The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions: One year of implementation

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Acronyms

EAs	–	Expected Accomplishments
ENOT	–	The National Strategy for Territorial Planning
GTLRG	–	Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments
NUA	–	New Urban Agenda
NUF	–	National Urban Forum
SDGs	–	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG	–	United Cities and Local Governments
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	-	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VLR	–	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	–	Voluntary National Review
WUF	–	World Urban Forum

Executive summary

At the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in February 2020, diverse actors committed to supporting implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) as an accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Decade of Action with a set of voluntary actions and commitments: the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions.

More than a year later, at the midpoint between WUF10 and WUF11, taking place in Katowice, Poland, in June 2022, this report highlights progress on 24 voluntary actions being implemented by 41 partners. They represent initiatives from all regions and by stakeholders including national governments, local and regional governments, civil society, professional organisations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), academia, persons with disabilities, and United Nations agencies. It is encouraging to see the concrete action taking place across the board, as stakeholders fulfil their commitments to implementing the NUA to achieve the SDGs in this critical decade.

This report shares progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. It highlights actions representing collaboration and cooperation between WUF partners and stakeholders across the world, that are contributing to the development of cities that are more equal, inclusive and resilient. Various actions incorporate culture and innovation as key components of sustainable urban development.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions support the objectives and implementation of SDG11 and other SDGs.

Stakeholders provided updates on their progress via UN-Habitat's online Urban Agenda Platform. This knowledge portal was developed, as one of UN-Habitat's commitments, for stakeholders at global, regional, national and local levels to share voluntary reports, best practices, and data on NUA implementation. It is a one-stop shop for reporting and learning that aims to establish communities of practice for sustainable urban development.

The report also provides updates on the WUF Legacy Initiatives inaugurated at WUF10 to drive momentum on continuous integrated knowledge exchange and incubation of scalable initiatives to accelerate sustainable urbanization.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions by the numbers

This report provides updates on 24 actions and initiatives associated with the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. These focus on six key areas and contribute to 12 SDGs. They represent initiatives by stakeholders including national governments, local and regional governments, civil society, professional organisations, NGOs, academia, persons with disabilities, and the United Nations agencies.

WUF10 flag raising ceremony, Abu Dhabi 2020 © UN-Habitat/ Azeem Baig

Implementation of the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions: focus areas and contribution to SDGs

Abu Dhabi Declared Actions

24 Actions
Promoting implementation of the NUA to accelerate the SDGs

41 Partners
Collaborating globally

Focus Areas

Mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility in cities

Promoting sustainable urban development and NUA implementation at regional & local levels

Advancing sustainable urbanization in the commonwealth

Making cities resilient by 2030

Developing the New Urban Agenda Monitoring Platform

Enhancing civil society's contribution to sustainable urban development

SDGs
Actions are contributing to multiple SDGs

1 NO POVERTY | 2 ZERO HUNGER | 5 GENDER EQUALITY | 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION | 13 CLIMATE ACTION | 15 LIFE ON LAND | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions represent a global effort and support the ambitions of SDG11 among others, such as SDG17 – Partnerships for the Goals. Actions are being implemented at the regional level (Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa) and the global level.
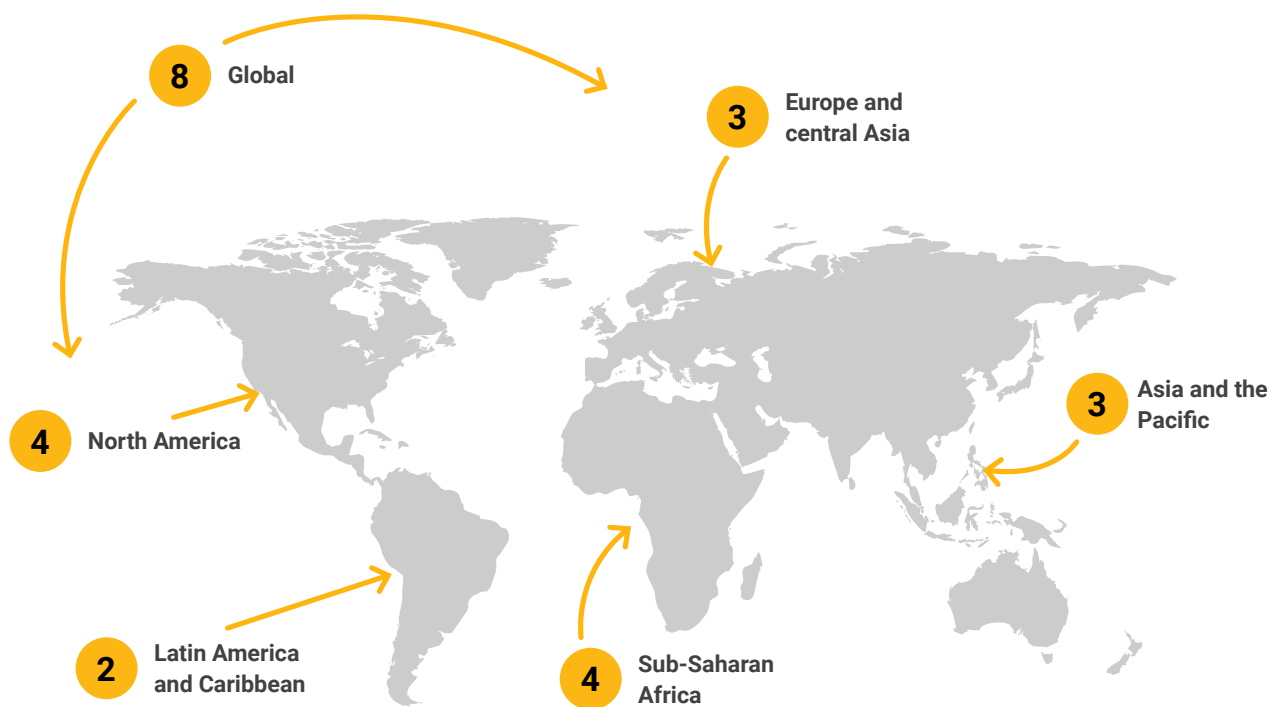
Stakeholders taking action – key trends

This report highlights actions and initiatives that support the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, within the various stakeholder cluster groups.

National governments remain committed to action, after reiterating their commitments to support the implementation of the NUA at WUF10.

▪ In early 2021, Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama reaffirmed the commitment to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050, saying this would soon be legislated through a ground-breaking climate change bill.

▪ Mexico's Urban Improvement Program – Integral Neighbourhood Improvement 2020 has improved the living conditions of low-income communities and neighbourhoods which indicated high rates of violence and marginalisation through 256 urban projects.

▪ Mexico is preparing or renewing 13 Municipal Urban Development Plans along with a Metropolitan Programme and a State Urban Development and Land Use Planning Programme.

▪ Mexico's Social Housing Programme (2020) has assisted 57,650 homes, prioritising areas with a majority indigenous population, women-headed households, and urban or rural areas with high levels of violence and insecurity.

Local and Regional Governments (LRG) are ensuring a more prominent position for cities and local and regional governments in discussions on ecological transition and promoting the cultural dimension in localisation of the SDGs. These initiatives are advancing empowerment and gender responsive and inclusive urban development in cities and settlements. The LRG constituency is strengthening its capacity to implement, review, and follow up on the NUA.

- The World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments, through the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, is defining its roadmap for greater engagement towards implementation, review and follow-up of the NUA.

- A United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Policy Council on the Implementation of the NUA was established in 2020. It has held technical and political meetings in 2021.

- UCLG launched the Seven Keys programme in 2020 to promote the cultural dimension in the localisation of the SDGs.

- UCLG adopted its Decalogue for the COVID-19 aftermath, aimed at putting new citizenship and freedoms for renewed democracy at the centre of the agenda, reducing the digital divide, and building the next generation of rights and equality.

Civil society is working to advance sustainable urbanization and promoting a people-centred approach to inclusive sustainable development. The World Blind Union and its partners have a strong focus on mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility in cities. Initiatives are showing the value of collaboration between civil society, academia, local and national governments, and professional associations.

- The World Blind Union and UN-Habitat are working to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities through a 2020-2023 agreement to mainstream disability inclusion, universal design, and accessibility.

- The World Blind Union and City Space Architecture are set to publish a special issue of The Journal of Public Space with a focus on universally accessible public spaces for all to be showcased at WUF11.

- In 2020, the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative, in collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure, the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government and The Prince's Foundation, hosted an Online Programme on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth. This featured 11 events, involving 106 panellists from 31 countries. It attracted over 2,000 individual participants from 44 Commonwealth and 44 non-Commonwealth countries, amounting to over 4,000 unique views.

