

## Climate Smart Cities Challenge spurs urban solutions

UN-Habitat has partnered with Viable Cities Sweden, Nesta Challenges UK, and others on a [Climate Smart Cities Challenge](#), an innovation project that will see winning cities establishing a real-world testbed and inviting problem-solvers to help develop scalable solutions to greenhouse gas challenges including those that deliver social benefits. Solutions will cover a wide range of sectors and fields such as urban form and physical design, transport, circular resource flows, food production, energy systems, housing, ecosystems, public space and many more. The challenge garnered significant interest from cities and closed on 22 January; applications from 50 cities will be narrowed down to just three city winners, to be announced in March 2021.

## Climate Action – a key focus for 2021

Climate action will be highlighted in 2021 by UN-Habitat. An organization-wide taskforce has been established to lead on climate action initiatives including the Innovate4Cities conference being co-organized with the Global Covenant of Mayors to promote data, innovation and technology to accelerate ambitious climate action in cities, engagement in urban climate change events. UN-Habitat will also advocate for action in cities at key events leading up to [COP26](#) and launch a global [climate action for cities campaign](#) aligned to the UN Race to Zero and the Race to Resilience campaigns. UN-Habitat will work with its partnership networks and more than 150 partner organizations of the World Urban Campaign which will launch the 6th Edition of the [Urban Thinkers Campus](#) to focus on concrete, replicable and measurable climate solutions. There will also be a push to secure greater support for UN-Habitat's [RISE-UP flagship programme](#) to leverage large scale investment for urban adaptation and climate resilience.

**Call for Expression of Interest for qualified individuals to join the UN-Habitat Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE)**

Apply now before 21 February 2021 for a chance to play an important role in guiding and promoting stakeholder engagement with UN-Habitat to accelerate achievement of the urban dimensions of the SDGs

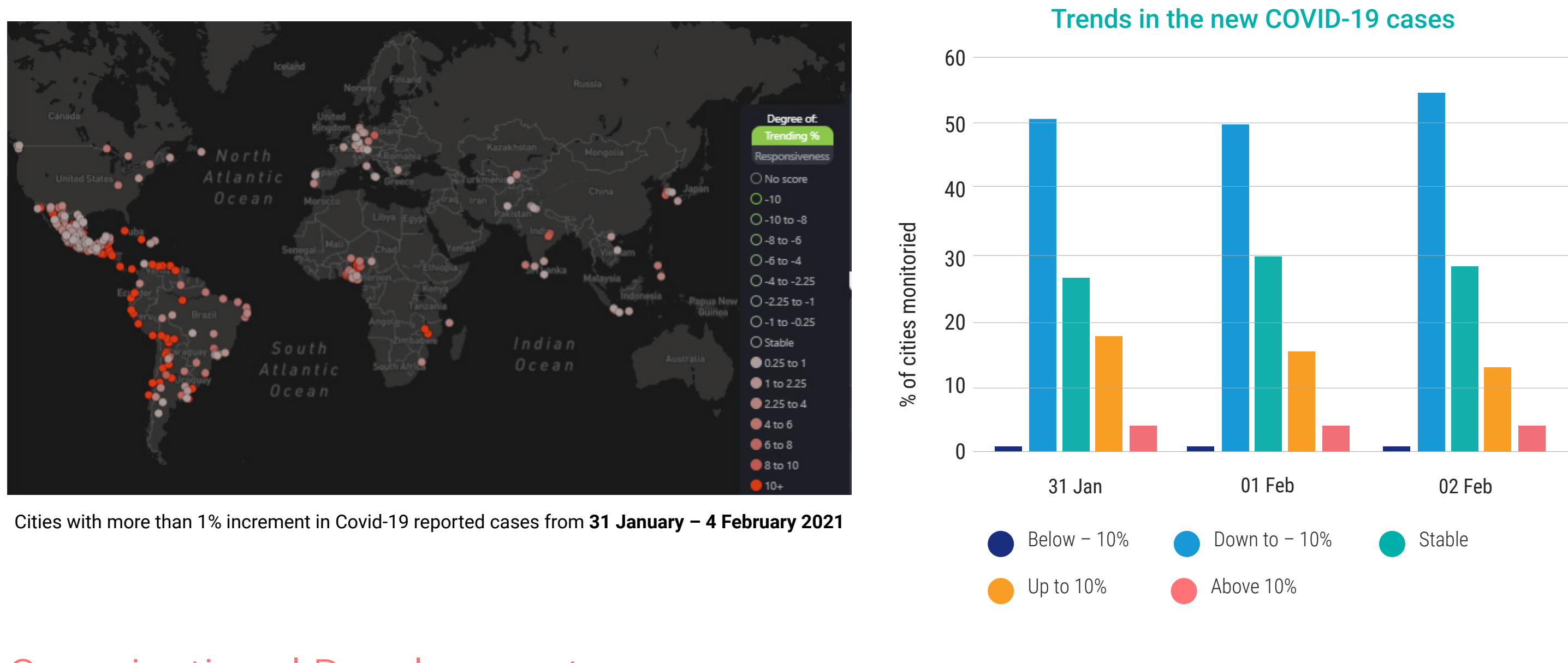
## New Urban Agenda Illustrated gives practical guidance to urban stakeholders

