

Urban October Report 2019



World Habitat Day Global Observance in Mexico City

World Habitat Day 2019 theme of “Frontier technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth” was noisily illustrated at the Global Observance in Mexico City by a children’s orchestra playing instruments made from buckets and plastic bottles.



The performance by the children of the Rey Poeta orchestra, was one innovative way to illustrate the 2019 World Habitat Day theme of *Frontier technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth*.

The Museum’s auditorium was packed with over 300 dignitaries, politicians, experts, academics, NGOs, and young people from around the world eager to share innovative ideas.

The Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, told the audience: “We are facing a global waste management challenge on a monumental scale that requires urgent action. Our cities produce 7 to 10 billion tonnes of waste a year and current rubbish collection services don’t even reach half of the urban population in low-income countries.”

She called for cities to take advantage of technology to create a circular economy where resources undergo transformation and retain or even increase their value.

The Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights in Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was elected as President of the first UN-Habitat Assembly earlier this year, Ms. Martha Delgado, said that the Mexican Government was strongly committed to making urbanization a powerful tool and ally of Sustainable Development.

Mexico’s Minister of Urban and Rural Development, Mr. Roman Meyer Falcon, described innovation as a way to transform the way the environment is managed which could improve the quality of life for millions of people.

Outside the auditorium, participants signed a large board pledging to rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle their waste. This pledge echoes the UN-Habitat Waste Wise Cities campaign which encourages cities to sign up to promote sustainable waste management and has so far attracted over 80 cities.

In the afternoon there were panel discussions on the Circular Economy and the Informal Economy and Migration.

This year’s World Habitat Day celebrations were held across the world including Cameroon, Kenya, Canada, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Last year over 80 cities, towns and communities celebrated the day.



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Community members come out in numbers to meet the clean up competition jury in Yaounde, Cameroon . © UNHabitat / Ivy Mutisya



Other World
Habitat Day events





A woman joins her neighbours to celebrate jury members at the clean up in Yaounde, Cameroon. © UNHabitat / Ivy Mutisya

Cameroon

Cameroon organizes week long WHD celebrations

The Government of Cameroon, with the support of UN-Habitat, did more than celebrating World Habitat Day. They designated the first week of October as *Habitat Week* focusing on the problem of waste.

The Habitat Week activities included round table talks, sessions with expert panels as well as community activities such as a clean-up competition in all the seven municipalities in Yaoundé focusing on roads, clogged drainage ditches and rivers. One area turned a former roadside dumpsite into a mini-park. On October 3 the Habitat Village was inaugurated, bringing together exhibitors from across the continent to showcase their innovative solutions in waste management. Many initiatives showcased at the Village showed how to up-cycle waste including using recycled plastic bottles to make outdoor furniture.

"I am deeply moved and I hope this campaign lasts longer so that we may be able to improve our environment and for the promotion of safer cities," said Wilfred Zebaze, a resident who took part in the clean-up. The Waste Wise Cities campaign is a call to action for cities to fully consider waste generation and treatment, to improve the sustainability of cities, towns and communities.

The theme for the 2019 World Habitat Day was *Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform Waste to Wealth*. The subjects discussed in Cameroon included innovative solutions to the waste in camps for refugees and the displaced.

"We have decided to use all the recommendations to prepare a roadmap for the drafting and implementation of a national program on sustainable waste management not only to manage waste, but to transform it to wealth while improving the health and wellbeing of our population," said Ms. Celestine Ketcha Courtes, Minister of Housing and Urban Development.

"We still need much more to improve waste management," said Ms. Allegra Baiocchi the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Cameroon speaking at the Habitat Village on the ceremony to mark World Habitat Day on 7 October.



The Minister of Housing and Urban Planning is received at the Habitat Village, Cameroon. © UNHabitat / Ivy Mutisya

Guinea-Bissau

On October 7, in celebration of World Habitat Day, UN-Habitat Guinea-Bissau, in partnership with IP9 University, held the "Urban Cinema". The theme that guided this year's event was "Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform Waste to Wealth". As part of the Urban October celebrations, the event exhibited a document that raises a discussion the problem of the large production of plastic and the serious consequences of its dumping into the environment. The National Technical Advisor of UN-Habitat Guinea Bissau, Mr Edinilson da Silva, IPNOVE Chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr Malan Camará, Architect of the Camara Municipal, Mr Alfredo Antonio da Silva, General Director of Territorial Planning, Mr António Vladimir Vieira and UN-Habitat Local Urban Ambassador, Rui Manuel da Costa, attended the event.



Participants at the Guinea Bissau event

Kenya

Nakuru county hosts Kenya's WHD celebrations

Kenya celebrated World Habitat Day this year in Nakuru County, with a day of events focused on the theme of "Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth".

The Opening Ceremony, also witnessed by Members of the Diplomatic Corps from 10 resident Missions in Nairobi and UN-Habitat, was held at the Briquettes Production Factory turning human waste and sludge into briquettes for cooking fuel at Nakuru Water and Sewage Company Grounds.

Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works, Mr. James Macharia who was the Chief Guest, praised the briquette project saying it would reduce the need to cut down trees for charcoal and firewood. He called on other counties to emulate Nakuru county in embracing innovative technologies which offer solutions on sustainable development and climate change.

The Governor of Nakuru, Mr. Lee Kinyanjui, told the opening ceremony that the town's population was increasing fast.



Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works, Mr. James Macharia gives a speech at the national celebrations for World Habitat Day in Nakuru, Kenya.

"This means that we have increased our waste and hence the need for innovative solutions to handle this," he said. He further highlighted the need for investment and partnerships.

The Permanent Representative to UN-Habitat, Ambassador Njambi Kinyungu, commended Governor Lee Kinyanjui and the people of Nakuru County for opening its doors. "Today's event provides a unique opportunity for others to learn from Nakuru's leadership in demonstrating how change in mind-set and forward thinking towards waste is positively impacting on sustainable livelihoods and liveable communities", she said.

There were also 11 exhibitors showing various innovative ways of converting waste into organic fertilizer as well as turning plastic into baskets.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, said, in a speech read by the Director of UN-Habitat's Programme Division Mr. Raf Tuts, that properly collecting and treating waste could create employment, promote economic growth, improve public health and combat climate change.

"We must all start by reducing our waste, reusing our existing resources and recycling as much as we can of the remainder," she said.

The Executive Director added that UN-Habitat had supported solid waste management activities in Kenya including in Thika municipality where a landfill was constructed at Kang'oki in partnership with the county, using the Japanese Fukuoka method.

"In Kisii town, youth groups have been trained to recycle waste into useful products to sell. UN-Habitat with funding from the Government of the Republic of Kenya supported Kisii town to undertake a Solid Waste Management audit and develop a Long-Term Solid Waste Management Strategy County Solid Waste Management Policy," she stated.

UN-Habitat is also engaging Makueni, Mombasa, Nyandarua, Nairobi and Nyeri to develop effective tools and approaches for solid waste counties management.

In the speech, the UN-Habitat Executive Director mentioned the Waste Wise Cities Campaign run by UN-Habitat and partners, which was launched by the President of Kenya, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, and herself, during the global observation of the World Habitat Day held in Nairobi on October 1, 2018.