- In February 2021, the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative and partners launched a Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth.

The United Nations agencies are working with partners to localise the SDGs, build city resilience by 2030, and generate sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all. These efforts show the value of global partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders.

- UN-Habitat is committed to localising the SDGs through the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). In 2020, UN-Habitat and UCLG launched the first volume of the Guidelines for VLRs.

- In response to the action Making Cities Resilient 2030, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and its partners are helping local governments achieve risk informed development at the local level by implementing sound and inclusive strategies for disaster risk reduction.

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its various partners, including national and local governments, are working on an array of projects in all regions. These aim to: improve urban planning in line with environmental sustainability indicators, reduce emissions and integrate low-carbon development, improve municipal capacities for service provision, improve the livelihoods of the urban poor, and reduce disaster risk for refugees and at-risk populations.

WUF Legacy Initiatives

The WUF Legacy Initiatives were launched at WUF10 to foster partnerships, promote knowledge sharing and cooperation, and support sustainable urban development to meet the objectives of the SDGs and NUA in the Decade of Action. The legacy initiatives demonstrate WUF's role and commitment to continuous integrated knowledge-exchange and incubation of scalable initiatives in the pursuit of sustainable urbanization. The legacy initiatives are being implemented during the inter-session period and progress will be reported at WUF11.

History of WUFs presented in WUF Alumni Exhibition at WUF10 © Maiken Thonke

WUF Alumni Network

The WUF Alumni Network consists of representatives from previous WUF host cities. Building on the collective wealth of experience, the Alumni Network will work with UN-Habitat to support future host cities on how best to plan and organise a successful WUF.

The WUF Alumni Network reflects the NUA's call for the creation of partnerships to enhance coordination and cooperation to effectively implement the NUA. It supports capacity development and sharing of best practices to enhance the transformative impact of the WUF. The initiative is linked to UN-Habitat's strategic corporate priorities.

The implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 requires a catalytic approach, in which UN-Habitat leverages its knowledge, technical cooperation, convening capacity, partnerships and advocacy (Think, Do, Partner, Share). The strategic plan states that achieving sustainable urban development is a continuum that involves generating knowledge and supporting local implementation, monitoring results, and then advancing to the next stage. The objective of the WUF Alumni Network is anchored

in these ambitions to gather the various streams of knowledge UN-Habitat has generated over the years.

UN-Habitat is in talks with Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the host of WUF9, to co-host the first WUF Alumni Network meeting. UN-Habitat is also engaging with governments to nominate focal points for the WUF Alumni Network.

The Cities Investment Facility

UN-Habitat's Cities Investment Facility is an innovative mechanism for connecting sustainable urban development projects with capital investments, helping to bridge the substantial annual infrastructure financing gap of over $3.2 trillion. This multi-stakeholder, partner-driven initiative enables the flow of capital into urban development by supporting projects through the process of ideation, design, feasibility, and financing. It has a focus on projects in low- and middle-income countries and secondary cities.

- The Cities Investment Advisory Platform aims to catalyse up to $500 billion in private capital towards sustainable urban infrastructure development.

▪ The Cities Investment Facility aims to provide technical assistance to up to 100 urban projects by 2023.

▪ The Cities Investment Facility team plans to finalise development and operationalisation of the various platforms and, contingent on funding, showcase the initiative and its proof-of-concept projects at WUF11.

NUF 2.0

The National Urban Forums (NUFs) are inclusive national-level platforms that bring multiple stakeholders together around a common vision for sustainable urban development that aligns with the NUA and SDGs. NUF 2.0 is the updated iteration of the NUFs and feeds into the global WUF process, promoting inclusive policy debates and knowledge sharing, informed policy action, and engagement from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors.

NUFs are key platforms for structured reporting on the transformative impact of the WUF through various initiatives including VLRs and reporting on implementation of the NUA.

NUF highlights since WUF10:

▪ Malaysia, Poland, and Colombia have hosted NUFs (virtually and in- person).

▪ Based on key recommendations from an Expert Group Meeting (October 2020), UN-Habitat revised its guidelines for NUFs.

▪ Seven NUFs (Malaysia, Spain, Turkey, Colombia, Ecuador, Poland, State of Israel) are planned for 2021 along with two sub-regional urban forums (Caribbean and South East Asia).

Next steps

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated global inequalities, making the call to action at WUF10 even more imperative. It is encouraging to see the concrete action taking place across the board, as stakeholders fulfil their commitments to implementing the NUA to achieve the SDGs in this critical decade.

The WUF Legacy Initiatives are being implemented and revised as the anchor points of consolidating the WUF as a permanent advocacy, partnership and knowledge platform that contributes to implementation and monitoring of the NUA, SDGs and key global agendas as well as to the strategy and work of UN-Habitat as the United Nations focal point for sustainable urban development.

Various activities are underway within the agency and in collaboration with partners to consolidate UN-Habitat's leading role within the global VLRs and SDG localisation ecosystem. The activities will be carried out within work streams of Strategic Partnerships, Advocacy, Knowledge Development, and Technical Cooperation.

In the run-up to WUF11, UN-Habitat encourages partners to continue mobilising and to report progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions using the Urban Agenda Platform. In this way, partners can celebrate successes, share lessons learned, and continue building a community of practice that supports sustainable urban development.

Partners are also encouraged to use the NUFs as platforms for mobilising actions, generating new commitments and NUF Declared Actions, and reporting on these.

At WUF11, partners will showcase the creative ways they are following through on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and innovating to ensure that our cities are more inclusive, sustainable, equal and resilient.

Visit the Urban Agenda Platform and share progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions.

1

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions: accelerating sustainable urban development

UN-Habitat's Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif makes her opening remarks © by IISD/ENB | Natalia Mroz

In February 2020, the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF10), held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, kick-started the United Nations Decade of Action. The forum brought together over 13,000 people from 169 countries to engage around issues related to sustainable urbanization, building inclusive and resilient cities, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With less than 10 years to achieve the global goals, WUF10 served as a call to action for all stakeholders to ramp up their efforts for driving sustainable urban development in this critical decade. The theme of WUF10, Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation, emphasised that cities are incubators of social, economic, environmental, political and cultural progress and are at the heart of achieving the SDGs.

While laudable progress is being made in creating cities that are more inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient, there is much work to be done to achieve the SDGs by the close of the decade. Our cities are struggling with issues of extreme poverty, socioeconomic inequality, slums, social exclusion and marginalisation, gender-based discrimination, humanitarian crises, conflict, air pollution, climate change and high unemployment.[1] The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded global inequalities and added immense pressure to sustainable development, making this call to action even more urgent.

At WUF10, partners answered the call to mobilise with a set of voluntary actions and commitments: the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions (Annex). Representatives from key constituent groups composing the WUF10 Advisory Group[2] including international organisations, national, local and regional governments, civil society organisations and grassroots communities, youth associations, women's groups, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, foundations and philanthropies, academics, and the private sector took up the challenge. Together, they committed to supporting implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) as an accelerator to achieve the SDGs.

At the midpoint of the WUF intersessional period, as we look forward to WUF11, set to take place in Katowice, Poland, in 2022, this report provides an update on progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. It shares successes and shows how partners are innovating to meet the ambitions of the NUA and build cities and communities that are safer, resilient, more inclusive, and sustainable.

Box 1: The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions – fundamentals.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions recognise that:

- An increasingly urbanized world constitutes a transformative force which can be harnessed and steered for more sustainable development.

- Culture is an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanization and achieving the NUA.

- Women and girls are key agents of transformative change in their cities.

- Scientific and technological innovation is critical for implementing the NUA and achieving the SDGs and key global development frameworks.

- Data needs to be linked to evidence-based policy formulation, development of action plans, and sources of funding.

- An integrated approach to the implementation of the NUA by all levels of government and by various stakeholders is crucial.

- Cities represent an entry point for all 17 SDGs and create a window of opportunity for sustainable urban development.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions – implementation after one year

More than a year has passed since the adoption of the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. Despite the numerous and unprecedented challenges of the pandemic, UN-Habitat's partners remain committed to implementing their commitments to sustainable urban development, showing how cities are at the centre of driving innovative solutions to global challenges.

Submissions to UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda Platform, an online portal for reporting progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and other commitments, show the range of actions taking place.

This report provides updates on 24 actions and initiatives associated with the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. These focus on six key areas and contribute to 12 of the SDGs (Figure 1). They represent initiatives by stakeholders including national governments, local and regional governments, civil society organisations and their partners, such as professional organisations, NGOs, and academia, and the United Nations agencies.