The New Urban Agenda provides a comprehensive framework to guide, track and accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 11 to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. UN-Habitat's [New Urban Agenda Illustrated handbook](#) is aimed at urban stakeholders globally and gives clear definitions and practical examples to foster greater understanding on implementation of the [New Urban Agenda](#). The handbook gives a snapshot of issues and challenges in the urban development sphere as laid out in the New Urban Agenda and gives guidance on how to address higher level policy decisions for growth and development of cities around the world.



## Local Covid-19 monitoring is key for countries' response strategies

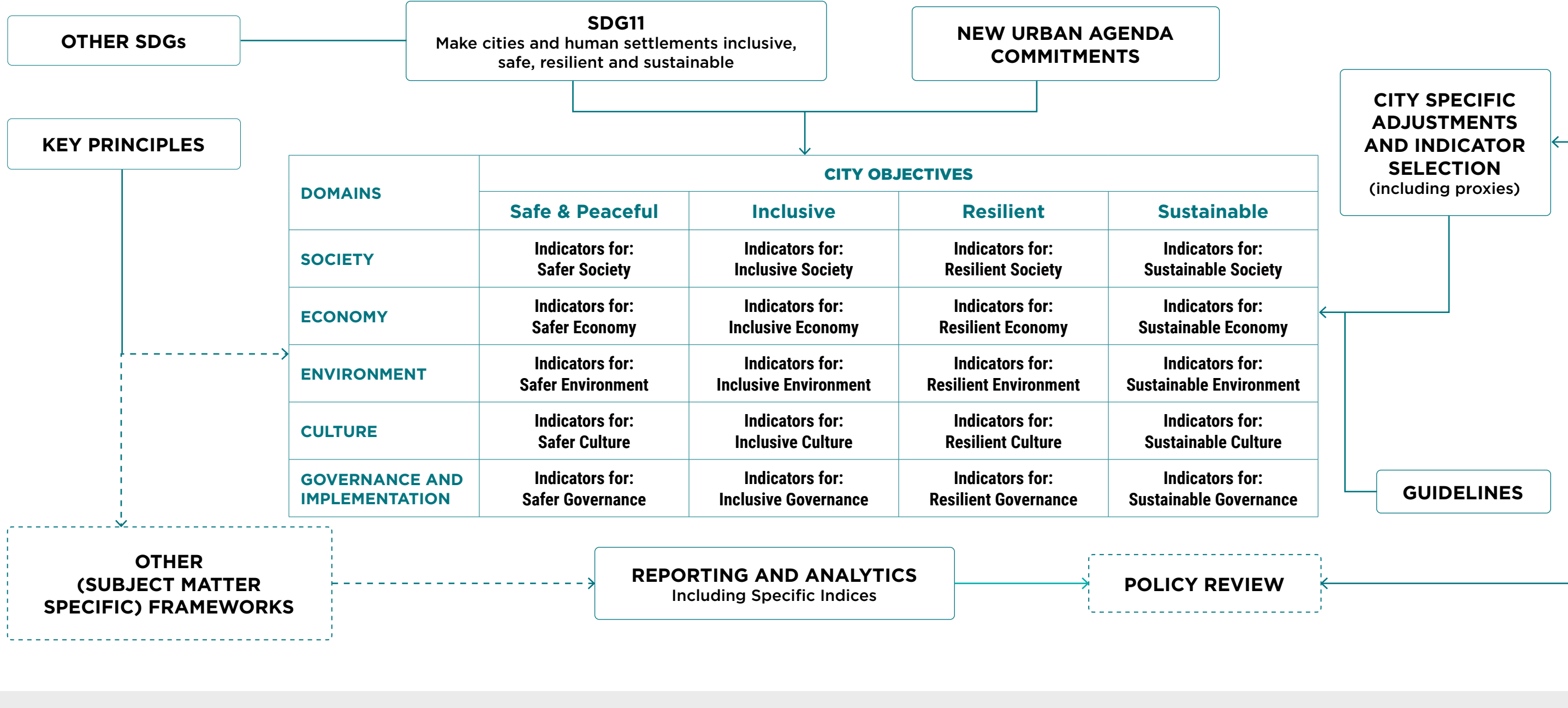
Linking large-scale patterns with local conditions and actions remains an important strategy in fighting the current pandemic infection rates. By December 2020, the coverage of cities monitored by city COVID-19 tracking platform, developed through a collaboration between UN-Habitat and [CitiIQ](#), had reached 1,700 cities globally. New cities on the platform include UK (85), Germany (48), Argentina (58), Japan (24), South Korea (4), Australia (30), South Africa (7), Canada (25), the United States (75) and Mexico (144). The daily tracking shows that measures taken by cities to reduce COVID-19 infection rates, including lockdowns are largely yielding positive results as shown in the graph below. New cases have declined in half of the cities monitored; however, over 17% of cities show an increase in new cases.



