

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

URBAN IMPACT





The first quarter of 2020 has been particularly challenging for all of us. It began auspiciously enough with preparations for the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations in high gear. We were also to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing conference on Women, with many events prepared and organised in the run up to the General Assembly in September. UN-Habitat was gearing up to support these wider UN programmes with the kick-off of the United Nations's Decade of Action at the 10th session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi. That world is now a distant memory as the planet has gone into lock down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time of writing, the global death toll from the pandemic has surpassed 160,000, with more than 2.3 million people infected worldwide. At UN-Habitat, we are very fortunate that early action and precautionary measures meant that none of our staff and personnel have been stricken with the disease. At Nairobi and elsewhere across our 90 global locations, the agency is now working from home. Daily meetings, webinars, the provision of services through digital platforms - this is now the new normal for the agency. We are working very closely with other UN agencies through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to support humanitarian services to the most vulnerable communities.

During this crisis, the necessity and critical role of multilateral organisations has become very evident. There is no doubt that we are not perfect and as we are put under both greater scrutiny and great stress, we can spot the gaps, which will help us in the future as we strive to make ourselves fit for purpose. At the moment, we need to prioritise and focus on the most vulnerable communities and in the case of cities and human settlements, the focus has been on those 1 billion people living in informal settlements as well as wage earners who cannot afford to work from home.

Although this issue of Urban Impact is mostly given to coverage of the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum, we are also including UN-Habitat's immediate efforts to support precautionary and remedial efforts by local governments to help prepare the most vulnerable communities face the challenges of this global pandemic. An emergency fund of USD 1.3 million has been allocated to support 13 high impact projects across all continents delivered through our regional offices.

In the longer term, UN-Habitat is working closely with the United Nations Secretariat in New York to support the Secretary-General's socio-economic impact pillars. In our case, our efforts

are in pillar four, which is focused on the recovery stage. All together, some 70 projects have been identified as catalytic interventions that will help with the medium term recovery efforts by local governments and also provide assistance to communities in building up their resilience. We estimate that we will need to raise initial funding of USD 100 million to channel support to these crucial stakeholders.

As I look back at the first quarter of 2020, I am reminded of the optimism we all shared at the 10th session of the World Urban Forum. We had called for declared actions and with COVID-19, we must now walk the talk. You will find in this issue that the relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG #11 and other urban-related SDGs, have not been diminished. COVID-19 has opened our eyes to the inequality in cities, the lack of investments in public infrastructure, the much-needed reforms in local governance, the right to shelter and housing, and the need for job security.

I am confident that as we look back at the 10th session of the World Urban Forum, as we review the declared actions that we made together, and as we review all our preparatory works to ensure business continuity in this age of COVID-19, we are more resolved than ever not to go back to business as usual.

To all the member states whom we serve, our partners in local governments, our supporters in the private sector and civil society; as well as the communities in which we draw inspiration, I would like to thank you for your renewed confidence in UN-Habitat. We will work doubly hard in these challenging times to find new ways of serving and fulfilling our mandate.

Stay safe and bon courage.

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)



On the Edge of COVID-19 Pandemic

By Neil Khor and Fernanda Lonardoni

As we are preparing to publish this first quarter issue of Urban Impact, UN-Habitat's quarterly magazine, all of us have adapted to a new normal - working from home to deliver services and provide help to the most vulnerable communities in a world gripped by a global pandemic.

Multilateral organisations are needed now, more than ever before as resources are quickly being repurposed to shore up defences against the spread of this deadly virus. The best defence, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has advised, is to stay at home. Yet, it is precisely this action that is wreaking havoc on economies around the world and causing misery to millions of wage earners in all major cities.

At UN-Habitat, we have been asking ourselves some very hard questions as we look back at the 10th session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), our main flagship event to launch the UN's Decade of Action which was held in Abu Dhabi. This was the first time that a WUF was held in the Arab region, and all in the midst of two major challenges - rising political tensions in the Persian Gulf and an epidemic arising in Hubei Province in China.



Two years of meticulous planning and millions of dollars had been spent by the United Arab Emirates and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to host the event. Some 15 000 participants, a significant percentage being international delegates, had registered. By 27 January, WHO had declared an outbreak of the nouvelle coronavirus, a viral strain similar to SARS and MERS. At the time, there was little inkling that this would become a global pandemic. To all intents and purposes, it was an epidemic that could be contained largely in China, like SARS and MERS before it.

The WUF10 hosts were leaving nothing to chance. We held daily meetings with representatives of the UAE Government, particularly the Ministry of Health, to ensure that every precaution would be taken to screen would be participants. In the week leading up to the WUF10, on 6 February, flight restrictions were imposed upon all travellers coming from China. The Chinese Government voluntarily withdrew its official delegation to WUF10 as a precautionary measure. In the end, some two thousand registered participants traveling directly from China cancelled their participation for the greater good.

At the venue, through consultations with WHO and the Joint Medical Services of the United Nations Office of Nairobi, we worked closely with the UAE Ministry of Health as well as the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) to ensure that the venue was equipped for any eventuality. All hotels serving the Forum were provided with guidelines on handling suspected cases of the nouvelle coronavirus.

Precautionary measures which are now common place such as hand washing advisories and facilities, provision of sanitizers, and frequent cleaning of the venue were implemented rigorously, and with increased frequency. All participants and their travel plans were closely monitored should future contact tracing be necessary. To date, some two months after WUF10 ended, not one case of COVID-19 has been traced back to the conference.



Residents in Bhawanipur village, Gaurigunj Rural Municipality Nepal practice hand washing techniques to protect against COVID-19 © UNHabitat

WUF10 was probably the first and last conference of its magnitude in 2020. A week after the end of WUF on 13 February, the world had changed. What we had taken for granted - an integrated economy that gave rise to a global network of cities as production centres - is now under scrutiny. It was therefore opportune that the WUF provided us with the chance to reaffirm and renew our partnerships with cities, civil society and community stakeholders. They are now active on the frontlines of the COVID-19 battle.

Partnerships forged and strengthened at WUF10 have equipped UN-Habitat to deliver better services to the most vulnerable communities to prevent, respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Key issues addressed at WUF10 such as urban inequality now have life and death significance. We heard the plight of communities living in informal settlements, as well as disadvantaged groups living in the midst of plenty in our mega cities. Clearly, the pandemic is impacting the world's most vulnerable people the hardest.

The WUF has always been a stakeholders' platform providing all interested in urban development with an opportunity to learn and share. Our Voices to Cities platform has now been superseded by webinars with UCLG, the Global

Task Force of Mayors and Minurvi. It is important for cities grappling with the pandemic to share their knowledge and experiences, as governors and mayors have a major role to play in slowing down the spread of the pandemic. Lessons learned from cities at different stages of the pandemic can help us all learn how mayors are keeping their cities functioning by ensuring continued food supplies, providing support to the most vulnerable and ensuring they have access to adequate health care.

With national governments launching stimulus packages to help their economies weather the impacts of the pandemic, we must not forget local governments. Those at the frontline must be supported to work with communities in ensuring that even as immediate needs are being met, focus remains on long term sustainability. As the Secretary-General said, ***“we cannot return to business as usual.”***

UN-Habitat is reaching out to cities and communities to offer them our expertise in water and sanitation, urban transport and other basic urban services. To establish long term solutions, we are enhancing our slum upgrading, the right to adequate housing, and security of tenure programmes as the basis for creating more equitable and sustainable cities. Both national and local governments are realizing that a different and more inclusive approach is possible and are considering alternatives to evictions, homelessness and rental default.

UN-Habitat is collaborating with and supporting the work of national and local authorities in informal settlements through a wide range of community based networks. Hand washing stations have been installed in strategic locations in informal settlements, and awareness campaigns are being conducted, including the sharing of practical information on minimizing exposure to infections.