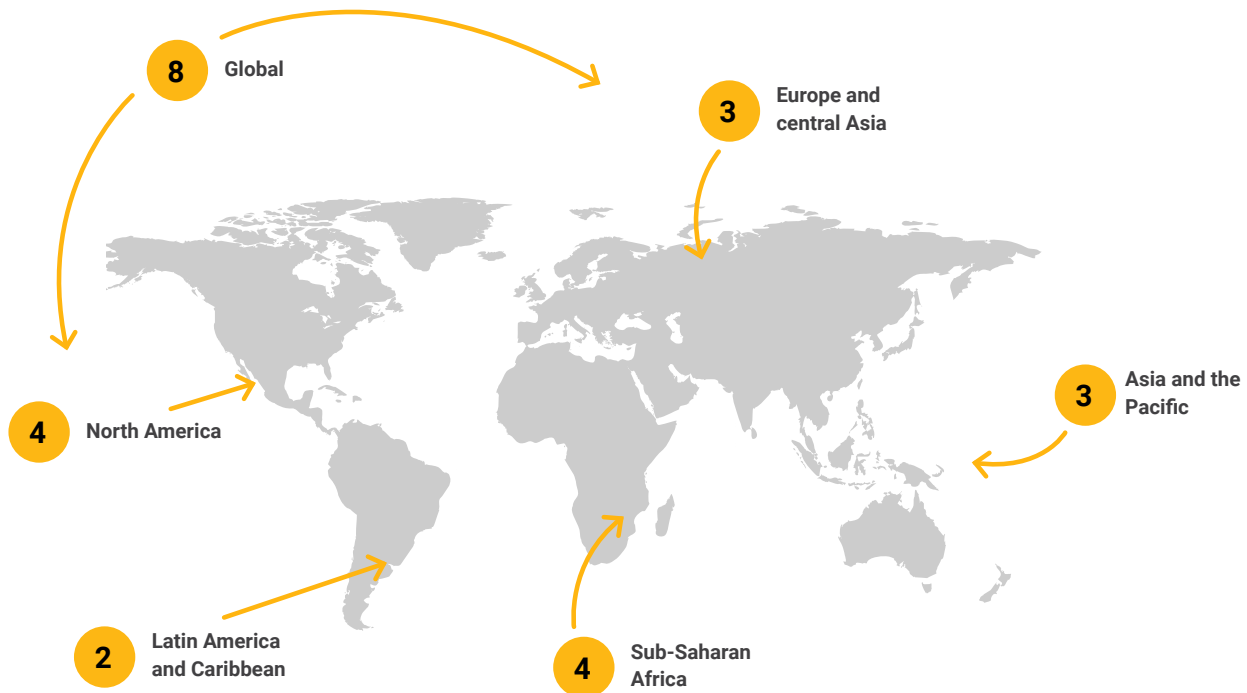The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions represent a global effort and support the ambitions of SDG11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, and other SDGs such as SDG17 – Partnerships for the Goals. Actions are being implemented at the regional level (Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa) and at the global level (Figure 2).

Visit the Urban Agenda Platform and share progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions.

Figure 1: Implementation of the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions: focus areas and contribution to SDGs

Abu Dhabi Declared Actions

24 Actions
Promoting implementation of the NUA to accelerate the SDGs

41 Partners
Collaborating globally

Focus Areas

Mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility in cities

Promoting sustainable urban development and NUA implementation at regional & local levels

Advancing sustainable urbanization in the commonwealth

Making cities resilient by 2030

Developing the New Urban Agenda Monitoring Platform

Enhancing civil society's contribution to sustainable urban development

SDGs

Actions are contributing to multiple SDGs

1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
15 LIFE ON LAND
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Figure 2: Number of Abu Dhabi Declared Actions by region.

8 Global

3 Europe and central Asia

4 North America

3 Asia and the Pacific

2 Latin America and Caribbean

4 Sub-Saharan Africa

Contribution to the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions complement the overarching ambitions of UN-Habitat and its partners to accelerate implementation of the NUA, SDGs and key global frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement, in the Decade of Action.

By putting the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions into practice, and sharing their progress, partners help to support the objectives of the WUF. These include raising awareness of sustainable urbanization; improving collective knowledge on sustainable urban development; and promoting cooperation between stakeholders and constituencies working to advance sustainable urbanization.

WUF11 will be an opportunity to gauge progress on implementation of the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and how they support the implementation of the NUA and the SDGs. Partners will showcase the ways they are innovating to harness urbanization as a transformative force to create cities that are safer, more inclusive, sustainable and resilient. It will also serve as a catalyst for further mobilisation in this regard.

The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions tie closely to UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023. One of the plan's objectives is to reposition the agency as a global centre of excellence and innovation with the aim of advancing sustainable urbanization. Core to this are the objectives of strengthening partnerships; scaling up and deepening the impact of UN-Habitat programmes at all levels; enhancing national ownership, transparency and accountability; giving voice to communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and vulnerable groups; and implementing, monitoring and reporting on the NUA and SDGs.[3]

In the time between the WUF sessions, partners are encouraged to galvanise further support on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, mobilise stakeholders, and strengthen partnerships at the National Urban Forums (NUFs). These are inclusive national-level platforms that bring multiple stakeholders together around a common vision for sustainable urban development that aligns with the NUA and SDGs. They are key for domesticating and localising global and regional agendas.

During the WUF intersessional period, NUFs are encouraged to produce their own NUF Declared Actions, monitor their progress and share the outcomes at WUF11 and subsequent sessions of the WUF.

2

Stakeholders taking action

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Across the world, initiatives associated with the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions are raising awareness of inclusive urbanization; mainstreaming disability inclusion into urban development; driving sustainable urban development anchored in culture and human rights; localising the SDGs with a focus on the cultural dimension; promoting gender equality; improving livelihoods of the urban poor; strengthening institutional capacity and supporting technological modernisation; improving urban resilience; and promoting the use of green infrastructure.

Actions and initiatives are described in the following sections, listed by stakeholder group and focus area. (Visit the Urban Agenda Platform to view actions).

National governments

At WUF10, national governments reiterated their commitments to supporting implementation of the NUA and made specific commitments to help achieve liveable, prosperous, resilient, inclusive cities and communities.

Taking climate action (Fiji)

> **SDGs:** 13, 11.
> **NUA commitments:** Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development.
> **Region:** Asia and the Pacific.

At WUF10, **Fiji reiterated its commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050**. In early 2021, Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama reaffirmed this commitment, saying it would soon be legislated through a ground-breaking climate change bill. "Our commitment to plant 30 million trees and sustainably manage every square kilometre of our ocean by 2030 could very well mean Fiji becomes a carbon-negative society in the not-too-distant future," he said.[4]

Promoting sustainable urban development and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at regional and local levels (Mexico)

> **SDGs:** 1, 2, 11.
> **NUA commitments:** Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty, planning and managing urban spatial development, building urban governance structures to establish a supportive framework.
> **Region**: North America.

Since WUF10, Mexico has implemented various actions to improve living conditions for marginalised communities, inform policy and strategy on territorial, urban and metropolitan planning, and address its housing backlog through a social housing programme.

The Urban Improvement Program – Integral Neighbourhood Improvement 2020 has improved the living conditions of low-income communities and neighbourhoods with high rates of violence and marginalisation. Two-hundred-and- fifty-six projects were completed corresponding to 98 urban design projects and services, including 116 urban equipment and public space works and 42 street pedestrianisation works.

To promote gender equality, the programme requires that contracted construction companies offer gender bathrooms, guarantee that 30% of the personnel working on-site are women performing "typically male" activities, and implement training and workshops for men on topics related to new masculinities. (Read more about this action).

The National Strategy for Territorial Planning (ENOT) is a medium- and long-term public policy based on three national axes: Territorial Structuring, Territorial Development, and Territorial Governance.

By 2040, Mexico's Land Management model, proposed in the ENOT, will contribute to promoting social, economic, and cultural development in harmony with the rational use of natural heritage, forming a territorial structure articulated by regions that take advantage of the benefits of agglomeration economies to expand and diversify

their productivity, reduce social inequalities, preserve and restore the ecological balance and build safe and inclusive environments with the participation of society in decision making. (Read more about this action).

The Urban Improvement Programme also has a focus on urban, metropolitan and territorial planning. It is promoting land and urban planning in Mexico's states, metropolitan areas, municipalities, and territorial districts through the preparation or renewal of 13 Municipal Urban Development Plans, a Metropolitan Programme, and a State Urban Development and Land Use Planning Programme. (Read more about this action).

