

Opening Remarks	Launch of Global State of National Urban Policies 2021: <i>Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Delivering Climate Action</i>	Friday, 25/06/2021
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- Deputy Secretary-General, OECD Mr. Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen
- Director, Cities Alliance, Dr. Greg Munro
- Honourable Ministers
- Honourable Mayors
- Distinguished guests
- Colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning/afternoon/evening to all of you!

On behalf of UN-Habitat, I wish to congratulate the **National Urban Policy Programme (NUPP)** partners, led by UN-Habitat, OECD and Cities Alliance, for the production of the “**Global State of National Urban Policies 2021, *Achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Delivering Climate Action***” report, being launched today.

UN-Habitat contributed to development of the report, by mobilizing member states to provide updated data on National Urban Policies. Since the first edition “**Global State of National Urban Policies 2018**”, the series of reports has had significant impact on policy makers and practitioners, by inspiring development and implementation of evidence-based, inclusive and participatory National Urban Policies for sustainable urban development.

At UN-Habitat, we believe urbanization is a catalyst, for economic growth and social progress. Well-planned and managed urbanization ensures more efficient use of natural resources, to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation. National Urban Policies provide the framework, to harness the urbanization dividends and mitigate its negative externalities.

National Urban Policies are key policy instruments to promote territorial and spatial equity, enhance policy coherence among different sectoral policies, and promote institutional coordination. In addition, the National Urban Policy process provides a platform, for the co-creation of a shared vision owned by all levels of government, diverse civil society groups, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

National Urban Policies are critical for achieving Sustainable Development Goals, and are at the heart of implementing the New Urban Agenda. To achieve cities and human settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, countries need to develop national urban policies to effectively support the implementation and monitoring of the global agreements.

The UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2020-2023 recognizes national urban policies, together with urban planning, governance, and financing mechanisms as key drivers of change towards achieving sustainable development.

UN-Habitat is supporting urban policy at different levels, through 1 Global Programme, 4 Regional Programmes, 55 National Urban Policy Programmes, and over 10 sub-national urban policy processes. UN-Habitat is currently supporting Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia and Sudan in Arab States, as well as Iran and Myanmar in Asia Pacific, in formulation of their national urban policies. Technical support in diagnosis and formulation of state urban policies, is also happening in Zanzibar, Tanzania, Niger State, Nigeria in Africa respectively.

The UN-Habitat National Urban Policy (NUP) database has consolidated information from over 156 countries, and had further prepared 5 regional monitoring reports. The database has been a useful source in development of the Global State of National Urban Policies 2021 we are launching today.

This report is a remarkable milestone, in the global monitoring of National Urban Policies. Based on the analysis of rich data and knowledge from 162 countries, including 86 countries that participated in a comprehensive monitoring survey, the report showcases their progress in formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Urban Policies since 2018. It showcases how countries use NUP to enhance sustainable urban development, advance global agendas, and address challenges revealed by the COVID-19 crisis.

The report also shows that National Urban Policies have matured since the first global monitoring in 2018; with more countries having explicit National Urban Policies, and embracing wider objectives, including climate resilience. More than two thirds of countries reported, that their National Urban Policies contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To enhance their contribution to global and regional agendas, countries need to align NUP targets and indicators with the SDGs and other global indicators. They need to invest in robust urban-scale data to help design policies, that address place-based concerns, foster monitoring and evaluation, and facilitate evidence-based stakeholder dialogue, throughout the formulation process. The Global Urban Monitoring Framework, being developed under the leadership of UN-Habitat, will offer a harmonized framework for collecting urban-scale data, to report on the SDGs and New Urban Agenda, and can provide important inputs for future policies.

To effectively implement NUPs and address emerging challenges, countries need to develop conducive constitutional and legislative frameworks, enhance fiscal transfers from central to local governments, build their capacity and performance while also strengthening democracy and transparency in governance.

UN-Habitat is proud to have worked with OECD, Cities Alliance and other National Urban Policy Programme partners, as well as a diverse array of countries to produce this report. It provides strong recommendations for NUPs to be able to promote an inclusive, green and climate-friendly recovery of cities from COVID-19.

I hope your discussions today will be fruitful, and an inspiration for more countries to embark on developing, strengthening, implementing and monitoring their own National Urban Policies.

Thank you.

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