Community volunteers are being trained and provided with the support they need to identify symptoms of illness and facilitate home care and self-quarantining. They are also actively engaged in community contact tracing to prevent further spread of the disease, and in the collection of data to enable evidence-based decision-making both at the community level and city-wide.

The 10th Session of the World Urban Forum happened in a different world than today. It may well have been the last major UN conference of a gentler age. However, the theme - culture and innovation - and the partnerships forged are more relevant today than ever before. This is the time for us to lay the groundwork if we are serious about turning the leaf. In the midst of the on-going lock down, we must commit to realizing the Declared Actions at WUF10, as only then can we make cities safe, inclusive and resilient for all in the age of crises that lies before us.

Neil Khor was the Officer-in-Charge of the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum

Fernanda Lonardoní was Project Lead of the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum



© UNHabitat/Julius Mwelu



Abu Dhabi Proud Hosts of WUF 10

The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum was officially opened on 8 February 2020 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC).

The colourful, high-tech opening ceremony was graced by His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of the Executive Council and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court, accompanied by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

President Ashraf Ghani of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of the Republic of Fiji, and the Chairman of the Department of Municipalities and Transport representing the Local Organizing Committee of World Urban Forum 10, H.E. Falah Al Ahbabi were among the dignitaries present.

In his video message, the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, thanked Abu Dhabi for hosting the gathering – the first time the World Urban Forum has been held in the Arab Region. He noted that urbanization is one of the megatrends of our times and steering it well will help address global challenges such as climate change.



As we embark on a Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, the world's cities, towns and communities will be at the heart of this work. The United Nations counts on local and national leaders, businesses, civil society and other partners to help provide solutions to global threats, including the climate emergency.

Mr. Guterres, urging participants to make sustainable urbanization a reality and ensure that no one and no place is left behind.



What I hope to see from the Tenth Session is a set of declared actions. Commitments that we will make on a voluntary basis as individuals, communities, cities and countries, at local, regional and global levels, that help mark this Decade of Action to accomplish the SDGs by 2030.

*Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-Habitat)*

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif said UN-Habitat could not have asked for a better host than Abu Dhabi. She highlighted the special significance of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum, saying the World Urban Forum had truly come of age as the world's premier gathering of thinkers and doers for sustainable urbanization, and this year it coincided with the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. The UN-Habitat Executive Director she called on the Forum to come up with concrete actions.

Thanking the President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji for their continued support of UN-Habitat, Ms. Sharif said it was their sense of urgency, their ability to translate policy into practice and to regard urbanization in holistic terms that would ensure it could be transformed into opportunities for sustainable development.

President Ashraf Ghani of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan said that meeting the challenges posed by the scale and scope of urbanization in the context of global uncertainty, disruptive and destructive change required fast action.



“Urgent, systematic and global action is required. We have the tools and repertoire of techniques to solve the problem,” he said, adding that the world needed change in the culture of states, culture of people, and the culture of global organizations.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji said the Forum offered the opportunity to discuss the role of cities in averting crises by making urban living synonymous with sustainability. He said living standards in cities had grown remarkably, but that progress has come at the cost of a warming world.



“The old model of development is untenable; if we continue to urbanise on carbon-intensive industries, the world's cities will crumble into hotbeds of inequality and extreme vulnerability,” he warned.



H.E. Falah Mohammad Al Ahbabi, the Chairman of the Department of Municipalities and Transport and coordinator of the Local Organising Committee of WUF10. ©UN-Habitat/Azeem Baig

Welcoming participants to Abu Dhabi, the Chairman of the Department of Municipalities and Transport and coordinator of the Local Organising Committee of the Tenth World Urban Forum, H.E. Falah Mohammad Al Ahbabi thanked UN-Habitat for its support, guidance and vision in making the Forum in Abu Dhabi a reality.



“It is a privilege to see the world's greatest minds in urban sustainability come together from more than 160 countries to challenge the conventional ways, to tackle crucial issues and discover new insights on urbanization. With more than 18,000 registered participants and 580 speakers with 133 exhibitors, we have strengthened our capacity and remain united in our vision to create a better world for the next generation,” he said.

The ceremony opened with a dazzling virtual tour of Abu Dhabi featuring some of the Emirate's most important cultural sites.

Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation

By Eduardo Lopez Moreno



Brasov, Romania ©Shutterstock

Culture and innovation: the creative capital of cities

Urbanization and culture have been intrinsically connected in the history of humanity. After a rather slow growth of evolutionary history, the industrial revolution (1760-1840) resulted in an urban revolution. Industrial cities were different from other existing cities. They were larger, more densely populated, socially diverse and with high potential for innovation. They were also highly influential in the development of world culture.

Culture and innovation brought great opportunities for cities to flourish and develop and, as cities expanded and diversified to industrial, commercial, technology, knowledge and political powers, they had more opportunities to become global and regional cultural centers and places of innovation.

Culture is an elusive term that takes different concepts and definitions. From a functional point of view, it has to do with art, beliefs, capabilities, habits, morals, behaviors and forms of knowledge. From an anthropological point of view, culture reflects the way people think and act. It is a product of action that determines social conditions and future arrangements, supporting governance mechanisms and influencing policy directions. In this complexity, culture is a public asset that underpins social meaning and actions.

Culture is often associated with history, identity, values and tradition, while innovation is associated with forward looking thinking. However, the reality is that these two concepts are space and time-bound interrelated. The city with its people and systems, innovative milieus, knowledge creation mechanisms, new technological developments, creative places, and diverse societal relations, create conditions to reinforce and expand cultural values and innovative mechanisms.

Culture and innovation drive positive urban change and when culture promotes creativity, diversity, tolerance, inclusion and participation, it triggers innovation and creates the right environment for it to flourish. Alternatively, innovative ideas and solutions are more likely to be created and adopted in open cultural environments.

Culture and innovation are a creative capital with direct implications on various dimensions of development and prosperity. Acting together, they have the capacity to unleash underdeveloped potential, make better use of local resources and assets, maximize city opportunities and redefine comparative advantages. Resourcefully combined, culture and innovation, supported by creative approaches to planning, economy, social inclusion and entrepreneurial capacity, can drive economic growth, development and prosperity.

Promoting endogenous innovation and a culture of creativity

Innovations in cities do not happen by accident. They require a culture of creativity that needs to be embedded in the way urban centers operate. It is not just for governments or business, but for the entire society to contribute with its own powers of imagination and creative transformation. And this has to be encouraged, properly established, institutionalized and legitimized. In practice, all of this requires well-adapted physical environments, which in turn have to do with urbanization economies and better urban planning.¹

Creativity and innovation are fundamental factors for endogenous growth and development. Location advantages that translate into economies of agglomeration and positive externalities at regional scale, combined with active knowledge networks, and an appropriate economic environment, are key ingredients for creative capital.

This can be further advanced by the use of technology, adequate organizational factors, including institutions, and the right government interventions. When cities assemble all these elements, they are better placed to foster innovative solutions that fuel the creation of social and intellectual capital, thereby further contributing to their productivity and prosperity.

¹ UN-Habitat (2012) State of the World Cities Report 2012, The Prosperity of Cities, UN-Habitat and Earthscan, London.

