



SPEECH

Closing remarks by Anacláudia Rossbach, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat, at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12)

Friday, 8 November 2024

The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt under the leadership of our Host,
Your Excellency, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Your Excellency, Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs
General Mahmoud Tawfik, Ministry of Interior Affairs
Honourable Dr. Manal Awad, Minister of Local Development
Honourable Eng. Sherif al Sherbiny, Minister of Housing, Utilities and urban Communities
Honourable Dr. Ibrahim Saber, Governor of Cairo
The National Coordinating Committee of the Government of Egypt,

Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives
Governors and Mayors present

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, All Protocols Observed
Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

I start with expressing immense gratitude to our host- the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum in Cairo. Your efforts have been nothing short of exceptional, resulting in the largest and most impactful Forum to date. I feel profoundly grateful and honored to have led and shaped the World Urban Forum with our host and every participant.

This session has been a turning point in the journey of the World Urban Forum.
We have broken many records and scaled new heights.

At this WUF, we have had:

- Record-breaking attendance: over 24,000 participants from 182 countries registered for WUF12
- 4 heads of state
- 60 ministers and 45 deputy ministers (from 84 countries)
- 96 mayors



- More than 700 partner-led events from over 1,500 applications
- Over 5 days, more than 63,000 participants actively participated in dialogues, sessions, and discussions.

I thank every single participant for these results and more.

The relevance of the theme and the forum

The Forum's focus on local action was timely, given that over half of the world's population now resides in urban areas. Local governments hold significant influence over quality of life and state of cities and human settlements. Yet, the rapid pace of urbanization, particularly in the global South, has left municipalities with funding gaps for crucial infrastructure and services. Addressing this was a central theme at WUF12, highlighting the need for equitable finance.

The Pact for the Future also recognized the role of NUA and the localization of SDGs.

I commend the conclusion of the Cairo Call to Action which embodies the voices of WUF12, cutting across all stakeholders.

The discussions at WUF 12 consistently highlighted and raised a number of critical issues at the heart of efforts to promote sustainable cities and communities including the following:

- The critical urgency of addressing the global housing crisis recognizing that adequate housing is a human right, and conscious that housing inadequacy interacts with other crisis including climate and humanitarian crisis- we can not wait any longer when almost 3 billion people are suffering from various forms of housing inadequacy, with the most vulnerable being those living in informal settlements and slums
- Finance as a priority for urban sustainability, including unlocking untapped finance in cities through better urban planning and land-use that promotes inclusive, prosperous and sustainable pathways- we must manage and use land across its social, economic and ecological functions as one of the critical assets that opens up finance
- The need to capture, share and learn from practices and existing solutions in order to accelerate action swiftly and at scale- WUF is a perfect place to do so and we can do even more next time to connect practices and actors
- The power and potential of coalitions and partnerships to ensure that we leverage resources and expertise and take action at scale to respond to the complex and unprecedented challenge

We are fully committed to conveying the outcomes of WUF 12 at relevant moment and platform drawing on the Cairo Call to Action.



We will be sharing this with our own intergovernmental bodies and platforms.

We are taking these recommendations and Cairo Call to Action, which will be unveiled shortly at the closing ceremony, to COP29 in Baku to align subnational and national efforts to meet the Paris Agreement goals and achieve the SDGs and implement the New Urban Agenda.

These outcomes will feed into discussions within the UN-Habitat governance structure and the first Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Adequate Housing for All. This meeting will take place in Nairobi at the start of December to develop a framework for measuring and reporting on the adequacy of housing across diverse national and local contexts.

We will draw on insights for our strategic planning at UN-Habitat (2026-2029). Looking ahead, we are excited about the journey to Baku, with deep appreciation for the Government of Baku in hosting WUF 13.

We take key reflections and insights from Cairo to pave the way.

My vision is to have ensure we build a critical mass of ideas, networks, and practices in the lead up to WUF13 and I count on all to collaborate with UN-Habitat on this.

I can confidently conclude that the WUF is now the world's largest global urban coalition, thanks to the presence and contribution of every and each one of you!

Last but not least, I want to take this opportunity thank all the people behind the scene:

Our Host, His Excellency President Abdel Fattah El -Sisi
Prime Minister of Egypt, His Excellency Dr Mostafa Madbouly
Deputy Prime Ministers from Nepal, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Thailand
The Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dr. Badr Abdel Atty
The Ministry of Interior Affairs, General Mahmoud Tawfik
The Minister of Local Development, Honourable Manal Awad
The Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, Honourable Sherif al Sherbiny
Governor of Cairo, Honourable Ibrahim Saber,
The National Coordinating Committee of the Government of Egypt,
Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Our Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives
Governors and Mayors present
Former Executive Directors of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif and Ms. Anna Tibaijuka



United Nations Senior Representatives Mr. Haoliang XU, Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, and Mr. Ming ZHANG

Egyptian Security personnel

United Nations Department for Security and Safety

United Nations Resident Coordinators

Medical Clinic here the venue of WUF 12

The numerous Volunteers serving WUF 12

Service providers including caterers, transport providers, janitorial, and sanitation services

Interpreters and technicians

Egyptian Staff responsible for VIP reception including at the airport

The thousands of participants

UN-Habitat staff

And all of those who I could not acknowledge

My heartfelt appreciation for your diligence and contribution which made this WUF a great success!

Thank you! Shukran! See you all again in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2026!