## Organizational Developments

### Global Urban Monitoring Framework gains traction

The United Nations Statistical Commission and General Assembly through its resolutions urged UN-Habitat to develop innovative methods, approaches and guidelines for data collection, analysis, monitoring and implementation to support Member States in dealing with emerging urban challenges and opportunities. In response to this call, and with the support of the City of Madrid, UN-Habitat convened partners in 2020, including UN agencies, national and local governments, private sector, civil society and academia, to develop the Global Urban Monitoring Framework. The Framework provides a harmonized approach for monitoring implementation of the New Urban Agenda and urban dimensions of the SDGs, recognizing the roles of national, subnational and local governments and other stakeholders in policymaking, planning, design, implementation, financing and timely delivery of services. The representative from Finland, Mr. Jyri Juslen said *"Finland regards the framework as a good starting point for its national urban indicator system... it is a good catalyst for the development of national urban indicator systems"*. The framework is structured around five domains and four city objectives on which indicators for measurements are mapped, as show in the diagram below. It allows countries and cities to assess their progress on prosperity, equity, health, education, technology, culture, environment, poverty, and safety, among others. The framework will now be shared widely with partners for inputs and feedback with a view to having it formally endorsed by the United Nations Commission next year.



**Call for Expression of Interest in hosting Global Observance of World Habitat Day 2021 and 2022 and World Cities Day 2022** extended to **Friday 26 February 2021**. Apply now for an opportunity to host these high visibility Global Observances of World Habitat Day and World Cities Day. For more information, contact: [unhabitat-whd@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-whd@un.org) or [unhabitat-wcd@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-wcd@un.org)



## Member States pledge over USD 164 million for sustainable urbanization

Member States and other development partners pledged over USD 164 million at [Partner and Pledge for Sustainable Urbanization](#) event on 2 December 2020 attended by over 120 participants. The money will help finance [global and country programmes](#) to be implemented with UN-Habitat's support to accelerate achievement of the urban dimensions of the SDGs. Pledges for core activities only reached USD 1.2 million against a target of USD 10 million. Highlights of the pledging event included statements from [the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed](#), President of the UN-Habitat Assembly and [UN-Habitat's Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif](#).

## UN-Habitat's Executive Board approves work programme and budget for 2021

The second session of UN-Habitat's Executive Board of UN-Habitat met from 27-29 October 2020 in an online session with over 240 participants. The President of the UN-Habitat Assembly, Martha Delgado Peralta, commended the work of the organization in the fight against COVID-19 and urged Member States to renew their support to UN-Habitat. The Executive Board approved the annual work programme and a total budget of USD 228 million budget for the year 2021 of which USD22.5 million is for core activities, USD 43.3 million is for global programmes and USD 152.6 million for country activities. The Board also [reviewed and adopted the documents](#) crucial for implementation of the UN-Habitat's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan on accountability and results frameworks, results-based management policy, and strategies on impact communications, resource mobilization and partnership including UN-Habitat's engagement with the private sector and non-governmental partners. The decisions adopted by the Executive Board can be found [here](#). The next session of the Executive Board will be held from 7 to 8 April 2021.

**Act now to support UN-Habitat's emergency global response**

UN-Habitat's new [DONATE](#) online giving feature gives you a chance to contribute to emergency response to urban crises such as the global COVID-19 pandemic and other humanitarian emergencies affecting the most vulnerable in cities.