Space, culture and creativity: a productive mix

Culture enhances development and has, in itself, become a factor in different forms of innovation. Recently, space and its related attributes have largely contributed to new forms of cultural manifestation and local growth and development. Space recreates memories, reinvents the notion of identity and belonging, and redefines and reinforces the soul of the city, which is exhibited through its cultural heritage and intangible values. The city's soul is also revealed through its social fabric, its creative and intellectual assets, its vibrancy and distinct personality.²

As described by the European Network of Cultural Centres, *'space does not only constitute the geographic reference of cultural resource both material and immaterial, it becomes a resource on its own'*.³ Space attributes are somehow integrated in the production of creative goods and services, such as music, theatre, fashion and other societal and symbolic elements that are mainly operated locally by small- and medium-size enterprises that understand and embrace the intrinsic value of the native, resident and unique. These local places are characterized by a high degree of specialization, social diversity, mix uses and dense areas, different forms of art creation and representation and continuous innovations.

Resident communities use their ability to imagine, create and innovate using territorial proximity factors that are enhanced by local comparative advantages, endowment, resources, accessibility and infrastructure. By using creativity and intellectual capital, these communities constitute a set of knowledge-based activities, including different forms of art creation, to produce tangible and intangible products with creative content and economic value.

In this sense, creativity represents a deeper process of production with a new form of added value. Cities that recognize these local creative spaces have better chances of promoting endogenous development.

² Ibid

³ European Network of Cultural Centres (2017) Main connections between cultural and creative activities and the socio-economic space, <https://encc.eu/resources/database/main-connections-between-cultural-and-creative-activities-and-socio-economic>.



Connecting culture and innovation for social inclusion

Cities are increasingly becoming heterogeneous, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies. While living with diversity has become the new normal, many inhabitants still try to live 'parallel lives' and different forms of inter-ethnic intolerance and social conflict prevail at local level.

Managing diversity and promoting cultural interchange and social cohesion take different forms that include policies, actions and specific measures aimed at building an inclusive society. Such a society must be based on fundamental values of equity, social justice, and human rights and freedoms, as well as on the principles of tolerance and embracing diversity.⁴

Experience shows that much of the understanding and negotiation to manage diversity and difference occurs at the very local level, through everyday experiences and encounters. The importance and relevance of neighborhood contexts and the local micro public is key to the development of new interactions and relations. Place identity, innovative design of space and urban regeneration and revitalization can contribute to strengthening identities and belonging, integrating both host communities and newcomers, including migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people.⁵

It is important that urbanization models and urban planning allow for socially and physically integrated urban growth. This should allow for equitable access to services, transport, education, public space, employment and housing for the

most vulnerable, by focusing on mixed-use development, transport planning for multiple users, affordable housing policies, and urban renewal programmes.⁶

The protection and enhancement of the built heritage requires new strategies and thinking on ways of creating distinctive place-identity solutions for better cultural, social and ethnic integration and inclusion. This can be done by connecting culture and innovation and constructing new public spaces that promote social and community interactions as a way of complementing and enriching the local built heritage.

Cities can provide ethnic and culturally diverse social groups and individuals with a 'spatial membership' with the possibility of integrating their own values, identity and history into the social and physical fabric of cities.⁷ These cities accentuate notions of multiculturalism, diversity and complexity by overlapping instead of separating local layers of identity as a way of being inclusive.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ UN-Habitat (2008), State of the World's Cities Report 2008, Harmonious Cities, UN-Habitat and Earthscan, London.

⁴ UNESCO (2014) Social Inclusion, Social Transformations, Social Innovation, What Role for UNESCO in 2014-2021? http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BPI/EPA/images/media_services/Director-General/ConceptNoteSocialInclusionSocialTransformationsSocialInnovationEN.pdf

⁵ UN-Habitat (2019) Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Nairobi.

Eduardo Lopez Moreno is Head - Knowledge and Innovation, UN-Habitat and Interim Director of UN-Habitat Office in Mexico and Cuba

UN-Habitat's Flagship Programmes Launched at WUF10

By Fee Stehle

Thirty years from now, two-thirds of the world's population will reside in urban areas. Cities are under increasing pressure to address massive challenges including socio-economic inequality, inadequate access to housing and basic urban services, social exclusion and marginalization, gender-based discrimination, cultural conflicts, air pollution, climate change, and unemployment.

To drive localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in this Decade of Action, the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 is underpinned by five Global Flagship Programmes designed to create a global ecosystem of cities, sub-national and national governments, UN-organizations, the private sector and civil-society working together towards A Better Quality of Life for All in an Urbanizing World.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif launched the five global flagship programmes which will enhance integration of sustainable urbanization issues during the Tenth World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi.

An initial group of partners consisting of Fiji, the World Resources Institute in Poland, the Adaptation Fund, and Slum Dwellers International, came together to launch the Flagship Programme **RISE UP: Resilient Settlements for the Urban Poor**. The programme will benefit 600 million urban poor by leveraging large scale investment to build urban adaptation and climate resilience in global hotspots of vulnerability.



“

With more and more of the world's citizens living in unsustainable informal settlements, and with climate change worsening as global temperatures rise, it's clear the need to rise up to address the sustainability of our urban poor has never been greater.

Be advocates for the urban poor, in word and in action. By doing so, you're fostering a spirit of inclusivity that serves us all. Because when we involve those we seek to help in what we're doing, when we talk less and listen more, I believe we can forge the greatest solutions of all.

*Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji,
the chief guest at the launch.*

Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji, noted that addressing challenges such as relocating communities and securing them with infrastructure investments, improving literacy levels, and alleviating poverty will be a long and tedious process. However, he also made it clear that each one of us can take immediate action to improve the climate resilience of the urban poor by fighting against their stigmatization.

In a partnership between UN-Habitat, the Government and the Adaptation Fund, urban resilience has been enhanced to strengthen climate change responses in three southern provinces of Lao PDR.



Village Chief Sophone Pattachingtoko (left) and Ms. Yajao Patta (centre) during a community consultation. © UN-Habitat/Bernhard Barth

Local government officials and technical staff from 189 villages have been trained in resilience planning, improving their ability to localize climate change and resilience responses and implement sustainable economic development initiatives. Climate change action plans developed at the provincial, district and settlement levels provide a scalable framework for enhancing community resilience through local adaptation measures.

The Flagship Programme **SDG Cities** promotes efforts to ensure that **sustainable urbanization is advanced as a driver of development and peace, to improve living conditions for all**. The programme will catalyse increased funding for sustainable actions, thereby improving the capacity of cities to achieve the SDGs.

Urban regeneration initiatives contribute to **Reduced Spatial Inequality and Poverty**. UN-Habitat will partner with cities to leverage linkages between data on their progress towards achieving the SDGs, policies and sources of finance.

By targeting the transformation of socially, economically, and environmentally deprived areas in cities, the Flagship Programme **Inclusive, Vibrant Neighbourhoods and Communities** will support cities to improve living standards for 500 million people by 2030.

People-focused Smart Cities seeks to enhance shared prosperity of cities and regions by driving sustainability, inclusivity, prosperity and the realization of human rights by making the urban digital transformation work for the benefit of all. By 2030, twenty national governments, 200 cities, and 300 tech companies will have implemented smart city guidelines.

The Flagship Programme **Inclusive Cities: Enhancing the Positive Impact of Urban Migration** supports local and national authorities to create inclusive and non-discriminatory urban environments for all people. This will foster social cohesion amongst host and migrant communities, improve living conditions and promote human rights in countries facing migration and displacement challenges.

These five Flagship Programmes will enable integration of the social inclusion dimensions identified in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 including human rights, gender, children, youth and older persons, and persons with disabilities, into UN-Habitat's programmatic work.

They signal a paradigm shift in the way that UN-Habitat works in order to facilitate the transformative change in cities and human settlements, ensuring that no place, and no one is left behind.

