

<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Cities Alliance Event: High-Level Dialogue and Book Launch: Secondary Cities Post COVID-19</b>	<b>Friday, 19 March, 4:00 - 6:30pm EAT</b>
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**Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am happy to see all of you gathered here virtually to mark this special occasion for Mr Billy Cobbett. Let me say at the very outset, this is marking a new chapter in Billy's contribution to the urban agenda, which I am sure will be even more exciting going forward.

COVID-19 reveals what we all know very well – that cities are resilient, that leadership at the local level continues to be the driving force for recovery and that we must translate policy into practice by working together. In Billy's time at Cities Alliance, he has built up the visibility of the urban agenda, and we now take for granted that urbanization if planned and managed well, could positively transform places and communities.

My message to all of you this afternoon is that we need to work together. The climate challenge and the new social contract that we need to forge between cities and cities will require all of us to have shared goals. UN-Habitat will double our efforts to bring all urban actors together.

What the Member States expect from us, is to foster a genuine partnership between national and local governments. It is estimated that we will need to spend USD 3 trillion dollars a year to retrofit our cities, to adapt to climate change and to transition our economies into greener and more sustainable growth models. When we adopted the New Urban Agenda, we had the blueprint we needed, and I believe you will find the mandate still relevant.

From its launch in 1999, the Cities Alliance is a strong platform bringing diverse constituencies together to address some of the greatest challenges faced by cities. Billy's leadership in the past two decades have made it what it is today. You have guided the diverse membership of the Cities Alliance towards integrated action at all levels, to target very pertinent issues in cities, including women empowerment, informality, climate change, resilience, migration and the economy.

My colleagues at UN-Habitat can testify to Billy's contributions to the urban agenda. He is the pioneer of the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure, and has transformed our view about the urban poor as strategic development partners. He has taken this fighting spirit to the Cities Alliance secretariat.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Greg Munro, who brings a lot of experience to the role of Director of the Cities Alliance. Greg has had senior roles in local government, in multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and UNAIDS, and more recently at the helm of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

UN-Habitat welcomes this opportunity to renew and strengthen our partnership with Cities Alliance. Let me assure you Greg that you have the continuous support of UN-Habitat as you lead the Cities Alliance through a new Strategic Plan, at this most critical time for cities.

Thank you.

<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Edited by</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Word Count</b>	<b>Estimated Time (125 words per minute)</b>
Dyfed/Chris	Raf, Neil, Runze	Finalized; Friday, 19 Mar 13:18	481 Words	4 Minutes