## World Cities Report 2020 gives latest thinking on value of sustainable urbanization

UN-Habitat's recent flagship report on the Value of Sustainable Urbanization affirms that well-planned, well managed and well financed cities and towns create economic, social, environmental and other unquantifiable value to vastly improve the quality of life. [Key findings](#) of the latest thinking and urban trends to inform policy and decisions on pressing topics, include confirmation of the continuing increase in urban populations, the need to address overcrowding and hygiene in housing and public spaces to manage pandemics and other health risks, and the importance of data to inform urban planning and population policies that leave no one behind. It also shows how the economic growth and consumption of cities can support development and build resilience to climate change, highlights the importance of people-centred smart cities, local governments and strong institutions and underscores the opportunity that Covid-19 recovery presents to build back better. Click [here to view full report](#).



James Machaira, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works launches *World Cities Report* at *World Cities Day 2020*

## Foundation and Philanthropy Platform: Unlocking the Power of Philanthropy for Impact at Scale

UN-Habitat launched the Foundation and Philanthropy Platform for sustainable urban development to foster greater collaboration with foundations. Foundations play an increasing role in sustainable development by mobilizing resources for development, undertaking development initiatives and as influencers of development policy. Participants who agreed on the establishment of the platform in October 2020 include [Botnar](#), [Realif](#), [Yayasan Hasanah](#), the [Prince's Trust](#), [Tony Elumelu](#), [Tata Trusts](#) and [Vanke](#). The platform will help to structure UN-Habitat's engagement with foundations and philanthropy to co-create solutions for sustainable urban development. Members agreed to focus initially on innovative financing and entrepreneurship for sustainable urbanization. The first meeting on Innovative Finance took place on 21 January 2021 and invited the [European Foundation Center](#) and [European Venture Philanthropy Association](#); the stream on Entrepreneurship is expected to meet later this month.

## Call for Proposal for Water Operators' Partnerships

Financed by European Union and implemented by the UN-Habitat Global Water Operators Alliance (GWOPA), this call for proposal, open until **15th April 2021**, will provide funding for successful proposals of 20 to 30 not-for-profit peer partnerships of USD 250,000 - 450,000 over three years. One goal is to get more utilities, financiers and supporting actors involved in solidarity-based partnerships. Water Operators' Partnerships proposals can be North-South, South-South, or triangular in their formation, provided that the leading mentor operator or local government is from a European Union member state or an eligible beneficiary country.

## Launch of The Regent Park World Urban Pavilion in Toronto, Canada

A partnership between UN-Habitat, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the city of Toronto, Urban Economy Forum Association, and the Daniels Corporation has been forged to set up the [Regent Park World Urban Pavilion](#). The Pavilion, to be launched in Toronto later this year, will be a global knowledge exchange hub on inclusive and sustainable urban development to encourages collaboration with local and national governments, leading urban institutes and urban stakeholders throughout the world. It is hoped that it will stimulate city-led innovations, strengthen local capacities by connecting data to decision making, bolster good governance and planning, and generate financing for local investments to create greater impact toward urban prosperity. The Pavilion profiles Canada as a Pioneer for SDG Cities to encourage other governments to join this global movement.

## Asia Pacific



### Urban farming helps vulnerable people in Fiji during the COVID-19 pandemic

*"....I thought I would never be able to grow food because of the lack of space."* Deepika Devi, a resident from Suva, Fiji.

The COVID-19 Community Awareness and Preparedness in Informal Settlements project, funded by UN-Habitat's Global Emergency Response Fund, supported households in informal settlements struggling to obtain nutritious food during the pandemic through container farming. Informal settlements often have limited access to land for growing or the land is affected by climate-related hazards such as flooding. COVID-19 restrictions have meant that many in informal settlements can no longer afford nutritious food. Container farming is a simple, low-cost solution that allows families to grow their own food. Around 800 households received seeds, training and monitoring support.

### Hundreds of flood victims benefit from housing and water supply in Laos

*"Thanks to the Government of Japan and UN-Habitat, we can finally move into own houses and regain livelihoods"* Son Duangmala, one of the flood victims.

Newly constructed houses were handed over to families who lost their homes following devastating floods in July 2018, at a ceremony held in November 2020 in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province, in southern Laos. The reconstruction project, funded by the Government of Japan, was implemented by UN-Habitat in partnership with Ministry of Public Works and Transport, and local authorities. The goal of the project was to provide permanent housing with household-level piped water supply to families whose houses and livelihoods were destroyed by the devastating floods caused by collapse of an auxiliary dam. More than 6,000 people were displaced and had to live in temporary shelters in neighbouring villages. The new houses are based on Building Back Better principles with elevated floors, solid foundation and modular extensions to withstand recurring natural disasters and instill climate resilience in future infrastructure construction.

