling for ensuring that technologies introduced maximize benefit for all, John Paul Farmer, City of New York, outlined his city's vision for achieving this, based on: universal broadband access; good technology policy; innovation; and high-quality digital services.

Reminding of the digital divide, Ayona Datta, University College London, called for providing access to technology in resource-poor neighborhoods to enable equal participation in the urban public sphere.

In the discussion, panelists touched on: involving blind people in technology design; ensuring representativeness in teams delivering technologies; understanding technology as a power relationship; incentivizing technological interoperability; drawing on communities of practice worldwide for solutions; ensuring affordability for a more equitable adoption; and public information transparency as a tool to counter misinformation.

**DIALOGUE 5: Urban Planning and Heritage Preservation - Regeneration:** This session convened on Wednesday. The first panel discussion was moderated by Dena Assaf, UN Resident Coordinator to the UAE. UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif, describing her own involvement in restoration efforts in Malaysia, stressed the importance of preserving heritage sites and buildings in cities, saying "once it is lost, it will only be retrieved at great cost."

In a keynote address, Jyoti Hosagrahar, UNESCO, said urban regeneration is usually synonymous with reversing decline, addressing unemployment, improving poor housing, and reducing social exclusion, and urged integrating heritage conservation with urban development.

In the first panel discussion, Inés Samudio, Minister of Housing and Land Management, Panama, shared her country's recent establishment of a Ministry of Culture and resultant restoration efforts in Panama City, emphasizing the value of creating "living museums" where local communities continue to live and work, instead of being evicted and losing the intangible wealth of their experiences. Arbjan Mazniku, Deputy Mayor of Tirana, noted that while people are "change-averse," including them in planning processes leads to lasting and gratifying results.

Shatha Al Mulla, Ministry of Culture and Knowledge, UAE, stressed the importance of developing heritage projects as spaces of co-existence where modernity and tradition are integrated. Cameron Rashti, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, noted the need for regeneration projects that spur social, economic, and cultural development that, in turn, support quality of life. Milena Ivković, International Society of City and Regional Planners, highlighted that her organization focuses on "active adaptive" re-use of urban areas through workshops and capacity building.

Participants posed questions about: including climate and disaster risk mitigation measures when restoring sites and buildings; and balancing economic growth, tourism objectives, and the preservation of fragile ancient structures.



L-R: Moderator **Dena Assaf**, UN Resident Coordinator to the UAE; **Jyoti Hosagrahar**, UNESCO; **Arbjan Mazniku**, Deputy Mayor of Tirana, Albania; **Shatha Al Mulla**, Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, UAE; **Cameron Rashti**, Aga Khan Trust for Culture; **Milena Ivković**, ISOCARP; and **Inés Samudio**, Minister of Housing and Land Management, Panama

In the second panel, Ahmed Eiweida, World Bank, said integrating culture and people in regeneration projects was essential to attracting private investment. Similarly, Maung Maung Soe, Mayor of Yangon, noted the importance of participatory approaches to heritage conservation.

Dwinita Larasati, Indonesia Creative Cities Network, described a programme promoting innovative urban regeneration ideas through small-scale interventions in Bandung's public spaces. Alaina Beverly, University of Chicago, noting that universities can have a transformative role in communities, described efforts to revitalize Chicago's South Side neighborhoods by facilitating investments in local businesses and capacity-building workshops.

Donovan Rypkema, International Council on Monuments and Sites, said that, because "no government in the world will give sufficient funding to built heritage" and because civil society is unable to fill that gap, creating a strong economic case to attract private sector investment in urban preservation is key. Patrick Domingos Tembwa, REALL, said affordable housing was an untapped market worth USD 17 trillion globally and can be more commercially viable than upscale housing.

During discussions, panelists underscored that built heritage includes all the spaces where people live and work, as opposed to just the World Heritage Sites, and described how communities themselves can leverage financing in the urban regeneration of their neighborhoods.

**DIALOGUE 6: Partnerships and Initiatives Supporting Culture and Innovation in Cities:** This session also convened on Wednesday. Jason Pomeroy moderated this dialogue. In the first panel, Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), suggested current challenges to globalization and the "fracturing of global value chains" also provide an opportunity for engagement with the local level.

Siraj Sait, Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity, described how faith-based practices and culture relating to ethical finance and customary land rights can contribute to sustainable urbanization.

Cautioning against "hype of smart innovation," Maruxa Cardama, Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, called for attention to cost-effective mobility innovations for

millions of urban dwellers in the global South, and for greater focus on managing space, and practical applications for informal transport.

During discussions, Kituyi said the development community should recognize the economic value of creative industries. Sait stressed the need to establish a "right to culture," including through creating communal spaces for cultural actors. Cardama identified tasks for accelerating sustainable mobility, including: collecting data on informal transport; innovating to integrate informal and formal transport; and information sharing for stakeholder engagement.

Irina Ilina, Higher School of Economics University, opened the second panel with a keynote outlining the development of a "digital university" model that integrates university education into city infrastructure.

In the discussion, Vladimir Bataev, Zaz Ventures, highlighted barriers to smart city development: poor understanding of the problems facing cities; limited possibilities to pilot projects; and difficulties with bringing solutions to scale.

Tulio Vazquez López, Inter-American Housing Union, stressed the need to put citizens at the center of decision-making processes to ensure smart cities are not just more productive, but also more equitable.