The Social Housing Programme (2020) aims to address the housing backlog and contribute to the regeneration of areas with high levels of marginalisation. It prioritises areas with a majority indigenous population, women-headed households, urban or rural areas with high levels of violence and insecurity, vulnerable groups, and Mexican migrants. The programme

has assisted 57,650 homes at a cost of over $3 billion. (Read more about this action).

Local and regional governments

At WUF10, 200 local and regional government representatives gathered to support the call for implementing the NUA as an accelerator of the SDGs.[5] The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTLRG) convened a World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments.

With the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, the Local and Regional Governments (LRG) constituency made numerous commitments to advancing sustainable urban development. The LRG constituency has mobilised to follow through on these commitments, strengthening its capacity to implement, review, and follow up on the NUA; giving culture a more prominent position in the localisation of the SDGs; and promoting equality.

Local and Regional Governments Assembly during WUF10 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates © UN-Habitat

Promoting sustainable urban development and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at regional and local levels

> **SDGs:** 5, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17.
> **NUA commitments:** Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty, sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all, building urban governance structures to establish a supportive framework.
> **Region:** Global.

LRG encourages all stakeholders to be involved in local, territorial, national, and international plans to carry out the NUA as an accelerator for the SDGs. To follow through on this, the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments through the GTLRG is defining its roadmap for greater engagement towards NUA implementation, review and follow-up. Since WUF10, it has created the UCLG Policy Council on the Implementation of the NUA (November 2020). The Council held its first technical meeting in January 2021 and first political Policy Council meeting in February 2021.

LRG commits to developing a sustainable development model that is strongly anchored in culture and human rights, upholding public service provision to ensure adequate living standards for all. The "Right to the City" needs to be a reality. In 2020, UCLG launched the Seven Keys programme to promote the cultural dimension in SDG localisation. This workshop is aimed at cities, municipalities and regions that are not familiar with analysing the relationship between the SDGs and local cultural policies. It provides participants with an understanding of what the SDGs are and how they can be localised from different perspectives, as well as a list of achievable actions that will contribute significantly to the localisation of SDGs in their municipalities. This builds upon the existing "Culture 21 Actions" toolkit, which promotes a sustainable development model anchored in culture and human rights with 100 actions structured around nine commitments.

LRG assumes a more prominent role for cities and local and regional governments in discussions regarding the ecological transition, localising climate action, prioritising nature-based solutions and traditional knowledge, and mainstreaming nature and culture in sustainable urbanization. In November 2020, the UCLG World Council members adopted a Pact for the Future with a special axis on the planet and ecological transformation. The pact serves to "ensure a future for the younger generations," reflecting LRG's commitments in the run-up to the 100th anniversary of the United Nations, to build a world that leaves no one and no place behind.[6]

> *"Our approach to the climate emergency and the transformation towards sustainability must be political and involve a major change of mentality about our relationship with nature. Biodiversity, ecosystems and production and consumption patterns need to be transformed"*
>
> *Johnny Araya, Mayor of San José, Co-president of UCLG.[7]*

The UCLG Culture Committee is also a founding member of the new Climate Heritage Network, which provides culture-based approaches to the climate emergency.

LRG commits to foster locally relevant cultural policies and programmes to maximise the relationship between cultural rights, memory, creativity, diversity and knowledge, to integrate heritage and culture in urban planning, and to promote global cultural partnerships as strands of solidarity and vectors for peace.

The International Award UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 celebrates cities and individuals that have distinguished themselves by contributing to culture as a key dimension in sustainable cities. The fourth edition was held in 2020. The cities of Medellín and Segou were winners. Chiang Mai, Concepción, Manchester, Ramallah, San José de Costa Rica, Ulaanbaatar and Yopougon received special mentions.

Additionally, the UCLG Cultural OBS database hosts more than 200 good practices on cultural rights, memory, creativity, diversity and knowledge. All of them are indexed according to the SDGs.

LRG commits to understanding innovation beyond technology, placing communities at the centre of the agenda, and securing a technological revolution that services communities, guarantees equal access by all people, fosters women empowerment, and goes beyond the notion of consumerism. In 2020, UCLG adopted its Decalogue for the COVID-19 aftermath, a political charter that puts new citizenship and freedoms for renewed democracy at the centre of the agenda and reducing the digital divide. It calls for governments at all levels to ensure that "data gathering and the development of artificial intelligence is used for the common good and that rights are guaranteed with involvement of communities and at the service of democratic societies."[8]

To promote women empowerment and gender equality, Generation Equality events are scheduled from March - June 2021.

LRG commits to continue consolidating the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as the representative mechanism through which the constituency provides inputs to the global agendas, building on the realities and expertise of our communities. The World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments is defining a roadmap for its contribution to NUA implementation and review with consolidated mobilisation from May 2021 to March 2022. The UCLG Culture Summit will take place on 9-11 September 2021 in Izmir, Turkey, as the global hub on the cultural dimension of sustainable development.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Civil Society Organizations are promoting a people-centred approach to inclusive sustainable development. Initiatives, such as the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative, are showing the value of collaboration between civil society, academia, local and national governments, and professional associations. The World Blind Union and partners, including UN-Habitat, have a strong focus on mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility in cities.

Mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility in cities (World Blind Union and partners)

SDGs: 10, 11, 17.
NUA objectives: Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty, sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all, capacity development.
Regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and Central Asia.

The World Blind Union is implementing an agreement with UN-Habitat (2020-2023) to accelerate the agency's work towards mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility within its strategies, policies, programmes, and operations in line with Agenda 2030, the NUA, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This action supports implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy so that UN-Habitat is better equipped to address exclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the NUA. The World Blind Union seeks to support UN-Habitat to take a whole-of-organisation approach to accessibility across its systems, practices and services based on the guide, launched in November 2020, Accessibility GO! A Guide to Action.

The World Blind Union and UN-Habitat have co-organised an Expert Group Meeting on Inclusive Cities, focusing on persons with disabilities and older persons. This provided UN-Habitat with recommendations and actions to take forward within its four domains of change. World Blind Union has also provided recommendations related to the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy -- specifically on accessibility. (Read more about this action).

> *"Safeguarding and promoting enhanced compliance with the Convention [on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities], including participation of diverse persons with disabilities in processes informing urban policy and practice, are critical to succeed in building accessible cities for all."*
>
> *Hannes Juhlin Lagrelius, World Blind Union.*

The World Blind Union and City Space Architecture are set to publish a special issue of The Journal of Public Space with a focus on universally accessible public spaces for all.

The open-access publication is planned for release in April-June 2022 and will be showcased at WUF11. It seeks to raise awareness and foster learning around universal design for public spaces, and what inclusion of diverse groups means in urban practice. The primary focus is on persons with disabilities, in their diversity, and accessibility, which is often overlooked in discussions on urban practices. A broad audience and range of stakeholders will be engaged since universally accessible public spaces are relevant for all social groups, urban practitioners, and policymakers. (Read more about this action).

Advancing sustainable urbanization in the Commonwealth (Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative and partners)

SDGs: 11.
NUA commitments: Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all
Region: Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Initiative is working to advance sustainable urbanization in the Commonwealth in line with its commitment in the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions. Since WUF10, the Initiative in collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Infrastructure, the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government and The Prince's Foundation, has implemented two main actions.

The **Online Programme on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth** (June-September 2020) featured 11 events, involving 106 panellists from 31 countries. It attracted over 2,000 individual participants from 44 Commonwealth and 44 non-Commonwealth countries, amounting to over 4,000 unique views.

In February 2021, partners issued a **Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanisation across the Commonwealth**. It calls for: 1) greater focus on enabling sustainable urbanization in Commonwealth

policy making, 2) Commonwealth dialogue to define and implement a new way of working across the respective networks toward multi-level governance and sustainable urbanization, 3) commitment by member states to a new Commonwealth Initiative of practical action to support sustainable cities and human settlements across the Commonwealth. (Read more about this action).

People with disabilities

At WUF10, civil society and groups representing people with disabilities committed to fostering community engagement and inclusion.

Enhancing civil society's contribution towards sustainable urban development

SDGs: 11.
NUA commitments: Sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty.
Region: Sub-Saharan Africa.

Journalist Elizabeth Ombati, with the organisation Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Kenya, committed to **raising awareness around accessible and inclusive urbanization in Nairobi** through writing blogs and articles in newspapers and a public campaign. Due to disruptions from the pandemic, Ms. Ombati has published one blog post on this topic. In future, she hopes that increased public education on this issue will be used to influence policy. Her work is ongoing. (Read more about this action).

