



UN-HABITAT

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
unhabitat-info@un.org | www.unhabitat.org

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat Quality of Life Initiative gains recognition from UN Statistical Commission

Nairobi, 22 April 2026 – The United Nations Statistical Commission has formally recognized UN-Habitat’s Quality of Life Initiative and encouraged its continued development, marking an important step in advancing how well-being is measured in cities worldwide.

The Commission’s decision brings the initiative into the global statistical system, providing a foundation for expanding the use of its Quality of Life Index and supporting countries and cities in measuring development outcomes beyond traditional economic indicators.

Adopted at the Commission’s fifty-seventh session under agenda item 3(c) on demographic and housing statistics, the decision acknowledges the progress made in developing the Quality of Life Index and its role in supporting the implementation of the Global Urban Monitoring Framework, endorsed by the Commission in 2022.

Discussions among Member States reflected broad interest in the initiative’s potential to strengthen the measurement of urban well-being and inform more people-centred approaches to development. Countries from multiple regions highlighted its relevance for improving the evidence base for urban policy.

The Commission’s recognition provides a platform for the next phase of work, including expanding implementation across cities, further refining the methodology, and strengthening collaboration with international efforts to develop metrics that go beyond gross domestic product.

Progress in the coming period will be reflected in the Human Settlements Statistics Report to be presented to the Commission in 2027, offering an opportunity to consolidate results and further advance global approaches to measuring urban well-being.

—END—

About the Quality of Life Initiative

The Quality of Life Initiative is a global effort to enhance urban well-being through data-driven, people-centred measurement, monitoring, and insights implemented by United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and sponsored by the Quality of Life Program in Saudi Arabia. It provides cities with a structured framework to assess well-being across nine domains, including health, education, environment, mobility, housing, governance, social cohesion and culture. By integrating objective data and

citizen perspectives, the Initiative enables governments to better understand how economic development translates into lived experiences. The Initiative is being implemented in more than 100 cities across over 40 countries, supported by a digital platform that allows cities to collect, analyse and visualize quality of life data to inform policy decisions. The Quality of Life Initiative contributes to a growing international effort to develop new metrics that better capture the multidimensional realities of people's lives. By linking statistical measurement with urban policy and planning, the Initiative aims to support governments and cities in designing more inclusive, sustainable and people-centred development strategies.

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 or follow us on social media @UNHABITAT.

For further information on UN-Habitat, please contact:

Kathleen Sullivan
Senior Communications and Advocacy Advisor
Quality of Life Initiative, UN-Habitat
kathleen.sullivan@un.org

Note to editors:

1. **What is the Quality of Life Initiative?** The Quality of Life Initiative is a global programme implemented by UN-Habitat and sponsored by the Quality of Life Program in Saudi Arabia. It provides cities with an innovative measurement tool, the Quality of Life Index, for cities to assess and enhance urban well-being using data-driven insights.
2. **What does the Quality of Life Index measure?** The Index evaluates various objective and subjective dimensions of quality of life and urban well-being in cities, across nine key domains:
 - Basic services & mobility
 - Culture & recreation
 - Economy
 - Education
 - Environment
 - Governance
 - Health
 - Housing
 - Social cohesion

It also measures overall self-reported life satisfaction independently from the domains.