Marcela Villarreal, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), emphasized the infeasibility of feeding the projected urban population growth if future citizens consume as much meat as those in the global North do today. She called on the food industry to provide more sustainable and healthy choices to urban residents.



**Marcela Villarreal**, FAO

In the third panel, Mamou Daffé, Arterial Network, spoke of his work creating the Niger Festival for arts and music in Ségou, Mali, which has grown to attract 30,000 visitors and aims to reaffirm identity and social cohesion while improving livelihoods.

Shamoy Hajare, Radicle Global, called for good policies, alternative financing mechanisms, and entrepreneurship education to promote social entrepreneur ecosystems and economic development to “uplift people and the planet.”

Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, spoke of the need to build good artificial intelligence policies to leverage its potential across the economy in a socially-inclusive and ethical manner.

In a discussion, Tucci Bartsiotas noted that Daffé’s festival is also a tool for channeling youth’s talent and energy, and for providing opportunities. Hajare urged integrating youth into urban design, planning and implementation, noting a need to recognize youth as implementers and not only activists.

### Roundtables

**MINISTERS’ ROUNDTABLE:** The roundtable was held on Sunday. In opening remarks, Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Minister of Infrastructure Development, UAE, noted the need to think both about the future, including trends such as artificial intelligence, and about the past, through bringing our heritage forward. Elisa Ferreira, European Commission, said that culture reflects different ways of thinking and living. She called for people to “open our ears, open our brains, and respect each other,” saying these are the ideas on which the EU was built. Ferreira stressed willingness to cooperate with cities and countries worldwide to share experiences in promoting culture and inclusion in development. UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif said that balancing innovation and culture will define the future of humanity, calling for ministers to share good practices.

**Panel 1: National updates and engagement: connecting the dots between culture and innovation in cities:** In the first panel, Mexico said the UN-Habitat City Prosperity Index had been implemented in over 300 municipalities across the country. The US spoke of its ‘Opportunity Zone’ programme that seeks to encourage investments in economically-depressed areas.



Abdullah Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Minister of Infrastructure Development, UAE



Elisa Ferreira, European Commission

Malaysia emphasized that global and national agendas will not succeed if local communities do not understand them or are not empowered to act on them. France called for recognition of historians, archaeologists, and “those who can tell us about the past.” Senegal highlighted the need to ensure digital technologies are in accordance with local cultures and do not weaken social ties.

Belgium emphasized the role of public urban spaces, which he called the “living rooms of cities,” to foster cultural cohesion. Colombia said the country seeks to preserve and foster the “orange economy,” namely the cultural industry. Afghanistan noted a national decree that recognizes slums as formal settlements. Azerbaijan outlined plans to accommodate internally displaced persons (IDPs) in cities, and to build low-income housing. Barbados shared the country’s efforts to build a “smart capital” with free wi-fi, a mobile app to share tourist information, and smart parking systems.

Ecuador stressed the importance of participative planning processes as sources of cultural innovation. Panama described the work of the country’s new Ministry of Culture and offered to share experiences from its recent economic growth. Uganda noted the success of a system where citizens can lodge complaints about people abusing the environment, even if it does not affect them directly. Mongolia outlined its urban development policy, which seeks to respect its nomadic tradition while developing the tourism industry. Bahrain described the Madinat Khalifa settlement, which drew on sustainable urban planning practices that preserved the original Bahraini culture.

**Panel 2: National mechanisms for promoting and financing cultural innovation: challenges and good examples:** Morocco said a dedicated funding mechanism is essential to ensuring cultural perspectives are taken into account in urban development plans. Bangladesh called for global and regional coordination in cultural heritage preservation efforts. Belarus highlighted efforts to promote smart cities and social housing along with a national standard on environmental protection. Tunisia stressed the importance of connecting cultural inheritance with all housing initiatives.

Mauritius said the country’s promotion of housing estates has led to a home ownership rate of 89%, and shared efforts to

protect a heritage site located next to an economic zone through an area action plan. Poland highlighted how Katowice, the host city of WUF11, sought to make use of cultural heritage in its urban revitalization efforts. Moldova suggested smart technologies can be leveraged to develop cohesive communities. Burkina Faso said that integration and social cohesion, as well as balancing modernity and authenticity, are essential principles for its urban development programmes. In closing remarks, Victor Kisob, UN-Habitat, noted a shared concern with how people give meaning to their lives in urban areas.

**ONE UN ROUNDTABLE:** This session took place on Monday. Opening the roundtable, Chris Williams, UN-Habitat, highlighted UN-Habitat's work with other UN agencies on a system-wide strategy for urban development that provides a framework for increasing the UN's country-level effectiveness.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif reflected on her experience working with UN agencies as the Mayor of Penang, Malaysia, highlighting the role of Resident Coordinators (RCs) as focal points integrating different levels to achieve impact.

Elkin Velásquez, UN-Habitat, moderated a panel with UN RCs and focused on their experiences with: coordinating with UN country teams; promoting urban development; and engaging other stakeholders.