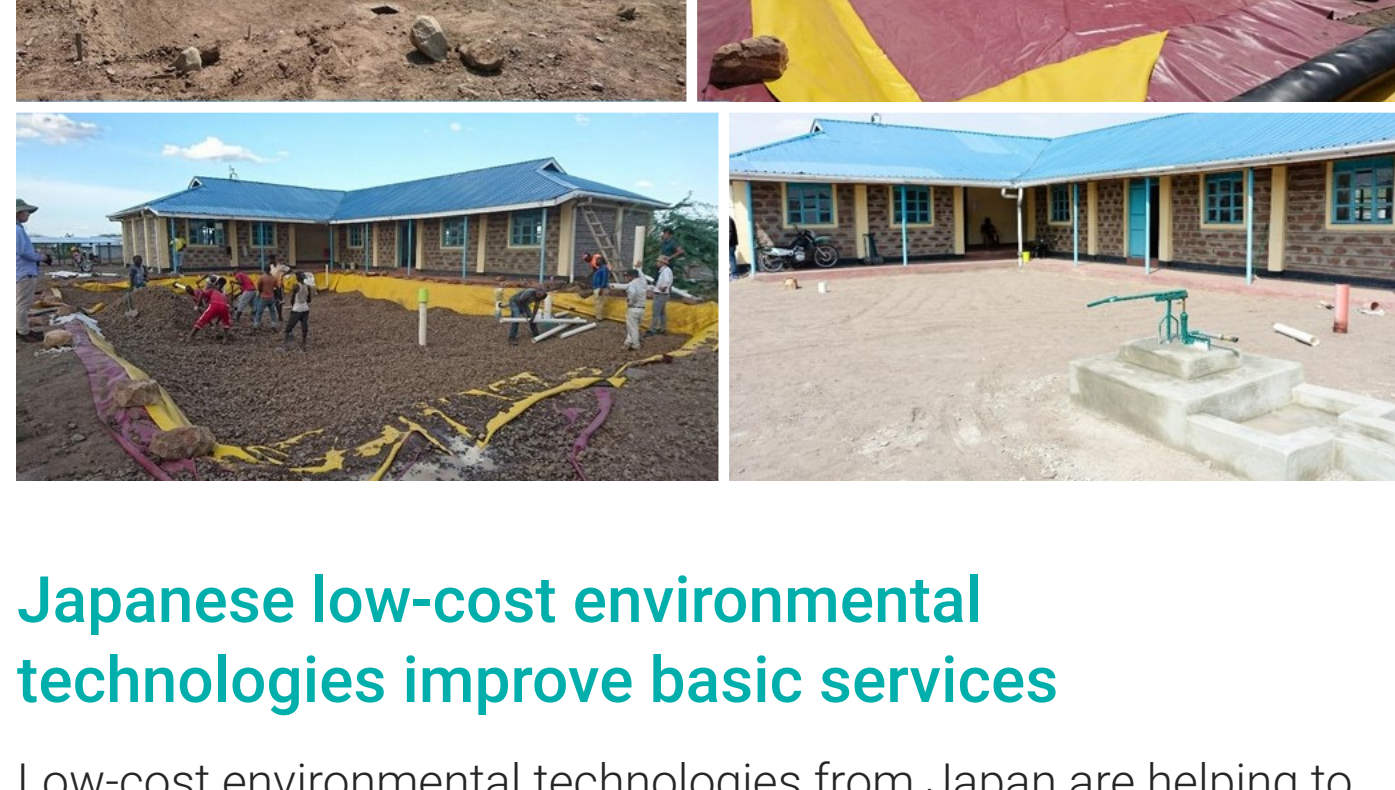
### THE PHILIPPINES



### Cities in the Philippines linked to climate finance at the urban resilience investment forum

Five cities in the Philippines were linked to climate finance opportunities at the [Urban Resilience Investment Forum](#) held in November 2020. The four-day virtual Investment Forum provided a platform for the cities to present their [innovative climate-resilience projects](#) to potential investors and partners from local, regional and government banks, private companies, international development partners and major financing institutions. The dialogue identified gaps and solutions in city-level climate-related finance including viable public-private partnerships and ways to mainstream, access and leverage finance for climate change action in cities. The cities, led by their respective mayors, presented their projects as partners of UN-Habitat's *Building Climate Resiliency through Urban Plans and Designs* project in the Philippines. Under the project, cities receive training and technical assistance to update their Local Climate Change Action Plans and Climate and Disaster Risk Assessments, formulate their city-wide adaptation strategies and develop design for resilience.