Kenyan and international dignitaries visited a factory turning human waste into fuel briquettes in Nakuru on World Habitat Day. Communication Department Nakuru County Government

The campaign encourages governments at all levels to manage waste according to twelve key principles. So far more than 80 towns and cities have signed up globally including Kajiado, Kiambu, Kirinyaga, Kisii, Mombasa, Nairobi and Nyeri Counties.

Before the official ceremony, the Chief Guest, the Governor, Diplomatic Corps and other dignitaries visited Gioto landfill, which is being turned into a green recreational park for Nakuru County residents and planted indigenous trees there.

The Governor of Nakuru said rehabilitation of the landfill had improved the lives of those living in Nakuru town and its environs.

“Previously after a heavy downpour, the accumulated waste from the site would be washed down onto the road making it impassable and an eyesore,” he said. “Now we have put up a green embankment which has really helped.”

During the Friday before the World Habitat Day, there was a clean-up in two estates in Nakuru involving various stakeholders including the State Department of Housing, the Kenya Military Academy, the Kenya Permanent Mission to UN-Habitat and many local residents.

Ethiopia

Tree planting in the rehabilitated area of Koshe / Reppie dumpsite in Addis Ababa

Following the Prime Minister’s initiative launched on 29 July to plant 200 million tree saplings across the country, UN-Habitat promoted the planting of 500 trees in Koshe dumpsite, where the agency developed the Koshe / Reppie dumpsite rehabilitation project after a landslide in 2017 which claimed the lives of about 150 people. While stabilizing the site to avoid future collapses, UN-Habitat introduced the Fukuoka method to Koshe dumpsite, a low-cost approach with uses local materials to install leachate drainage pipes and gas vents, hereby enlarging the aerobic region in the landfill waste layers.

The second phase of the tree planting initiative, also funded by the Government of Japan, was launched on the World Habitat Day to symbolise the 2019 theme “*Frontier technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth*”. During her official visit to Ethiopia in November, UN-Habitat’s Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, symbolically watered of the tree saplings together with the Ambassador of Japan.



City Resilience Action Planning Crash Course in Dire Dawa



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Dubai

UN-Habitat uses WHD fete to deepen ties with Arab housing ministers

In efforts towards deepening cooperation with housing ministers from the Arab world, UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director Victor Kisob attended The Third Arab Ministerial Forum for Housing and Urban Development (AMFHUD III) held there.

Mr. Kisob attended the Third Arab Forum for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (AMFHUDIII). The forum was hosted by the United Arab Emirates in cooperation with the Ministerial Council for Housing and Construction of the Arab League and the Regional Office of Arab States of UN-Habitat. The event saw the participation and attendance of more than 15 Arab ministers, high-level executives and key stakeholders, from the private and public sector, it will be the largest Arab gathering dedicated to tackle the challenges and shape the future of housing and urban development.

He also attended the 36th session of the Arab Ministerial Council for Housing and Construction, organized by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme of UAE, in collaboration with the Council of Arab Ministers of Housing and Construction of the League of Arab States and UN-Habitat.

The three-day forum discussed topics and issues that serve the future in the fields of housing and development, where the discussions revolve around three main questions of inclusive cities for happiness and quality of life, sustainability in housing and urban development, as well as the role of the private sector and NGOs in supporting government housing.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Kisob hailed the key role played by the League of Arab States in stimulating the member countries towards sustainable urban development.

"I would also like to pay tribute to the new low-income housing initiatives in the UAE and Bahrain, the planned expansion of cities in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the emergence of several smart Arab cities and the innovative approaches adopted to rebuild better cities."

Mr. Kisob pointed out that the Arab countries have extraordinary potential to become a role model in the new urban agenda and in the implementation of the SDGs through the exchange of experiences, policies and legislation. He added that the adoption of the Arab Regional Strategy for Housing and Urban Development 2030 and its implementation plan is an extremely important commitment.

AMFHUD has been established as a biannual regional consultative platform on housing and sustainable urban development issues hosted by one of the Arab countries and organized in partnership with the Ministerial Council for Housing and Construction of the Arab League, with relevant Ministries of the Arab member states and the technical support of UN-HABITAT's Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS).

The forum consisted of a series of technical sessions focused on specific and comprehensive themes organized in coordination with the Arab countries and bringing together specialists in the field of housing and urban development, and resulted in the endorsement of "Dubai Declaration" by the Arab Ministerial Council for Housing and Construction with a set of recommendations and initiatives for cooperation towards strengthening innovation and integrated territorial development in the Arab region.



Keynote speakers at the World Habitat Day celebrations at the Ecocity World Summit Vancouver, Canada credit Ecocity Summit/Scott McAlpine

Canada

Vancouver mayor retraces history since Habitat I held there in 1976

World Habitat Day was celebrated in Vancouver as participants reflected on the city's history of supporting UN-Habitat, including as the host of the agency's founding conference, Habitat 1 in 1976.

"World Habitat Day is a time to reflect on the state of our towns and cities and the basic right of all to adequate shelter," stated Dr. Jennie Moore, Director of Institute Sustainability for The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and coordinator for the Ecocities Summit. "It was here in Vancouver in 1976 that the first Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development took place, giving rise to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, now known as UN-Habitat."

The celebrations focused on telling the story of Vancouver and UN-Habitat, aimed at reinvigorating the partnership and demonstrating how Vancouver has followed up on the commitments of Habitat I and the Third Session of the World Urban Forum in 2006 which it also hosted.

"The theme of the Third World Urban Forum was *Turning Ideas into Action*, calling attention to the importance of inclusive sustainable urban development," stated Deputy Mayor Peter Fry, speaking on behalf of Mayor Kennedy Stewart.

"We at the City have taken this to heart and adopted many key undertakings such as the Ecodensity strategy, which promotes livable density for everyone; designating Vancouver the first ever City of Reconciliation, with commitments to strengthen local First Nations and Urban Indigenous relations, and most recently declaring a climate emergency, committing to limiting global warming to 1.5°C."

Ken Cameron, retired Manager, Policy and Planning, Metro Vancouver who attended Habitat I said the conference allowed both governments and civil society to work together.

"From the outset, Habitat I was a conference like no other," stated Mr. Cameron. "The Government of Canada sponsored demonstration projects to produce ideas that could be shared internationally. The Government also supported a parallel conference for the public and NGOs, who then were not welcome at UN meetings. The conference featured futurist (American architect) Buckminster Fuller and Mother Theresa, reflecting the social and human dimensions of urbanization."

Chris Williams, Director of UN-Habitat's New York office, represented the UN-Habitat Executive Director Maimunah Mohd Sharif, saying she was asking Mayors of cities that hosted WUFs to form an alumni group that she can take advice from and which would allow the cities to share their different experiences and inform the future.

"My Executive Director, on the occasion of World Habitat Day 2019, has asked me to extend this invitation to the Mayor with the hope that he can attend the WUF in Abu Dhabi in February of 2020 and share the amazing experience and knowledge Vancouver has on sustainable urbanization."

