



PRESS RELEASE

Global platform launched to support ‘proximity’ in urban planning

5 June, 2023 (NAIROBI, KENYA) — Today, at the Second United Nations Habitat Assembly, the Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities was launched to support the implementation of proximity approaches in cities worldwide.

The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities will serve as a go-to knowledge and capacity building platform collecting information about local initiatives while supporting and promoting urban proximities at a global scale. Urban development based on proximity – or the idea that urban dwellers should be able to meet essential needs without venturing far away from home – has been proven to promote social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Through the Observatory, major global urban actors join forces by placing the theme of proximity at the heart of urban strategies. The four founding partners – the Entrepreneurship, Technology and Innovation Chair of the IAE Paris Sorbonne Business School (Chaire ETI), C40 Cities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) – are jointly leading the work to fulfill these objectives.

“This global joint initiative allows us to drive large-scale change by informing urban strategies in cities worldwide that contribute to building local ecologic, economic and social value creation,” says **Chaire ETI Professor Carlos Moreno**.

Together, the Observatory partners will develop a globally applicable concept based on proximity, official measures and indicators, a global centre for knowledge sharing and capacity building, and a global network to support cities in implementation. In addition, the Observatory will boost international scientific research in related fields.

According to **UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director Michal Mlynár**, “Through the Observatory, we aim to establish a global network of urban actors to join forces by placing the theme of proximity at the heart of urban strategies.”

Ideas around proximity in urban planning have been shaped over the past century by a number of thought leaders, and gained renewed attention in recent years after Professor Moreno popularised the idea of a “15-minute city” that allows urban dwellers to meet most of their daily needs within a short walk or bike ride from home, if they so choose.

It has inspired action in diverse urban contexts around the globe, from Paris’ “La ville d’un quart d’heure”, to Shanghai’s “15-minute community life circles”, Bogota’s “Barrios Vitales”, or Glasgow’s “Livable Neighbourhood” approach.

“At a time when the combined effects of the environmental crisis, socio-spatial inequalities between and within countries and acute political tensions and polarisation are increasingly impacting human lives, urban proximities offer us a new sustainable model caring for the wellbeing of our communities,” says **UCLG Secretary General Emilia Saiz**.

By placing people at the centre of the urban plan, this concept focuses on ensuring an equitable distribution of all essential social functions of the city, freeing both time from constrained mobility and space from vehicular traffic.

C40 Executive Director Mark Watts says: “This exciting new initiative will facilitate the development and scaling up of the proximity approach globally. This is a pivotal moment in urban planning - the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said that compact cities can help cut urban emissions by around 25%. The Observatory will be key to enabling the transformation of global cities, improving quality of life for urban dwellers and reducing emissions.”

For more information, please visit <http://sustainablecities.org> or contact:

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About Chaire ETI

IAE Paris-Sorbonne Business School and Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University has more than 60 years of experience in innovation. Chaire ETI's goal is to develop and diffuse recent and innovative ideas shared by their researchers and associated partners around the territory, so they become a key for today's economically, ecologically and socially sustainable value chain. The work output is proposed in different formats by our researchers (written, visual or video), so it can be accessible for everyone. We want to pass our knowledge to all practitioners who are involved in their scientific work and make it more useful in the development of our cities, territories and in our own lives. Through our work in Chaire ETI, we want to create strong connections between the research and the socio-economic actors, private and public, through our studies, publications, events and advisory missions.

About C40 Cities

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a science-based and people-focused approach to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build

healthy, equitable and resilient communities. Through a Global Green New Deal, mayors are working alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to go further and faster than ever before. The current Chair of C40 is Mayor of London Sadiq Khan; three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and Realdania.

About UCLG

United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG, as a global network of cities and local, regional, and metropolitan governments and their associations, is committed to representing, defending, and amplifying the voices of local and regional governments to leave no-one and no place behind. Together we are the sentinels of the hopes, dreams, and aspirations held by individuals in communities around the world searching for a life in which the ideals of the SDGs are a lived reality. Through collaboration, dialogue, cooperation, and knowledge-sharing, we as a World Organization walk the walk, working to advance global response and action through ground breaking commitments and agreements that become common threads that transcend borders and tie communities together, to uplift and empower the local level.

About UN-Habitat

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. UN-Habitat is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system. UN-Habitat works with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. UN-Habitat promotes urbanization as a positive transformative force for people and communities, reducing inequality, discrimination and poverty. UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries to promote transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action.