Comoros RC highlighted lack of strategic urban planning documents, but said having only four UN agencies on the ground has enabled more direct interaction. The UAE RC said that the government is looking for innovations in urban governance and youth engagement. Kuwait RC identified lack of urban planning university degrees and limited dialogue with government as challenges. Montenegro RC suggested the UN can work on advocating priority issues to high-level stakeholders, supporting vertical stakeholder dialogues and financing frameworks, and engaging people who are being left behind.

Iran RC described the urban context as a practical organizing framework for the 20 UN agencies operating in the country. Fiji RC identified challenges with citizen empowerment, political accountability, institutional capacity building, and data. Belarus RC identified a gap in financing for energy efficiency in buildings. Azerbaijan RC called for "a new narrative" to include multidimensional issues, such as disaster risk reduction. Bahrain

RC highlighted a multi-ministry coordination mechanism that has facilitated access to decision making.

A second panel, moderated by Laila Baker, UN Population Fund, heard interventions by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UN-Habitat, UNEP, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and UNDP on the synergies needed at global and regional levels. Speakers highlighted, *inter alia*: issue-based policy approaches, such as around air pollution; Memoranda of Understanding among UN agencies that identify intended impacts; global agencies defining their "menus of services" for country-level agents to champion; filling data gaps to unlock sustainable and private sector financing; and collaborating instead of competing with each other.

The World Bank suggested collaboration with the UN in analytical work, technical assistance, and partnerships outside the UN. The Huairou Commission said the UN-Habitat model of constituency partnerships can inform other agencies. Marc Collins, Oceanix, suggested a role for RCs mediating between what host countries need and what the private sector can provide. UCLG described the multilateral governance system as outdated and lacking "the right partners around the table in the right conditions," calling for co-creation and discussions to be less technocratic and more focused on governance and policy.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND GRASSROOTS ROUNDTABLE:** This session convened on Tuesday. In opening remarks, Jane Katz, Habitat for Humanity, urged panelists to share solutions towards healthy and inclusive urban communities.

Talib Ahmed Bensouda, Mayor of Kanifing, said his municipality empowers communities by ensuring its budget is participatory and by encouraging private investment in community organizations. Violet Shivitse, Huairou Commission, said grassroots communities are not passive, but instead develop fast solutions based on the struggles they are going through. Monica Ramírez, Habitat for Humanity, said the growing housing deficit in Latin America and the Caribbean could be addressed by "recycling" vacant properties in city centers.

In a keynote speech, Jane Nyakairu, UN-Habitat, said the agency was launching five programmes that target grassroots



Matthias Naab, UN Resident Coordinator in Comoros



Monica Ramírez, Habitat for Humanity



**Manal El Shahat**, Ezbet Community Center

communities, including one on climate resilience for the urban poor. Erik Berg, Habitat Norway, explained that urban theatre can be a transformative and healing force for those in areas in crisis such as slums. Mary Wong Lai Lin, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia, said social housing programmes are best implemented by engaging beneficiaries on a daily basis. Yamila Castro, Cities Alliance, stressed the importance of acknowledging that most urban growth is informal, and recognizing informal settlements as an integral part of the city.

Manal El Shahat, Ezbet Community Center, described the efforts of an interdisciplinary group of academics to promote sustainable development in informal settlements in Cairo. Luis Bettencourt, University of Chicago, said cities should be seen as interconnected systems that can be best understood through a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. Larry O'Brien, Compass Housing Services, said he decided to co-organize the first conference on the NUA in Australia after listening to grassroots speakers during the 2016 Habitat III conference.

Amy Betancourt, Cadasta Foundation, outlined the work done by her organization in helping communities secure land rights. Sara Nandudu, SDI, said the implementation of international agreements is slow due to the lack of meaningful community engagement. Smruti Jukur and Rose Molokoane, SDI, welcomed the shared roundtable between civil society and grassroots organizations, noting that the latter needs the former's support.

Shain Shapiro, Sound Diplomacy, said music is an untapped revenue source for communities in countries where it is not recognized as a formal industry. Sulayman Abdulmumuni Ujah, Joint Association of Persons with Disabilities, Nigeria, said persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected during natural disasters. Jane Akinyi, Kenya Association of the Intellectually Handicapped, called for further political participation for persons with disabilities. George Wasonga, Civil Society Urban Development Platform, said that, to organize effectively, communities should first gather data about themselves.

**PARLIAMENTARIANS ROUNDTABLE:** This session was also held on Tuesday. Describing the Inter-Parliamentary Union co-sponsored event as the start of a long conversation, moderator



**Wafa Bani Mustafa**, Jordanian Parliament

Robert Lewis-Lettington, UN-Habitat, invited speakers to reflect on how UN-Habitat can help parliamentarians, and how work by parliaments and the agency connect.

Wafa Bani Mustafa, Jordanian Parliament, and IPU Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, presented on the role of parliamentarians in supporting implementation of the SDGs and NUA, including a set of proposed 'best practices,' stressing that strong engagement in this regard is key to realizing accountability and "our common success."

Jean-Marie Bockel, French Senate, presented on ways to improve engagement with the NUA by parliamentarians and the judiciary, calling for parliamentarians to help restore citizens' trust in new technologies.

Nancy Lung'ahi Abisai, East African Legislative Assembly, stressed the need for citizen participation at all levels, including policymaking, lawmaking, implementation, and budget allocation, to ensure responsiveness to people's needs.