> *"Interventions to ensure accessibility, reasonable accommodation, and being central in all urban planning must put people with disabilities at the centre."*
>
> *Elizabeth Ombati, Users and Survivors of Psychiatry Kenya.*

The United Nations agencies

The United Nations agencies and their partners are showing commitments to building city resilience by 2030; promoting sustainable urban development and implementation of the NUA at regional and local levels; localising the SDGs through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs); and creating platforms for all partners to report progress on implementation of the NUA.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working across regions with its partners, including local, regional and national governments, to promote low carbon urban development, build municipal capacity for service provision, reduce urban poverty, and minimise disaster risk for vulnerable populations. Many initiatives focus on the use of green technology, transport, and improved waste management. These efforts show the value of global partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders.

Developing the New Urban Agenda monitoring platform (UN-Habitat)

SDGs: 11.
NUA commitments: Information technology and innovation.
Region: Global.

At WUF10, UN-Habitat committed to developing an **online platform for tracking progress on implementation of the NUA** with the aim of systematising updates and enhancing knowledge sharing.

UN-Habitat has since launched the Urban Agenda Platform. This is a knowledge portal for stakeholders at global, regional, national and local levels to share voluntary reports, best practices, and data on NUA implementation, the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions, and Declared Actions from National, Regional and Sub-Regional Forums. The platform is a one-stop shop for reporting and learning that aims to establish communities of practice for sustainable urban development.

Making Cities Resilient by 2030 (UNDRR and partners)

SDGs: 11, 17.
NUA commitments: Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development.
Region: Europe and Central Asia.

With the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and its partners help local governments implement sound and inclusive strategies for disaster risk reduction.

The project is innovative in its use of a website that offers a three-stage "resilience roadmap" to guide cities on how to improve resilience overtime. The online interface connects cities with private sector service providers, offering gratis and fee-based services, through a searchable listing.

To ensure no one is left behind, the initiative engages with cities that are normally left out of global urban initiatives. It works closely with national governments to promote national programs on urban resilience for scale and sustainability. It aims to increase the number of cities committed to reducing local disaster and climate risk and the number of partnerships globally and regionally. (Read more about this action).

Promoting sustainable urban development and implementation of the NUA at regional and local levels

SDGs: 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17.
NUA commitments: Environmentally sustainable and resilient urban development, capacity development, sustainable urban development for social inclusion and ending poverty, building urban governance structures to establish a supportive framework.
Regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Global.

There are numerous actions, spearheaded by United Nations agencies and their partners, to promote sustainable development and implementation of the NUA at regional and local levels.

VLRs are at the core of UN-Habitat's SDG localisation efforts. As co-secretariat of the Local 2030 initiative, in 2021 UN-Habitat will coordinate the creation of a baseline for SDG localisation, and generate a 10-year strategy for the initiative.

In 2020, UN-Habitat and UCLG launched the first volume of the Guidelines for VLRs. A second volume exploring the connection between Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and VLRs will be published in March/April 2021. UN-Habitat has been coordinating the development of the Moscow VLR and is currently supporting the city of Florence, Itay, in developing its first VLR.

In the **Metropolitan Area of Asunción, Paraguay**, a multi-partner initiative, is working on the Asunción Green City of the Americas – Pathways to Sustainability project.

Led by Paraguay's Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the project integrates transportation, solid waste management and green infrastructure in a sustainable and resilient city framework. Partners include national ministries, local government, NGOs and UNDP.

30 sustainable bus shelters have been installed throughout Asunción's metropolitan area. These provide commuters with comfortable seats, lighting, a Wi-Fi connection, and bins for recyclable and organic waste. Partners are implementing a pilot initiative to restore and green the Banco San Miguel y Bahía de Asunción Ecological Reserve, the city's largest green area. (Read more about this action).

UNDP and the Municipality of Guatemala are collaborating on the Metropolitan Development Program of Guatemala City. The project aims to improve the capacity of the Municipality of Guatemala to provide services through institutional strengthening and technological modernisation in order to influence the quality of life of city residents. It focuses on urban mobility, environment and solid waste disposal, institutional strengthening, and territorial organisation. (Read more about this action).

In Bangladesh, UNDP and its partners are working on two projects in line with the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions.

The Ministry of Public Works and Communications led the design of a 600 kilometre bicycle lanes network, connecting all 11 cities within Asunción's metropolitan area
© UNDP Paraguay/Bruno Ferreiro

To help achieve the SDGs by 2030, UNDP's **Livelihoods Improvement of Urban Poor Communities Project** focuses on building community organisations, promoting skills and enterprise development for women and girls, and enhancing adaptive capacity of low-income communities through resilient infrastructure. It aims to improve living conditions and livelihoods of up to 4 million urban poor, include 1.4 million households in locally-managed savings and credit schemes, and provide 88,000 people with skills for employment. (Read more about this action).

In Cox's Bazar, where close to a million Rohingya refugees live, having fled violence and serious human rights violations in Myanmar,[9] UNDP and partners are implementing an area-based programme for strengthening Disaster Risk Management. Partners include UNHCR - the UN Refugee Agency, the Geological Survey of Bangladesh, and the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute.

The initiative involves improving forecasting and risk analysis, implementing landslide and flash flood mitigation measures, and providing technical support to humanitarian actors and local government. Partners installed state-of-the-art rain gauges in three landslide-prone areas around the Rohingya refugee sites in Cox's Bazar. (Read more about this action).

The **Sustainable Cities in Turkmenistan - Integrated Green Urban Development in Ashgabat and Awaza** project aims to implement integrated low-carbon and climate resilient solutions, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and scale-up the results of pilot project activities at the national level.

Partners, including national ministries and municipalities, are working on implementation of energy-efficient public lighting, sustainable urban transport solutions, city-wide sustainability plans, and reduction of waste and improved recycling.

The project has taken an active role in development of drafts of two new laws for Turkmenistan, which contribute to the sustainable development of the country's electric-energy sector. In 2019 and 2020, together with the Nature Preservation Society of Turkmenistan, the project launched a campaign on waste collection in residential areas aimed at building waste sorting practices and skills and increasing the scale of processing. (Read more about this action).

30 sustainable bus shelters were installed throughout Asunción's metropolitan area. Photo: UNDP Paraguay © UNDP Paraguay/Bruno Ferreiro

3

WUF Legacy Initiatives

The opening of the Alumni Network © UN-Habitat / Babu Lal

The WUF is committed to continuous integrated knowledge exchange and incubation of scalable initiatives to accelerate sustainable urbanization. At WUF10, a selection of Legacy Initiatives were initiated to drive momentum in this regard. These initiatives serve to foster partnerships, promote knowledge sharing and cooperation, and support sustainable urban development to meet the objectives of the SDGs and NUA. They each support the WUF's Expected Accomplishments (EAs), NUA objectives and SDGs.

WUF Alumni Network

The WUF Alumni Network consists of representatives from previous WUF host cities: Nairobi (2002), Barcelona (2004), Vancouver (2006), Nanjing (2008), Rio (2010), Naples (2012), Medellin (2014), Kuala Lumpur (2018), and Abu Dhabi (2020).

Building on the collective wealth of experience, the WUF Alumni Network will work with UN-Habitat to support future host cities on how best to plan and organise a successful WUF. To promote knowledge sharing, there are plans to develop a brief guide on the top 10 best practices for implementing a WUF, and enhanced WUF communication and advocacy activities.

The Alumni Network reflects the NUA's call for the creation of innovative partnerships to enhance coordination and cooperation to effectively implement the NUA. It supports capacity development and sharing of best practices to enhance the transformative impact of the WUF. The initiative is linked to UN-Habitat's strategic corporate priorities.

The implementation of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 requires a catalytic approach, in which UN-Habitat leverages its knowledge, technical cooperation, convening capacity, partnerships and advocacy (Think, Do, Partner, Share). The strategic plan further states that achieving sustainable urban development is a continuum that involves generating knowledge and supporting local implementation, monitoring results and then advancing to the next stage. The objective of the WUF Alumni Network is anchored in these ambitions to gather the various streams of knowledge UN-Habitat has generated over the years.

UN-Habitat is in talks with Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the host of WUF9, about co-hosting the first WUF Alumni Network meeting. UN-Habitat is also engaging with governments to nominate focal points for the Alumni Network.

Cities Investment Facility

UN-Habitat's Cities Investment Facility is an innovative mechanism for connecting sustainable urban development projects with capital investments, helping to bridge the substantial annual infrastructure financing gap of over $3.2 trillion. This multi-stakeholder, partner-driven initiative enables the flow of capital into urban development by supporting projects through the process of ideation, design, feasibility, and financing. It has a focus on projects in low- and middle-income countries and secondary cities.

