



PRESS RELEASE

GLOBAL OBSERVANCE OF WORLD CITIES DAY 2020 ON 31 OCTOBER BEING HOSTED BY KENYA

22 October 2020

The World Cities Day Global Observance will take place on Saturday 31 October 2020. World Cities Day has been observed annually across the globe on the 31 October since 2014, highlighting a range of issues around sustainable urbanization. It is hosted by a different city each year, with attendance ranging from communities to the highest level of dignitaries. Several events take place around the world to mark the Day.

This year, UN-Habitat is partnering with the Government of the Republic of Kenya to organise the event, with the global celebrations being hosted by the County Government of Nakuru, supported by Uasin-Gishu and Kisumu County Governments. The Observance will be guided by the general theme *Better City, Better Life*, while the sub-theme is *Valuing our Communities and Cities*.

This year's Global Observance is historic as it is the first to be hosted in Africa.

"Kenya is delighted to be the first African country to host the World Cities Day Global Observance. We are committed to promoting sustainable urban and human settlements' development as is outlined in our National Urban Development Policy, as well as supporting the work of UN-Habitat," said Mr. James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works of Kenya

This will also be the first Global Observance of World Cities Day being held virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has drawn the world's attention to the urgent need to prioritize sustainable urban planning and development of our cities and towns, which have become epicentres for the spread of diseases particularly in unplanned and informal settlements.

The programme for the day features an official Opening Ceremony in the morning and two parallel sessions consisting of a total of four Roundtables in the afternoon.

The official Opening Ceremony will include statements from various dignitaries including:

- The Host Governor of Nakuru County and chairman of the Urban Development, Planning, Lands, Housing, Infrastructure and Energy Committee of Council of Governors **Mr. Lee Kinyanjui** ;
- The Mayors of **Ekaterinburg**, Russian Federation and **Shanghai**, People’s Republic of China;
- Recorded video message from the UN Secretary-General **António Guterres**;
- UN-Habitat Executive Director, **Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif**;
- Minister of National Development of **Singapore**, and Cabinet Secretary Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works of **Kenya**
- And a keynote address by **His Excellency Hon. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta**, C.G.H., President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces

The afternoon will feature Roundtables on the following topics: 1. *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through resilient intermediate cities*, 2. *Working together to build resilient communities and cities* 3. *Building back better communities through public space* and 4. *World Cities Report 2020-The Value of Sustainable Urbanization*.

The Observance will include the launch of UN-Habitat’s flagship World Cities Report which is focusing on the Value of Urbanization. There will also be live linkups to events in China and Malaysia and the launch of the latest edition of The Shanghai Manual, a resource providing practical solutions for urban decision makers.

“The Permanent Mission of Kenya to UN-Habitat is honoured to be associated with this historic Global Observance of World Cities Day. Our active engagement with UN-Habitat is testament to Kenya’s commitment to working with and supporting the work of UN-Habitat,” said the Kenya Permanent Mission to UN-Habitat.

“UN-Habitat is pleased to partner with the Government of the Republic of Kenya, which hosts UN-Habitat headquarters, for the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2020. This day provides a platform for stakeholders to examine opportunities and challenges in our cities, towns and human settlements as well as recognize community efforts on sustainable urbanization,” said Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat

“National and sub-national governments have a responsibility to shape cities and urban areas to be drivers of economic growth, centres for opportunities and innovation. Further, sub-national governments play an integral role in providing solutions to communities through inclusive, accessible, and transparent participatory processes due to their advantage of operating at the

local level,” said Mr. Lee Kinyanjui, the Governor of Nakuru County and Chairperson of the Urban Development, Planning, Lands, Housing, Infrastructure and Energy Committee of the Council of Governors.

Partners, stakeholders, the media and other professionals can register to watch the Opening Ceremony and post questions at the Roundtables at <https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/register-for-wcd-2020>. Proceedings can also be followed live on UN-Habitat’s YouTube account and Facebook @unhabitat.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxkn7WqOdNdNB3AfG65NQ_A

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