### JAPAN, ETHIOPIA, KENYA, MYANMAR



### Japanese low-cost environmental technologies improve basic services

Low-cost environmental technologies from Japan are helping to manage waste and improve water supply in developing countries where practical and affordable environmental solutions are in great need. The ["Fukuoka Method"](#) solid waste management is a well-known method which UN-Habitat has been deploying to several places including Kiambu County (Kenya), Addis Ababa and Bahir Dar (Ethiopia) and Yangon (Myanmar). Underground rainwater harvesting tank ["Tametotto"](#) is another solution being implementing in collaboration with the Fukuoka-based constructor Daiken. This simple technology has so far been deployed in Laos, Vietnam and in the Kalobeyei refugee settlements in Kenya, allows storage of over 100 tons of water using intermediate and low-cost techniques with locally available materials, skills and labour and is thus easily adopted by local communities in a sustainable way.



Arab States

YEMEN



Saudi Development and Reconstruction Programme for Yemen

Over 4,000 people are set to benefit from a new project developed by the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Programme for Yemen, Alwaleed Philanthropies and UN-Habitat to rehabilitate 600 houses for low-income families in the Yemeni city of Aden. The Adequate Housing Project will also provide 200 unemployed youth with vocational training. Some 1,600 new jobs will be created during implementation of this project which will be coordinated with the Yemeni Government and local authorities, and will collaborate with civil society organizations. The houses will be constructed using traditional building techniques that are environmentally friendly, using locally available materials. The project will bring together housing sector employees and community leaders to monitor progress and thus stimulate social integration and cohesion.

LEBANON

UN-Habitat announces cash-for-rent for 800 families affected by the Beirut Blast

Several months after the devastating Beirut Port explosions, many people remain displaced and still live in temporary accommodation, shared shelters or in the homes of their friends and families. Countless families continue to live in their damaged homes, despite the risk of the buildings collapsing, due to the fear of losing their right to return. To respond to this dire need as part of the priorities of wider humanitarian response in the shelter sector, UN-Habitat, through funding from the UN Central Emergency Relief Fund and in collaboration with the Polish Centre for International Aid, is providing cash-for-rent for 800 households that are home to 4,000 beneficiaries. This will more than double the current number of families who have received cash-for-rent assistance for a secure home for at least three months as longer-term solutions are sought. Beneficiaries will also participate COVID-19 prevention awareness sessions and receive critical information to enable individuals to protect themselves against COVID-19, and against sexual and gender-based violence.



IRAQ



Creating jobs for the local community in Duhok, Iraq

**"Finding a decent job in Baroshke is very difficult considering the high rate of unemployment among youth in this region"** narrates Saud Saad, a resident in Baroshke neighbourhood in Duhok Centre of northern Iraq. Saud is one of many local community members provided with job opportunities through the programme *"Strengthening the Long-Term Resilience of Subnational Authorities in Countries Affected by the Syrian and Iraqi Crises-Headway"*, funded by the EU and implemented in partnership with UNDP. It has created 1,140 working days so far in Duhok and this number is expected to reach 3,200 for both skilled and un-skilled labourers by the end of the rehabilitation target of 200 houses. UN-Habitat is currently rehabilitating 947 houses occupied by internally displaced persons, refugees and host community members in the cities of Duhok, Sumel, Erbil, Mosul and Sinjar.

Africa

SOMALILAND



Entrepreneurial Somaliland mother thrives from EU-funded cash transfer programme

Maryam Jama had been unable to continue her previous employment selling sweets to pupils when schools closed due to COVID-19. This changed in August 2020 when she started receiving monthly cash transfers of USD 60 through the UN-Habitat-run Berbera Urban Development Project which supports recipients in Berbera who are suffering from the impact of the pandemic. Within a month, she was able to pay back the loan and make enough to take care of her family. She also started selling nets which are in high demand during the winter months from December to February when there is an influx of mosquitoes. She hopes to open her own tailoring shop in the market in the near future. The EU funded cash programme, which began in August last year, ran until January 2021. A [new programme](#) was launched at the beginning of February funded also by the EU to the tune of USD 6.9 million to improve the response to COVID-19 and other crises in Mogadishu.