Stein Erik Lauvås, Norwegian Parliament, said cooperation with regional and local-level stakeholders is key to implementing the NUA

Abdoulaye Diop, National Assembly of Senegal, shared how his parliament has worked with various stakeholders to improve the country's urban areas, including through socioeconomic data gathering, work on a cultural heritage fund, and promoting territorial equity in planning and resource allocation to ensure basic services for all by 2030.

Zione Ntaba, High Court Judge, Malawi, discussed the role of, and challenges faced by, judiciaries in engaging with parliaments, emphasizing judiciaries' constitutional role in the policy process. She stressed the importance of regulatory impact assessments by parliaments to ensure constitutional compatibility and compliance with issues such as human rights to avoid litigation.

Describing her city's efforts to accelerate SDG implementation through local engagement, Penny Abeywardena, New York City, issued a call for local and regional governments to sign the Voluntary Local Review Declaration, noting 20 new cities had already done so at WUF10.

David Pkosing, Kenyan National Assembly, drew attention to different models of democratic systems, expressing hope

for closer engagement between UN agencies and parliaments to enable faster project implementation. He also suggested partnering with UN-Habitat on a sustainable model for increasing affordable housing in Kenya by tapping into provident funds to finance mortgages.

In discussions, speakers and participants drew attention to: Senegal's experience in using industrial taxes to subsidize housing programmes and creating dedicated housing funds; Jordan's model of distributing land and houses at affordable prices; the need to reinforce parliaments' authority over budgets; and the importance of improved integration of food and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) into work on urban issues.

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH ROUNDTABLE:** This session, which took place on Wednesday, was moderated by youth activist Raphael Obonyo. In opening remarks, Douglas Ragan, UN-Habitat, described climate change as an "entry point" to talk about other issues such as equity and consumption.

In a first panel, Leah Namugerwa, Fridays for Future, circulated a petition calling the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and the Deputy Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme to declare a climate emergency. Martin Lucas Sortland Eick, Norwegian youth delegate, described his efforts to see youth "take true ownership" of SDG implementation in his country. Marina Joseph, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, said empowering youth collectives is far more effective than empowering individuals. Erik Berg said he hoped to see youth pressure the sports industry to become carbon neutral.

Kekhshashan Basu, Green Hope Foundation, called for the UN to stop organizing "tokenistic" youth summits, and instead provide youth seat at a table.

In a second panel, Katarzyna Smętek, Polish youth climate activist, said WUF11 in Katowice hopes to feature a dedicated youth hub and children and youth representation on all panels. Jennie Moore, British Columbia Institute of Technology, said reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the global North was the first step in tackling the climate crisis. Carrick Reddin, UN Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY), said students in tertiary education should pressure university management to adopt climate-friendly policies. Ruxanda Renitaico, Accenture and UNMGCY, said it was thanks to her experience organizing with UNMGCY that she created a group of over 150 young colleagues seeking to influence Accenture's corporate sustainability policies.

Sofya Ignatenko, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, noted youth climate activism is all the more useful in Russia where state bureaucracy hinders national climate action.

Joyati Das, University of Melbourne, emphasized sections of the 'Youth DeclarAction' adopted at the Urban Youth Assembly that relate to youth and new technologies.

In concluding remarks, Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the UN's 75th Anniversary, said the world faces a worrisome retreat from multilateralism, and conducted a short consultation of youth views on how the UN could best move forward.



Participants of the Children and Youth Roundtable pose with **Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond**, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the UN's 75th Anniversary.

**TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES ROUNDTABLE:** This session also took place on Wednesday. Moderated by Joan Erakit, American journalist and writer, the roundtable explored the role of traditional authorities in sustainable development.

In the first panel, Drani Stephen Izakare, Paramount Chief of the Madi people, Uganda, emphasized the value of listening to women and children, and shared his experience using traditional custodianship of land to support peacebuilding and shelter refugees. Katepu Laoi, Minister of Local Government and Agriculture, Tuvalu, noted that rural people migrating to cities do not abandon their culture but bring it with them and use it to solve issues in the city.

Ana Lucy Bengochea Martínez, Wagucha Community Practitioner Platform, shared her organization's work in Honduras to support community resilience, and highlighted the value of linkages between traditional and national authorities. El Boukhari Ben Essayouti, Timbuktu Cultural Mission, described cultural practices designed to preserve heritage buildings in Timbuktu and the importance of traditional craftspeople in restoring them.

In discussion, panelists addressed: how millennia-old, culturally embedded traditional institutions cannot be destroyed by modern legal decisions; the need to support local-level action; and how traditional authorities and governments can have mutually beneficial relationships.

In the second panel, James Favel, Bear Clan Patrol Inc., described his work drawing on traditional clan roles to support safety and cultural restoration for indigenous communities in Winnipeg, Canada.

Fatima Mohamed El Fadol Adam, Mayor of Nyala, explained that local governments in Sudan play important social, political, and judicial roles alongside the state, including in conflict resolution.

Daniel Adumah, Mayor of Adentan, said a constitutional arrangement in Ghana where traditional leaders account for 30% of local government assembly members, has facilitated collaboration between local and traditional authorities. Abdoulaye Makhtar Diop, Chief of the Lebu people, underscoring the role of traditional leaders as guardians of values and advisers to



**Ana Lucy Bengochea Martínez**, Wagucha Community Practitioner Platform

local governments, called on UN-Habitat to interface with them directly.