Fee Stehle is Associate Policy Officer, External Relations, Strategy, Knowledge and Innovation Division, UN-Habitat



A commercial urban town in Lagos Nigeria. ©Shutterstock

Shifting from Funding to Financing – The Cities Investment Platform

By Aman Gupta

By 2050 sixty-eight percent of humanity will live in cities¹, with ninety percent of this urban growth occurring in developing countries. As we enter the Decade of Action, UN-Habitat recognises that in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is urgent need to close the gap in infrastructure financing currently estimated to be USD 5.6 trillion².

With the growing shortfall in resources needed to ensure well-functioning and sustainable cities, traditional approaches to funding must be replaced with more inclusive mechanisms that bring together a diverse range of actors at every stage from planning to implementation. Establishing legal and institutional frameworks for them to work together effectively, thereby minimizing individual and collective risks is fundamental.

During the 10th Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi, business leaders, bankers, regulators, innovative technology companies, sovereign wealth funds, developers, and global consultancies came together to discuss

sustainable financing, appropriate legislation, innovation in urban development, and norms and standards that will enable the private sector to participate more effectively in promoting sustainable urbanisation.

The Business Assembly resolved to leverage strategic linkages between urbanization, culture and innovation in order to mobilize financing of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to develop evidence-based policies that ensure more direct local and regional interventions. Participants committed to providing local governments with a range of financing options by 2030.

1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2018 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/2018-revision-of-world-urbanization-prospects.html>.

2 UN-Habitat 2020. The Sustainable Investment Gap and How to Close It: Cities, Infrastructure and SDG Investment Gap. Nairobi. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/02/the_sustainable_investment_gap_and_how_to_close_it_february_2020.pdf.

The Cities Investment Platform

The Cities Investment Platform convened by UN-Habitat brought bankable sustainable urbanization projects to investors' attention. Cities were invited to pitch sustainable urban development projects to a range of investors. Matching cities with investors was a major outcome of the Cities Investment Platform. UN-Habitat and the Global Development Incubator filtered over 100 proposals and selected nine with the greatest potential impact. The Cities Investment Platform team provided these cities with the professional and technical support to turn their proposals into bankable and sustainable urbanization projects. These were then pitched to a panel of investors at an event modelled on the lines of the shark tank.

UN-Habitat's shark tank for municipal-led urban development projects included investors from technology companies, regional and global banks, development finance institutions, and investment managers. They examined the projects and made recommendations to cities pitching projects ranging from smart mobility to water management, solar energy, and slum upgrading.

A water and sanitation project received a USD 70 million commitment from a large regional development finance institution for investment in blue-green infrastructure,

nature-based solutions, desilting, and solid waste removal. This commitment was a direct result of support by UN-Habitat and Global Development Incubator in the selection and preparation of the projects. It will have a significant impact on achieving SDGs 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17.

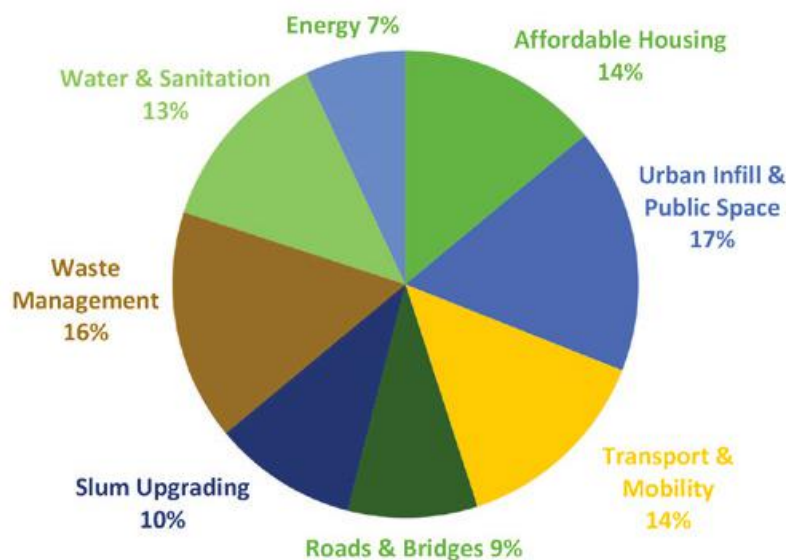
Cities Investment Facility

The Cities Investment Facility will strengthen the capacity of cities to prepare bankable and sustainable city projects through the effective use of knowledge, financial instruments, data, innovative urban solutions, and shared best practices. By supporting the planning, design, financing, and implementation of projects through a series of instruments that engage city authorities, investors and other stakeholder, the CIF will mobilize the flow of capital into urban projects which have the greatest impact, and provide the best returns on investment.

The Facility focusses on unlocking the potential of blended financing mechanisms to bridge the global financing gap in sustainable urbanization by building a pipeline of bankable urban development projects with assessed potential impact.

Aman Gupta is a consultant in sustainable finance, Office of the Executive Director, UN-Habitat

PROJECT SUBMISSIONS



wuf¹⁰ / IN PICTURES



UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms. Sharif at the launch of the People-Focused Smart Cities Flagship Programme
© UNHabitat/Waseem Ali

WUF 10 delegates in unanimous call for Digital technology to benefit all

The digital revolution should work for the benefit of everyone and not create further divisions says UN-Habitat's Executive Director, Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

She was speaking during the launch of two Flagship Programmes encouraging action around the Sustainable Development Goals.

The potential advantages and challenges of the spread of digital technology were scrutinized during the launch of the Flagship Programme on People-Focused Smart Cities. The launch heard that over half the world's population is currently online, but there are still 3.6 billion people without affordable access to the internet.

"We can see all around us that data, artificial intelligence, connectivity and the new digital economy are shaping our societies. Digital technologies have the potential to serve people, improve public services and working conditions. But persistent digital divides remain, and the digital revolution must be directed and governed in a democratic and inclusive way," said Ms Sharif.

Deputy Director-General for Globalization, Culture, Education and International Development, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France Mr Cyrille Pierre, called for a demand driven digital economy. *"It is no longer a luxury to get access to digital services, it's a necessity,"* he said.

Vice President of Urban Tech Partnerships, Mastercard, Mr Alby Bocanegra concurred, emphasising that *"People are at the heart of cities."*

Executive Director Fundación Ciudadanía Inteligente, Guatemala Ms. Renata Avila called for high quality technology to be delivered to everyone saying, *"We need to make data our citizen superpower ... so far companies hold data and we need to take it back."*

UN-Habitat also launched the Flagship Programme **SDG Cities**, a global initiative to encourage and support cities to achieve the SDGs.

Noting that this Flagship Programme would encourage investment in areas that achieve the greatest SDG impact, the UN-Habitat Executive Director said *"We need to generate demand amongst cities worldwide to accelerate SDG achievement – SDG achievement is good for the city, good for its people, good for national and global development."*



UN Resident Coordinator for the United Arab Emirates Dr Dena Assaf at the One UN Roundtable convened during the Tenth World Urban Forum
© UNHabitat/Mohammed Ishtiaq

UN Resident Coordinator supports sustainable urban development in the UAE

UN Resident Coordinator for the United Arab Emirates Dr. Dena Assaf applauded Abu Dhabi for its capacity to host such important events with high quality organization and facilities. “By hosting the World Urban Forum, the premier meeting on sustainable urbanization, the UAE has shown its strong commitment to a better future for our cities, she said.

She observed that discussions and exchanges at WUF emphasized the central role cities and towns will play in the future of our planet.

“The United Nations in the United Arab Emirates, led by the Office of the Resident Coordinator and the UN country team will use the outcomes from WUF10 to support sustainable urbanization in the UAE, including urban and rural planning and social inclusion towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,” reiterated Dr. Assaf.



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Officials plant the evergreen Ghaf tree as a living legacy to WUF 10

There is a popular saying in the Arab world that death will not visit a man, even at the time of famine, if he has a Ghaf tree, a goat and a camel, since the three together will sustain a man under the most trying conditions.

