



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

World Cities Day 2023: Financing sustainable urban future for all

Istanbul, Türkiye, 31 October 2023 — In recognition of World Cities Day 2023, UN-Habitat – the United Nations entity responsible for cities and human settlements – is holding a global observance to highlight the urgent need to invest in sustainable urban development.

This year, the global ceremony is taking place in the Municipality of Üsküdar, in Istanbul, Türkiye. The ceremony is held under the patronage of the First Lady of Türkiye, H.E. Emine Erdoğan.

World Cities Day, observed annually on 31 October, was designated by the United Nations to highlight the importance of cities and promote sustainable urban development. The Day aims to raise awareness of the need to make cities more sustainable, accessible, and liveable.

“Cities play a pivotal role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals,” said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in his video address for World Cities Day. “They foster innovation, culture and economic growth. They are also key to tackling today’s complex challenges – from growing inequalities to the triple planetary crisis, from quality education to healthcare.”

The theme of this year’s celebration focuses on financing a sustainable urban development for all. “We need a new financing framework for sustainable urban development to reverse the negative trends. We need to invest in integrated planning and turbocharge our commitment to shelter and housing as a human right,” said UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif in her address.

“Things might seem impossible, but I am always optimistic. I believe in turning IMPOSSIBLE into I’M Possible. Cities and human settlements, big or small, are our hope. We can unlock the opportunities they offer and create conditions for growth and recovery,” she added.

The programme of World Cities Day features a high-level ceremony with the participation of several First Ladies followed by two roundtables to dive deeper into financing opportunities for cities and zero-waste initiatives as drivers of circular urban economies.

More than 1,000 participants representing 221 countries registered for the event in-person and online. Recommendations and messages from the debates will be shared at the ministerial session on urban action and climate change at COP28 in December 2023.

World Cities Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2013 and first celebrated in Shanghai, China, in 2014.

About UN-Habitat

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. To know more, visit www.unhabitat.org or follow us on Twitter @UNHABITAT.

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UN Web TV stream

To watch the global observance of World Cities Day 2023, check the live streaming [here](#).