Ibtissam El Hammoumi, Ministry of Urban Planning and Housing, Morocco, noted that traditional leaders play an important role in land and water management.

In discussion, the panelists and audience addressed ways to institutionalize traditional authority and underscored the important role of female traditional leaders.

### *Special Sessions*

**Sustainable Urban Development in the Arab/Middle East and North Africa Region:** Welcoming participants to the Second Pan-Arab Urban Development Symposium which was held on Sunday, moderator Nawal Al-Hosany, UAE Permanent Representative to the International Renewable Energy Agency, outlined as region-specific challenges that influence sustainable urbanization and urban resilience: fast population growth; unemployment; human displacement; and vulnerability to climate change and other environmental risks.

Participants watched a video highlighting 12 priorities for Arab urban development, identified at the first Symposium in 2019.

Falah Mohammad Al Ahabbi, Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport, highlighted the UAE's efforts to find innovative solutions to integrate sustainable development into urban planning, stating that success relies on comprehensive strategies and close cooperation among different levels of government.

Noting that, by 2030, 60% of the world's population will be urban, UN-Habitat Executive Director Sharif called for action to make Arab cities resilient, inclusive and sustainable for all.

Stating that all development happens at the local level, Mounir Tabet, UNESCWA, identified three necessary partnerships, between: citizens and state; different tiers of government; and all stakeholders. He called for joint planning and implementation, empowering local governments, and facilitating access to best practices.

Mahmoud Sharawi, Minister of Local Development, Egypt, shared his country's experience in promoting local development



**Fatima Mohamed El Fadol Adam**

**Fatima Mohamed El Fadol Adam**, Mayor of Nyala

in rural areas to mitigate urban migration through new economic zones and investment laws, and decentralized planning.

Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Derasat, explained the value added of think tanks in sustainable urban development, which is in translating science into policy-relevant options. He lamented a lack of focus on urban planning by regional think tanks, and called for more financing to data acquisition to address challenges relating to data availability.

Ayat Soliman, World Bank, called for rethinking financing, identifying as key elements: multi-donor partnerships; maximized local-level revenue collection; transparent fiscal transfers; and incentives for private sector participation, including in post-conflict reconstruction.

Jamila Mohammed Al Fandi, Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme, shared the UAE's experiences in engaging citizens in neighborhood revitalization through social media-based feedback platforms and creating cultural links to enhance a feeling of responsibility.

H.R.H. Princess Lamia bint Majed Al Saud, Al Waleed Philanthropies, identified a rising trend of philanthropic giving and corporate social responsibility within the region's private sector, and called for seizing the opportunity, highlighting her organization's work with children, youth, and women.

Haoliang Xu, UNDP, identified three areas for cooperation to build back better and attract private financing: de-risking investment, particularly in post-conflict environments; developing a pipeline of bankable projects; and leveraging new sources of finance, such as local or Sharia-compliant bonds.

Maher Johan, Deputy Minister of Planning, Iraq, narrated his government's experience in post-conflict reconstruction, citing as challenges the more than USD 100 billion in infrastructure damage, one million IDPs, and hundreds of thousands of destroyed housing units. He identified setting clear priorities, in partnership with UN agencies and other partners, as critical to success.

Panelists also exchanged views with the audience, including ways to increase knowledge exchanges between Arab countries and how to effectively build trust among stakeholders and decision makers, such as through embedding feedback mechanisms and citizen engagement in project design and implementation.

**Migration and the Open City: the role of culture in enabling inclusive societies:** Ottavia Spaggiari, Columbia Journalism School, moderated this session on Monday. In the first panel, Richard Sennett, London School of Economics, expressed his worry about potential backlash to mass climate-induced migration. Mpho Moruakgomo, Botswana Association of Local Authorities, noted that migration is not new and exposes us to new ways of living. Bart Somers, Flemish Minister of Integration and Interior and former Mayor of Mechelen, shared three pillars of Mechelen's approach to receiving migrants: making it a story of success and progress; encouraging multi-layered "lasagna identities" that make finding commonalities with others easier; and promoting interactions through mixed schools and neighborhoods. Renate Held, International Organization



Soula Ben Abderrahim, Tunisia

for Migration, stressed the importance of including culture in urban planning. During the discussion, panelists considered how "integration" is often interpreted in terms of loss, and promoted "inclusion" and "participation" as more empowering alternatives.

Between panels, Spaggiari held a dialogue with Emmanuel Jal, a refugee-artist-activist-musician-entrepreneur from South Sudan. Jal highlighted how people quickly develop perceptions, often inaccurately, and encouraged participants to understand others more holistically.

During the second panel, Nasser Yassin, American University of Beirut, encouraged seeing refugees as having agency, rather than as helpless or risks to stability. Jonathan Malagón González, Minister of Housing, City, and Territory, Colombia, highlighted four dimensions of Colombia's response to migration from Venezuela: free education; free healthcare; legal residency; and labor market inclusion. Nadia Jbour, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said supporting smaller towns that receive refugees is critical. Khadijah Ahmadi, Mayor of Nili, warned against settling migrants on urban peripheries due to the challenge of providing services to these areas. Carola Gunnarsson, Mayor of Sala, highlighted how migration can help relieve gaps in the labor market. Souad Abderrahim, Mayor



Emmanuel Jal, refugee-artist-activist-musician-entrepreneur from South Sudan

of Tunisia, emphasized strong social bonds as key to Tunisia effectively receiving Libyan migrants.