Table 1: WUF Alumni Network alignment to WUF EAs, NUA objectives and SDGs.

WUF EAs	EA 1 – Improving knowledge on sustainable urban development	EA 2 – Raising awareness on sustainable urban development	EA 3 - Increasing coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system
NUA objectives	Capacity development	Information technology and innovation	Building urban governance structures
SDGs	SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities	SDG17 – Partnerships for the goals	

Table 2: Cities Investment Facility alignment to WUF EAs, NUA objectives and SDGs.

WUF EAs	EA 1 – Improving knowledge on sustainable urban development	EA 2 – Raising awareness on sustainable urban development	EA 3 - Increasing coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system	
NUA objectives	Sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all	Planning and managing urban spatial development	Mobilisation of financial resources	
SDGs	SDG9 – Industry, innovation, infrastructure	SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities	SDG13 –Climate Action	SDG17 – Partnerships for the goals

A series of three instruments work to engage city authorities, investors and other stakeholders (figure 3).

Figure 3: The three instruments of the Cities Investment Facility.

Cities Investment Portal
Cities promote their urban development projects to an audience of investors and third-party experts who provide financing and technical and advisory support

Cities Investment Advisory Platform
Focuses on the upstream stages of project development, providing cities with in-depth project preparation, bankability, advisory and technical assistance

Cities Investment Vehicles
Improves the ability of cities to access financing and reach the implementation stage of their urban development projects

Partners and donors include: Think City, CDP-Southpole-Teri Alliance (Cities Investment Portal); Global Development Incubator, Reall (Cities Investment Advisory Platform); Emerging Markets Infrastructure Fund, BlendLab (Cities Investment Vehicles).

Visit the Cities Investment Portal
Visit the Cities Investment Advisory Platform

Box 2: Cities Investment Facility objectives.

- At WUF10, city leaders from nine shortlisted projects pitched to a panel of investors who offered feedback on the projects' investment readiness.

- The Cities Investment Advisory Platform aims to catalyse up to $500 billion in private capital towards sustainable urban infrastructure development.

- The Cities Investment Facility aims to provide technical assistance to up to 100 urban projects by 2023.

The Cities Investment Facility team plans to finalise development and operationalisation of the various platforms and, contingent on funding, showcase the initiative and its proof-of-concept projects at WUF11.

At WUF11, the second iteration of the Cities Investment Platform (CIP) event will be held. This will include an open call for projects and project pitch preparation, as well as inviting a number of existing and new investors to the table.

National Urban Forums 2.0

The National Urban Forums (NUFs) are inclusive national-level platforms that bring multiple stakeholders together around a common vision for sustainable urban development that aligns with the NUA and SDGs.

NUFs have been established in a number of countries. Since 2013, more than 45 countries or regions have hosted NUFs. These forums promote dialogue and consensus among stakeholders and advance inclusive urban policymaking, monitoring and review.

NUF 2.0 is the updated iteration of the NUFs, which serves to accelerate action on the SDGs in the Decade of Action. The aim is for 35 NUFs, including regional and sub-regional urban forums, to be organised during the intersessional period between WUF10 and WUF11. These will feed

into the global WUF process, promoting inclusive policy debates and knowledge sharing, informed policy action, and engagement from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors.

NUFs are key platforms for structured reporting on the transformative impact off the WUF through various initiatives, including VLRs and reporting on the implementation of the NUA.

NUFs are encouraged to generate their own Declared Actions to further mobilise implementation of the NUA and SDGs and share these via UN-Habitat's Urban Agenda Platform. Progress can then be shared at the WUFs.

Box 3: NUF highlights in 2020.

- Since WUF10, Malaysia, Poland, and Colombia have hosted NUFs (virtually and in- person)

- Based on key recommendations from an Expert Group Meeting (October 2020), UN-Habitat revised its guidelines for NUFs

- Seven NUFs (Malaysia, Spain, Turkey, Colombia, Ecuador, Poland, State of Israel) are planned for 2021 along with two sub-regional urban forums (Caribbean and South East Asia).

Table 3: NUF 2.0 alignment to WUF EAs, NUA objectives and SDGs.

WUF EAs	EA 1 – Improving knowledge on sustainable urban development	EA 2 – Raising awareness on sustainable urban development	EA 3 – Increasing coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system	EA 4 – Substantive and strategic inputs provided for reporting on implementation of NUA
NUA objectives	Capacity development			
SDGs	SDG11 – Sustainable cities and communities	SDG17 – Partnerships for the goals		

4

Next steps

Bike lane, Abu Dhabi © UN-Habitat Babu Lal

It is encouraging to see the concrete action taking place across the board, as stakeholders fulfil their commitments to implementing the NUA to achieve the SDGs in this critical decade. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated global inequalities, making the call to action at WUF10 even more imperative.

The WUF Legacy Initiatives are being implemented and revised as the anchor points of consolidating the WUF as a permanent advocacy, partnership, and knowledge platform that contributes to implementation and monitoring of the NUA, SDGs and key global agendas as well as to the strategy and work of UN-Habitat as the United Nations focal point for sustainable urban development.

Various activities are underway within the agency and in collaboration with partners to consolidate UN-Habitat's leading role within the global VLRs and SDG localisation ecosystem. The activities will be carried out within work streams of Strategic Partnerships, Advocacy, Knowledge Development, and Technical Cooperation.

In the run-up to WUF11, UN-Habitat encourages partners to continue mobilising and to report progress on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions using the Urban Agenda Platform. Partners are also encouraged to use the NUFs as platforms for mobilising actions, generating new commitments and Declared Actions, and reporting on these.

At WUF11, partners will showcase the creative ways they are following through on the Abu Dhabi Declared Actions and innovating to tackle the most pressing urban challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

With less than a decade to achieve the SDGs, concerted action is needed to ensure that no one and no place is left behind.

5

Annex

WUF10 Delegates gathered for Tree Planting Ceremony at Abu Dhabi's Old Airport Park © UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu

Annex: The Abu Dhabi Declared Actions

Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation

1. We, the participants of the tenth session of the World Urban Forum, represent national, subnational and local governments, international and regional organizations, parliamentarians, civil society, older persons, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, grassroots groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, professionals, the private sector, foundations and philanthropies, academia, professionals and other relevant stakeholders. Together we gathered in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to dialogue on the theme "Cities of Opportunities, Connecting Culture and Innovation." Now, at the conclusion of this World Urban Forum we declare our voluntary actions and commitments for the next two years and beyond. We do so in support of the implementation of the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in this Decade of Action.

2. We recognize that an increasingly urbanized world constitutes a transformative force which can be harnessed and steered for more sustainable development. Cities have the opportunity to take the lead to plan and design as well as manage transitions towards inclusion, resilience, sustainability, economic growth and shared prosperity. At the same time, cities are addressing many global challenges including poverty, gender inequalities, human rights violations, unemployment, health emergencies, loss of social cohesion, threat to cultural heritage and cultural diversity, environmental degradation, migration, disaster risk and climate change.

3. We, the participants of WUF 10, are convinced that culture is an integral part of the solution to the challenges of urbanisation and achieving the New Urban Agenda. The urban environment, in turn, has an influence on culture. Culture is a core component of local identity including heritage, creativity and diversity and urbanisation need to be planned, designed and managed to enhance this. Culture is considered by some constituencies as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and must be a stronger strand of global solidarity. Culture and heritage are essential in the context of peoples' empowerment as well as their universal access to services, and ownership of regeneration and social cohesion strategies. Urban heritage—both cultural and natural—is an asset and enables sustainable urban development. Revitalising cities whilst respecting urban heritage allows us to celebrate the past while embracing a sustainable future. It limits the negative impacts of city sprawl while also reducing waste, infrastructure needs and transportation costs. Strategic integrated urban planning provides the tools to ensure the integration of urban heritage, culture, local economic needs, environmental considerations, biodiversity, low carbon development and climate resilience to ensure the creation of sustainable, prosperous, liveable communities. Attention to the urban rural continuum and to nature in cities is essential. Participatory community engagement and innovation are key means to achieve this.

4. We believe that cities are centres of creativity and innovation as well as places with valuable cultural heritage and identity. The culture and creative industries are rapidly expanding sources of employment and economic development in cities and urban areas globally. Innovation and cultural heritage must at the foundation of how urban centres operate, with strong support from national governments, a strengthened role for subnational and local governments and systematic collaboration with civil society. Cities that are well-planned and well-managed, grounded in cultural heritage, have more opportunities for sustainable urban development. Supported by people-centred technology, smart city initiatives and fit-for-purpose land governance, culture and innovation become creative drivers for sustainable growth, shared prosperity and inclusive development.