This year's Ecocities Summit looks at whether cities can be ecologically healthy and socially just and focus on the development of International Ecocity Standards, developed by Ecocity Builders and BCIT over the last 10 years.

Cuba

The World Habitat and Cities Day was celebrated in Cuba under the motto "Better city, better life. Innovative solutions and a better life for future generations." with the commitment to work to improve people's lives and a few days after Havana turned 500.

The celebration was organized by the Institute of Physical Planning and the National Union of Architects and Construction Engineers of Cuba (UNAICC) and was accompanied by UN Habitat.

The activity began with the projection of the message of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), Maimunah Mohd

Sharif, who in her speech referred to the importance of new creative ideas to contribute to mitigation of the global challenges: global warming, waste generation, the expansion of informal settlements, traffic density and unplanned urban growth.

In the activity, Consuelo Vidal-Bruce, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Cuba, expressed his satisfaction and commitment from the United Nations to continue supporting the development of Housing and habitat in Cuba, evidenced in the new Cooperation Framework 2020- 2024.

The president of the Institute of Physical Planning, Samuel Carlos Rodiles Planas, highlighted Cuba's commitment to make a country more sustainable. In his speech, he pointed out "Cuban cities are not exempt from some common problems of Latin American and Caribbean cities, Cuba supports the New Urban Agenda,... and, despite the intensification of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on our country by the US government, works for a prosperous and sustainable development".

At the end, the prizes and mentions of the "My City and its parks" Contest were given to eight children of 5th and 6th grade of primary school, and the National Habitat Recognition that the National Habitat Committee and the Planning System give each year for professionals dedicated to the improvement of housing and human settlements.



During the World Cities Day attendees listen the message of Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat. © UN-Habitat / Hector Bayona-Acosta



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Belgium

European parliament held a high-level policy session on 11 November 2019 to explore reasons why sustainable urbanization was critical for development. It was organized by European Parliament's Urban Intergroup, the European Commission and UN-Habitat.

The event brought together Members of the European Parliament, European Union Member State representatives, European Commission staff, UN agencies, development partners, think tanks and prominent thought leaders in global academia to discuss practicable recommendations and tools in using sustainable urbanization as driver of development.

Mr. Jan Olbrycht, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) set the stage by introducing the background to this policy session as originating from the project "*Supporting the Urban Dimension of Development Cooperation: Increasing financial capacities of cities from developing countries to deliver productive and sustainable urban development*". This project was requested by the European Parliament, financed by the European Union and implemented by UN-Habitat. He highlighted the urgent need to take the SDGs seriously instead of allowing the word sustainable become meaningless terminology.

This notion was re-emphasized by Mr. Felix Fernandez-Shaw, Director, Policy, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission (DG DEVCO), who reminded the

audience that the urban dimension is relevant to all of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, not only the dedicated goal SDG 11. Similarly, the priorities of the new European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen (Green Deal, Digital Technologies, Sustainable Growth and Jobs, Migration, Governance, Peace and Security) were all closely linked to developments in cities. He explained that the policy session event took place at an important moment, as the European Union is currently programming its next budget in the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021-27, and DG DEVCO prioritises geographical regional and country-level programmes, where sustainable urbanisation features as an important driver.

With special reference to Africa, key note speaker Sir Paul Professor Collier, CBE Fellow of the British Academy, University of Oxford and IGC Cities that Work Council member, emphasized the need for effective investment in urbanization as a crucial driver for development and economic growth. "A good city puts in place physical and institutional infrastructure to attract firms," he said, emphasizing that harnessing urbanization is the key prerequisite for African cities to become engines for productivity and livability. He underlined the urgency of investing in cities as Africa undergoes a surge of population growth and urbanization, and the need for investment is already enormous, hence if not undertaken now it will become completely unaffordable due to much higher costs of retrofitting the physical infrastructure to urban areas.

A Round Table moderated by Ms. Jennifer Musisi (Kampala, Uganda), City Leader in Residence at Bloomberg City Leadership Initiative, Harvard University and IGC Cities that Work Council member, gave room for senior representatives of different financial institutions to present their current practice with urban finance. The panel consisted of Mr. Gerry Muscat, Head of Regional and Urban Development, European Investment Bank; Mr. David Jackson, Director, Local Development Finance, United Nations Capital Development Fund; Ms. Ana Beatriz Jordao Carneiro-Monteiro, Chief of Coordination Area of Sustainable Cities, AECID – Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation; and Ms. Wallis Goelen Vandebroek, Senior Adviser, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission (DG REGIO).

Following the round table a debate on the way forward in terms of required interventions was moderated by Professor Anthony Venables CBE Fellow of the British Academy, University of Oxford and IGC Cities that Work Council member.

Key discussion items during the event related to the challenges of cities in developing countries to design bankable projects embedded in a long term integrated and sustainable urban development strategies which holistically improve quality of life for urban dwellers, the need to develop capacity for own source revenue and securing local tax base whilst creating jobs, and enabling cities to secure external funding. In this regard, shaping good relationship between central and local governments is key and the theme of climate financing is an overarching one which can bring co-benefits in a range of different urban sectors.

Mr. Felix Fernandez-Shaw concluded that urban investment should be directed to all SDGs in the programming of the next seven years for DG DEVCO, and context analysis is key to identify proper solutions which can vary in terms of budget support, technical assistance, blended finance mechanisms and financial guarantees.

“To gather experts and practitioners around the table is an important outcome of this session,” commented Mr. Jan Olbrycht MEP in his closing remarks, and he urged for improved cooperation in urban development issues, which are relevant to European cities and those in developing countries alike – albeit different in scale, the challenges discussed were universal.

Spain

On World Habitat Day, UN-Habitat co-organized an event with ISWA on synergies and collaboration between UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities Campaign and ISWA's Initiative of Mayors and Municipalities at the ISWA World Congress in Bilbao, Spain during which they signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

Seville hosted a meeting organized by the Office of UN-Habitat in Spain and FEMP in collaboration with the City of Seville, AACID, FAMSI and Ecoembes with the presence of Ecologists in Action and the mayors of Fuenlabrada and Cazorla. The event discussed and shared problems and possible solutions about this year's theme, “Cutting-edge technologies as a tool to convert waste into wealth.”

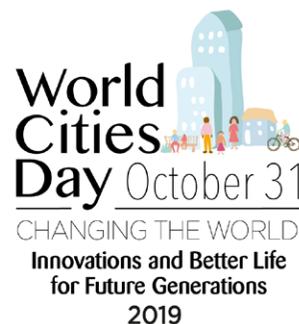


Participants at the UN-Habitat organized session at the ISWA World Congress in Bilbao, Spain to mark World Habitat Day



World Cities Day Global Observance in Ekaterinburg

The first ever Global Observance of World Cities Day in Russia attracted participants from over 40 countries to explore how innovations can improve the lives of urban residents now and in the future.



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During the high-level opening session, UN-Habitat's Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, said innovation was often born in cities and should be used to improve life for everyone. "Imaginative ideas will allow us to be more efficient and effective in the way we manage our resources, we move people and goods, deliver our services and construct our infrastructure and buildings," she said.

