



PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat presents its World Cities Report 2024

Cairo, 5 November 2024 – A new United Nations report focuses on the looming crises of climate change and rapid urbanization. The pressures of poorly managed growth have resulted in the steady attrition of green space in many urban areas, with the average share in urban areas worldwide falling from 19.5 per cent in 1990 to 13.9 per cent in 2020, according to UN-Habitat’s World Cities Report.

More than 2 billion currently living in cities could be exposed to an additional temperature increase of at least 0.5 degrees Celsius by 2040. At the same time, climate action in cities is still failing to match the scale and intensity of the challenges cities face.

A critical theme of the report is the significant funding gap for resilient urban infrastructure. Cities need an estimated USD 4.5-5.4 trillion per year to build and maintain climate-resilient systems, yet current financing stands at just USD 831 billion – only a fraction of the required amount. This shortfall leaves cities, and especially their most vulnerable populations, exposed to escalating risks.

Even more troubling, according to the findings of the report, is the evidence of climate interventions that have either failed to protect the most vulnerable communities or even made their situation worse. These include instances of “green gentrification”, when beneficial measures such as the creation of parks either result in the direct displacement of poor households or push up property values, effectively pricing them out.

However, despite the widespread evidence of the complex barriers cities face in the midst of the deepening climate emergency, the report also highlights the importance of seeing urban areas not just as part of the problem, but part of the solution too – even if their full potential has yet to be realized.

The *World Cities Report: Cities and Climate Action* is presented this week to coincide with the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, the premier global conference on sustainable urban development. The event, held in Cairo from 4 to 8 November 2024, is convened by UN-Habitat and co-organized with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

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“Knowledge is the cornerstone of effective climate action, and the insights we gather today are critical in shaping future frameworks like the forthcoming IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities,” said Anacláudia Rossbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat. “The recently published World Cities Report 2024 serves as a testament to the importance of integrating urban realities into climate discussions. As we prepare for COP29, we are committed to leveraging knowledge to inform strategies that resonate with both local and global efforts.”

The report calls for a sharper urban focus to advance ambitious national commitments. It highlights the importance of aligning climate action with broader development goals, such as improved services, settlement upgrading, poverty reduction, and public health. The report further calls for integrated climate considerations across sectors to support cities in making effective, lasting investments for sustainable development.

The report also stresses the need for climate action to be participatory and community-led. It calls for locally appropriate solutions that address the specific needs of residents, particularly in informal settlements and low-income neighbourhoods, where communities have often been excluded from decision-making.

[Download full report here](#)

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