5. We also believe that cities are incubators of social, economic, environmental, political and cultural progress. They are equally the guardians of cultural heritage and identity which must be safeguarded to pass on to future generations. Subnational and local governments play an integral role in enhancing the diversity of urban life, through the adoption of rights-based approaches to cities and, in particular, with the promotion of gender equality and equal access to opportunities for all. They provide solutions for decent work, housing, and transport, the provision of basic cultural services such as libraries, tangible and living heritage, and community centres and adopt inclusive, accessible, and transparent participatory processes.

6. The New Urban Agenda acknowledges the importance of culture, cultural diversity and cultural heritage in all its forms as resources that enrich humankind, making an important contribution to sustainable urbanization and the development of inclusive safe cities and human settlements, empowering all people to play an active role in development initiatives.

7. We celebrate cultural heritage as a valuable resource to be protected and safeguarded in its diversity of expression and forms. These assets inspire innovation and creativity in cities and human settlements, creating and implementing new knowledge and solutions to improve living conditions for all. We emphasize that women and girls are key agents of transformative change in their cities. Culture offers a perspective on leaving no one and no place behind as it enables women and girls to identify with their heritage and make their voice heard through creative means. Women and girls must have effective and equal ways to participate through cultural expressions as well as innovative and inclusive decision-making.

8. We encourage stronger commitments to safeguarding culture heritage and finding related innovative solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and other global frameworks.

9. We recognize the need for an integrated approach to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by all levels of government and by various stakeholders. This includes enhanced coordination and coherence supported by institutional, social and technological innovations which protect tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This is crucial for the achievement of sustainable urban development and the overall prosperity of cities and human settlements.

10. We also recognize that innovation and advances in science and technology are critical for implementing the NUA, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and other global development frameworks relevant to sustainable urbanization.

11. We draw attention to the importance of data and knowledge as a fundamental starting point to understand gaps and needs. We acknowledge the need to critically link data to evidence-based policy formulation, development of action plans and sources of funding. In this regard we welcome the New Urban Agenda monitoring platform, City Prosperity Initiative, and other platforms such as the Culture 2030 indicators. In this respect, the global people-based definition of cities and settlements (Degree of Urbanization), will be a crucial instrument for collecting comparable data and facilitating harmonised reporting in the implementation of the SDGs.

12. We encourage stakeholders to declare their actions towards strengthening investments and efforts in developing better data platforms to support evidence-based policies and investments and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

13. We believe that together sustainable urbanization, culture and innovation are fundamental in supporting the Decade of Action. We aim to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals which call for sustainable and inclusive solutions to all the world's biggest challenges. Cities represent an entry point for all 17 SDGs and create a window of opportunity for sustainable urban development. Service provision, density and economies of scale are factors that bind all development goals together.

14. We encourage all development actors gathered in Abu Dhabi to mobilize their respective capacities in this Decade of Action. We will continue to call for actions and mobilisation and track progress through a monitoring and reporting mechanism. At the global level, this requires strong leadership, more resources and smarter solutions. At the local level, this includes shifts in policy, budget, institutions, and regulatory frameworks to make cities safe, resilient and sustainable, grounded in cultural heritage and creative practice. At the people level, we call for a movement of youth, civil society, media, private sector, academia and others to advocate for social and economic transformations. We want to raise awareness of all stakeholders: the cities we build today are tomorrow's heritage.

15. We thank the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the City of Abu Dhabi, and UN-Habitat for convening the Forum. And we commit to providing continuous cooperation to the next hosts, the Government of Poland and the City of Katowice.

Abu Dhabi, 13 February 2020

Declared Actions

We welcome and recognize the diverse commitments made by participants during WUF 10.

International Organizations

The European Union (EU) and its Member states reaffirmed their commitments for accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the EU and beyond. The EU and its member states declared their tangible actions to support sustainable urban development in particular the Urban Agenda for the EU, the Global people-based definition of cities and settlements, and the International Urban Cooperation programme notably fostering global city to-city cooperation. The EU Cohesion Policy and the EU development cooperation are also major instruments to support this ambition.

- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in partnership with UCLG, ICLEI, the World Bank, UN-Habitat, the World Council on City Data and the Global Resilient Cities Network (Rockefeller Foundation) recognize the urgent need for reducing risks in urban areas, in coherence with the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework, Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. These organizations commit to making cities resilient by 2030, during the Decade of Action, through support to cities from their tools and knowledge products, their regional offices and networks and associations, and improved coordination with national governments and leaders of local governments.

- UN-Habitat commits to pursuing the development of the New Urban Agenda monitoring platform with the aim to systematize updates on progress and enhance knowledge sharing and innovations related to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

- The Resident Coordinators System will:

  > Endeavor to work with governments and local and non-State actors to promote sustainable urbanization to further the development objectives of the UN country teams in the areas of spatial equality and poverty eradication, prosperity and economic development, climate action and environmental sustainability, and crisis reduction and recovery.

  > Incorporate sustainable urban development as part of the development of the various instruments of the UN country teams, including: Common Country Analysis (CCA), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (also known as Cooperation Framework), the implementation coordination groups of the results areas of the Cooperation Framework, and the monitoring of the implementation of the results areas.

  > Actively promote the implementation of the United Nations Systemwide Strategy for Sustainable Urban Development among Resident Coordinators by creating spaces for UN-Habitat participation in United Nations country team retreats, regional meetings of Resident Coordinators, and through global and regional webinars, among other forums.

- World Blind Union (WBU) in partnership with UN-Habitat agrees to implement an agreement to accelerate UN-Habitat's work towards mainstreaming disability inclusion, universal design and accessibility within its strategies, policies, programs and operations in line with the Agenda 2030, the New Urban Agenda, United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. WBU commits to contribute to awareness raising and learning on universal design by publishing a special issue of the Journal on Public space in partnership with City Space Architecture prior to World Urban Forum 11.

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) commits to:

  > Promoting greater respect for international humanitarian law during urban warfare to strengthen the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure; and support resilient, safe, and impartial urban services for urban populations during armed conflicts and other situations of violence, including through innovative funding mechanisms.

  > Promoting urban planning and design which positions military installations at an appropriate distance from the civilian population, civilian infrastructure, and cultural property in accordance with international humanitarian law.

- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) commits to:

  > Partnering with States and local governments to: 1) raise awareness of the effects of urbanisation on humanitarian trends and vice versa; 2) collaborate to strengthen urban systems and local services for community resilience; 3) work to improve individual and collective capacity to a) respond swiftly to anticipated and realised humanitarian challenges in urban areas, and b) engage in urban planning and investment processes that reduce future disaster risk; 4) work to decrease the vulnerability and exposure of the urban poor, particularly those living in slums and informal settlements; 5) work in partnership to catalyse and localize investment in the necessary human, technical and financial resources to reduce future disaster risks and the effects of climate change."

- The Association of Commonwealth Universities, Commonwealth Association of Architects, Commonwealth Associations of Planners and Commonwealth Local Government Forum commit to the development of an inter-disciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration, working to advance sustainable urbanisation in the Commonwealth; home to one third of the World's population and nearly 50% of the projected increase of the World's urban population to 2050.

National Governments

- Fiji commits to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

- National governments reiterate their commitments to support the implementation of the NUA, particularly with regard to innovation and culture to help achieve liveable, inclusive, prosperous and resilient cities and communities, notably:

  > The Government of Senegal will deploy the necessary efforts to use Islamic Finance in the application of land-value capture.

  > The Special Olympic Saudi Arabia will implement inclusive sports across major cities through partnerships between a minimum of one major university in each of the big cities and all facilities by 2021.

Local and Regional Governments

The commitments made by LRG at the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments convened by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, during WUF10 are as follows:

The constituency of LRG encourages all stakeholders are involved in local, territorial, national, and international plans to carry out the New Urban Agenda as an accelerator for the SDGs, to make this achievement a global endeavour so that our communities can find ownership in these agendas and truly make them a reality, addressing the challenges as one humanity. The constituency of LRG commits to developing a sustainable development model that is strongly anchored in culture and human rights, upholding public service provision to ensure adequate living standards for all; the Right to the City needs to be a reality. The constituency of LRG assumes a more prominent role for cities and local and regional governments in the discussions regarding the ecological transition, to localize climate action, prioritise nature-based solutions and traditional knowledge, and mainstream both nature and culture in sustainable urbanization. The constituency of LRG commits to foster locally relevant cultural policies and programmes to maximize the relationship between cultural rights, memory, creativity, diversity and knowledges, to integrate heritage and culture in urban planning and to promote global cultural partnerships as strands of solidarity and vectors for peace; the promotion of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development needs to be pursued. The constituency of LRG commits to understanding innovation beyond technology, placing communities at the centre of the agenda, and securing a technological revolution that services the communities, that guarantees equal access by all people, that fosters women empowerment, and that goes beyond the notion of consumerism. The constituency of LRG commits to continue consolidating the World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments as the representative mechanism through which our constituency provides inputs to the global agendas, building on the realities and expertise of our communities.