In discussion, panelists stressed that a shift in mindsets and a whole-of-society approach can make migration an opportunity. They also called for building humane cities, not just smart ones.

**Culture, the Creative Industry and Their Impact on Reconstruction and Resilience:** This session was also held on Monday, with moderator Ottavia Spaggiari asking panelists to address both tangible culture, which refers to the built environment, and intangible culture, which includes norms and practices.

Hodan Ali, Municipality of Mogadishu, described a programme aimed at introducing the country's youth to Somalia's pre-conflict history, and added that, to fight "idle minds" that could be radicalized, the municipality offers many activities.

Noting that sport is a critical space for "meeting and resocialization," Sergio Roldán, Urbano Medellín, said the city of Medellín succeeded in decreasing drug trafficking and use by engaging communities in sports.

Ernesto Ottone Ramírez, UNESCO, in a joint presentation with Sameh Wahba, World Bank, saluted Medellín's success in leveraging sports in the war against drugs. Wahba suggested three focus areas: urban regeneration and historical urban landscapes; cultural and creative industries; and resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Sabri Abdulla, Municipality of Mosul, described challenges faced in the reconstruction of the Old City of Mosul and its historical landmarks following destruction by Daesh in recent years, including a lack of skilled contractors to reconstruct historical buildings, and weak regulatory frameworks.

Sushil Gyawali, National Reconstruction Authority, Nepal, explained the building back better vision behind the reconstruction efforts that followed a 2015 earthquake. Citing the reconstruction of the Dharahara tower in Kathmandu, he said the surrounding public space was increased sevenfold to boost community exchange and resilience.

Alexandre Caldas, UNEP, reminded that many reconstruction efforts still assume unlimited planetary resources: "There's the people, there's places, but there's also the planet. We need to bring environmental culture into the resilience discourse."



Ottavia Spaggiari, Columbia Journalism School



Doris Andoni, National Housing Agency, Albania

**Affordable Housing Innovation to Foster Cities' Culture and Diversity:** This session convened on Wednesday. Opening the session, Victor Kisob, UN-Habitat, characterized housing as a fundamental human right at the heart of UN-Habitat's mandate. Patricia Peiró Aso, El País, moderated.

On country experiences, Hassan Shawqi Alhazmi, Ministry for Lands and Technical Affairs, Saudi Arabia, described how taking an ecosystem approach to de-risking private sector participation enabled the delivery of 120,000 affordable housing units in one year. Amina Abdi Aden, Minister of Housing, Djibouti, reported on an income-based housing support programme. Javier Jileta, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, described efforts to reduce the cost of housing through digitalization and data centralization. Doris Andoni, National Housing Agency, Albania, shared experiences in accelerating housing provision through e-governance and reduced bureaucracy.

On private sector perspectives, Zachary Jones, AECOM, described how public-private collaboration helped the Bahraini government in affordable housing through creating "places where people want to live." Mourad Limam, McKinsey & Company, identified as ways to reduce cost of housing: micro-units; co-living; and projects dedicated to artists.

Sharing views from international institutions, Sameh Wahba stressed the need to fix supply and demand-related market distortions, such as land development regulations and access to land and finance, before focusing on pro-poor subsidies. Joaquim Oliveira Martins, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, observed that land-use reforms and zoning regulations can raise prices. Karine de Frémont, French Development Agency, explained her agency emphasizes, *inter alia*, sustainable funding, rehabilitation, connectivity, and energy efficiency. Gerry Muscat, European Investment Bank, said the bank prioritizes clear access criteria for affordable housing and diverse neighborhoods, among others.

Yves-Laurent Sapoval, Ministry of Housing and Territorial Equality, France, presented a new global multi-stakeholder compact on housing for SDG 11.1 (ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums), which will start with a knowledge hub and workshops for localized solutions.

### ***SDGs in Action***

**Launch of the SDG Project Assessment Tool: an innovative tool for inclusive, sustainable and effective urban projects:** On Sunday, Klas Roth, UN-Habitat, introduced the SDG Tool that was developed as part of the Global Future Cities Programme, a component of the UK Prosperity Fund, and is based on normative studies from over 500 cities worldwide.

Neil Khor, UN-Habitat, described the tool as a guide to city authorities and delivery partners for more inclusive urban projects. He said it aims to improve the quality of projects in the planning, development and design phases, and to steer participatory discussions between stakeholders.

Lewis Neal, UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said cities will be one key in achieving the SDGs, hence the importance of tracking progress in individual urban projects.

As key principles in urban planning, Naomi Hoogervorst, UN-Habitat, identified: integrated urban planning and design at different scales and across different sectors; incentives to promote behavioral shifts in order to increase the use and provision of alternative, sustainable modes of transport; and the efficient use of data that supports evidence-based and justifiable decision-making processes.

The tool was demonstrated in a video, outlining its main steps: tailoring the tool according to the context; assessing the project; discussing the results in a participatory workshop; and seeking expert recommendations provided by UN-Habitat.

Dyfed Aubrey, UN-Habitat, presented a graph illustrating the achievements of selected cities, according to social, economic and environmental dimensions. He suggested the next decade will be critical for improving city management.

