

PRESS RELEASE
UNDER EMBARGO (MONDAY, 4:30 pm)

Advancing sustainable urban development worldwide

United Nations program: Montréal to host UN-Habitat project office

Montréal, December 12, 2022 – UN-Habitat, the United Nations program for human settlements and sustainable urban development, is opening a new project office in Montréal. The office will be responsible for the Global Programme on Green, Resilient Sustainable Cities and will be the sixth UN office located in Montréal. UN-Habitat aims to leverage the latest advances in science and technology to support the sustainable development of cities.

Established in 1978, UN-Habitat works in 90 countries to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements through normative work, research, project implementation, communication, and close partnerships with local and national authorities. The agency maintains its headquarters at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Montréal office will explore scientific advances and innovative tools to make policy recommendations and propose measures to foster sustainable urban development. The team will use AI to deal with the most pressing issues, while developing a multidisciplinary platform to better address the specific needs of cities and communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The office will also seek to forge new partnerships to support vulnerable groups and Indigenous communities across the globe.

Montréal was chosen for its leading-edge AI and urban development ecosystems, academic institutions, and its pool of international organizations. What's more, a number of avenues for cooperation have been identified with local players, including researchers at McGill University, Concordia University, and Mila - Québec's AI Institute (MILA).

The Montréal team will be working closely with the Barcelona team, which provides technical support to cities, and the UNITAC (United Nations Innovation Technology Accelerator for Cities) team in Hamburg.

Montréal is home to close to 70 international organizations, including a dozen specializing in sustainable development. The city's international organizations community already boasts five UN offices: the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Refugee Agency, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, and the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montréal Protocol.

"UN-Habitat has a special relationship with Canada. The first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat I, took place in Vancouver in 1976. Back then, the governments recognized the need for sustainable human settlements and adverse effects of rapid and uncontrolled urbanization and laid the groundwork to set up UN-Habitat," said Maimunah Mohd Sharif, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat. "I am happy that the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, and the City of Montréal are

again supporting our mandate and the work to accelerate local action towards greener, more resilient, and sustainable cities for the most vulnerable cities and communities.”

The Government of Canada (Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions), the Government of Québec (*Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie*), and the City of Montréal are collaborating with Montréal International who plays a key role in coordinating and implementing the project.

Quotes:

"We have a responsibility to take concrete action to fight climate change and protect biodiversity. That is why our government is proud to announce during the COP15 its support to Montréal International in establishing the new UN-Habitat program office. This office will help Montréal and Canada develop concrete solutions to make cities greener, more resilient, sustainable and ready to seize the opportunities of the economy of tomorrow. "

- The Hon. Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Québec Regions

"The establishment of a UN-Habitat global project office in Montréal is great news for Québec. This announcement helps strengthen Québec's sustainable development ecosystem and its reputation as an international leader in this area. It reaffirms the importance Québec places on the fight against climate change and hosting international organizations that choose to set up operations here. A warm welcome to UN-Habitat!"

- Martine Biron, Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

"The arrival of the UN-Habitat office in Montréal confirms the international recognition of the city's leadership in sustainable development. This sixth UN office in Montréal will highlight the city's expertise in housing and development of exemplary neighbourhoods. In Montréal and throughout the world, we must densify urban environments in an intelligent manner by making more room for nature. Our administration is taking concrete and ambitious steps to prepare Montréal for the impacts of climate change, and we are very proud to welcome major organizations such as UN-Habitat, which are committed to creating green and resilient living environments."

- Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal

"Greater Montréal is clearly leading the way on sustainability—a key pillar of our strategy to build a green economy that is both resilient and inclusive. The arrival of UN-Habitat is tangible proof of that. We are extremely proud that a sixth UN agency has chosen Montréal as a base to run its operations and advance its mission. This is the first UN agency located in the city since the UNESCO Institute for Statistics opened an office here in 2001, over 20 years ago."

- Stéphane Paquet, President and CEO, Montréal International

About UN-Habitat (www.unhabitat.org)

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries that support policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action.

About Montréal International (www.montrealinternational.com)

Montréal International (MI) is a non-profit organization funded by the private sector, the governments of Canada and Québec, the *Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal* and the City of Montréal. Its mandate is to attract and retain foreign investment (companies and startups), international organizations, skilled workers and international students to Greater Montréal by providing support services tailored to their needs.

Media contact

Eve Caron
Director, Public Relations, Montréal International
eve.caron@mtlintl.com

Katerina Bezgachina
Communications Chief, UN-Habitat
ekaterina.bezgachina@un.org