

Achieving SDGs in times of global crises



Side Event 8

Women Led Cities: Supporting and Enhancing Creative Multilateralism of Diverse Women's Leadership of Businesses, Cities and Grassroot Organizations to Address Inequality and Gender-Based Violence and Make Cities Safe, Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable



Monday 5 JUNE 2023, 18:15 - 19:15



Conference room 1

SUMMARY

Women in cities face various forms of inequality. Many are also burdened with the need to balance income earning activities while carrying out unpaid care work; they also disproportionately continue to face violence and harassment in the public and private sphere.

City life has been shaped by centuries of male leadership. To date only 5% of the world's cities are led by women. In business only 8% of Fortune 500 companies are women-led, & in the workforce, women earn around 37% less than men in similar roles. At the current rate of change, the political gender gap is expected to take 145 years to close & the economic gender gap 265 years.¹

Women's contribution in cities has not been valorised and recognised; lack of women representation in policy and decision-making processes also perpetuates ongoing inequalities and yields few role models for young women leaders. Research shows that women as mayors tend to take a proactive stance on inequality, e.g by prioritising budgetary allocations aimed at improving the quality of life for all such as through education, health care, & social assistance.² It is vital to invest in creative & innovative programmes of women's leadership starting at the community/local level, as one of the transformative pathways to achieve equality and end gender-based violence (GBV).

Women-Led Cities, a new initiative launched on International Women's Day 8 March 2023, thus contributes to a vision of a world where at least 50% of leaders at all levels are women and where gender-based violence is history. Women-Led Cities presents a strategic opportunity to form a grand, multi-stakeholder coalition to

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/digest/>

² Political Research Quarterly 2018, 'Representative Budgeting: Women Mayors and the Composition of Spending in Local Governments'



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promote women in leadership and expand effective impact investments and gender transformative financing in cities. It provides a crucial space for the engagement of women-led businesses, civil society including grassroots women-led groups, and the private sector together with female mayors and local leaders, to promote an effective and ambitious gender responsive action agenda for cities with women's empowerment central in its strategy.

Over the next 10 years Women-led Cities will set out to achieve the following objectives and results:

1. **Economic empowerment:** Improved economic opportunities for women through inclusive regulatory frameworks, increased investments in urban infrastructure (including markets, processing units/factories, transport and energy projects), and incubating and financing women-led businesses through grants, loans and guarantees.
2. **Better places to live that are free of violence and harassment:** Improved and safer urban environments, through women and child friendly spaces, shelter homes, safe mobility with affordable and efficient public transportation, accessible and affordable housing and health facilities, clean water and sanitation, and overall higher standards of living for women.
3. **Political empowerment:** Improved engagement of women in local decision-making processes, including empowering women mayors as agents of transformative change.

Women-Led Cities is affiliated with UN-Habitat's global flagship initiative *SDG Cities*³ and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)'s *IncluCity*⁴ project and was conceived when these agencies joined forces with *ellaimpacta* - an exciting new network of women CEO's committed to women leadership and local transformation that addresses systemic challenges of gender inequality and GBV, thus improve quality of life for all. The partnership has identified the need to put women organised at the grassroots in the centre of Women-Led Cities and looks forward to establishing collaboration with *Huairou Commission* - a women-led social movement of grassroots women's groups from poor urban, rural, and indigenous communities – during the Assembly and beyond.

The objective of this event is to further discuss how women leaders of businesses, cities and communities can join forces to drive positive local transformation and reduce inequality. It will also launch the first phase of Women-Led Cities by announcing pilot cities, activities and pledges from private sector partners and development banks.

Organizer(s)

1. Huairou Commission; www.huairou.org
2. United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); www.uncdf.org
3. UN-Habitat; <https://unhabitat.org>
4. EllaImpacta Alliance

³ <https://www.sdg-cities.org/>

⁴ <https://www.uncdf.org/article/6567/inclucity-addressing-growing-income-inequalities-in-cities-through-inclusive-local-financing>



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Moderator

- Ms Liane Friere, CEO Blendlab (Brazil)
- Ms Angela Mwai, Chief Human Rights and Social Inclusion, UN-Habitat

Speaker(s)

1. Maimunah Mohd Shariff, Executive Director UN-Habitat
2. Luiza Trajano, CEO Magazine Luiza and Associated Companies (Brazil)
3. María Gabriela Aguilera Jaramillo, Minister, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Ecuador
4. Violet Shivutse, Chair Huairou Commission Women, Homes and Community (Kenya)
5. Rohey Malick Lowe, Mayor City of Banjul (Gambia)
6. Samina Anwar, Programme Manager UNCDF
7. Ticiana Rolim de Queiroz, founder and president of Somos Um (Brazil)

