

**Opening Remarks**

**Cities and Pandemic  
Report Launch**

**Tuesday 30 March 2021**

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Government representatives, urban professionals, researchers, and urban stakeholders from all around the world, a very good morning/afternoon/evening to all of you!

What unites us in this UN-Habitat webinar, is an interest in visions on how to make cities better places and more sustainable, in the face of crises and unexpected changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic we are living in.

For one year now, urban areas have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 crisis, with 95 per cent of all cases recorded in cities in the first few months. Urban areas were faced with a rapidly changing public health crisis, along with challenges in safe mobility, increased water and sanitation needs, critical use of public spaces and the economic consequences of lockdowns. The public health crises was extended into social and economic crises for cities.

Despite these pressures, many local governments and community leaders responded quickly and effectively to prevent the spread of the pandemic and mitigate its effects, taking the first steps toward accelerate recovery.

But this has not been easy for most cities. Every city and community have had to learn a lot from living with the pandemic.

UN-Habitat's new report - Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, greener and equitable future – demonstrates how cities can reduce the impact of future pandemics and lead the way to a fairer, greener and healthier future for all.

**First**, the Report urges urban leaders and planners to rethink how people and goods move within and through cities.

**Second**, we know COVID spread quickly due to lack of access to basic services, due to poverty and overcrowded living conditions. Therefore, we need to address these long-standing urban problems based on human rights principles.

To address these common challenges, this Report recommends an increased focus on planning locally, at the scale of neighbourhoods and communities that are self-contained, inclusive, as well as flexible in the face of the next challenge, including climate change.

The Report documents how compact, well-planned cities combining innovative residential and commercial functions with public spaces and affordable housing can improve public health, the local economy and the environment.

The Report also calls for cities to be at the forefront of moves towards a new Social Contract between governments, the public, civil society and private sector. This Social Contract aims to reduce poverty and inequality, provide adequate affordable housing and strengthen social protection.

This requires governments to collaborate with the private sector and civil society and on focus on policies to protect land rights, improve access to water, sanitation, public transport, clean energy, health and education facilities and ensure inclusive digital connectivity.

This will also protect jobs and provide financial support to cities to allow them to grow financially resilient and make green and low-carbon investments.

**Finally**, the Report’s findings indicate that the New Urban Agenda, the United Nations’ road map to inclusive, prosperous, and green cities is a ‘pandemic-proof’ agenda and remains as valid as at its signing in 2016.

The Cities and Pandemics Report also makes it clear that the way cities and towns invest in the recovery from the pandemic will have a make or break on the global opportunity to achieve a sustainable future for all.

I would like to encourage you to explore how this report could be implemented in your respective working scenarios.

Thank you.

<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Edited by</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Word Count</b>	<b>Estimated Time (125 words/min)</b>
Paula	Neil; Runze	Finalized	Mon 29 Mar 17:10	554 Words	4 Minutes

**Scenario for UN-Habitat moderators, speakers and for meeting  
administrators**

**Cities and Pandemics Report**

**Tuesday 30 March 2021 14:30 – 17:00**

**Speaking role assigned: the ED, Eduardo Moreno, Christine Knudsen, Raf Tuts, Paula Pennanen**

**14:30 Paula** Announces the start of the event; housekeeping – Paula (1 min)

**14:32 the ED: gives her opening remarks**

**14:40 Raf:** Invites Eduardo Moreno to give an outline of the report's key findings and recommendations.

*Eduardo speaks about the report (20 mins)*

**15:00 Raf:** Introduces the purpose and the topic of the session and introduces the speakers:

1. **Aissata M.B. Camara**, Deputy Commissioner, New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs
2. **Professor Sahar Attia**, Department of Architecture at the Faculty of Engineering of Cairo University
3. **Emilia Saiz**, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments
4. **Dr Nathalie Roebbel**, Head, Urban Health, Social Determinants of Health of WHO
5. **Rosemary Kalapurakal**, Deputy Director of the United Nations Development Coordination Office

**Raf moderates the panel discussion (35 mins)**

**15:35 Raf:** Introduces the questions from the floor (Paula feeds from from the chat)

*Raf presents the questions to the speakers (15 mins)*

**15:55 Raf:** Wraps up the session in 2-3 minutes; Closes the session and invites

**Christine to open the session 2.**

**16:00 Christine:** Introduces the purpose and the topic of the session and introduces the speakers of the session 2:

1. **Prof. Siraj Sait**, Professor of Law and Development at the University of East London and Director of the Noon Centre of Equality and Diversity and the co-chair of UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise and also a member of the Advisory Group on Gender Issues.
2. **Leilani Farha**, founder of the Non-governmental Organisation the Shift – Right2Housing, and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing
3. **Maitreyi Das**, Manager of Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice of the World Bank
4. **Robin King**, Director, Knowledge Capture and Collaboration, Ross Center for Sustainable Cities; Senior Advisor, Coalition for Urban Transitions; and Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University
5. **Saskia Sassen**, Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology at Columbia University

*Christine moderates the panel discussion (35 mins)*

**16:40 Christine:** Invites panelists to give a one-minute final comment to conclude the session;

**16:50 Christine:** Wraps up the session 2.

**16:55 Christine:** Thanks participants; makes concluding remarks on the event and the next steps with the report

**17:00:** *Event ends*