

# IMPLEMENTING THE **NEW URBAN AGENDA**

## Side Event Advertisement

Thursday, 11 May 2017, Venue: Conference room 11

Time: 18:00 – 19:30

Nairobi, Kenya

### **Action Plan for the Greener Cities Partnership - Inter-Agency Collaboration to Help Deliver the New Urban Agenda**

Organized by UN-Habitat and UN-Environment

#### **Background**

Urban areas around the world are becoming not just the dominant form of habitat for humankind, but also the engine-rooms of human and economic development as a whole. Over 50 per cent of the global population now lives in cities and it is expected that by 2050 seventy per cent (70%) of humanity will be urban. Urban population growth is predominantly taking place in cities in developing countries, most notably in Africa and Asia. This growth trend is most pronounced in small to intermediate-sized cities, where infrastructural backlogs are often highest and technical and financial capacity the lowest.

Regrettably, rather than achieving greater efficiency, cities are forfeiting their potential agglomeration advantages related to concentration and connectivity and are instead losing density. From 1990 to 2000 cities around the world grew spatially faster than their populations; those in the developing world grew 20 per cent faster. During the next two decades the world will more than double the amount of land used for cities. As cities lose density and intensify sprawl they lock themselves into unsustainable land use patterns where jobs and people are far from one another, transportation costs and congestion are high, infrastructure runs are longer and more costly, segregation of socioeconomic groups and land use types are more pronounced and environmental impacts are greater, climate change concerns ever more exacerbated.

Unplanned and poorly managed urbanization negatively affects people and the environment. Currently there are about 1 billion slum dwellers who suffer economic, social and physical exclusion. Crime affects some 60 per cent of urban residents in developing countries. Piecemeal speculative development is largely responsible for the fragmentation,

degradation and destruction of natural habitat and for undermining agricultural land and ecosystem services. Many cities are significant generators of greenhouse gas emissions and waste, and have high and inefficient resource consumption. Increasingly, cities and urban areas are exposed to geological and climate change-induced risks with the poor being the most vulnerable.

Recognizing the importance of urban development issues in the global environmental agenda, UN-Environment and UN-Habitat have combined their professional networks and technical capacity in a Greener Cities Partnership focusing mostly on three programme priorities: (1) resilient, resource efficient cities, (2) sustainable transport and mobility; and (3) solid waste and waste water management. Other areas of collaboration include sustainable housing and construction, air quality, urban eco-belts, urban environmental data and indicator monitoring. It is envisioned that the partnership will improve synergy not only between the two agencies but also among their partners.

### **Relevance to the GC26 theme**

The side event presents a unique opportunity to further explore the complex relationship between sustainable cities and environmental challenges. The New Urban Agenda envisages socially and environmentally sustainable cities. Therefore, this event discusses the crucial role that environmental considerations play in urban policy-making. It calls upon policy makers to take into account environmental dimensions in sustainable, resilient and efficient city planning, and highlights specific examples of how this can be best put into practice.

### **Objective**

This event showcases the urban environmental partnership between UN-Habitat and UN-Environment. The Greener Cities Partnership, a joint effort between the two UN agencies, sets its goal to further consolidate and achieve greener, resource efficient and resilient cities in the delivery and implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Embedded at the core of various urban environment Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the partnership constitutes a good example of effectively bridging efforts in the fields of urban resilience, resource-efficiency, transport, waste, housing, air quality and climate change, among others. The event attracts a high-level expert panel including representatives from national governments, supporting the idea of an inter-agency urban environmental partnership through their own experiences, expertise, facts and findings.

### **Speakers**

- **Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira**, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat
- **Ms. Elizabeth Taylor Jay**, Ambassador of the Government of Colombia in Kenya; Permanent Representative to UN-Habitat and UN-Environment
- **Mr. Rob de Jong**, Head, Transport Unit, UN-Environment
- **Mr. Victor Rønneberg**, Ambassador of the Government of Norway to Kenya, Somalia and the Seychelles; Permanent Representative to UN-Habitat and UN-Environment

- **Ms. Norliza Hashim**, CEO, Urbanice Malaysia (Urban Wellbeing Centre of Excellence), LBG under the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing & Local Government, Malaysia; Secretariat of WUF9
- **Ms. Isabel Wetzel**, Coordinator, Greener Cities Partnership, UN-Habitat and UN-Environment

**Contact person:** Isabel Wetzel, **Email:** [isabel.wetzel@unhabitat.org](mailto:isabel.wetzel@unhabitat.org)