Solola Sefiu, Lagos State Urban Renewal Agency, described challenges of dealing with rapid urbanization in Lagos, emphasizing lack of available data, weak institutions, and poor funding.

Simon Gusah, Future Cities Nigeria, described Lagos as a fundamentally successful city within the country's context, given the constant internal struggle between the government trying to manage rapid urbanization and people migrating to the city

slums. He said urban planners need a greater understanding of why people move into slums in order to unlock the hidden opportunities in these areas.

During the ensuing discussion, participants asked questions about: involving UN-Habitat in evaluating cities' SDG achievements; navigating evidence-based planning; getting local-level feedback; and doing baseline mapping.

### ***Sustainable Urban Development Now***

**RISE UP: resilient settlements for the urban poor:** This event, held on Tuesday, was moderated by Patricia Peiró Aso, El País, and marked the launch of a new UN-Habitat flagship programme aimed at mobilizing and coordinating large-scale investments in climate change adaptation and resilience for the urban poor. Victor Kisob, UN-Habitat, opened by highlighting the prevailing funding gap for adaptation in countries.

Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, provided a keynote speech before officially launching the programme in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with Kisob. Bainimarama said leaders should step back and see the bigger picture, namely where people will live in the future, what they will need, and what strategic investments can be made now to support them. He also called for all people to fight the stigmatization of the urban poor.

Various stakeholders made interventions in support of the programme, including the World Resources Institute, Poland, the Adaptation Fund, and SDI.

### ***Closing Ceremony***

The closing ceremony was held on Thursday. Following a performance by Al Ayalla dancers, moderator Amira Mohammed, Abu Dhabi Media TV presenter, welcomed delegates to the closing ceremony and introduced a video of the highlights of WUF10.

Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed 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.



Al Ayalla dancers perform during the closing ceremony

In a video message, President of UNGA Tijjani Muhammad-Bande commended WUF10 for marking one of the first events of the UN 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 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 better, 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 people from different backgrounds talking to each other, and expressed hope that goodness will thrive over short-term ill will.

Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General 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 UN Secretary-General 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.

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, Department of Municipal Affairs 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 the World Urban Forum, 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 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 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 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 were represented at WUF10, Sharif reported on 71 bilateral meetings by UN-Habitat’s executive team during the Forum and called on all member states to integrate the urban dimension into their development plans. She commended the work of local governments and their commitments in signing up for Voluntary Local Reviews and to 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).



L-R: **Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed**, Abu Dhabi Department of Municipal Affairs 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; and **Katarzyna Smetek**, Polish youth representative

### **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 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;
- the 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.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**53rd Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD 53):** CPD 53 will convene under the theme, 'Population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development.' The Commission assists United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by: arranging for studies and advising the Council on various topics related to population and development; monitoring, reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; and providing appropriate recommendations to the Council. **dates:** 30 March - 3 April 2020 **location:** New York City, US **contact:** UN DESA **email:** population@un.org **www:** <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/sessions/2020/index.asp>

**URBAN FUTURE global conference (UFGC):** The URBAN FUTURE is "the place to meet the most passionate and inspiring CityChangers from all over the world." For 2020, the themes are mobility, water, districts, and leadership. The conference anticipates 3,000 participants from 400 cities around the world, including mayors, architects, mobility experts, city planners, scientists, sustainability managers, environmentalists, innovation experts and many more. **dates:** 1-3 April 2020 **location:** Lisbon, Portugal **contact:** UFGC Secretariat **email:** hello@urban-future.org **www:** <https://www.urban-future.org/>

**2nd UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference:** This meeting is organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and will bring together key stakeholders from government, the UN system and other international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to discuss the opportunities, challenges and solutions towards achieving

sustainable transport objectives. **dates:** 5-7 May 2020 **location:** Beijing, China **contact:** UN DESA **email:** director.oisc@un.org **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/transport2020>

**The 2020 Congress of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR):** CEMR 2020 will have the motto 'Local action. Global shift. Living the Sustainable Development Goals.' seeks to bring together the whole SDG family in one place, including mayors, local and regional leaders from across Europe, as well as other passionate people who drive change towards a more sustainable future in every city, town and region. **dates:** 6-8 May 2020 **location:** Innsbruck, Austria **contact:** City of Innsbruck **email:** cembr2020@innsbruck.gv.at **www:** <https://www.cembr2020.at/>

**5th World Forum of Local Economic Development:** This event has been consolidated, over almost a decade, as a meeting point between governments and networks of governments, multilateral organizations and agencies of the UN system. The 2020 theme is 'Innovation in the territories for a better quality of life' which focuses on: territory as the basis of social, economic and environmental innovation; territorial economic and productive models to face inequality; and the future of work and the work of the future from a territorial perspective. **dates:** 6-8 May 2020 **location:** Córdoba, Argentina **contact:** UCLG **email:** del.cglu@andaluciasolidaria.org **www:** <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/events/5th-world-forum-local-economic-development>