Several speakers at the event, which attracted over 650 participants, mentioned the importance of involving the residents of cities. The Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Yakushev called for people to unite their efforts and creativity to transform their cities.

"I hope this World Cities Day will provide us with new possibilities and give us new energy to resolve problems of our cities for their sustainable development and improvement of living conditions," he said.

The Mayor of Ekaterinburg Aleksandr Vysokinskiy, pointed out that technology "is a tool not a target, and that the future of a city depends on its population."

The Head of the United Nations Information Centre in Moscow, Vladimir Kuznetsov, read the statement of the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, which declared that the climate battle would be won or lost in cities.

"From electric public transport to renewable energy and better waste management, many of the answers needed for the transition to a sustainable, low-emission future are already available," the Secretary-General stated.

Venezuela's Minister for Housing and Habitat Ildemaro Moisés Villarroel Arismendi, pointed out the need to make technologies accessible to everyone.

Mr. Jiang Wanrong, Vice Minister of Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China said that good city planning and the interests of people should be the top priority to make cities inclusive.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director, the Mayor of Ekaterinburg Aleksandr Vysokinskiy and the Deputy Director-General of Shanghai Municipal Housing and Urban-Rural Development and Management Shanghai, Zheng Zhang, launched the 2019 edition of the Shanghai manual standing next to a plastic replica of the manual which, after a count down, lit up.

This was followed by sessions on the themes from the previous day's workshops including from the youth, followed by a live link to World Cities Day celebrations in Bilbao, Spain, Istra, Moscow region and the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

During the Bilbao link up, the Vice Counsellor of Territorial Planning of the Basque Government, Arantza Leturiondo said it was a positive sign that so many youth had taken part in their discussions as they would build the cities of the future."

Following presentations from representatives of United Nations agencies based in Moscow, a specialist from Future Foresight from Abu Dhabi's Strategic Planning Division, Maha Al Dhaheeri spoke about the links with the World Urban Forum.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director closed the Global Observance of World Cities Day saying there was a lot of work to be done and she hoped participants all exchanged ideas, heard about useful best practices and would continue talking and networking. "This is the beginning not the ending," she said to loud applause.



World Cities Day celebrations at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) © UN-Habitat / Linus Sijenyi

Ethiopia

Launching of the Jigjiga City Structure Plan Revision on the World Cities Day

The official launching meeting of the Jigjiga City Structure Plan Revision was held at the Regional President's Office, at the kind invitation of the Government of Somali Regional State, on October 31, 2019, bringing together close to 35 participants (officials and key staff members) representing the regional cabinet, Bureau of Urban Development and Construction, Jigjiga City Administration and community as well as the Bureau of Urban Plan Preparation and Implementation Follow Up from the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction (MUDCo) and UN-Habitat Ethiopia Country Office.

This event kick-started the preparation of the structure plan for Jigjiga City Administration (JCA) with the technical support of UN-Habitat. This initiative seeks to integrate the planning practices related to the preparation of strategic urban development plans at city level (Structure Plan) and those related to the preparation of local development plans (LDPs) in order to achieve multifaceted developmental objectives including ensuring higher economic growth rates, inclusiveness and social justice, optimal utilization of natural resources, appropriate solutions to environmental concerns, spatial integration of Jigjiga City with its hinterlands and to accommodate displacement-affected communities fleeing to the City due to conflict and climate change.

Kenya

World Cities Day was celebrated in on 31 October 2019 with three events at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), University of Nairobi and the Macmillan Library taking very different approaches to the theme of innovation in urban areas.

Some 70 young people from more than 20 youth-led organizations, met at the United Nations Office at Nairobi organized by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) for a Youth Dialogue session to brainstorm on the innovative ideas to make the current and future life better.

The meeting took the overall theme of World Cities Day 2019 which is *Changing the World: Innovations and Better Life for Future Generations* and focused on a sub theme of *Supporting youth to develop innovative solutions to the Urban Challenges*.

Minister Counsellor and General Consul, Ana Elena Campos-Jiménez, from the Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica in Kenya, said that youth must play a huge role to define the future.

Most of the youths attending the event agreed. Angela Chalo from Youth for SDGs said, "youth aren't the problems but are the part of the solution if not the solution itself."

Similar sentiments were expressed by another youth, Kelly Banda who noted, "Youth represents creativity, talent and the innovation our society needs to move forward."

Collins Oduor from PACJA said "there is an urgent need for stronger partnership between UN-Habitat and other organizations like PACJA to support youth innovations in different spheres".

Naipolitans, a non-profit that brings together urban professionals and enthusiasts put together a public discussion that touched key issues affecting urbanization. The dialogue was held at McMillan Memorial Library, one of the most iconic buildings in the heart of the CBD. This was thanks to a partnership with Bookbunk Kenya, a not-for-profit organization who are restoring public libraries in Nairobi. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, who have been leading two study groups: The Just City Study Group and the Socially Just Public Transport Study Group, were also part of the event as well as the Safer Nairobi Initiative.

The event commenced with a video by Book Bunk Kenya that brought out some of the progress they have made in restoring McMillan Library and other public libraries. Njeri Cerere, co-founder of Naipolitans gave the welcoming address and recognized all the organizing partners.

Titus Kaloki, from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) gave a short review of the 'Just City Approach.' This was accompanied by an infographic that was on display and shared with all attendants. The key principles were:

1. A place with dignity for everyone.
2. A city that respects equity and diversity.
3. Citizens are responsible for their city not just claiming rights.
4. A city that is democratic; where citizens have a stake in what is being done.



World Cities Day celebrations at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) © UN-Habitat / Linus Sijenyi



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Kuwait

UN-Habitat sub-regional office for the Gulf States in Kuwait, in partnership with the municipal council, launched the first national campaign for greening open spaces, with the participation of many government agencies, the private sector and volunteer teams.

“Greening Kuwait” campaign aims to plant 100,000 trees in open spaces to create a green belt protecting cities from dust storms, desertification, and sand encroachment in the north and south of Kuwait.

Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Environment, Public Authority for Youth, General Authority for Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Social Affairs, Health Cities Program, Ministry of Health, Kuwait Oil Company,

Zain, Volunteer Team Helm Akhdar, in addition to many volunteering teams and activists are all joining hands in this joint campaign.

The campaign comes in line with the Kuwait National Development Plan that stems from the vision of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for achieving a sustainable living environment in Kuwait by 2035.

The objectives of the 2035 National Development Plan are based on seven key pillars, including a pillar on addressing environmental issues, greening, air quality and creating a sustainable living environment.



Launching the Greening Kuwait Campaign on World Cities Day 2019. © UN-Habitat



UN-Habitat Deputy Executive Director Victor Kisob addresses 2019 China Observance of World Cities Day in Tangshan City

China

The 2019 China Observance of World Cities Day was held in Tangshan City, Hebei Province, China co-organized by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MoHURD), the Government of Hebei Province and UN-Habitat.

More than 400 participants, including mayors, officials, experts and scholars from nearly 20 countries, over 30 Chinese cities and provinces and various international organizations were gathered to share their opinions on innovations and better life for future generations.

The Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Mr. Victor Kisob delivered remarks at the opening ceremony. He noted that that 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China adding that during that period China's towns and cities had been transformed.

"Since 2008, the Chinese government has helped to improve the living conditions for more than 200 million people. I wish to compliment the Government of China for placing the focus on improving people's livelihoods and allowing sharing the prosperity brought by rapid economic and urbanizing growth.

UN-Habitat works closely with the Government of China and all Chinese partners to share innovative ideas, experiences and best practices on sustainable housing and urban development, especially focusing on implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda. We wish to continue developing broader cooperation with China and other developing countries through the Belt and Road Initiative, South-South Cooperation and other global cooperation frameworks," he said.

"Innovation is an important solution to address the challenges of urbanization. It is necessary to take innovation as the fundamental driving force for sustainable urban development and deepen the transformation and reform to accelerate the innovation of system and technology regarding urban planning, construction and management", said Mr. Ni Hong, the Vice Minister of MoHURD. Mr. Zhang Gujiang, the Vice Governor of Hebei Province, and Mr. Ding Xiufeng, Mayor of Tangshan City, made welcome speeches and introduced the concepts and practices of Hebei and Tangshan on urban transformation and innovative development.

Tangshan is the first Chinese city winning the UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor. Now as the hosting city, Tangshan Municipal People's Government released the *Tangshan Initiative for Urban Transformation and Innovative Development* to announce their advocacy on ecology and urban green development, innovation and urban governance, structure optimization and urban transformation, and openness, inclusiveness and cooperation.

Pakistan

World Cities Day was event was organised on 28 October in Islamabad with the declaration of Argentina Park as Model Park under the Clean Green Pakistan Movement on October 28. The Programme was officiated by Federal Minister and Advisor to PM on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam.



Citizens in Barcelona, Spain participate in the World Cities Day celebration hosted by UN-Habitat. © UN-Habitat / Rosa Suri

Spain

The UN-Habitat office in Barcelona organized the “Festival of World Cities Day” in the Parc de la Ciutadella within the framework of the “Fiesta de la Ciencia”.¹

The Basque Government, through the Department of Environment, Territorial Planning and Housing and in collaboration with the Office in Spain of UN-Habitat, organized a meeting in Bilbao to commemorate World Cities Day on October 31. The day was inaugurated by the Councilor Iñaki Arriola and during the event a connection was made with Yekaterinburg, headquarters of the global celebration with the presence of Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

At a later discussion table, problems and possible solutions were shared about this year’s theme, “Innovations and a better life for future generations” by Francisco Javier Martín Ramiro, General Director of Architecture, Housing and Land of the Ministry of

Promotion; Elja Diepenbrock, Project Manager of the European Urban Knowledge Network; María Buhigas, Founder of the Urban-facts professional office; Manuel Quirós Galdón, University Professor at IE School of Architecture and Design and Emilio Tejedor, Responsible for Environment and Knowledge Management at Iberdrola. Arantza Leturiondo, Vice-Minister of Territorial Planning of the Basque Government, closed the day.

UNESCO Chair in Housing, Rovira and Virgili University organized an event with 3 work tables, 11 speakers and 150 professionals from the housing sector to discuss around access to housing and prevent its loss. The event addressed the current situation of housing from a global perspective, touring housing from the perspective of the mortgage market to homelessness. The content was structured based on three thematic work tables and the presentation, first, of the documentary “The Threshold” and the simulation experience “The Threshold”, which bring the phenomenon of homelessness in society.



Urban October



AFRICA

Cape Verde

To celebrate the 31 days to promote a better urban future, the Urban October was filled with activities to commemorate this date. In Cabo Verde, the celebrations of the Urban October took place on World Cities Day, with the National Urban Forum, carried out by the MIOth, jointly with the UN-Habitat and INGT. It was a public presentation of the National Housing Policy and National Territorial Planning and Housing Policy. The policies were also presented in terms of their implementation instruments, such as the Spatial Development Framework (SDF), Participative Slum Upgrading Program (PSUP) and the Requalification, Rehabilitation and Accessibility Program (PRRA). Those present included Cape Verde Vice-Prime Minister, Olavo Correia, MIOth Minister, Eunice Silva, and the resident Coordinator of the UN here in Cape Verde, Ana Patrícia Graça, and a number of governmental institutions, international agencies, NGOs, academicians, researchers, and district community member. An exhibition of documents and plans such as the detailed plan of Chã das Caldeiras- Fogo and some PRRA interventions all over the city of Praia was then unveiled. UN-Habitat Cape Verde Urban Ambassador, Elsa Furtado together with the students from Calheta, also developed some activities to celebrate the date, with awareness activities about the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the #11, and also some illustrations about the city of Calheta.



Participants at the Urban October event in Cape Verde

Ethiopia

City Resilience Action Planning Crash Course in Dire Dawa

As part of the urban resilience pillar of the country programme, a crash course on the City Resilience Action Planning (CityRAP) tool was organized in Dire Dawa from October 2-4, 2019. This course included around 24 municipal technicians as well as representatives from the community, the academia, the police, and NGOs to develop a common understanding of urban risks and resilience concepts. The course was organized as a series of interactive sessions which included group exercises, games, audio-visuals material, debates, etc. It was run by local focal points that had previously been trained on the tool by UN-Habitat. At the end of the CityRAP crash course, participants produced a risk map of the city of Dire Dawa in a participatory manner.

Urban Dialogue and Radio Debate

UN-Habitat Ethiopia organized a series of events open to all throughout the month of October to discuss urban opportunities and challenges in Ethiopia, as well as to present practices and lessons learnt from abroad. These events were organized in collaboration with the Urban Centre, the Association of Ethiopian Architects and the Ethiopia Urban Planners Association and Government officials. Each week of the month, an urban theme was defined and discussed during the events. The themes included housing, transportation, solid waste management and urban planning.

Every week, an Urban Dialogue and a radio debate were organized to discuss the theme of the week. The Urban Dialogues started with a panel including representatives from the government, the civil society (academia or professional association) and UN-Habitat. They were selected for their expertise in the different themes and for bringing different perspectives. The panel presentation done by UN-Habitat to guide the debate was followed by a discussion with a strongly engaged audience, which could raise questions and suggest policy improvements.

The radio debates were the occasion for an expert of UN-Habitat to exchange on the theme of the week with the host of the "Kebet Eske Ketema" (From house to city) radio show.

It was the first time that UN-Habitat organized a series of such events in Ethiopia and it brought a lot of visibility to the urban issues and selected themes, allowing the engagement of the civil society.



The Urban Dialogues in Addis Ababa promoted the engagement of Academia, Government and Civil Society stakeholders in critical issues for Ethiopia's urbanization

Launching of the New Urban Agenda Partners Platform

On October 30, 2019, the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction (MUDCo) in collaboration with UN-Habitat launched the New Urban Agenda Partners Platform. The establishment of this platform will help maximize the impact and synergies of sustainable urban development projects in Ethiopia by improving the coordination among stakeholders working to promote the urban agenda in the country. Around 60 partners working in the urban sector were invited to join the platform, among them government institutions, international organizations, donors, NGOs, professional associations and universities.