The LRG further recognizes:

- The urgent need for reducing risks in urban areas, in coherence with the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework, Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, in order to save lives and livelihoods.

- The urgent need to strengthen mechanisms for citizen participation that facilitate and measure women's agenda setting and leadership roles in planning and decision making

- The urgent need to recognize and value the participation, knowledge and expertise of women and girls (across their diversities) by convening dialogue and agenda setting processes that value lived experience, cultural expression, and grassroots community generated data as innovative inputs to public policy making and programming

The implementation of the **Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities** (Cities of Abu Dhabi, Helsinki, Barcelona, Banjul, and Almaty)

In the context of **Voluntary Local Reviews** the cities of Barcelona, Rostov-on-don, Betio Town, Kuala Lumpur, San Justo, Tandil, Seberang Prai, Buang, Sipalay City, Brussels Capital Region, Tawau, Esplugues de Liboregat, Turkestan City and Acapulco de Juarez, join previous signatories in their commitment to: i) identify how existing strategies, programs, data, and targets align with the Sustainable Development Goals; ii) To provide at least one forum where stakeholders can come together to share experiences, lessons learned, and information gathered using the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals; and 3) To submit a Voluntary Local Review to the United Nations during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum.

Private Sector

The private sector commits to:

Finance

- Learning from venture capital funding and embracing that approach to financing urban development.

- By 2030, local governments can draw from a selection of financing mechanisms to achieve SDGs and increase their opportunities and overall sustainability.

- Exploring different types of financing (Islamic finance, land-based finance, land-value capture), and to better adjust to local contexts and risk profiles of low-income groups.

- Working towards ensuring that the specific and strategic infrastructures, most needed for the realization of the SDGs, are identified and coupled with appropriate financing mechanisms (Standard Chartered Bank and Rendeavor).

- Ensuring that SDG investment plans are financially sustainable (Webank).

- Exploring further applications of land-based finance to resolve issues of urban finance and city planning.

Training and information and awareness

- Supporting the development of an Inclusive City Index 2030 in partnership with public and private sector to measure inclusion and accessibility in cities (World Enabled)

Political, inclusion and social engagement

- Engaging in dialogue with a network of cities to ensure technology is accessible to all (Mastercard).

- Promoting of a culture of evidence-based policies which ensures that local and regional action attempts to address actual problems on the ground.

Civil Society

Civil Society organizations commit to:

Community engagement and inclusion

▪ Raising awareness around accessible and inclusive urbanization in Nairobi through writing blogs and articles in newspapers and public campaign including sharing knowledge, guidelines and other resource materials (Elizabeth Ombati commits herself as a journalist with disability and through her organization Users and Survivors of Psychiatry).

▪ Enabling staff to have essential skills on embracing innovation with inclusiveness policies and programs on Universal Design (Joint Association of Persons with Disabilities Nigeria commits to advocate for capacity building of Government Agencies in the city of Abuja, Nigeria).

▪ To engage private sector and grassroots communities to identify innovative design solutions that are sustainable and affordable for the urban poor.

▪ Recognizing grassroots communities in their important contributions and supporting them in building and scaling-up impactful partnerships with governments.

▪ Enhancing and accelerating practical and strategic partnerships with mayors and local authorities to improve the living and working conditions of women in poor communities and expand grassroots women's public decision-making roles.

▪ Ensuring knowledge, good practice and tools of rural and urban poor and indigenous women's groups are mainstreamed in poverty reduction and women's empowerment initiatives (local-national-regional levels).

Training, information and awareness

▪ OHANA Indonesia commits to continue partnering with five government municipalities to achieve JOGJA Accessible 2024 and take concrete actions to 1) develop action plans, including conduct of trainings for government officials who work for infrastructures, advocacy for inclusive budgeting and realization of accessibility audits in 5 districts and municipalities; 2) monitor and evaluate actions including budget related to maintenance and improvement of accessibility in public spaces including government offices.

▪ Advocating for commitment of timeline implementation and strategies for the New Urban Agenda in Abuja, Nigeria.

▪ Sensitizing communities and grassroot groups through continuous education to partner with local government, academia, civil societies.

▪ Setting up an aggregated development data database which is accessible to the local community (and to which they contribute data) so that realities are understood, and gaps and biases are easily identified.

▪ Sensitizing communities and grassroot groups through continuous education to partner with local government, academia, civil societies.

▪ Strengthening data collection efforts by grassroots communities through sensitization of national and local governments and create avenues for joint partnerships.

- Investing in stronger accountability mechanisms for local grassroot communities that rely on innovation to track project implementation.

- Investing in contribution of grassroots data and knowledge systems with the national statistics offices and contribute to the achievement of SDGs based on credible people-focused data and information.

- Investing in retaining the practices, knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples and use this for improved urban & territorial planning including environmental protection.

Academia

- Advancing the development and use of spatial data, such as data from remote sensing and GIS, which holds significant opportunity for improved city governance, and is becoming more readily available at fine geographic scales.

- Using administrative data, which cities have held in a variety of mostly unusable formats for decades to improve the efficiency of everyday city functioning.

Other groups

Grassroot communities commit to:

- Strengthening data collection efforts through sensitization of national and local governments and create avenues for joint partnerships.

- Investing in contribution of grassroots data and knowledge systems with the national statistics offices.

- Investing in stronger accountability mechanisms for local grassroot communities that rely on innovation to track project implementation.

The youth associations commit to:

- Invest in retaining the practices, knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples and use this for improved urban & territorial planning including environmental protection.

- Enhancing the science-policy interface through citizen-generated data from formal, informal, traditional and indigenous sources; participatory and community-based technology assessment; building digital and complementary skills that promote sustainable livelihoods; and designing appropriate innovations that fill gaps in the territorial dimension of sustainable urbanization.

The Women's Assembly constituents collectively commit to sustain the role of the Women's Assembly as a key space for convening diverse actors (grassroots leaders, local authorities, planners, researchers and NGO activists) working across themes and sectors to share the best practices, knowledge, tools and advocacy women are locally leading to advance empowerment and gender responsive and inclusive urban and settlement development and cities; and to take inventory, track and monitor:

- the actions of the women's constituency in localizing and implementing the 2030 agenda and New Urban Agenda.

- the actions of governments and other key stakeholders in achieving measurable progress in gender responsive implementation and expands women's public leadership roles (across their diversities).

- challenge cultural norms through collective acts as disruptions to patriarchal cultural.

Endnotes

1   Maimunah Mohd Sharif. 2020. The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum: Connecting Innovation and Culture for Cities of Opportunity. UN Chronicle. https://www.un.org/pt/node/54501

2   The selection of representatives was guided by geographical and gender balance as well as types of stakeholders. Full list of advisory group members available as Annex 1 of UN-Habitat report, The Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum. Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation. https://unhabitat.org/report-of-the-tenth-session-of-the-world-urban-forum

3   UN-Habitat. The Strategic Plan: 2020-2023. https://unhabitat.org/the-strategic-plan-2020-2023

4   Fijian Government Media Centre. 2020. Fiji reaffirms commitment to the climate action momentum. https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJI-REAFFIRMS-COMMITMENT-TO-THE-CLIMATE-ACTION-MO

5   Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. 2020. Culture, innovation and sustainable urbanization: our constituency ready to contribute to WUF10. www.global-taskforce.org/culture-innovation-and-sustainable-urbanization-our-constituency-ready-contribute-wuf10

6   UCLG. 2020. Facilitating a "Pact for the Future": The role of the International Municipal and Regional Movement powered by UCLG. https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/facilitating-pact-future-role-international-municipal-and-regional-movement-powered-uclg

7   Speaking at the 2020 UCLG World Council. UCLG. 2020. Facilitating a "Pact for the Future:" The role of the International Municipal and Regional Movement powered by UCLG. https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/facilitating-pact-future-role-international-municipal-and-regional-movement-powered-uclg

8   UCLG. 2020. Decalogue for the post COVID-19 era. https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/decalogue_for_the_post_covid-19_era.pdf

9   UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency. Rohingya Refugee Emergency at a Glance. https://unhcr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=5fdca0f47f1a46498002f39894fcd26f