As a living legacy to the success of the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum, the first ever in the Arab World, dignitaries attending the event planted some 400 seedlings of the evergreen Ghaf trees.

UAE's Minister of Climate Change and Environment Mr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, UN-Habitat Executive Director Mrs.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, and the President of the UN-Habitat Assembly Ms. Marta Delgado, Forum participants, high-level representatives of municipal entities and diplomatic missions across the UAE participated in the event where they each planted a tree.

"This is a very fitting way to continue our efforts and enhance the legacy of WUF10. The Forum is all about creating a better future in our cities and the planting of these trees today and many more throughout the year demonstrates a firm commitment to this goal," said the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

HRH Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud appointed UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador



Her Royal Highness, Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, a leading philanthropist and the Secretary General of Alwaleed Philanthropies, was appointed UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Arab States, during the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi.

"UN-Habitat is very grateful for the unwavering commitment of HRH Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud to support sustainable urban development and better living standards for all. Her partnership with UN-Habitat will contribute to the organization's vision of socially and environmentally sustainable cities that leave no one and no place behind" said UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat Ms Maimunah Mohamed Sharif.

"I am greatly honoured to have been appointed the first ever UN-Habitat Regional Goodwill Ambassador for the Arab World. Using the experience and lessons we have learned through our work over four decades, we will continue to face the world's most pressing challenges with unwavering dedication, commitment, and intelligence to help countries and stakeholders address issues around urbanization and its implications on societies, economies and environments. We promise to continue building bridges for a more compassionate, tolerant and accepting future along with our key partners," said Princess Lamia Bint Majed Al Saud.

BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL AT WUF10

The Better Cities Film Festival was a node for conversation around improving our cities, articulated through the transcendent art of film. Storytellers from across the world expressed diverse points of view on what it means to create sustainable, inclusive and resilient cities in line with the theme Connecting Culture and Innovation.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Best Feature Film and UN-Habitat Better Communities Award Winner - Soufra

Soufra traces the life and work of social entrepreneur Mariam Shaar in the Burl El Barajneh refugee camp south of Beirut, Lebanon. Together with other refugee women, she launches the catering company Soufra, which becomes a powerful means for economic liberation, empowerment and social cohesion.

"Together, they heal the wounds of war through the unifying power of food while taking their future into their own hands."

Watch the trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/233138776/69849e9301>

More information on the film here: <https://www.soufracfilm.com/>

UN-Habitat Hero Award – City Dreamers

City Dreamers highlights the often overlooked contribution of women in the field of architecture and urban planning. The film chronicles the pioneering contributions of four women architects – Phyllis Lambert, Blanche Lemco van Ginkel, Cornelia Hahn Oberlander and Denise Scott Brow whose transformative work shaped cityscapes across North America and Europe.

"City Dreamers is above all inspired by what has united these four women throughout their careers: the "dream" of a fundamentally human and inclusive city."

Watch the trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/324193176>

More information on the film here: <https://www.citydreamersfilm.com/>

Emerging Ideas Award – Growth Below

Presented by the International Tunneling and Underground Space Association Committee and on Underground Space (ITACUS) and the Swiss Center of Applied Underground Technologies (SCAUT), Growth Below demonstrates the vision and technology behind the use of underground urban spaces to tackle the challenges of food security sustainably, thereby expanding our understanding of the capacity for human development.

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmFYHxqAi20&feature=youtu.be>

More information on the work of ITACUS here: <https://www.ita-aites.org/>

And SCAUT's Underground Green Farming initiative here: <https://www.scaut-association.com/en/Use-Concept-Studies/Category/Use-Concept-Studies/Underground-Green-Farming>

FULL LIST OF WINNERS

Photos: <https://we.tl/t-4wzEdi60un>

Sources:

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<https://www.citydreamersfilm.com/>

<https://about.ita-aites.org/wg-committees/itacus/news-announcements/1839/growth-below-wins-best-emerging-idea-2020-award-at-better-cities-film-festival?tmpl=component>

<https://www.scaut-association.com/en/Use-Concept-Studies/Category/Use-Concept-Studies/Underground-Green-Farming>



Pushing the Gender Parity Agenda in the Workplace

UN-Habitat is committed to achieving gender parity in the workplace and the economic, social and personal empowerment of women around the world. This was demonstrated at the Tenth World Urban Forum where, for the first time in the Forum's history, over 50 percent of the speakers were women.

On International Women's Day, March 8th 2020, voices of women across the world were amplified through collective action and solidarity under the theme **I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights**.

Committed to Gender Parity in the Workplace

UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif is an active member of the International Gender Champions, a network of women and men in leadership positions working together for gender equality in their respective spheres of influence. She has made a personal commitment to achieve gender parity within the organization and established an Advisory Group on Gender Parity to steer and monitor progress towards this objective.

Ms. Sharif has also committed to decline any invitations to speak in "manels" - panels with no gender balance.

Backing education for girls and women

Sunta is a rural community outside Darfur in South Sudan with a high population of internally displaced persons. To improve opportunities for girls' education, UN Habitat and the Government of South Sudan have jointly established the Sunta Girls Secondary School, dedicated to the education of marginalized girls within the community, often left out of formal education due to cultural separation of genders and inadequate facilities. With its initial enrollment of 94 girls, the project immediately doubled the number of female students attending school.



Supporting women-led community initiatives

UN-Habitat and the Human Relief Foundation have carried out a Community Health and Hygiene Awareness-Raising Campaign in the Yathrib Sub-District of Iraq as part of a wider EU-UNDP led project to Support Recovery and Stability in Iraq through Local Development.

Professional HRF hygiene trainers led interactive sessions for women and youth focusing on handling, treatment and safe storage of drinking water, treatment of lice and scabies infections, prevention of typhoid and diarrhea, and the safe disposal of solid, organic and toxic waste. Health and hygiene kits were distributed to 400 households.



Highlighting Gender-inclusive Urban Planning

In the weeks leading up to International Women's Day 2020, UN-Habitat intensified its ongoing campaign to amplify the voices of women planners, architects, activists and policymakers. In the Philippines, the campaign highlighted the views of women professionals on what a city designed by women would look like.

View a collection of responses on the UN-Habitat Philippines Facebook Page ([here](#))

Sources: <https://genderchampions.com/champions/maimunah-mohd-sharif>

<https://unhabitat.org/story-new-girls-school-in-sunta-darfur>

https://twitter.com/Human_Relief/status/1234423339214569474

<https://twitter.com/UNHabitatIRAQ/status/1234055924190502912>

<http://unhabitat.org.ph/2020/03/09/generationequality-gender-equal-cities/>



Remembering Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar who served as the fifth Secretary – General of the United Nations from January 1982 to October 1991 passed away on 4 March 2020. In his two terms as Secretary-General, he steered the United Nations through challenging social and political upheavals, including the Gulf War, during which he played a crucial role in brokering peace between Iran and Iraq.

Cuellar served as the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations, representative to the Security Council and President of the Security Council. He was Prime Minister of Peru from 2000–2001.

Cuéllar's impact on global diplomatic relations was universally recognized. He was the recipient of honorary degrees from over twenty universities across the world, as well as national honours from over 25 countries.

At the time of his death, Cuellar was the oldest living former UN Secretary General at 100 years and 45 days. He is survived by two children.

Sources:

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/javier-perez-de-cuellar>

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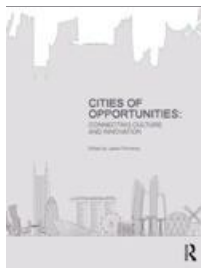
#MYARAB CITY COMPETITION

UN-Habitat Arabic invited citizens from across the Arab world to share a snapshot of their cities – a moment in time that captures the essence of their city and the people who call it home. Three entries highlighted the vibrancy and diversity of urban living were selected from over 250 submissions.



