

World Cities Day 2022 celebrated in Shanghai and Nairobi

Shanghai, China/Nairobi, Kenya (31 October 2022) – This year the Global Observance of World Cities Day took place in the city of Shanghai, People’s Republic of China. The theme of the day is ‘Act Local to Go Global’ focusing on the need to promote local action to accelerate the achievement of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Global celebrations are held in hybrid format, in person for participants in China and online for international guests.

The President of the People’s Republic of China sent a congratulatory letter to the guests of the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2022. His message was read by the Party Secretary of the Shanghai Municipality, Chen Jining. The Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Ni Hong, and Mayor of Shanghai Municipal Government, Mr. Gong Zheng, made statements at the high-level opening ceremony.

The World Cities Day closes the Urban October month on 31 October each year. It serves to advocate for urban development and push forward greater cooperation between national governments and cities to address urban challenges. This year over 30 other cities celebrated World Cities Day and over 400 events took place around the world during Urban October.

“On this World Cities Day, we recognize the critical role of urban areas in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Next year marks the mid-point to the deadline to reach the SDGs,” wrote UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his message for the World Cities Day 2022.

“We have only about 87 months, 380 weeks or 2600 days left to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The best way to do so is by ensuring our cities and communities are sustainable. Time to act is now,” said Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

“By 2050 more than half of the global population will live in cities. It is therefore fitting that in celebrating World Cities Day we recognize the important role that cities will play in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals,” said in his video address Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

Discussions at World City Day focused on localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. “The future of humanity is urban; however, the future of the people and the planet will be determined by how we design, generate and manage our cities and town,”

said in a video address Secretary General, United Cities and Local Government Asia Pacific Dr. Bernardia I. Tjandradewi.

“In most countries, local and regional governments are responsible for coordinating and delivering basic services which are essential to the wellbeing of local communities. Because of their proximity and better understanding of needs and aspirations, it is the subnational governments that are best positioned to represent local communities at decision making tables,” said President of the United Nations Habitat Assembly and Vice-Minister for Multicultural Affairs of Mexico Martha Delgado.

UN-Habitat, the UN focal point for local regional governments and the custodian of the New Urban Agenda, has been advocating for the localization of SDGs since the endorsement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agency’s work on localizing the SDGs is guided by a partnership-based territorial approach, human rights, and multilevel governance.

“The priority for any responsible government is to ensure that the quality of life for its citizens and to make cities more child friendly, accessible for the elderly, greener, and friendlier,” said United Nations Resident Coordinator in China Siddharth Chatterjee

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana said that “Local Climate Action, including low carbon development nature-based solutions and protection of coastal areas, will enhance the lives of citizens while contributing to broader climate strategies to generate global benefits.”

The global celebrations of World Cities Day are hosted in a different city each year. World Cities Day was first celebrated in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China in 2014. This year, the event travelled back to Shanghai. It was live streamed at UN complex in Nairobi. Representatives of China, Eritrea and Kenya attended the ceremony in Nairobi. Over 350 people from around the world joined the hybrid event, with over a dozen Member States participating online from Nairobi.

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