



UN-HABITAT

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

Youth lead climate action at World Cities Day 2024 Global Observance in Alexandria

Alexandria, Egypt, 31 October 2024 – Today, the city of Alexandria hosted the Global Observance of World Cities Day 2024, bringing together high-level dignitaries, youth climate leaders, and urban stakeholders under the theme, **“Youth Climate Changemakers: Catalysing Local Action for Urban Sustainability.”** The event underscored the role of youth in advancing climate action in cities, showcasing their innovative approaches to building sustainable, resilient urban futures.

The gathering, held at Bibliotheca Alexandrina, highlighted the contributions of youth leaders and local governments to urban climate resilience, with sessions exploring pathways for translating youth-led climate solutions into impactful, large-scale actions. The day featured an opening ceremony with remarks from global and national leaders.

In his statement for the Day, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said: “With more than half of the world’s population and 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, cities are at the forefront of the climate crisis. And they need the energy and vision of youth leading the charge for change.”

UN-Habitat Executive Director Anacláudia Rossbach emphasized the urgency of local climate action by the youth: “By 2050, cities are expected to house 70 per cent of the global population, and youth represent a significant share of the urban population. That’s why [their] voices and actions have never been more critical. [...] In the Global South, where the impacts of climate change are often most severe, young people are already leading. [...] Together, we can create cities that are not just liveable but resilient, equitable, and sustainable.”

The Prime Minister of Egypt, Mostafa Madbouly, stated: “Our gathering today on World Cities Day reflects our renewed commitment to collective action and international cooperation to build a more sustainable and prosperous future for all [...] We believe that young people are capable of creating new solutions to the challenges facing cities. Therefore, we work on empowering them to play an active role in sustainable development within local communities. [...] We work on empowering local communities and enhancing partnerships with the private sector and international development partners, foremost among them, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).”

The observance featured a youth-led discussion on climate solutions in cities and a high-level ministerial panel, exploring how multilateral actions, partnerships and investments can accelerate climate projects.

Shanghai Award 2024

The Shanghai Award 2024 was also presented during the observance, honouring outstanding urban projects that promote sustainability and climate resilience. The Award was presented this year to:

- **Agadir, Morocco**, recognized for advancing sustainable water management, green infrastructure, and social equity through citizen-driven urban governance.
- **Thiruvananthapuram, India**, awarded for promoting green transport, smart infrastructure, and renewable energy, making it a model of inclusive, sustainable urban development.
- **Iztapalapa, Mexico**, awarded for its human rights-centred approach to sustainable urban transformation.
- **Melbourne, Australia**, awarded for prioritizing fairness and inclusion to ensure no one is left behind in its sustainable development efforts.
- **Doha, Qatar**, awarded for balancing economic growth with sustainable policies, establishing itself as a global centre for education, business, and research.

Fuzhou, one of the winning cities of the first cycle of the Shanghai Award, proposed forming a global alliance of winning cities. In his speech, the Fuzhou Vice-Mayor highlighted the alliance's goals and introduced a video showing Fuzhou's recent urban developments and messages from other first-round winning cities.

Shanghai Manual 2024

The 2024 Shanghai Manual, a comprehensive guide supporting sustainable urban development and the Sustainable Development Goals, was officially launched alongside a global call for case applications for the next iteration of the manual.

Supporting sustainable urban growth

With urban populations expected to reach 70 per cent by mid-century, cities are on the front lines of the climate crisis. The focus of World Cities Day 2024 on youth-led climate action serves as a reminder of the crucial role young people play in devising innovative solutions for urban challenges, particularly in the Global South, where cities face the dual pressures of rapid urbanization and climate vulnerability.

Partnerships for urban sustainability

World Cities Day highlighted the importance of collaborations across public and private sectors to foster sustainable, resilient urban spaces. The event concluded with a dialogue focused on sustainable investments for urban climate resilience, facilitating partnerships that help scale local climate action.

Discussions and outcomes from today's observance will contribute to the upcoming [twelfth session of the World Urban Forum 12](#) in Cairo.

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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 or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

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