BOOKS LAUNCHES AT WUF10

Several authors, researchers and academic institutions launched publications on topics ranging from gender to risk accumulation, food security and urban finance at WUF 10.

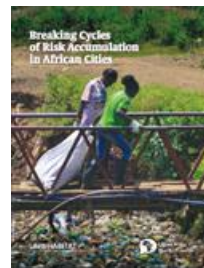


Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation

Edited by Jason Pomeroy

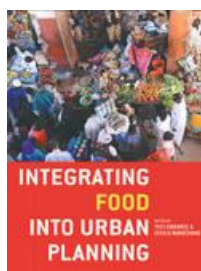
Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation is a series of essays by the most eminent thought leaders on the built environment covering five continents across different disciplines and sectors. The essays address six universal themes – culture, society, space, technology, economy and environment, within the urban context and explore how some of the key challenges of sustainable urbanization can be addressed through these parameters.

The publication seeks to broaden readers' understanding of the role of cities as catalysts of culture and innovation. Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation is Published by Routledge.



Urban African Risk Knowledge – Cycles of Risk Accumulation in African Cities

This publication by UN-Habitat highlights outstanding global examples of research and policy innovations aimed at breaking the cycle of risk accumulation in African cities through the social and spatial distribution of urban risk and capacities for its management. It targets African urban planners and city leaders with a cross-cultural approach and includes chapters from Anglophone and Francophone Africa in a deliberate effort to bridge two key continental cultural constituencies with contrasting pre- and post-colonial legacies written into their urban landscapes. The multi-actor quality of risk management and resilience building means the book gives voice to multiple stakeholder viewpoints – community leaders, international consultants, urban planners, and researchers who share their achievements in developing innovative, Africa-centric urban risk management strategies.

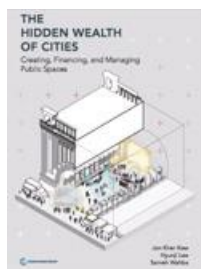


Integrating Food into Urban Planning

Urban planners as well as local and regional authorities who have hitherto not been actively engaged in food-related issues are now being asked to play a central and active role in food production, processing, packaging, production, transportation marketing, consumptions, disposal and recycling.

While there is a growing body of literature on the topic, glaring gaps exist in planning cities in ways that improve food security and nutrition for marginalized and poor city residents. This volume is a collaboration between the Bartlett Development Planning Unit at UCL and the Food Agricultural Organization and aims to fill this gap by putting more than 20 city-based experiences in perspective, including studies from Toronto, New York City, Portland and Providence in North America; Milan in Europe and Cape Town in Africa; Belo Horizonte and Lima in South America; and Bangkok and Tokyo in Asia.

By comparing cities of different sizes in both the Global North and South, and in developed and developing regions, the contributors collectively argue for more targeted dissemination of global knowledge rooted in local food planning practices, programmes and policies.



The Hidden Wealth of Cities: Creating, Financing, and Managing Public Spaces – World Bank

Public urban spaces ranging from city streets, neighborhood squares and parks, to public libraries and markets account for one-third of the total area of most cities, on average. However, the potential for these public-space assets which are typically owned and managed by local governments to transform urban life and the way cities function is often overlooked for a number of reasons. These include more pressing city priorities arising from rapid urbanization, poor urban planning, and financial constraints. As these public spaces deteriorate into congested, vehicle-centric and polluted places, they often

become liabilities which drain public resources continuously and exacerbate existing problems within the cities. By contrast, cities that invest in the creation of human-centered, environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant, and socially inclusive public spaces in partnership with communities, government entities, and other private stakeholders tend to perform better. They implement smart and sustainable strategies across their public space asset life cycles to yield returns on investment far exceeding monetary costs. Ultimately, this approach enhances livability, resilience, and competitiveness of cities.

The Hidden Wealth of Cities: Creating, Financing, and Managing Public Spaces discusses the complexities surrounding the creation and management of vibrant public spaces, drawing on analyses and experiences of cities around the globe. Through the lens of asset management, it proposes a range of creative and innovative strategies cities can adopt in planning, financing and managing both government-owned and privately owned public spaces.



Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design – The World Bank

The Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design encourages gender-inclusive planning and design, which actively includes the voice of women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities. The publication seeks to bridge the gap between policy and practice, intention and action, by demonstrating the positive impact of gender inclusion in urban planning and design.

Case studies of successful gender-inclusive projects from around the world show how simple design measures can dramatically increase agency and wellbeing for disadvantaged groups and gender minorities.

The Handbook sets out guidelines for design and implementation of participatory and inclusive processes that explore the experiences of the city from the perspective of all citizens – women, men, sexual, gender and other minorities.



Supercities: Territorial Intelligence (English Edition)

Cities are the new engines of the global economy, with the potential to be leading actors in the fight against climate change, inequality, and poverty. But they are often confronted

with formidable challenges, and woefully limited economic resources and political power to address them.

Supercities are a generation of cities whose innovative leadership, vibrant creativity, and shared vision enable them to implement public projects with transformative potential.

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<https://wuf.unhabitat.org/wuf10-programme/urban-library/book-launch-african-urban-risk-knowledge>

<https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/111613>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/publication/handbook-for-gender-inclusive-urban-planning-and-design>

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<https://thinkcity.com.my/supercities/>

PARTICIPATE in the Dubai International Best Practices Award for Sustainable Development



Cash prizes of USD 200 000 to be won in each category

The Dubai International Award for Best Practices recognizes and promotes the adoption of best practices in sustainable urban development through a unique global knowledge – sharing platform.

The winner in each category will receive a cash prize of USD 200,000 during EXPO Dubai to be held in November 2020. The award is open to national and regional governments, local authorities and their associations, non-governmental organizations, multilateral agencies, community-based organizations, research and academic institutions, public and private foundations, media entities and individuals. Award categories are available here in English, Arabic, French, Chinese, Spanish and Russian.

To participate apply at <https://www.dubaiaward.ae/> and share this call widely with your partners and networks.

For further information please contact unhabitat-bestpractices@un.org



Highlights of the UN-Habitat 2019 Annual Progress Report

The 2019 Annual Progress Report marks the sixth and final year of monitoring and reporting by UN-Habitat on progress in implementing the 2014 - 2019 Strategic Plan.

Thanks to the generosity of donors who supported operational activities with earmarked funding, UN-Habitat achieved 70 percent of indicator targets for the reporting period. Normative work was significantly constrained by the lack of core funding which undermined the organization's ability to implement work in municipal finance, urban and territorial planning, global monitoring, public space, safety, governance and urban legislation where it has a proven track record of delivering at scale.

UN-Habitat has developed a number of innovative and transformative normative tools and knowledge products, establishing norms and standards that strengthen the capacity of Member States to successfully implement sustainable urbanization programmes. These include the Secretary-General's Guidance Note on Land and Conflict, the Safer Cities Guidelines, and the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles and Framework.

Despite resource constraints, UN-Habitat made significant impact in its normative work. The Planning Lab continues to provide Member States with technical support for the design of inclusive, compact and integrated cities; UN-Habitat is making a unique contribution to humanitarian and post-conflict settlement planning with its integrated and inclusive urban planning tools; and its resilience profiling and planning tools support cities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Regions to become more climate resilient.

The benefits of cyclone resilient construction in disaster situations was demonstrated through UN-Habitat's support to Mozambique in the reconstruction of classrooms following massive destruction by Cyclone Idai. Using its inclusive approach to tenure security through the continuum of land rights, the Global Land Tool Network has, over the past six years, expanded tenure security for over 300,000 households (approximately 1.2 million people) in 13 countries; and in 2019 alone, the Public Space Programme made cities more inclusive for 445,000 people, the majority of them girls and women.

