



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WUF13 highlights key events advancing global dialogue on housing

Baku, 14 May 2026 – As cities around the world face growing pressure from housing shortages, inequality and climate impacts, the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) will bring together global leaders and urban stakeholders to advance solutions for more inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities. Convened by UN-Habitat and co-organized with the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Forum will take place from 17 to 22 May 2026 in Baku under the theme **“Housing the world: Safe and resilient cities and communities.”**

Through dialogues, special sessions, roundtables and assemblies, WUF13 will explore practical pathways to expand access to adequate housing, strengthen urban resilience and accelerate implementation of the New Urban Agenda, while fostering partnerships and collective action across sectors and regions.

Highlighted events

Ministerial Meeting on the New Urban Agenda: opening WUF13’s programme, the meeting will bring together government representatives to assess progress at the midpoint of the agenda’s 20-year timeline and strengthen political momentum around housing and sustainable urban development ahead of the 2026 midterm review of the New Urban Agenda.

Opening ceremony: The WUF13 opening ceremony will officially launch the Forum and introduce its focus on housing as a driver of inclusion, resilience and sustainable urban development. High-level representatives from the United Nations, the Government of Azerbaijan and international partners will set the stage for discussions on the urgent need to address the global housing crisis through collective action and partnerships.

Dialogue “The global housing crisis: what is the plan?”: The high-level session will examine the structural drivers of the global housing crisis, including rising housing costs, exclusion and the growth of informal settlements. Discussions will focus on solutions ranging from integrated housing and land policies to community-led approaches and stronger regulation, featuring **Jeffrey Sachs**, President of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Professor at Columbia University; **Jonathan Reckford**, Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for

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Humanity International; **Ola Abualghaib**, Director of the Global Disability Fund Secretariat at UNDP; **Emilia Sáiz**, Secretary-General of UCLG; **Matthew Baldwin**, Head of the European Commission Housing Task Force; and **Antonio Campagnoli**, World President of FIABCI.

Stories from the Climate Frontlines: The Special Session will explore how cities on the frontlines of climate change are adapting housing, land and urban systems to respond to growing environmental risks. Focusing on the connections between climate finance, policy and local action, discussions will highlight practical pathways to strengthen resilient and inclusive housing solutions, with particular attention to experiences from Amazonian cities and vulnerable communities. Speakers include **Harry Tekaiti**, Minister for Culture and Internal Affairs of Kiribati; **Jose Antonio Puppim de Oliveira**, Professor at Fundação Getulio Vargas and Coordinating Lead Author of the IPCC's Special Report on Climate Change and Cities; and **Paola Bances Chavez**, Mayor of Maynas (Peru).

Women's Roundtable: The roundtable will focus on advancing women's right to adequate housing in the context of the global housing and climate crises. The session will examine barriers related to land rights, housing finance, access to services and gender-based violence, while highlighting policy recommendations and practical approaches to support inclusive housing systems.

Pulse of Healthy Homes: This special session will examine the links between housing, health and urban resilience, highlighting how housing conditions and access to essential services shape physical and mental well-being, social cohesion and climate resilience. Speakers include **Kamelia Kemileva**, Co-Director of the Global Cities Hub; **Jose Manuel Zuniga**, President and CEO of Fast-Track Health; **Sebastiaan van Herk**, Co-founder of Healthy Cities; **Ghassan Abdullah Alothman**, Consultant Pediatric Respiriologist and Founder of Athr Community; and **Linda S. Lloyd**, public health specialist and advisor to WHO and PAHO.

Business Assembly: Bringing together companies, cooperatives, startups, SMEs and policymakers, the assembly will explore how private sector actors can help scale adequate, affordable and climate-resilient housing solutions by examining innovations across the housing value chain – from planning and construction to infrastructure and services – while highlighting the role of partnerships, technology and market-based approaches in advancing housing delivery.

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New features at the Urban Expo: WUF13 will also introduce new features within the Urban Expo focused on implementation, innovation and learning, while creating spaces for networking and collaboration to help address the global housing crisis.

- The **Business & Innovation Hub** will showcase practical delivery models, partnerships and innovations across the urban value chain, while creating opportunities for collaboration among private sector actors, cities and investors.
- The **WUF Academy** will provide a dedicated learning and knowledge space bringing together universities, research institutions and training organizations to bridge research, training and housing practice.
- The **Practices Hub** will present tested housing solutions and implementation experiences from around the world, connecting practitioners and decision-makers through interactive sessions, digital displays and networking opportunities.

Closing ceremony: With remarks from **United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed**, WUF13 will conclude with a closing ceremony reflecting on the Forum's main outcomes, partnerships and commitments. The ceremony will also present the Baku Call to Action, the Forum's stakeholder-led outcome document, consolidating shared priorities and actions to advance adequate housing and sustainable urban development worldwide.

A global platform for housing solutions

As the premier global platform on sustainable urbanization, WUF13 will provide a space for dialogue, knowledge exchange and partnerships to advance solutions to the global housing crisis. With thousands of participants expected from around the world, the Forum aims to strengthen cooperation across sectors and levels of government while connecting global discussions with practical action on the ground.

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About the World Urban Forum

Established in 2001 by the United Nations, the World Urban Forum is the premier global conference on sustainable urbanization, designed to examine the impacts of rapid urbanization on cities, communities, economies, and climate change. Since its inception, WUF has been hosted in cities across the world, with the first session held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2002.

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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 social media @UNHABITAT.

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