During the launching, different presentations were given by the World Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and UN-Habitat. In addition, the Ministry presented its sector wide 10-years perspective development plan ("MUDC 2030") that has been developed with the support of UN-Habitat. This sector plan will inform the Ethiopian government that is currently in the process of formulating a 10-year perspective plan covering the period 2020-2030. This session was the occasion for MUDC to receive constructive feedback from the partners.

This event attracted a wide national media coverage.



Inaugural speech of the Minister of Urban Development and Construction during the launching of the New Urban Agenda's Partner Platform in Ethiopia.

Sheger Visioning High-Level workshop

The "Beautifying Sheger Project" is a national project for the rehabilitation and the green development of 56 km riversides in Addis Ababa. A high-level visioning workshop was organized by UN-Habitat the 29th and 30th of October at Radisson Blu Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The goals of the workshop have been to understand the current aim, facilitate a conversation among the different donors and institutions involved in the project, provide insights, network and produce a technical report. A group of international experts on the topic, different NGOs, UN agencies, embassies and government related offices took part in the planned activities. The workshop started with a field visit to three selected sites along the rivers, continued with multiple presentations held from various participants and concluded with discussions and open questions sessions. This workshop has been a great opportunity to exchange opinions and share knowledge. The three main outputs are the creation of a knowledge platform, the elaboration of a concept note for a pilot project and the delivery of a technical report.

Kenya

The Third International Conference on National Urban Policy was held in Nairobi 28-31 October 2019. The event was convened by the heads of the 3 agencies leading the Global National Urban Policy Programme: UNHABITAT, OECD and Cities Alliance. The heads the three agencies had co-signed the invitation letter which will be sent to Member States and other interested parties. It was part of Urban October.

Mozambique

World Disaster Risk Reduction Day - 13 October

Over the past 10 years, UN-Habitat's experience with the Safe Schools program in Mozambique has shown that it is worth investing in safe and resilient construction.

Investing in infrastructure and capacity building for safe and resilient schools prevents the loss of classrooms and the disruption of the education of thousands of boys and girls.

UN-Habitat Mozambique recommend implementing the "Build to Last" approach is essential to ensuring sustainable social and economic development in the face of climate change.

The Safe Schools Program is implemented by UN-Habitat with funding from various partners such as World Bank and UNICEF. The damaged rooms by this school's Cyclone Idai shown in the video will be rehabilitated by MINEDH with support from UN-Habitat and UNICEF with ECW funds.

Principe Island

The Sustainable Development Plan for Autonomous Region of the Principe Island - Principe 2030 is a platform that organizes the conduction of necessary projects to promote the social, cultural, environmental and economic development of the region in order to facilitate collaboration between different stakeholders, identify priority areas of action, and define means of implementation.

The Plan was officially delivered to the Regional Legislative Assembly on World Cities Day.

Rwanda

Over 4,000 youth from across the Africa and some from other continents curious about and leading in entrepreneurship, technology, development convened at the third annual Youth Connekt Africa Summit to discuss practical ways of “boosting an industrious Africa.” There were a several side events and plenary sessions held. UN-Habitat organized an Urban YouthConnekt plenary session on Youth Innovations in Fragile States towards Peace and Resilience in Cities. The forum evaluated the challenges and opportunities in fragile states while providing recommendations for the development of the Africa Urban YouthConnekt strategy. The panel was curated to have youth at the centre of developing recommendations in the audience and in the panel to not only contribute to recommendations made but evaluate their efficiency in addressing the challenges they presented.



Some of the participants at the Rwanda summit

Speakers from as diverse places as Somalia, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda and Kenya shared the challenges in their respective sectors, and also highlighted some best practices that cut across various sectors such as jobs and entrepreneurship, education and skills, civic participation and leadership, gender- reducing gender inequality, technology and partnerships.

Tunisia

In partnership with UN-Habitat, Tunisia celebrated the World Cities Day and the Arab and World Habitat Day on 31 October 2019 to mark its commitments towards the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

The Minister of Equipment, Housing and Territorial Planning, Mr. Nouredine Selmi inaugurated, in the presence of the UN-Habitat Head of the Sub-regional office for the Maghreb, a one-day seminar on Urban Planning and Housing in Tunisia during which discussions addressed the current urban challenges Tunisian cities are facing and the importance of elaborating a participatory national urban policy that outlines the basic principles for the planning and management of cities in order to ensure inclusive growth and sustainable and equitable development.

Mr. Selmi pointed out that Tunisia is working to consolidate the principles of the United Nations and support its initiatives to achieve its aspirations towards a prosperous world of peace, security, development, well-being and prosperity, through the reinforcement of cooperation between the Republic of Tunisia and the United Nations Human Settlements Program and the establishment of a country office in Tunis. This cooperation will also be crystallized by the launching of the “National Urban Policy” adopted following the participation of the Republic of Tunisia in the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador.

It was emphasized that Tunisia is happy to host the 6th Arab Housing Conference “Policies and Strategies for Developing and Reducing Slums” in Tunis in November 2020. The Minister also proposed to establish a Union of Arab Ministers of Housing and Reconstruction in Tunisia to be entrusted with the task of governing Arab cities including planning smart cities in order to enhance cooperation and joint Arab action in the housing area.

ASIA

China

UN-Habitat conceived and co-designed the First International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages in close collaboration with Songyang County in China. The event took place in Songyang from 10-14 November 2019.

Philippines

Waste to wealth theme anchored Urban October in Philippines.

At the meeting, Ms. Theresa Carampatana of the United Libis Homeowners Association, Inc declared:

"Yung pagkilala sa basura, yung perspective ng mga tao na ito'y marumi, patapon, walang kuwenta... Ang isang bagay kung hindi mo na kailangan, pwede pang may makinabang diyari. Pwede pang gamitin ng iba." (Trash is considered dirty, disposable, and without value. But something that you no longer need can still be used by other people")

This statement captured the mood of the launch of Urban October in the Philippines which was anchored on this year's World Habitat Day theme of "Frontier Technologies as an Innovative Tool to Transform Waste to Wealth.

The festivities kicked off with the *Kapihan at Usapang Urban* (Urban Conversations Over Coffee) session on



© UN-Habitat / Mark Padida

October 7, 2019. UN-Habitat and event partner Technical Assistance Movement for People and Environment, Inc. (TAMPEI) invited urban actors and community representatives for presentations and candid discussions on community-led sustainable waste management and rainwater harvesting initiatives.

On World Habitat Day, UN-Habitat began construction of the first 500 permanent shelter units of its Japan-funded "*Rebuilding Marawi through Community-Driven Shelter and Livelihood*" Project. The ceremony included groundbreaking and capsule laying elements and was held at Barangay Kilala in Marawi City. The event was held in partnership with the Philippine National Housing Authority (NHA), Task Force Bangon Marawi, and the City Government of Marawi.

The permanent shelters will be built for some 500 families displaced by the Marawi siege that took place from May 2017 to October 2017 and who lived in the 3- to 6-meter easement of Lanao Lake. The build site is on a 39-hectare area acquired and developed by NHA.