UN-Habitat actively supported the United Nations Development System reforms, making substantive contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework through the new Resident Coordinator system in several countries, including Malaysia and Ethiopia, with the same process underway in eight countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

To support sustainable urbanization in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, UN-Habitat has strengthened its extensive country-level work in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Iraq. Durable resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees has been realised through the build-back better approach, resulting in safer, cleaner, more inclusive cities, and the transformative potential of inclusive long-term partnership strategies at all levels.

The first UN-Habitat Assembly which was successfully convened in May 2019 attracted 2,900 delegates including national delegations from 127 countries, four heads of state and government, and 49 ministers. The Assembly approved the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023. Two new platforms for collaboration with partners and stakeholders, the Stakeholder Advisory Group and the Private Sector Roundtable were launched during the Assembly. The newly elected Executive Board convened in May and November 2019 and approved UN-Habitat's 2020 work programme and budget.

The UN-Habitat resource mobilization strategy has been aligned with the United Nations Funding Compact agreed with Member States in 2019, and the Organization made significant progress in broadening its donor engagement portfolio.

Implementation of governance reforms in line with the General Assembly Resolution 73/539 adopted in December 2018 is on track under the guidance of the Executive Director, with oversight by the Deputy Executive Director.

Brick by Brick

Somali youth rebuild their country

By Shamaarkhe Abdullahi

A Somali proverb says, **“If people come together, they can even mend the sky.”** This rings especially true for a generation of young Somalis who are rebuilding the country in the aftermath of a decades-long civil war. In an environment of violence and poverty where unemployment affects nearly two-thirds of young people, opportunities to obtain quality education and engage meaningfully in political, economic and social life are scarce. This situation pushes many young people to risk illegal migration or makes them prone to destructive and anti-social behaviour.

Launch of Project Rajo

In August 2018 UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing in Somalia launched Project Rajo. In the Somali language, rajo means ‘hope’. The project is designed to address high levels of unemployment in the country through a market driven skills training programme for youth. The three-month programme provides training in life skills, construction skills, entrepreneurship and ICT.



We have a vision of a world where urban youth have better opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential. We are working to improve livelihoods of these youth, especially those in conflict and post-conflict situations by including them in the governance and socio-economic life of their cities.

Sharmaarke Abdullahi,
UN-Habitat Programme Management Officer

In a country where youth comprise half the total population, this constitutes both a significant challenge and an important opportunity for the future development of Somalia. The programme brings together young women and men aged 15-35 from the three cities of Mogadishu, Kismayo and Garowe who were equipped with soft and transferable job skills with emphasis on training in the construction sector, entrepreneurship and business start-up support. To date over 580 young people have been trained and 12 start-ups launched with project support.



“Now I am able to support myself and help contribute to my family’s income,” said 23-year-old Jamila Abdilaqadir Adan who has been employed by a home design and decoration company in Garowe. **“I believe that since I have been trained in construction, even as a woman I can do the same work as the men because I want to help my family and in future, be able to support a family of my own,”** she adds.

The project is part of the youth component of the Somali Strengthening Institutions for Public Works programme and is funded by the African Development Bank, with UN-Habitat providing technical support, working closely with Federal and Regional levels of the Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing in Somalia as well as with UNOPS.

Deconstructing stereotypes to rebuild Somalia

The deep entrenchment of gender roles in a patriarchal society means that it is extremely rare to see a woman working on a construction site in Somalia. Unemployment among women, estimated at 75 per cent, is disproportionately higher than for men, and women make up only 11 per cent of the workforce in construction. Young women face even greater challenges in accessing skills training and employment within the sector.

Deconstructing stereotypes and empowering women was a key objective of Project Rajo. An equal number of women and men were recruited to take part in the training, with marginalized groups such as residents of informal settlements and returnees to Somalia being targeted.



Women have a strong role to play in the reconstruction of Somalia despite the barriers that exist.

Initiatives such as Project Rajo are essential in breaking down some of these barriers and advancing young people's full participation in rebuilding their communities.

*Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-Habitat)*

In Somali society, women are often celebrated for their resilience and strength and their enthusiastic participation in all aspects of training in Project Rajo is testament to this, as is the fact that 60 per cent of the first group of trainees to have completed the inaugural programme in Garowe were women.



"Project Rajo has provided me with important skills that will enable me to succeed in the construction industry but more importantly, it has made me feel empowered and confident in a male dominated industry," said Anfac Adan Abdi.



"The strong participation of women in the project is a remarkable milestone which creates role models for other women interested in pursuing a career in the construction sector across Somalia," noted the Puntland Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Mr. Abdirahman Barkhadle Warsame.



Graduation Ceremony in Garowe

Local ownership for a sustainable future

To ensure knowledge transfer and sustainability, Project Rajo partnered with state and federal governments in the development of a construction training manual which will benefit future trainees and administrations. It also identified two local partners for project implementation. The Success Institute for Human Development (SIHD) led the entrepreneurship component of the training, equipping youth with skills to bring their business ideas to life, while iRise Innovation Hub led a Hackathon to support youth in developing ICT-based solutions to various challenges in the construction sector.

Both SIHD and iRise continue to provide support to start-ups launched as a result of the training.



"We want to be part of their journey. We are not satisfied with only doing the training and will only be happy when we see these young people change their lives, their families' lives and their country," says the CEO of SIHD, Mohammed Omar.

In all three cities, officials have stressed the importance of local ownership.



"The government is happy to have a pool of young women and men with construction skills available locally. It will be more affordable to use locally available skilled labour instead of sourcing it from neighboring countries," said the Puntland minister for public works and housing, Mr. Ismail Ahmed Garas.



Youth participating in the ICT component of the training

Shamaarkhe Abdullahi is a Programme Management Officer, UN-Habitat



WORLD'S PREMIER GATHERING ON SUSTAINABILITY OF CITIES CLOSES WITH STIRRING CALL TO ACTION

The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum closed with a call for united action to ensure a better future for cities and towns. The Forum attracted over 13,000 delegates participating in 540 official events.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif said that during the six-day Forum delegates from all walks of life had highlighted the need for a common legacy of a better world for future generations. She noted that the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi had achieved a remarkable number of milestones.



“All of you know that in terms of numbers, quality presentations, gender balance amongst the speakers, the quality of the exhibitions, the integrated spaces and the opportunities for chance encounters, WUF10 has set a new benchmark in this urban Olympiad,” she said.

The three ingredients running through the theme of WUF 10: Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation are co-dependent and co-creating as human settlements exist and excel on the dynamic mixture of cultures.



Launch of WUF11 with representatives from Poland UN-Habitat and Abu Dhabi

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“Actions as you know, speak louder than words and change must begin at home. Our Strategic Plan 2020–2023 and the Flagship Programmes represent our aspirations and will equip us to help Member States, local governments and communities to take up the call to action for sustainable urban development. I call on Member States to integrate the urban dimension in their development plans, and to help us raise the necessary resources to deliver on our commitments,” she said.

Ms. Sharif emphasized that SDG 11 is where all of the SDGs converge for safe, sustainable and inclusive development, noting with satisfaction that through the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, we now have the what, how and when components.

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“It is heartening to know that in the UAE, great efforts are being made to plant thousands of trees to off-set the carbon footprint of our gathering. The UAE is one of the most generous countries, helping where they can and where there is greatest urgency and need,” she said.

The innovative SDG Cities Flagship Programme and the City Investment Facility were very well-received at WUF 10 and UN-Habitat is ready to expand its role as a bridge-builder linking financing with cities to ensure that plan-led development contributes holistically, leaving no one behind.

