

Achieving SDGs in times of global crises



Side Event 43

SDG Cities Certification: Facilitating multilateral cooperation from data integration to finance to accelerate achieving SDGs in Cities

 8 JUNE 2023, 18:15 – 19:15

 Conference Room 13

SUMMARY

The SDG Cities Global Initiative provides a structured way to support cities in improving quality of life and driving positive social, economic, and environmental impact. It centres on supporting cities with key interlinked processes of data analysis, inclusive strategic planning, strengthening local institutions and enablers of sustainable development, and financing SDG impact projects that leave no-one and no place behind. SDG Cities was recently selected as one of the twelve UN High Impact Initiatives to be showcased at the SDG Summit. As the initiative has started to gain traction in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, demand has grown for a UN SDG Cities Certification process that incentivizes and recognizes efforts of cities to accelerate the achievement of SDGs. This demand was discussed at the first *The Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements* meeting of 2023, which requested UN-Habitat to further explore the concept, including through pilot initiatives, understand better its potential benefits and demonstrate how it would avoid favouring cities of a certain scale, geography or income level.

It is envisaged that the certification would be linked to inclusive evidence-based planning, strengthening local institutions to deliver on SDGs, and achieving measurable progress towards SDGs in cities. As well as incentivizing local efforts to implement the SDGs and signposting available technical guidance and support, the proposed certification aims to:

- support policy cohesion across national to local levels, through the relevant use of baseline data and strategic planning processes
- facilitate coherent support of UN entities and partners at the local level
- facilitate linkage of cities with finance, through metrics that inform on the investment readiness of cities and through the alignment of Environment Social Governance (ESG) frameworks and SDG metrics to measure and report on impacts of local SDG related investments.

It is proposed that SDG Cities certification would be implemented through national processes that ensure the alignment of national, subnational and local development priorities, guided by global certification criteria and implemented with the support of regional, national or subnational technical support hubs.



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In partnership with UN-Habitat and UNEP, the City of Balikesir in Turkiye has offered to establish a technical hub for cities in Turkiye and Turkic states. Uniquely this will integrate UNEP's World Environment Situation Room, the One-UN Geospatial Data Room, and SDG Cities, so that cities can benefit from local geospatial data to inform local strategic planning then be supported to translate strategic plans into action and SDG impact. The hub further presents an opportunity to pilot the SDG Cities Certification process.

The side event will explore the concept of SDG Cities Certification and how it could achieve the aims outlined above. By first presenting the proposed initiative in Balikesir, the event will highlight how technology can be deployed to integrate data sources and avail data efficiently and meaningfully to support local planning process. It will also highlight how SDG Cities Certification can promote UN joint action at the local level, and mainstream environmental sustainability into local urban development. Then, with reference to the Malaysian SDG Cities Initiative, implemented by Urbanice Malaysia, the event will highlight how SDG Cities Certification can be deployed to promote policy coherence across national to local levels. Turning to the finance industry, inputs from Global CEO Alliance, Deloitte and the Global Sustainability Index Institute's SCR 500 Index, will help explore how SDG Cities Certification can help facilitate better linkages of cities with the finance industry, translating common commitment to sustainably into measurable impact. Finally, with the intervention of the Governor of Caldas, Colombia, the session will explore the role of regional governments to support the implementation of SDG Cities certification, in a way that ensures that every city, large or small, can benefit.

Organizer(s)

- Metropolitan Municipality of Balikesir, Turkiye
- UN-Habitat
- Government of Caldas (Colombia), Colombia
- Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, Ghana
- Geneva Agape Foundation (Ecosoc), Switzerland

Moderator

Mr. Dyfed Aubrey, Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-Habitat

Speaker(s)

- Mr. Yucel Yilmaz, Mayor, Municipality of Balikesir, Turkiye
- Mr. Martin Adjei-Mensah Korsah, MP, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, Ghana
- Mr. Roland Schatz, Chief Executive Officer, Global Sustainability Index Foundation, Switzerland
- Mr. Alfred Berkeley, Former President, Nasdaq, USA (Pre-recorded Intervention)
- Representative from Deloitte, USA
- Ms. Dyan Currie, Chief Planner, Brisbane City Council, Australia
- Ms. María Gabriela Aguilera Jaramillo, Minister of Housing and Local Development, Ecuador
- Mr. James Donovan, CEO, Adec Innovations, USA
- Mr. Jian Liu, Director, Early Warning and Assessment Division, United Nations Environment Programme
- Ms. Norliza Binti Hashim, CEO, Urbanice, Malaysia