The event was attended by the Secretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development and Chairperson of the Task Force Bangon Marawi, Secretary Eduardo del Rosario; the Human Settlements Officer of the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Bernhard Barth; Islamic City of Marawi Mayor Majul Gandamra; as well as officials from the Province of Lanao del Sur and the Islamic City of Marawi, government line agencies from the Task Force Bangon Marawi, and the IDP representatives from the project's partner communities.

The groundbreaking and capsule laying for the 500 houses closely follows the launch of the project's livelihood support component on 28 September 2018. The livelihood component is a six-month initiative to complement shelter provision and facilitate socio-economic reintegration of the those displaced by the siege.

AMERICAS

Brazil

Urban Cinema

Two Urban Cinema sessions related to the theme of the week were organized to complement the discussions held during the Urban Dialogues and the radio debates.

The Brazilian documentary "Waste Land" and the movie "Citizen Jane: Battle for the city" were screened to further inform on the challenges of solid waste and urban planning respectively. It was meant to reflect on the experiences of other countries related to urban challenges that are also faced in Ethiopia.

The sessions were open to all and many people attended both cinema sessions.

Urban Circuit

The Urban Circuit ("Circuito Urbano", in Portuguese) is an initiative created by UN-Habitat in Brazil to provide institutional support to events that take place during the month of October, in celebration to the Urban October. Inspired by Urban October's themes, the theme for the edition of 2019 has been "Innovative and Inclusive Cities". The initiative is seeking events that answer the following inspiring question: "How can innovation improve urban services and policies in an inclusive and sustainable way?"

This year has been the second edition and counted with 154 events in 61 cities and 23 states all over Brazil. Events reflected how various forms of innovation (public policy, governance, technology, social and economic/financial) can enhance urban services and policies, also contributing to the achievement of the SDGs and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, so as to ensure equality, inclusion, resilience, sustainability and access to urban services for all.

Canada

In Toronto, Canada, UN-Habitat, international city leaders and the Urban Economy Forum Association hosted the inaugural Urban Economy Forum, the first global platform on urban economy and finance, with participants from over 20 countries.

The Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau's statement said the "event brings together community leaders and financial stakeholders to discuss ways in which to build a sustainable urban economy."



The inauguration of the Urban Economy Forum, in collaboration with UN-Habitat and International City Leaders in Toronto Canada on 28 – 29 October 2019.

© Urban Economy Platform, Canada

United States of America

The World Bank, Build Academy, Airbnb, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), and UN-Habitat organized an exhibition of the winning projects from the 'Resilient Homes Design Challenge' at the United Nations which took place during Urban October. The Challenge generated designs for disaster-resilient and sustainable houses that could be constructed for under USD 10,000 for people living in areas affected by or vulnerable to disasters caused by natural hazards. Over 3,000 professionals from over 120 countries participated in the Challenge, resulting in over 300 team submissions. A jury of international experts selected four winning designs for each of the three scenarios, making 12 winners.

Another event called "Off the Rails: Mega Development and the Future of the City" was held as part of Archtober, New York City's Architecture and Design Month. It was organized by the Center for Architecture and UN-Habitat's Urban October. The event looked at the involvement of the public in the large scale development of under utilized urban land, the outcomes and whether a development was necessary at all.

An Underground Tour of the NYC Subway held during Urban October took a ride through one of the world's largest rapid transit systems going through past and present transit hubs of lower Manhattan, NYC. The tour was designed to give a comprehensive history of the NYC Subway system, from its groundbreaking in 1901 up through the creation of the three different proprietary lines which were unified into the system we know today.

AIA New York and Classic Harbor Line organized the first-annual boat tour through the Hudson, East River and Harlem River, focusing on issues of urban ecology. The circumnavigation of Manhattan explored the green infrastructure designed to both restore the health and productivity of the region's marine ecology and to create resilient edges to mitigate storm surge and sea level rise. Guests heard accounts of the abundant marine life documented by 17th century explorers and learned how subsequent settlement patterns and resource overuse led to the estuary's decline. NYC today's ecological goals, including efforts to rebuild native oyster habitat and create sanctuaries for migratory fish and waterfowl, embody a renewed commitment to restoring native ecology along our shared urban shoreline.



AIANY Urban Ecology Boat Tour

ASIA

Malaysia

Over 5,000 attend the seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum

Over 5,000 people attended the seventh Asia-Pacific Urban Forum held in Penang, Malaysia. Which concluded with the establishment of the Penang Platform for Sustainable Urbanization - a dynamic new partnership to leverage the strengths of cities and leading urban development organizations to support local, regional and national governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda in Asia and the Pacific.

Over 5,000 urban stakeholders explored future-oriented solutions in the three-day Forum co-organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Urbanice Malaysia, Penang Island City Council and State Government of Penang.

Speakers at the event hailed the momentous occasion and expressed optimism that the new Platform would achieve its objectives.

"Connecting cities with tailored technical assistance, generating action-oriented research and evidence on urban solutions, and enhancing access to innovative financing models are important focus areas of the Penang Platform. The Platform will support collaboration among

partners to take forward the development pathways identified in *The Future of Asian Pacific Cities* report, which will lead to more safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities across the region," said ESCAP Executive Secretary Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana.

The Penang Platform brings together an alliance of partners to address these multi-faceted issues through a holistic CITI pathway: Collaborate to accelerate implementation of the SDGs in cities, Integrate the use of tools, models, research and evidence of good practices, transform access to innovative sources of urban financing through new partnerships, and Increase political commitments for sustainable urbanization.

In her closing speech, UN-Habitat Executive Director Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif said, "We have learnt that many good practices are emerging in countries and cities on how to take the New Urban Agenda forward and achieve the SDGs. However, in many cases, policy frameworks and an enabling environment to support such initiatives are lacking. We must build partnerships and align our systems and frameworks to accelerate implementation of sustainable urban development. Let us keep the Asia-Pacific region at the forefront of sustainable development."



© Urbanice Malaysia



The UN-Habitat Executive Director with the Prime Minister of Fiji. © Urbanice Malaysia

The 14 founding members of the Penang Platform are 100 Resilient Cities, Penang Island City Council, CityNet, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, European Union International Urban Cooperation Programme (IUC), Huairou Commission, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies Japan (IGES), The Rockefeller Foundation, United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat, ESCAP and Urbanice Malaysia.

One of the concrete actions under the first phase of the Penang Platform from 2019 to 2023 is the Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy, which supports newly appointed mayors with access to expertise, greater awareness of regional resources and a support network to assist in the acceleration of urban sustainability initiatives. Mayors at the beginning of their term are well-positioned to benefit from the Academy's resources, which include week-long intensive "boot camps" held on an annual basis coupled with ongoing peer-learning.

"Sustainability should be viewed as the goal of society. Urban areas engaging in sustainable development increase their capability and flexibility to adapt and recover when faced with changes," highlighted Ms. Hajah Zuraida Kamaruddin, Minister of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia while presenting key outcomes of the Forum on urban resilience, urban planning, smart cities and urban finance.

