



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME  
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## PRESS RELEASE

### World Habitat Day 2025: Urban crisis response

**Nairobi, 6 October 2025** — UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, convened the global observance of World Habitat Day 2025 at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. World Habitat Day, mandated by the UN General Assembly and observed annually on the first Monday of October, provides an opportunity to reflect on the state of human settlements and reaffirm the right to adequate shelter.

This year's theme, **"Urban crisis response,"** underscores the urgent need to address multiple and intersecting urban challenges, including forced displacement, climate-related shocks, and inadequate access to housing, land, and basic services. By highlighting sustainable and scalable approaches, the Day now also serves as a platform to accelerate progress toward the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 11 on inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.

In his official message, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres drew attention to the impacts of global crises on cities and towns already under strain: "In our rapidly urbanizing world, cities often shoulder the impacts of today's crises. ... Yet cities are where solutions can take root and grow. When we plan for inclusion, newcomers help to drive economies, strengthen communities, and enrich culture."

The 2025 Global Observance programme included a high-level opening ceremony, the presentation of four UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor awards and one special citation, as well as a multi-stakeholder panel on urban crisis response with participation from governments, local authorities, and international and non-governmental organizations.

More than 260 participants from 48 countries joined the Day's events, including 138 in Nairobi and others online. More than 120 participants logged in online to follow the streaming on UN Web TV. Globally, World Habitat Day celebrations were organized across 28 cities in 28 countries.

UN-Habitat Executive Director Anacláudia Rossbach stressed the centrality of housing in crisis response and recovery: "Every crisis has a human face. ... Let us put housing at the heart of crisis response globally. Let us invest in cities as places of safety, opportunity, and resilience for all."

Representing the host country, Alice Wahome, Cabinet Secretary for Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to sustainable urbanization and support for UN-Habitat's mission: "Kenya remains steadfast in its support for UN-Habitat's mandate and vision, as the proud host of this vital agency. ... This year's theme, Urban Crisis Response, with its specific focus on

urban displacement, is incredibly timely. As a nation that has long demonstrated leadership and compassion in dealing with displacement, we are acutely aware of the complex challenges this crisis presents.”

World Habitat Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1985 and first celebrated in Nairobi in 1986. The outcomes of the 2025 observance will contribute to ongoing international processes, including the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum, in Baku, Azerbaijan, in May 2026, under the theme “Housing the world: Safe and resilient cities and communities”.

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### **About UN-Habitat**

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity working for sustainable urbanization. With programmes in over 90 countries, it supports policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in urban areas through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](https://unhabitat.org) or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

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