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World Urban Forum features key events driving global urban innovation

Cairo, 22 October 2024 – The twelfth session of the World Urban Forum 12 (WUF12), organized by UN-Habitat, is set to take place from 4-8 November 2024, under the theme “**It all starts at home: Local actions for sustainable cities and communities**”. This Forum will showcase a series of thought-provoking events that will gather global leaders, urban experts, and innovators to discuss the most pressing challenges and opportunities in urban development.

WUF12 will feature an array of high-profile events, including special sessions, roundtables, and assemblies, designed to inspire collaboration and action toward building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.

Highlighted events

Opening ceremony: The WUF12 opening ceremony will set the stage for the event, featuring influential speakers, including senior officials from UN-Habitat and national leaders. The ceremony will introduce the theme and highlight the Forum's focus on addressing urban challenges through innovative and inclusive solutions.

Children and Youth Assembly: The **Children and Youth Assembly** will provide a platform for young urbanists to share their vision for sustainable cities. This assembly will feature discussions on youth engagement in urban planning, with a particular focus on climate resilience, housing, and social equity. Key speakers include:

- **SM Shaikat**, Executive Director of SERAC-Bangladesh, and
- **Jaya Srinivasan**, an Indian researcher specializing in youth-centred development policies.

Indigenous Peoples roundtable: This roundtable will bring together Indigenous Peoples leaders and advocates to discuss the unique challenges and opportunities facing Indigenous communities in urban settings. Speakers such as **Lenin Zambrano**, Ecuadorian cultural activist, and **Jackson Looseiya**, Kenyan Director of Tanguia Mara, will address how Indigenous Peoples knowledge can contribute to sustainable urban planning.

Special session: Zero Waste World This special session will focus on innovative approaches to waste management and the development of circular economies in urban areas. **José Moller**, CEO of Algramo, will lead discussions on reducing urban waste through sustainable consumer practices, alongside other leaders in the zero-waste movement. This session will provide actionable insights on how cities can transition toward more sustainable, waste-free futures.

Business and foundation roundtable: Bringing together leaders from business and philanthropic organizations, the **Business and foundation roundtable** will explore partnerships and investments for urban sustainability. Moderated by **Catalina Valentino**, CEO of ELIXR Group, this roundtable will feature key speakers such as:

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- **Satoshi Ishii**, Director of the Asian Development Bank's Strategy and Partnerships Team, and
- **Safder Nazir**, SVP of Public Sector at Huawei Middle East & Central Asia, discussing the intersection of business innovation and urban development.

"A space for all" special session: In this interactive session, participants will explore how public spaces can be transformed into inclusive areas that foster community engagement. **Bahia Shehab**, a renowned multidisciplinary artist and professor at The American University in Cairo, will lead discussions on placemaking, while live art performances from **Maya Hayuk**, an acclaimed street artist, will illustrate the power of art in urban spaces.

"Empathy in motion" special session: This session will emphasize the need for inclusive and accessible urban design, focusing on how empathy can drive urban planning that serves all citizens. Moderated by **Maruxa Cardama**, Secretary-General of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLOCAT), this event will feature speakers like **Victor Santiago Pineda**, President of World Enabled, advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities in urban environments.

Closing ceremony

WUF12 will conclude with a **closing ceremony** that will reflect on the key takeaways from the Forum, summarizing the commitments made and outlining a roadmap for the future of sustainable cities. The ceremony will feature remarks from global leaders and representatives from UN-Habitat, celebrating the progress made during the event and setting the tone for continued collaboration.

A global platform for urban solutions

WUF12 offers a unique platform for engaging with global leaders, innovators, and policymakers to discuss solutions to today's urban challenges. With over 10,000 participants expected, the event will foster meaningful dialogue, inspire action, and drive forward the agenda for creating sustainable, inclusive cities.

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About the World Urban Forum

Established in 2001 by the United Nations, the World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, designed to examine the impacts of rapid urbanization on cities, communities, economies, and climate change. Since its inception, WUF has been hosted in cities across the world, with the first session held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2002.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting 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 unhabitat.org.

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