**Daring Cities 2020 - The Bonn Forum for Urban Leaders Taking on the Climate Emergency:** Daring Cities invites urban leaders from around the world to come together in Bonn for three days of idea exchange on how to take on resilience and mitigation in the time of urgent climate crisis. Urban leaders, such as mayors, city councilors, administration, technical staff, thought leaders and researchers, business leaders, civil society decision-makers and community organizers, are invited to be a part of this productive and action-oriented event. **dates:** 3-5 June 2020 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) World Secretariat **email:** daring.cities@iclei.org **www:** <https://daringcities.org/>

**BEYOND 2020 World Sustainable Built Environment Conference:** BEYOND 2020 aims to create the missing link between the SDGs and the built environment by crossing the boundaries of knowledge and sharing top-level expertise. About 2,000 delegates from all over the world in the academia, industry, finance and policy sectors who will work together to develop concrete solutions and achievable implementation plans. **dates:** 9-11 June 2020 **location:** Gothenburg, Sweden **contact:** Sweden MEETX AB **email:** beyond2020@meetx.se **www:** <https://beyond2020.se/>

**4th African Smart Cities Summit:** This event will explore major trends, celebrate Africa's progress, debate challenges and opportunities and discover the innovations set to advance African cities. Highlights will include a ministerial keynote co-located with the African Construction Expo, a prestigious awards ceremony to celebrate the change makers and innovators, and exclusive site visits to experience Smart City solutions and technologies in action. **dates:** 9-12 June 2020 **location:** Johannesburg, South Africa **contact:** DMG Events

**email:** danielclaassen@dmgevents.com **www:** <https://www.africanconstructionexpo.com/african-smart-cities-summit/>

**World Cities Summit 2020:** The biennial World Cities Summit is a platform for government leaders and industry experts to address livable and sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships. Jointly organized by Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities and Urban Redevelopment Authority, key highlights of the Summit include the Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, and the annual World Cities Summit Mayors Forum. **dates:** 5-9 July 2020 **location:** Singapore **contact:** World Cities Summit Secretariat **email:** info@worldcities.com.sg

**www:** <http://www.worldcitiessummit.com.sg>

**High-Level Political Forum 2020:** The 2020 HLPF, convening under the auspices of ECOSOC, will be held from 7-16 July 2020, including the three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from Tuesday, 14-16 July 2020. The theme will be 'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.' Fifty countries will present their NVRs. **dates:** 7-16 July 2020 **contact:** UN DESA **email:** director.oisc@un.org **location:** New York City, US

**www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

**Sustainable City 2020:** The 14th International Conference on Urban Regeneration and Sustainability, also known as the Sustainable City Conference, addresses all aspects of the urban environment aiming to provide solutions leading towards sustainability. The Sustainable City Conference addresses the multidisciplinary components of urban planning, the challenges presented by the increasing size of the cities, the number of resources required and the complexity of modern society. **dates:** 22-24 September, 2020 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Priscilla Cook **email:** pcook@wessex.ac.uk **www:** [www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2020/sustainable-city-2020](http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2020/sustainable-city-2020)

**9th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns:** The conference will demonstrate the urgent need for local governments to assume responsibility for urban transformation and lead the way in guiding Europe towards a secure and sustainable future. It will bring together local and regional leaders, European and international institutions and some of the brightest minds working on cutting-edge research, businesses and the civil society to forge a more sustainable Europe. **dates:** 30 September – 2 October 2020 **location:** Mannheim, Germany **contact:** ICLEI European Secretariat **email:** mannheim2020@iclei.org **www:** <https://conferences.sustainablecities.eu/mannheim-2020>

**World Habitat Day:** This UN day is annually celebrated on the first Monday of October to reflect on the state of human settlements and people's right to sufficient shelter. It also aims to remind people that they are responsible for the habitat of future generations. **date:** 5 October 2020 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UN-Habitat **email:** infohabitat@unhabitat.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/en/events/habitatday/>

**World Cities Day:** The UN has designated every 31st of October as World Cities Day. The day is expected to greatly promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization,

and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world. In 2020, Surabaya, Indonesia, will host the global celebrations. **date:** 31 October 2020 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UN-Habitat **email:** infohabitat@unhabitat.org **www:** <https://unhabitat.org/wcd/>

**Smart City Expo World Congress 2020:** Smart City Expo World Congress is the world-leading summit of discussion about the link between urban reality and technological revolution. Corporate leaders, public representatives, entrepreneurs, experts and academics from all around the globe come together to learn from each other, share experiences, talk about best practices, and open new paths for international collaboration. **dates:** 17-19 November 2020 **location:** Barcelona, Spain **contact:** Fira Barcelona **email:** smartcityexpo.visitors@firabarcelona.com **www:** <http://www.smartcityexpo.com/>

**The 11th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF11):** The Forum will provide a platform for global leaders to share expertise on the global challenges we face in urban development and the innovative ways we can overcome them. The forum will focus on how the world can achieve sustainable development goals to meet global standards of the New Urban Agenda. **dates:** TBD, 2022 **location:** Katowice, Poland **contact:** TBD **website:** <https://unhabitat.org/> **email:** TBD

For additional upcoming events, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

## Glossary

ESCWA	UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IDP	Internally displaced person/people
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
NUA	The New Urban Agenda (Habitat III outcome)
RC	UN Resident Coordinator
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Slum Dwellers International
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development, Earth Summit
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UN-Habitat	UN Human Settlements Programme
UNMGCY	UN Major Group for Children and Youth
VNR	voluntary national review
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WUF	World Urban Forum