On his part, Mr. Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang said: "APUF-7 was a fitting platform for various cities to share their successes in sustainable urbanization while taking cognizance of the need to include grassroots communities in the process of policy making. We believe this is the way forward for governments to work with the people in policy making so that they will take ownership of the programmes that we introduce. This is one of the ways to ensure sustainability."

EUROPE

France

UNESCO hosted an event to mark World Cities Day at their headquarters. The event was organized by UNESCO HQ on the 2019 yearly theme “Changing the world: innovations and better life for future generations” and gathered about 100 participants, mostly partner municipalities of UNESCO education/ culture/ communication programmes and network of cities, UN Sister agencies, media and member states representatives. The event was quite intense with more than 25 speakers plus discussion as well as a short live streaming with UN-Habitat ED present at Ekaterinburg, Russia Federation. The event covered four key thematic areas: SDGs localization; the bridging education, environment and innovation at the city-level in support of climate action; urban regeneration and social inclusion; and cities as springboards for innovation under which UN-Habitat had a presentation. UN-Habitat focused its intervention on the role & concrete examples of UN-Habitat for the implementation of the NUA, SDG 11 and monitoring of the UN wide urban development strategy in relation to the use of new technologies for public space development and management, youth engagement, greater social inclusion and innovative policy development with illustrations from the Global Public Space Programme and also

Russia

The city of Ekaterinburg held a meeting where the future of the world's youth was at the centre of lively discussions at the event in the lead up to the Global Observance of World Cities Day

As the snow fell outside, the Mayor of Ekaterinburg Aleksandr Vysokinskiy welcomed hundreds of guests to the World Cities Day pre-event which took an in depth look at World Cities Day sub theme - *Changing the world: innovations and a better life for future generations.*

“When we talk about innovation we should understand that we have borrowed the planet from our children and the city in which our children and grandchildren will live should be better. We need to work on our cities for future generations,” said the Mayor

During her speech, the UN-Habitat Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif, mentioned the involvement of the National Youth Council of Russia and the young Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Ambassadors from Russia in the day's discussions to ensure the voice of youth was heard.

“The engagement of youth in shaping our future is critical,” she said.



Youth ambassadors report back on their pre World Cities Day event © UN-Habitat / Georgy Sapozhnikov

Spain

Activities & Key partner and Stakeholders directly involved

14 key partners and stakeholders were directly involved in organizing/supporting activities within the Urban October 2019 in Spain. Such partners were Seville City Council, Fuenlabrada City Council, Cazorla City Council, Andalusian Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AACID), Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI), Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Regions (FEMP), Ecoembes, Department of Environment, Territorial Development and Housing of the Basque Government, High Council of Architects Associations of Spain (CSCAE), INBAR, AEICE, Institute for Cooperation and Basic Housing (ICHAB), Galician School of Public Administration y UNESCO Chair in Housing, Rovira and Virgili University.

9 events were organized/supported by the Office under the Urban October 2019:

A forum organized by AEICE in Burgos that along 4 days addressed future trends and the challenges of the industry, focusing on sustainability, the environment, new technologies, friendliness and competitiveness strategies. The week and was supported by the Junta de

Castilla y León and the collaboration of the Association of Architects of Burgos, the University of Burgos and the Construction Institute of Castilla y León².

First Iberian Bamboo Symposium. Organized by INBAR, the meeting addressed the usefulness of this material through different modules or aspects: environmental challenges, market conditions or legislation. On these different axes presentations were articulated with the participation of the UN-Habitat Office in Spain.

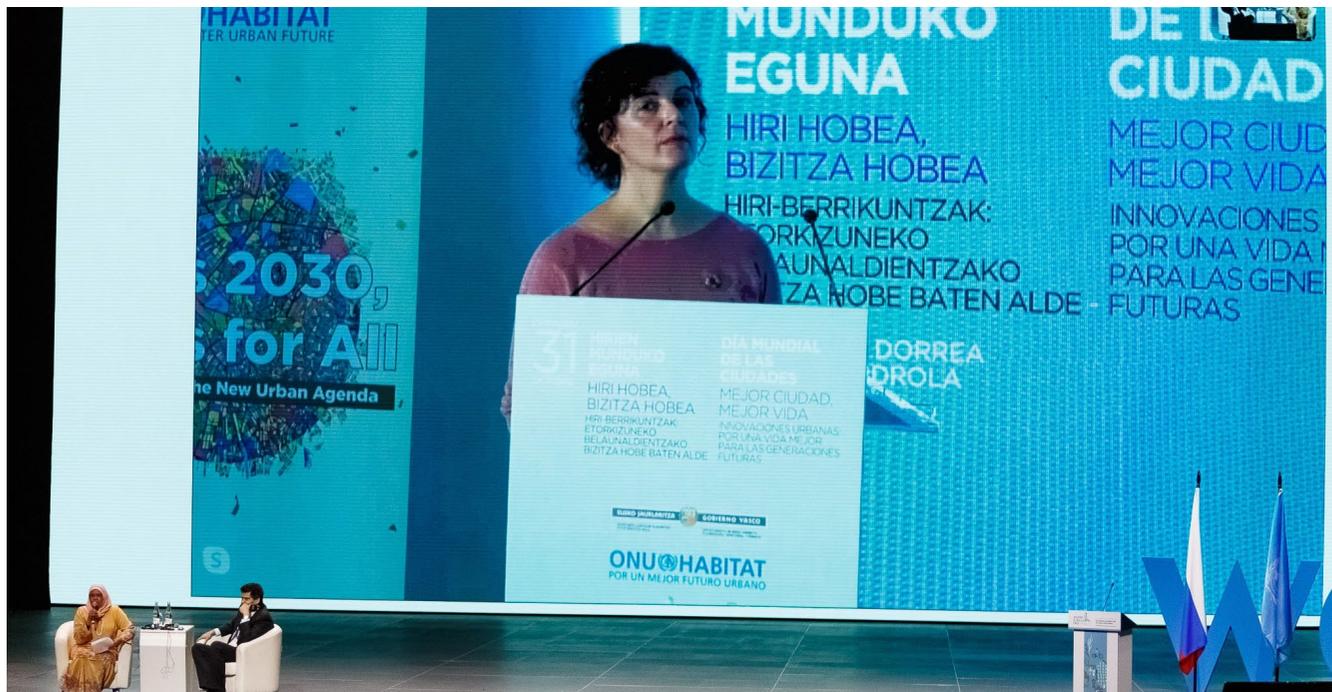
Event organized by the ICHAB (Institute for Cooperation and Basic Habitability). The UN-Habitat office in Spain supported the act in which the right to housing was discussed as a basic element of human life.

Spanish Media Coverage

UN-Habitat Office in Spain and the Urban October campaign had **37 media clips** in relevant media, such as El País, Europa Press, Cadena Ser, La Vanguardia and Diario de Sevilla.

¹ See video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Fnjg5ssCBM&feature=youtu.be>

² See video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvsA-wtBpX8>



A live link up between World Cities Day in Bilbao, Spain and the Global Observation in Ekaterinburg, Russia on 31 October 2019. © UN-Habitat / Ana Garcia

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