MOZAMBIQUE



Canada supports resilient and inclusive hospitals in Mozambique

Support from Canada is helping reconstruction of some 95 health units and hospital destroyed by two cyclones in 2019 in Beira, the country's second biggest city. The Ministry of Health, through the Directorate of Health Infrastructure and Equipment and UN-Habitat officially launched the *"Safer Hospitals: Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Construction Guidelines on Safer and Gender Sensitive Health Facilities in Mozambique"* project to support ongoing reconstruction efforts in the provinces of Sofala, Cabo Delgado and Manica, in line with Building-Back-Better principles to ensure future resilience. This includes technical assistance to adapt rules and guidelines for rebuilding resilient health infrastructure based on the framework of global guidelines. The project also hopes to improve access for women and girls to health facilities that are adapted to be more gender sensitive.

GHANA

United Nations supports Ghana's vision to upgrade informal settlements and reduce urban poverty

The informal settlements of Ussher Town and Jamestown in Ghana's capital, which have been transformed by UN-Habitat's work with Government and the community, received a visit from the UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed. The people-centered approach to slum upgrading has resulted in the use of a wide range of community and public spaces for sport, studying, handicraft and other cultural and commercial activities. The project falls under UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading



Programme (PSUP), an initiative of the African Caribbean Pacific Secretariat funded by the European Commission. As a beneficiary community of COVID-19 response from the UN, Ga Mashie is also benefiting from a UNFPA and UN-Habitat project to provide Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities and services to reinforce measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and improve livelihoods in the community. PSUP has enabled 3,600 women and youth to access affordable finance for business and commercial activities.

Europe

National Urban Policies: Key tool for sustainable development and socio-economic recovery

On 11 January 2021, the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (MITMA) of Spain, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, held a high-level dialogue entitled "National Urban Policies Spain-Latin America and the Caribbean". The value of National Urban Policies was highlighted as one of the key elements of the New Urban Agenda for accelerating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a key tool for socio-economic responses in the Covid-19 recovery. High level representatives of national governments shared their points of view, experiences and good practices in the development and implementation of National Urban Policies and discussed their influence on the role that cities and territories must play in social and economic recovery. The dialogue was within the framework of the first edition of the Urban Forum of Spain for 2021.

Latin America and the Caribbean



MEXICO

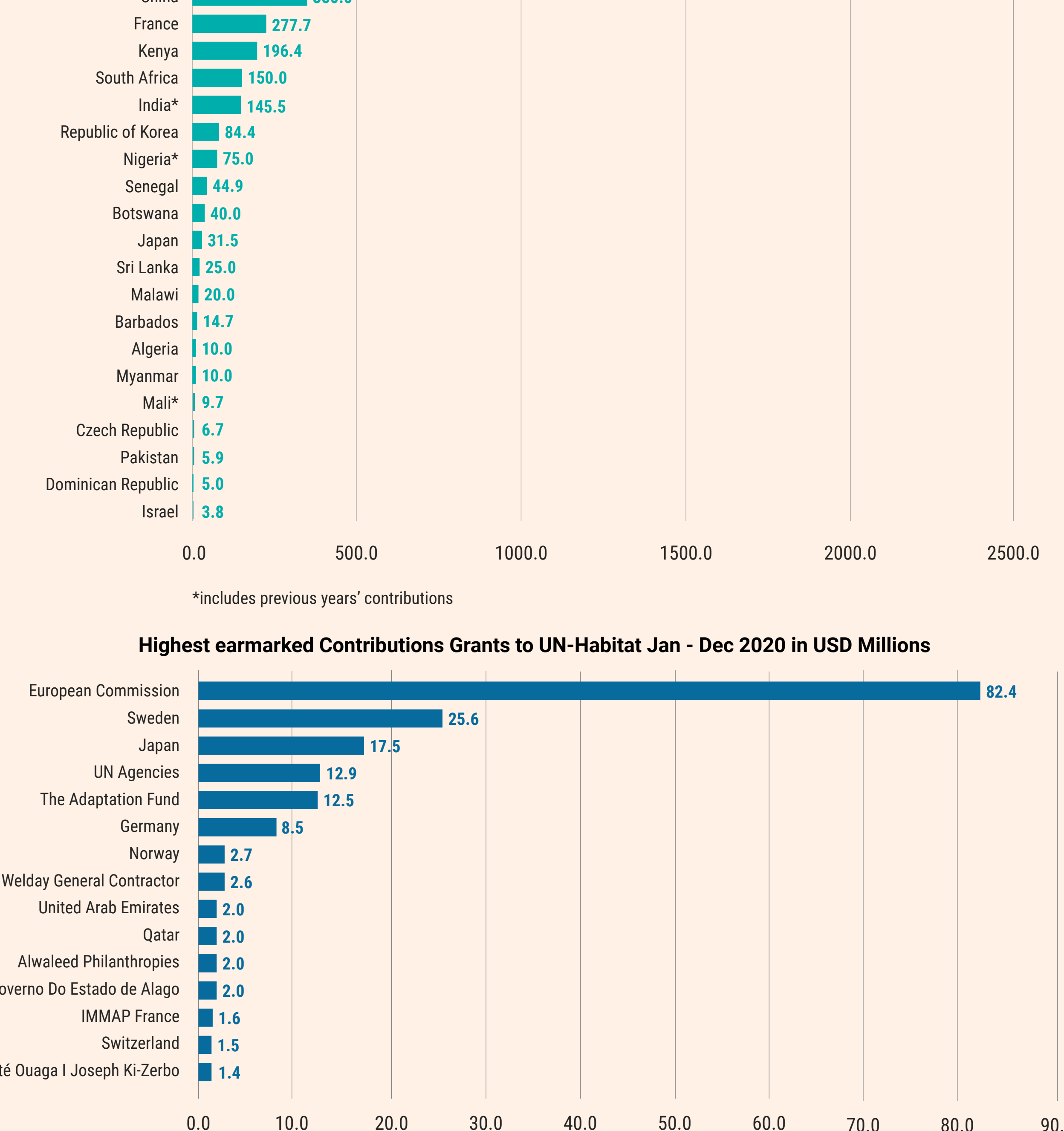
Safety for pedestrians in Mexican border city