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“As we work towards reporting on our accomplishments at the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, allow me to say to the Government of Poland and the city of Katowice that UN–Habitat is ready to work closely with you in the very near future,” she assured the hosts of WUF 11, taking the opportunity to announce that expression of interest to host the Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum was officially open.

Noting that World Urban Forum is not an ordinary event, the Executive Director of Strategic Affairs at Department of Municipalities and Transport and General Coordinator of the World Urban Forum 10 H.E. Mohamed Al Khadar Al Ahmed said hosting the Forum was simply irresistible.

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“But to do so successfully takes tremendous effort,” he said, thanking all those who had worked so hard to ensure its success. He commended diverse groups among them many high profile local and international organizations for demonstrating what true collaboration can achieve.

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“Over the five days, I attended many sessions to monitor the Forum’s progress and was truly impressed by how colossal this event is,” he said, adding that the agenda was extremely attractive with large audiences at every session and a lot of interaction among attendees.

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“The richness of the agenda, high profile of speakers, and interesting variety of topics were tremendously breathtaking for us. We have drawn valuable knowledge from the Forum and the end of this closing session our colleagues will announce clear commitments to action by Abu Dhabi,” he said.

He paid special tribute to the Executive Director of UN–Habitat and all UN-Habitat staff, over 500 volunteers among thirty people with special needs, the Department of Culture, and the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) for their professionalism and commitment in organizing and managing the event.

In a video message to the participants, the President of the United Nations General Assembly Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande commended the UAE and UN-Habitat for organizing and hosting the Forum, one of the first United Nations events marking the milestone Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development.



Urban library at WUF10 @ UN-Habitat/Waseem Ali

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“Culture and innovation are key to providing opportunities for decent work, reducing poverty, promoting climate action, fostering innovation and promoting socially cohesive, peaceful, resilient and inclusive societies,” he said. As cities become more diverse, culture plays a crucial role in fostering respect for human rights, peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

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“We must continue to implement the New Urban Agenda as one of the most important blueprints for achieving SDG 11 in our cities,” he concluded.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi highlighted the need to take stock of progress made towards achieving the goals set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and other global frameworks.

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“We have fallen behind and as the Secretary-General has proclaimed the Decade of Action, we must look at what we have done right, review the normative background and reject the forces against multilateral action,” said Mr. Kituyi.

Congratulating the hosts and UN-Habitat on the success of the Forum, the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on preparations to mark the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild Drummond said coming from New York where it is not always easy to be optimistic about the state of the multilateralism or global cooperation, *“it is truly encouraging and inspirational to be here and to witness the level of idealism linked to practical reflection and lessons learnt.”*

The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and Under Secretary of Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of Mexico, Ms. Martha Delgado who co-chaired the Advisory Group responsible for drawing up the final Abu Dhabi Declared Actions said they had listened to participants’ thoughts, wishes and aspirations.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions which were presented to the delegates include commitments from international organizations, national, local and regional governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders towards supporting efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by world leaders in 2015.

United Nations Resident Coordinator for the UAE Dr. Dena Assaf said the Forum has been widely recognized as an outstanding success where thousands of delegates shared ideas, best practices and innovative solutions to some of the most challenging problems facing cities today.



“We are pleased to support the UAE in knowledge and capacity transfer to other countries. The high participation from the UAE and excellent speakers clearly demonstrates the UAE has rich experience to share and is a true leader in innovation,” she said.

The representative of the Latin American Network of Persons with Disabilities and their Families Mr. Henry Murillo Salazar said that since Habitat III in Quito, and WUF 9 in Kuala Lumpur, there have been more visible efforts to address all forms of discrimination, and place the needs of people with disabilities on equal terms. However, he noted that much remains to be done.

Announcing that the next World Urban Forum (WUF) in 2022 would be held in Katowice, Poland the UN-Habitat Executive Director observed that it would be the first time for the Forum to be held in Central Eastern Europe.



Ms. Shayma Al Mughairy performs live sand drawing at the #WUF10 closing ceremony

The Minister of Development Funds and Regional Policy of the Republic of Poland Ms. Malgorzata Jarosinska-Jedynak invited delegates to WUF 11 to witness the urban transformation that has taken place in Central Eastern Europe over the last thirty years.



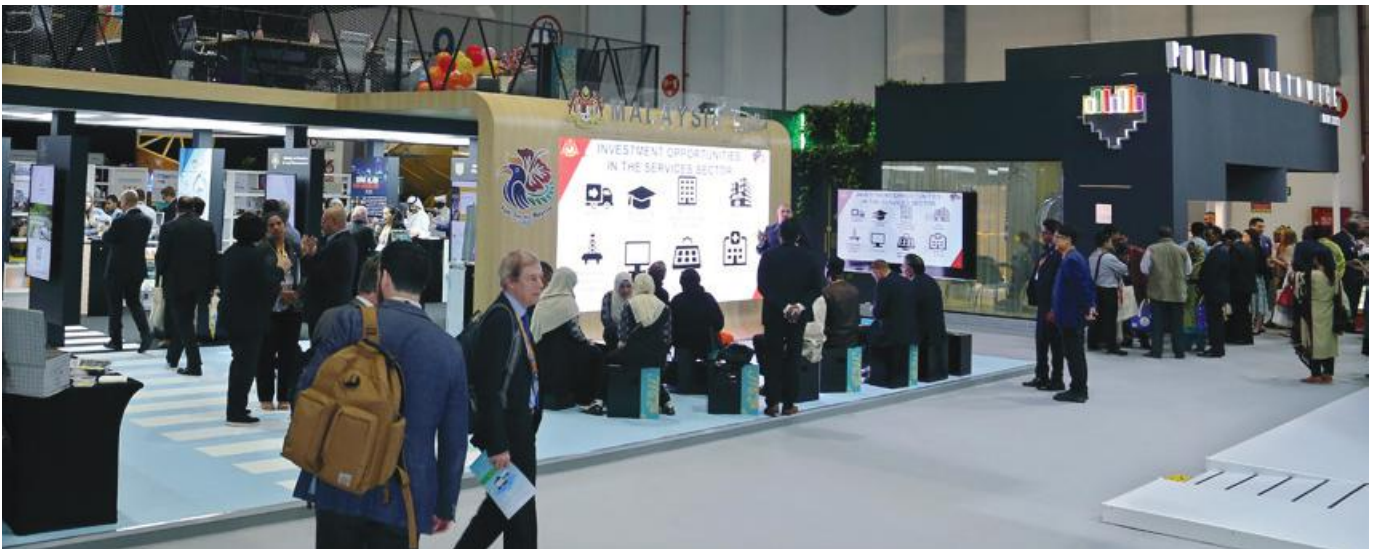
“In Katowice we want to talk about transformational changes that leave no one behind. It will be a historic event,” she said.

wuf¹⁰ / THE URBAN EXPO

The Urban Expo had a total of 130 exhibitors from 51 countries representing all regions and a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Spanning 17,000 square meters, the Expo attracted more than 30,000 visitors. The Expo was one of the liveliest areas of the Expo, featuring innovative designed exhibits such as the UN-Habitat Arena, Urban Cinema, country and city pavilions.







A photograph of a woman and two children in a slum setting. The woman, wearing a black shirt and denim overalls, stands in the background. In the foreground, two young children are leaning over a wooden railing. One child is holding a pink container, and the other is holding a small yellow object. The background shows a building with a corrugated metal roof and a red door.

**ADVANCING
SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION AS A DRIVER OF
DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE TO IMPROVE
LIVING CONDITIONS FOR ALL.**

URBAN IMPACT



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