



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Global leaders in housing, finance and urban policy to gather at WUF13 to address housing crisis and climate risks

Baku, 12 May 2026 – Global leaders in housing, finance and urban policy will gather at the thirteenth session of the World Urban Forum (WUF13) to confront the world’s deepening housing crisis and accelerating climate risks facing cities.

Convened by UN-Habitat under the theme “Housing the world: Safe and resilient cities and communities” and hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan, the Forum will bring together a high-level lineup of speakers from governments, international organizations and academia to advance solutions for more inclusive and resilient urban futures. The Forum will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 17 to 22 May 2026.

High-level United Nations voices

The Forum will feature senior United Nations leaders helping shape global discussions on housing, climate resilience, migration and sustainable urban development, including:

- **Ugochi Daniels**, Deputy Director-General of the International Organization for Migration
- **Dima Al-Khatib**, Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation
- **Andrea Meza Murillo**, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Together with UN-Habitat leadership, these voices will help frame global discussions on housing systems, urban inequality, climate resilience and financing gaps.

Flagship dialogues on the world’s most urgent urban challenges

Dialogue: The global housing crisis: what is the plan?

This central dialogue will bring together leading global voices across housing systems, governance and development, including:

- **Jeffrey Sachs**, President of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Professor at Columbia University
- **Jonathan Reckford**, Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity International

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- **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
- **Antonio Campagnoli**, World President, FIABCI (International Real Estate Federation)

The dialogue will examine structural drivers of the global housing crisis, including affordability pressures, governance gaps, inequality and exclusion, and will highlight scalable policy responses.

Dialogue: Housing at the centre of crisis recovery and reconstruction

This session will focus on housing as a foundation for recovery, displacement response and long-term resilience, featuring:

- **Ming Zhang**, World Bank Global Director for Urban Development
- **Ugochi Daniels**, Deputy Director General for Operations at the International Organization for Migration

The discussion will address housing systems in fragile and crisis-affected contexts, including reconstruction and recovery frameworks.

Dialogue: The climate–housing nexus

This dialogue will focus on how housing systems can respond to climate change through resilient, low-carbon and inclusive urban development, featuring:

- **Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP
- **Diana Ürge-Vorsatz**, Vice-Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The discussion will explore climate resilience, low-carbon housing solutions and approaches that protect vulnerable communities from growing climate risks.

Special sessions and global coalitions

WUF13 will also feature a series of special sessions addressing cross-cutting urban priorities.

The **Special Session on the Africa Affordable Housing Compact** will bring together senior global leadership to strengthen international cooperation on housing and urban development, including:

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- **Thierno-Habib Hann**, Chief Executive Officer and President of Shelter Afrique
- **Kecia Rust**, Executive Director of the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa

The **Special Session on Rethinking Cultural Heritage and Inclusive Urban Regeneration** will highlight the role of culture in shaping inclusive and resilient cities, featuring:

- **Clara Brugada**, Mayor of Mexico City
- **Lazare Eloundou Assomo**, Director of World Heritage at UNESCO
- **Ismail Serageldin**, Founding Director Emeritus of Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Academia and Research Roundtable

As part of WUF13's effort to bridge policy, practice and knowledge, the Academia and Research Roundtable will explore how research, innovation and education can help shape practical solutions to the global housing crisis and strengthen the capacities of cities and institutions to deliver adequate housing for all. Key speakers include:

- **Carlos Moreno**, Professor at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and urban innovation expert

A global platform for urban solutions

Bringing together governments, international organizations, local authorities, civil society, businesses, academia and grassroots communities, WUF13 will serve as a global platform to advance partnerships and accelerate action on the global housing crisis while promoting safe, resilient and inclusive cities and communities.

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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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