As part of the master plan *"Implementation of the New Urban Agenda in Reynosa 2030"* supported by UN-Habitat, volunteers including students, officials and the local communities painted areas on several roads and pavements to slow down cars, making it easier and safer for pedestrians. One of the areas is the Hidalgo International Bridge that connects Reynosa with McAllen, Texas, USA, the main crossing point for people and cars. The impact of these pilot actions, carried out with the Municipal Planning Institute and the Placemaking Mexico Foundation, will be monitored in coming months to see if they can be made permanent and replicated elsewhere.

Financial Update

Provisional figures for 2020 show that UN-Habitat secured total income of USD 208.2 million for core and earmarked activities. This represents a 10% increase in total income compared to 2019, demonstrating increasing demand from cities and countries for the organization's services to support sustainable urban development. A total of USD 138.4 million was secured for regional and country programmes representing 94% of the annual income target and USD 53.2 million for global programmes or 84% of the annual target.

There is, however, a **continuing shortfall in non-earmarked contributions for core activities**. Contributions in 2020 on reach 21% of the annual target of USD 18.9 million. The core budget for 2021 was approved at a lower level of USD 10 million by Member States; **we appeal for urgent help to reach the 2021 target of USD 10 million**. UN-Habitat continues to implement its resource mobilization strategy aimed raising adequate, predictable and flexible funding to implement activities in its strategic plan through a broader and more diversified donor base, strategic relations with development partners, innovation, pooled multi-donor funds to deliver at scale, joint programming with other UN Agencies to deliver as one, and demonstrating value for money so that UN-Habitat is the partner of choice.



Resources

UN-Habitat articles and blogs

Opinion pieces and interviews by the UN-Habitat Executive Director and other expert staff on a wide range of issues including informal settlements, housing, transport, the future of cities, gender and the environment have been published by the international media and high level partners.

Recent publications

Urban Planning Responses in Post-Crisis Contexts

Waste Wise Cities Tool

Urban Observatories: A Comparative Review

Turkana Houses

More publications

- Local Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees - A Gateway to existing ideas, resources and capacities for cities across the world
- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for Ghana under the Adaptation Fund Project "Improved Resilience of Coastal Communities in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana".
- Urban Profiling in Humanitarian and Development Contexts: A Guide for Turkish Municipalities Impacted by Migration and the Syrian Refugee Crisis
- Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Côte d'Ivoire under the Adaptation Fund Project "Improved Resilience of Coastal Communities in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana".

Events

Upcoming

- 13 FEB One year anniversary of WUF Social media/web
- MID MAR Launch of Cities and Pandemics Report virtual
- 06-07 APR First session of the Executive Board for the year 2021 Virtual/Nairobi
- TBC Launch of UNH Climate4Cities Campaign Social media/web
- 08 MAR International Women's Day – launch of Her Platform Global

Messages and social media material are on the Trello <https://trello.com/b/1TD925Gj/un-habitat-covid19> Stories and key messages are all on UN-Habitat's corporate website [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org). Urban Impact replaces the quarterly donor brief <https://donors.unhabitat.org/news>



