

Message from the UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif World Cities Day 31 October 2021

The World Cities Day this year, falls on the first day of the UN Climate Meeting in Glasgow, and we are all realising that the climate crisis is a threat to all.

We can trust that countries around the world are going to honour the pledges, to slash greenhouse gas emissions and slow down global warming. We already know that even with huge cuts in our emissions, global warming will continue for many years to come.

We can see the devastating impact of climate change in the long history of human settlements. Cities can seem to be ever growing, but they can also be on the decline and perish, if not well planned and managed.

We know that over half of the world's population lives in cities and towns today, but it is also important to acknowledge that they depend on the rural areas for food, water and nourishment. This is why we believe in action now, in all type of human settlements.

The theme for this year's World Cities Day is *Adapting Cities for Climate Resilience*. We would like to call for an all-of-society action programme.

We believe that cities and communities must be the pioneers in combating climate change. We are ready to support Member States bringing together adaptation, disaster risk reduction, COVID-19 recovery and integrated development strategies.

We must also make the vulnerable urban communities our collective priority. Globally, more than 880 million people live in slums – often in precarious overcrowded locations with little or no access to basic services. They will bear the brunt of the climate crisis, although their carbon footprint is among the smallest.

But we are seeing changes, that are starting with each individual action. I am happy to say that some 11,000 cities globally, have now committed to developing comprehensive climate action plans.

What we need to do is to scale things up, and the time for action is now. Let take action to ensure that no one and no place is left behind in our urbanising world.